

I am speaking today representing the Maple Grove PTA and Partnership Committees. When our community was polled during two community meetings the overwhelming majority voted AGAINST the implementation of the 6-8 model for our area middle schools for the following reasons.

This move does not serve the needs of our community and in fact impacts it in a very negative way. Currently 85 % of Maple Grove 6th graders go on to Manning Options. Assuming Manning receives the same number of applications as the 2009-2010 school year and stays at capacity of 450 students the following will occur:

- During the first year of the 6-8 implementation, half of those that apply to 6th and 7th grades at Manning will not be selected. (113 - 6th and 113 - 7th grade slots open with 225 applicants per grade (applicant numbers based on prior enrollment))
- During subsequent years, one third of those that apply to Manning for 6th grade will be denied. (150 slots open with 225 students applying)

Therefore, due to the addition of 6th grade at Manning, the 7th and 8th grade classes will need to be smaller, limiting the chances for any student seeking the unique brand of academic rigor Manning provides being chosen in Manning's lottery. This effectively places Manning in the position where it can no longer fully serve the population it has historically enrolled.

Adding 6th graders to other Middle Schools such as Everitt and Bell may not be a long term solution. Will these schools have the capacity to serve their populations two years from now? Five years from now?

It is the opinion of the Maple Grove PTA and Partnership Committees that the proposed 6-8 option has an incredibly negative impact on community continuity and community building as a whole. Our kids desperately need community continuity to support their development and growth.

In addition to the Manning issue, the negative impact on community continuity is related to the interwoven relationships with other geographically close articulations that are **NOT** potentially moving to the 6-8 option. For example, Lakewood and Arvada articulations will be continuing with the current 7 – 8 model. This places some Maple Grove students and their families in a terrible predicament. Maple Grove is 40% open-enrolled with many students coming from articulation areas where the move to 6-8 is not an option. These students in their 6th grade year find themselves in a No Man's Land, potentially having to enroll in 3 different schools in 3 years.

For this reason, the proposed change to the 6 – 8 model should be an ALL or

NONE move district-wide, and not by articulation zone.

There are NO cost savings for Maple Grove from the proposed change. In fact, the proposed change appears to be a huge disruption to our community with very little or no benefit. Issues not addressed by the district or FUC include the following:

- Increased cost of transportation due to additional busing that will be required since less Maple Grove students will be accepted into Manning Options whose students are not offered busing, and complications resulting from spotty implantation of the 6-8 model in geographically related articulations in our area.
- The substantial cost and time associated with developing a 6th grade curriculum for Middle Schools.
- Money for resources to support outgoing 5th graders academically and socially for such an abrupt move. These resources, which are currently included in the 6th grade curriculum, will need to be squeezed into **THIS** years 5th grade curriculum, which is already a densely packed curriculum mandated by the district. This will most certainly lead to a dip in academic progress and leave many 5th graders not socially ready for Middle School.
- Money and time to provide the essential training to adequately support staff and curriculum changes required to take place with such a move.

The time-line for implementing such an all encompassing change is unrealistic and unfair to administrators, 5th and 6th grade teachers and 5th, 6th and 7th grade students.

First round choice for Middle Schools is March 1. This gives staff 12 weeks to prepare students for a complete change in routine, curriculum, mind set, and level of responsibility.

In business it is standard practice to bring in an outside consulting firm to assist in the implementation planning and execution process. Not only is there no money to do this , but there is not enough time.

I urge you to please weigh the dramatic negative impacts and net costs that Options 16a, 16b, 21a, 21b and 24 would inherently cause against the insignificant savings that are being estimated and remove these options from consideration. These options simply aren't worth the risk and upheaval that they will cause.