



To: Board of Education  
From: Scott Woods, Superintendent  
Date: December 18, 2024  
Re: Administrative Recommendation for 2025-2026 K-5 Organization

The administrative recommendation for the 2025-2026 school year is to reorganize our current K-5 campuses into grade level schools. There are substantial benefits to this structure for students, families, and staff. Primarily, this structure expands equitable access for all students, is more cost-effective, and allows for improved teaching and learning. The overall goal is to improve student learning outcomes.

- **Equitable Access.** Provides predictable, long-term, equitable access to the educational program for all students and families, regardless of where they reside in RCS.
  - Students will have a consistent school experience regardless of where they reside in RCS.
  - More families will have access to school district transportation. Any student residing greater than 1.5 miles from their school will have transportation from a bus stop in their neighborhood to their grade-level school.
  - Classrooms at a grade level will have similar enrollment. For example, this year in second grade, class sizes across the district range from 11 to 21 students. With grade level schools, the difference in enrollment from one classroom to the next should never be more than one student.
  - Students will be with the same grade level group for their entire RCS career. Regardless of where a student resides or when they move into RCS, the students will have a consistent, predictable cohort of peers. This is a positive because RCS has a high mobility rate, and most students do not attend one K-5 elementary school. For example, of our current fourth grade students, only 34% attend the same school where they started kindergarten. About 28% have been enrolled in RCS since kindergarten but have moved schools at least once. 38% of fourth graders have not been continuously enrolled in RCS.
- **Cost-effective.** Is substantially more efficient and will free up resources to allow the district to focus on improving student learning outcomes.
  - Currently two elementary campuses are at or near capacity, grade level schools will enable programs to expand as needed without needing to do costly construction projects or shift future enrollment patterns.
  - Grade level schools allow for much more efficient classroom staffing. Fewer classroom sections will be needed under this model allowing us to shift staff into other roles such as reading and math intervention, acceleration or enrichment programs, and/or lowering overall class sizes.
  - Grade level schools will be able to focus on expenditures such as curriculum resources, materials, supplies that support only their grade level/s.
  - Grade level schools will allow special education teachers more direct time with their students without needing to increase staff.
- **Teaching and Learning.** Allows for significantly more focused collaboration among staff members and resources to support staff members.
  - All teachers in a building are able to focus on the instructional and social-emotional needs of only one or two grade levels.
  - School-wide professional development for our teachers can focus on the needs of only one or two grade levels.

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- Instructional specialists, such as math and reading interventionists, are able to focus primarily on supporting only one or two grade levels.
- With all staff in the school supporting only one or two grade levels, the opportunities for flexible programming and scheduling increase substantially.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

What will the overall structure be?

- Pleasant Acres (Early Childhood School)      Grades PreK and Kindergarten.
- Eastlawn      Grades 1 and 2.
- Northview      Grades 3 and 4.
- Broadmeadow      Grade 5.

What are some of the negatives of this proposal?

- We acknowledge that there are possible negative implications for the proposed changes, such as
  - This is a big transition for the Rantoul community, students, and staff;
  - Increase in transportation costs;
  - Increase in families with students in multiple buildings;
  - One-time costs associated with moving staff;
  - Loss of the traditional K-5 school structure.

How will transportation work?

- All K-5 students living 1.5 miles or more from their assigned school will be eligible for transportation from a neighborhood bus stop to their school.
- We are also considering expanding transportation services to include K-5 students with a sibling who qualifies under the 1.5-mile rule. This expansion will depend on the feasibility of implementation by our transportation provider and our ability to cover the additional costs.

Do other school districts have grade level schools?

- Yes. In downstate Illinois, there are 1,807 public schools with 60 different grade level patterns. Of school districts with at least 800 students, at least 30 school districts were identified as having grade level schools. Districts range in size from 810 to 7,187. For more details, see the attached appendix.

Didn't we already try grade level schools?

- Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, RCS shifted to "grade level centers". Pleasant Acres and Eastlawn served K-2. Northview and Broadmeadow served 3-5. At that time, this was partly done as a response to federal legislation (No Child Left Behind) accountability measures that required restructuring. Grade level centers ended in 2014-2015, and we have had a K-5 structure since 2015-2016.

Are we moving to grade level schools because of accountability measures?

- Not at all. This recommendation is because there are substantial benefits to this structure for students, families, and staff. Primarily, this structure expands equitable access for all students, is more cost-effective, and allows for improved teaching and learning.
- Restructuring of schools is no longer a component of federal accountability measures, instead we focus on comprehensive school and district improvement plans.

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How will schools be staffed?

- In general staffing will follow these parameters:
  - No staff will be eliminated due to this reorganization. Some positions may be reduced due to retirements or resignations.
  - At least one social worker per grade level.
  - At least one special education teacher per grade level.
  - At least one special education teacher per building for cross categorical services.
  - Maintain instructional coaches in each building.
  - Maintain staffing levels for math and literacy interventionists.
  - Maintain current administrative staffing.
  - Maintain library staffing.
  - Maintain non-instructional support staff (clerical, nurse, custodial, cafeteria).
  - Schools with an enrollment of greater than 300 students will add at least one strategic support position. That position and responsibilities will be determined in collaboration with the building administration and staff.
- Grade-level classroom staffing will continue to be based on existing class size limits. The number listed is the maximum enrollment in a grade level classroom. Once a class size exceeds the maximum, a remedy is provided.
  - PreK 17 Students
  - K-1 20 Students
  - 2-3 23 Students
  - 4-5 25 Students

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**Appendix  
Districts with Grade Level Schools Information**

Unit Districts (PK-12)									
Eflingham	Granite City	Iroquois West	Dixon	Carmi-White	Alton	Clinton	Coal City	Plano	Kewanee
2195	5680	810	2386	1336	5580	1677	2126	2419	1986
PK	PK-K	PK-K	PK-1	PK	PK	PK-1 (x2)	PK-1	PK-1	PK
K	1-2 (x2)	1-3	2-3	K-1	K-1 (x2)	2-5	2-3	2-3	K-1
1-2	3-4 (x2)	4-5	4-5	2-3	K-2	6-8	4-5	4-6	2-3
2-5	5-6	6-8	6-8	4-6	2-5 (x2)	9-12	6-8	7-8	4-6
6-8	7-8	9-12	9-12	7-8	3-5	9-12	9-12	9-12	7-8
9-12	9-12			9-12	6-8				9-12
					9-12				PK-8
Waterloo	Rochester	Litchfield	Wmnebago	Prairie Central	Edwardsville	Mahomet	Shelbyville	Monmouth-Rose	Mt. Zion
2701	2031	1283	912	1685	7187	3385	1242	1576	2391
PK-1	PK-1	PK	PK-1	PK-1 (x2)	PK-2 (x5)	PK-2	K	PK-1	PK-1
2-3	2-3	K-1	2-4	2-4	K-2	3-5	P, 1-3	2-3	2-3
4-5	4-6	2-5	7-8	5-6	3-5 (x4)	6-9	4-8	4-6	4-6
6-8	7-8	6-8	9-12	7-8	6-8 (x2)	9-12	9-12	7-8	7-8
9-12	9-12	9-12		9-12	9-12			9-12	9-12
Elementary Districts (PK-8)									
Rochelle	Carbondale 95	Mount Vernon	Centralia	Kinnikinnik	Pontiac	Streator	Bethalto	East Peoria	Mendota
1566	1562	1483	1051	1712	1067	1488	2347	1403	1001
PK-1	PK-1	PK	PK-1	PK-1	PK-1	PK-1	PK-1	PK-2	P, 5-8
2-3	2-3	K-3	2-3	2-3	2-3	2-4	2-3	K-2 (x2)	K-1
4-5	4-5	4-5	4-8	4-5	4-5	5-8	4-5	3-5 (x3)	2-4
6-8	6-8	6-8		6-8	6-8		6-8	6-8	
East Moline*	Belle Valley*	Districts in yellow are used as our "comparable districts" on the annual report							
2594	961								
PK	PK-8								
K-4 (x4)									
5-8									

\*East Moline and Belle Valley DO NOT have grade level schools.

Illinois school districts not including Cook, Lake, Kane, Dupage, or Will counties.	
Grade Served	COUNT of Schools
12	3
1-2	3
1-3	2
1-4	2
1-5	8
1-6	1
1-8	1
1-12	2
2-3	15
2-4	6
2-5	8
2-6	1
3-4	8
3-5	36
3-6	5
3-8	5
4-5	14
4-6	17
4-8	13
5-6	12
5-7	1
5-8	72
5-12	7
6-8	182
6-12	33
7-8	55
7-12	36
8-12	5
9-12	357
11-12	1
K	2
K-1	6
K-12	14
K-2	11
K-3	19
K-4	44
K-5	156
K-6	30
K-8	59
P	52
P-1	26
P-12	1
P-2	45
P-3	28
P-3,7-8	1
P-4	69
P-5	123
P-6	57
P-8	126
P,1-3	1
P,1,5	1
P,2,5	1
P,3,5	1
P,4,6	1
P,4,8	2
P,5,8	3
P,6,12	2
P,6,8	1
P,9-12	3
P,K	11
Grand Total	1807

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