



LAGUNITAS SCHOOL DISTRICT  
San Geronimo, California

MINUTES FROM THE SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

COMMUNITY FORUM  
November 4, 2009

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 6:35 p.m. by Susi Giacomini, Chair. Members present were Steve Rebscher, Denise Santa Cruz-Bohman, Richard Sloan, Susi Giacomini and Stephanie O'Brien. Also present were Larry Enos, Superintendent, Goldie Curry, Principal, and Amy Prescott, Business Manager. Donna Henderson recorded the minutes. Larry Enos, Superintendent, presented a power point describing the purposes and goals of the forum (on file). Those in attendance (approximately 70) divided into 4 groups and discussed the pros and cons of a K-5 elementary program and a 6-7-8 Middle School and also the pros and cons of a K-6 elementary program and a 7-8 Middle School. Notes from those groups are recorded below.

**GROUP 1 (FACILITATED BY DAVE CORT)**

<b>K-5</b>	<b>6 -7 -8 Middle School</b>
<p><b>PROS</b> Three years in MS A social network developed already and will extend to MS More time for MS to bond  More time to prepare for high school  MS research shows 3 years is best 3 years best to build district unity, electives, etc.  Equity among all programs if all going  Matches rest of Ross Valley Potential for smaller class size</p>	<p><b>CONS</b> 6<sup>th</sup> grade mature enough?? Philosophy (pedagogy) lessened for each lower program 6<sup>th</sup> grade not be mentors (and play young in safe environment) to K's 6<sup>th</sup> graders going in with older Waldorf – older kids because of 2 years in K Too young for 6<sup>th</sup> graders in MS Had choice of 3 programs want to keep it as long as possible Not enough younger parents know enough of MS to not be scared.</p>
<b>K-6</b>	<b>7 – 8 Middle School</b>
<p><b>PROS</b> Developing appropriate for K-6's Retaining elementary integrity</p>	<p><b>CONS</b> Some 6<sup>th</sup> graders are ready to go on Staffing issues re: MS and lower ed 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Requirements for teachers</p>

All K-6-7-8—Cons are K-6 Pros  
Equity among programs  
May open out-of-district spots in elementary and then into MS

K's have role models

More parent involvement in classroom

Not enough time for curriculum requirements  
Space: (Facility challenge)

#### PATTERNS:

#1 from K-6/7/8 PRO (and #1 Con from K-5 and 6/7/8 has most dots

Comment: if change – it will effect kids and teachers

\*\*\* Why did this Board chard come now?? \* Budget \* What to do from Waldorf

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### INNOVATIONS – GROUP 1

- K – 6 and a 7-8 more slots in District
  - MS push into elementary programs
  - EL / other areas
  - 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in Program and MS – elementary teachers push into MS
  - MS aligning w/Drake in terms of program based learning
  - Blended programs in 6/7/8 or 7/8
  - Elementary teachers need more awareness of Middle School.
  - Paid teacher days to support more cross program connection w/Drake
  - If 6<sup>th</sup> in MS should be separate from 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>
  - MS Electives – Keep all 6/7/8 together- don't separate by grade level
  - Fiscal impact of K -5 with 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> vs K – 6 and 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> – Which is more fiscally responsible?
  - If Open is 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, give them more resources, teachers, for a special program.
  - Retain 6<sup>th</sup> grade choice
  - More cross program experiences between 6<sup>th</sup> graders
  - Much more flexibility: Programs sharing teachers, sharing specialists, field trips, less boundaries.
  - Would like to see choice last to 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - Parents in elementary programs need to be educated as to what happen in MS.
- A hybrid innovation where district dollars follow the sixth grade teacher with their cohort as they spend X number of hours per day or week in elementary programs and X number of hours engaging with the dynamism and maturity of 7th and 8th. The argument is that they stay connected during the transition while acting as mentors initiating or deepening the meaning of emotional literacy with young children. In this model it may be appropriate to say that 6th grade teachers are universal members of the district campus rather than associated with one particular program. It will also inform teachers, through engagement, of the various pedagogical backgrounds from which their 6th grad cohort emerged.

**GROUP 2 (FACILITATED BY GOLDIE CURRY)**

<b>K-5</b>	<b>6 -7 -8 Middle School</b>
<p><b>PROS</b>                      4 Program unity (District)                      Support Middle School staff philosophy                      Small class sizes                      Consistency                      Social-emotional milestone                        Consistency w/outside districts</p>	<p><b>CONS</b>                      Doesn't support Open philosophy                      Contrast to District belief/tradition of parent choice                      Going away from alternative choice                      Reverses grade school immersion at young age                      6<sup>th</sup> grader influenced by 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders –                      discrepancy between ages.                      Loss of leadership skills of 6<sup>th</sup> graders.</p>

<b>K-6</b>	<b>7 – 8 Middle School</b>
<p><b>PROS</b>                      Developmentally appropriate                        More years in program philosophy                      Develop and grow in nurturing environment</p>	<p><b>CONS</b>                      MS might be too small in numbers for departmentalized program.                      Not challenging enough for 6<sup>th</sup> graders                      Different philosophies needing to merge (one size fits all)                      Physical development more aligned with middle school                      Parent choice taken away.</p>

**GROUP #2 CONSENSUS STATEMENT**

<b>K-5</b>	<b>6 -7 -8 Middle School</b>
<p><b>PRO: Fosters District unity earlier</b></p>	<p><b>CON: Moving away from District belief in Parent Choice</b></p>
<b>K-6</b>	<b>7 – 8 Middle School</b>
<p><b>PRO: All students have an opportunity to develop and grow in nurturing environment.</b></p>	<p><b>CON: Risk that Middle School might be too small in numbers for departmentalized program.</b></p>

**INNOVATIONS – GROUP 2**

- Sixth grade options open to everyone.
- Alternative to K-5/6-8, K-6/7-8 K-8?? Why do students go to school over the hill?
- Need to know more about our MS program
- Research on benefits of a 6-8 vs 7-8.
- Self-contained 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- Consider student-staff ratio
- Blend all programs at 6<sup>th</sup> grade level part of day w/grade school programs part of day at MS
- What should we be teaching kids?
- More crossover
- All our kids have positive, strong, supportive experience in MS.

**GROUP 3 (FACILITATED BY AMY PRESCOTT)**

<b>K-5</b>	<b>6 -7 -8 Middle School</b>
<p><b>PROS</b> MS will have full 3 years to achieve momentum Gives kids a chance to get new peer group. Creates District-wide equity Viable MS Program w/3 teachers/3 grades for departmentalized app. Students in Mont. do want to move up to MS. Enrich community in MS Longer time for kids to bond Supports those kids who are ready. Honoring a proven tradition in District</p>	<p><b>CONS</b> Giving up 1 year of program philosophy Cuts out possibility of K-8 Program 3 tenants of Waldorf eroded in a K-5. Possibility of safety net for “younger” kids is lost  Eliminating choice for parents and students Could lose students</p>
<b>K-6</b>	<b>7 – 8 Middle School</b>
<p><b>PROS</b> Stay in programs longer (pedagogy) Honors choice Retain healthy staffing in programs  Opportunity to look at MS things differently More solid foundation to be prepared for high school. Better safety net for kids (more familiar) Honoring a proven tradition in the District</p>	<p><b>CONS</b> Lose staffing in MS Less time for students to bond. Not enough time to prepare students for high school. Less time for MS parents to understand philosophy. Potential for lack of viability of MS program due to smaller program. Could lose students due to changes. Could lose sports, enrichment due to smaller population.</p>

**INNOVATIONS – GROUP 3**

- K – 8 district (in all programs)
- Traveling Middle School (7/8)
- K-6 or K-8 in morning/split off by grades in the afternoon.
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade transition (assumes K-6 in all programs) for part of year.
- Keep it as it is today.
- Allow all programs choice to have a 6<sup>th</sup> grade, but keep a 6/7/8 MS.
- Shift MS to accommodate more effective 7<sup>th</sup> / 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Teachers go to programs rather than kids (in 6<sup>th</sup> grade) to ease transition to Middle School
- Find a way to better support pedagogy of each program in Middle School.
- Cross-expose all kids to other philosophies in District

**GROUP 4 (FACILITATED BY LARRY ENOS)**

<b>K-5</b>	<b>6 -7 -8 Middle School</b>
<p><b>PROS</b>            More resources            Smaller Class size in K-5            6 -8 together longer.            Large social pool in 6 – 8            All start together            More electives            Large team of MS teachers</p> <p>Greater flexibility for K-8 configuration and staffing</p> <p>Greater differentiation and ability grouping            Consistency            More bonding in 6 – 8            Community building for whole district 6 – 8.            Developmental break            Teachers specializing            Field trips/extra curricula            Fundraising resources – get more done.            Sustains the departmentalization            Financial incentive            Frees up space in elementary program.            2 teachers = less extracurricular            Gives 5<sup>th</sup> graders opportunity for leadership.</p>	<p><b>CONS</b>            Developmentally is the child ready?            Less time in elementary philosophy            Less flexibility in elem. Programs            Less chance for leadership and empowerment (6<sup>th</sup>).            Maturity issues.            Need to be younger longer.            Less time for community bonding (6 – 8) teachers, parents and students.            Teachers stretched further to meet a large need of students.            Less time for program to be fully implemented.            Causes parent group to be smaller (elementary)</p>
<b>K-6</b>	<b>7 – 8 Middle School</b>
<p><b>PROS</b>            Opportunity to re-envision MS            Gives parents the choice they want (honors program choice)            Philosophical integrity            Alumni – pro 6<sup>th</sup> grade            Small MS experience – really personalizes student experience            District-wide consistency</p> <p>Everyone has equal equity            Middle school teacher curriculum            Developmental appropriate            Mentor younger-mature in program.            More time for kids – mature curriculum</p>	<p><b>CONS</b>            No opportunity for mentoring – 7/8 kept younger            Limits staff and extracurricular</p> <p>Short transition 7 / 8 to high school.            Not mirroring other community configuration            No transition for 6<sup>th</sup> grade organizational year.</p> <p>Less time for academic and emotional skills/strategies for high school.            Too few students (socially)            Danger for increase in transfer.            Large class size K-6            Seniority – teachers 7/8</p>

**INNOVATIONS – GROUP 4**

- Give choice for 6<sup>th</sup> grade to all programs. Imagine the 6 – 8 Middle School as project based and multi-graded when possible.
- Opportunity for hybrid 6<sup>th</sup> grade meeting each child’s individual needs.
- Cross program parent education opps (elem).
- Have a forum w/ 4 – 6<sup>th</sup> grade parents (and any parents interested in having this discussion) with MS staff to discuss ideas and questions about MS.
- One program for all K-5 students.