

# GCPS Grade Band Alignment: Additional Information



Board Meeting: May 10, 2022

# Objectives for Today's Presentation

- Provide additional information and an update on grade band realignment work
- Provide information requested by the elected Board specific to grade band realignment
- Provide an update on the Broad Ford/Southern Middle Educational Specification and Feasibility Study

# What is the Rationale for a PK-6 and 7-12 Grade Band Alignment?

- Provides the greatest instructional opportunities and flexibility to meet student needs regardless of where a student lives within the county
- Aligns extremely well with the instructional initiatives of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which will allow GCPS to be competitive by maintaining and enhancing opportunities for students
- Addresses decreasing enrollment and underutilization of schools in an efficient and fiscally responsible manner while providing a path towards needed Capital Improvement Projects
- Will allow GCPS to sustain high quality instructional programming while navigating budgetary challenges

# Grade Band Alignment: Research

GCPS Strategic Facilities Study Results (December 2019):

- Research committee was established to study Grade Band Re-configuration (p. 39)
- Findings included:
  - “No particular grade configuration conclusively improves student learning” (p.39)
  - “Research shows that there is greater impact on student learning when the emphasis is not on location of the students but on the educational experience students receive” (p. 39)

# Grade Band Alignment: Performance Reviews

## Performance of Schools (7-12)

- Clearfield High School, PA- 1,046 students
  - Below state average in Math/ELA and Science
- Forest Hills High School, PA- 827 students
  - Below state average in ELA, Math, and Science
- Richland High School, PA- 733 students
  - Significantly **above** state average in ELA, Math and Science
- United High School, PA- 463 students
  - **Above** state average in ELA/Math and below state average in Science
- Westmont Hilltop High School, PA- 742 students
  - **Above** state average in ELA, Math, and Science

## Performance Reviews of Schools (K-6)

- Clearfield Elementary, PA- 1,057 students
  - Below state average in Math/ELA and Science
- Forest Hills Elementary, PA- 962 students
  - **Above** state average in Math/ELA and Science
- Richland Elementary School, PA- 735 students
  - Significantly **above** state average in ELA, Math and Science
- United Elementary School, PA- 469 students
  - **Above** state average in ELA, Math, and Science
- Westmont Hilltop Elementary School, PA- 740 students
  - Below state average in ELA and **above** state average for Math and Science

# GCPS Administration Visit Richland High School and Petersburg High School (7-12 Grades)

## Richland High School: 7-12

- 710 students (2022)
- Estimated Average Class Size 17-20

## Petersburg High School: 7-12

- 640 students (2022)
- Estimated Average Class Size: 22

## GCPS Secondary Schools (Current)

- Middle Schools (2022)
  - NXS- 318 Students
  - SXS- 458 Students
- High Schools (2022)
  - NHS- 428 Students
  - SHS- 631 Students
- Estimated Average Class Size: 18-20

## Projection for 7-12 (SY 24-25)

- Northern (7-12): Total students 673
- Southern (7-12): Total students 926

# GCPS Administration Visit: Richland High School and Petersburg High School (7-12 Grades)

## Lessons Learned:

- Strong recommendation to implement 1 schedule 7-12 to support a unified culture and climate for everyone.
  - Petersburg has historically had 2 schedules and is moving to 1 schedule for this reason. Richland operates with 1 schedule for all with excellent results.
- Both schools took measures when appropriate and feasible to separate younger students from older students. However, it was not the #1 priority. While there were 7th/8th grade areas there were times when students intermingled.
- Neither school had any concerns or behavioral issues between older and younger students. Both principals indicated that this was not a concern.

# GCPS Administration Visit: Richland High School and Petersburg High School (7-12 Grades)

## Lessons Learned (Cont.)

- Both schools purposefully structured holding areas, lunches, dances, etc.
- Both school systems had CTE offerings within the district. Both were regionalized programs
  - Petersburg was on the same campus and other schools are bused to the campus
  - Richland students were bused to CTE programs
- Richland was more integrated and staff sharing was a significant benefit
- Petersburg recommended having an integrated one school approach (ex: staff meetings, handbook, etc.)
- Both schools also offer PK-6 at the elementary level



# Listening Sessions Fact Checks and Q & A

## Fact Checks:

- Yearly operating cost of Central Office?
- Current bus ride times? Projected bus ride times with grade band alignment?

## Q & A:

- What is the current teacher/student ratio? What will the projected teacher/ratio be with grade band alignment?
- What is the current student per square foot ratio? What will the projected student per square foot ratio be with grade band alignment?
- What is the anticipated performance levels with grade band alignment?
- Are we going to have larger class sizes?

# Grade Band Realignment: Value Added

- Offers greater flexibility to ensure breadth of programming across all schools
- Greater opportunities and increased access to daily services
- More robust gifted and talented offerings at all levels
- Enhanced computer science opportunities at elementary level
- Enhanced student leadership (government) options for elementary level
- Greater ability to group students to address instructional needs to ensure progress towards College and Career Readiness Standards
- Greater opportunities to design robust support pathways for students aligned to the Blueprint legislations
- Greater opportunities for acceleration pathways for students aligned to the Blueprint Legislation
- Increased options for 8th graders to earn high school credits
- Stable class sizes with less variance around the county
- Ability to departmentalize where appropriate to allow teachers to become content experts
- Increased collaborative time between teachers

# Implications of Keeping Current Footprint

- Significant increases in class size and variances between class sizes around the county
- Significant program cuts equating to fewer opportunities and supports for students
- Combination classes in small schools (K/1st) based on enrollment
- Will require prioritizing/eliminating unmandated expenditures
- Inability to provide daily and/or full time student support services to groups of students
- Inability to obtain IAC State Funding for capital projects
- Significantly reduces the ability to implement programmatic transformation required by the Blueprint

# Education Specification Committees

## Education Specification Executive Committee

- Includes Grimm and Parker, Central Office Staff, and Building Administration
- Solidifies educational specification procedures
- Finalizes committee development
- Provides requested administrative information
- Provides final recommendations to Grimm and Parker

## Education Specification Stakeholder Committee

- Includes Grimm and Parker, Executive Committee as well as central office staff, teachers, community partners, parents, students etc.
- Participates in visioning/programmatic workshops and user group workshops (i.e. administration/student support, academic clusters, arts/technology, building services, etc.)
- Participates and provides feedback on space analysis and verifying space needs specific to the student experience
- Provides valuable feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders specific to the educational needs for the school in relationship to the space/environment

# Instructional Grade Band Alignment Committees

Vision: Solicit additional feedback from a broader group of educational experts on relevant instructional/programmatic topics related to grade band realignment county-wide

- Elementary will focus on the impact and design of 6th grade in a PK-6 model as well as logistics specific to the realignment
- Secondary will focus on the impact and design of 7/8th grade as well as the logistical components specific to the 7-12 model

# Educational Specification Committee Meeting Schedule

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|--|---|
| Educational Specification Executive Committee          | April 27, 2022, from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. |
| Elementary Vision/Programming and User Group Workshops | May 17th from 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.         |
| Parent/Community Vision Meeting                        | May 17th from 6:00-8:00 p.m.              |
| Secondary Vision/Programming and User Group Workshops  | May 18th from 8:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.         |
| Refinement and Reconciliation Verification Meeting     | TBD (Likely mid-June)                     |
| Educational Specification Executive Committee Meeting  | TBD (Likely end-June/beginning of July)   |

# Instructional Grade Band Alignment Committee Schedule

- Secondary Instructional Grade Band Alignment Committee
  - May 9, 2022
    - 8:30-11:00 a.m.
  - May 16, 2022
    - 1:00-3:30 p.m.
- Elementary Instructional Grade Band Alignment Committee
  - May 13, 2022
    - 1:00-3:30 p.m.
  - May 20, 2022
    - 1:00-3:30 p.m.

# Next Steps

- For more details on the Educational Specification Committees and Instructional Grade Band Committees please click the link below:
  - [Educational Specification and Grade Band Alignment Committees](#)
- Educational Specifications and Grade Band Alignment Website Page
- Continue offering opportunities for community feedback