



BOND PROGRAM UPDATES

Frequently Asked Questions

GRADE LEVEL RECONFIGURATION

WOULD THERE STILL BE REDISTRICTING?

Over the course of the next ten years, we would likely have to make some adjustments to the elementary attendance areas as population shifts occur. This would not happen until 2027 at the earliest as construction would have to take place first before boundaries would be moved.

WHEN WILL THIS HAPPEN?

The change in the middle school configuration would take place in Fall of 2025.

WILL THE BUILDING TIMES BE DIFFERENT?

The times between the two middle schools would be adjusted to be somewhere between 10-20 minutes apart.

WHAT WILL BUSING LOOK LIKE BETWEEN THE NEW UPPER ELEMENTARY AT MSN AND MIDDLE SCHOOL SOUTH?

We are working on different approaches to transportation which will take some time to explore.

OPTION 1 – is to have grades 5-8 on the same bus and then the bus would drop students off at South before proceeding to North. This would add 9-10 minutes onto the trip. It is important to note that our elementary transportation already has kids from across six grade levels and our high school transportation has students from across four grade levels. Therefore, it would not be uncommon to have four grade levels on the same bus.

OPTION 2 – create a separate route for each middle school level. Separate buses would pick up students from grade 5-6 and 7-8. This could potentially add more time to bus routes as buses would then have to cover larger areas compared to current routes.

WILL THERE BE BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE FOR 5TH GRADERS?

The plan would be to offer before and after school care for 5th graders and possibly 6th graders.



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WHAT BENEFIT IS THERE TO THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE BY DOING THIS?

The benefits of the plan will be to close the gaps between the two buildings and provide the same experience for all our middle school students. For example, no students from South can take swimming, whereas North students all get swimming.

Likewise, we are moving the high school career classes from South to the high school and adding many career feeder classes to South. The current plan is to offer busing between the middle schools to allow students to take those classes. By changing the grade configuration, it eliminates the need for a shuttle during the day and allows all students to have the same opportunities.

Additionally, this would remove the split between the two buildings from a community standpoint. Students would grow up together from an earlier age which would create a more cohesive experience across all of our programs.

WHAT BENEFITS ARE THERE TO THE CURRICULUM BY DOING THIS?

As mentioned above, we would be able offer the same programs for all students. This includes swimming, career and technical education classes, and even add 5th grade band for all students.

The career classes would enable students to begin exploring future career options earlier and enable them to focus on one or two pathways in high school. Because North does not have sufficient space to add those programs, by having all 7th and 8th graders at South, it would provide better opportunities for all students.

WILL THERE BE RECESS FOR 5TH GRADERS?

We are working on developing a schedule that would either provide students with P.E. every day or allow recess. The recess may be an extended lunch period where students would be able to go outside. We would develop some age-appropriate outdoor spaces and activities that would better align with 5th and 6th graders.



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HOW WILL STAFFING CHANGE?

There would be no loss of staff in the reconfiguration. Based on current trends, we are seeing increased enrollment and would be better able to handle the student growth in this configuration. Based on our review of teacher certification, we would be able to cover the reconfiguration with current staff certifications.

We have received several requests from teachers who would like to be a part of the new 5th and 6th grade configuration because they want to work together with other teachers that they have not had the opportunity to work with and because they prefer the earlier release time of a middle school building.

WHAT ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION?

We would be able to divide our current CI and EI programs by age level and create more specialized programs for students based on age levels.

WILL THERE BE ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS GOING TO BE PUT IN PLACE TO HELP WITH THE TRANSITION?

By dividing the students into separate grade cohorts of 5-6 and 7-8, we can tailor programs and support staff to the special needs of each grade level. Specifically, we can target the transitions between grade levels as currently, our largest achievement gap is between 5th and 6th grade. Therefore, by having them in the same building, we can ease the transition from elementary to middle school.

WILL THE MIDDLE SCHOOLS BE OVERPOPULATED?

Each middle school was built to handle between 1200-1500 students. However, they have shrunk to about 700 students at North and 500 students at South. This would balance each building at 800 students, which would still make each building on the lower end of utilization.

The elementary buildings would be around 80-85% utilized, which would give us ample room for growth.



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WILL 5TH GRADERS LOOSE THINGS LIKE RECESS, STARBASE, SEX ED, OR DRUG PROGRAM?

Our students would still be able to attend Starbase and have the benefit of all the current programs we offer.

WILL THERE BE AN INCREASE OF DISCIPLINE ISSUES IF YOU DOUBLE THE 8TH GRADERS IN ONE BUILDING?

We have looked at other districts that have made similar adjustments, and there has been no evidence that combining students of the same grade into a building leads to more discipline issues.

WILL THE ATHLETIC FACILITIES AT SOUTH BE IMPROVED?

As part of the bond, we had already planned on updating the facilities at South, and that would still be the plan with the new configuration.

EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH 5/6 & 7/8 BUILDINGS:

- [Forest Hills](#)
- [Hudsonville](#)
 - Their website includes a google slide show that breaks down the difference between an elementary and 5/6, states they bus 5/6 with 7/8, and an FAQ document
- [Grandville](#)
 - Building a new building for 5/6 "Intermediate"
- [Byron Center](#)
 - Intermediate School - just opened
 - Their website has a [FAQ](#) on redistricting
- [Brighton](#)
 - Maltby Intermediate



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REOPEN MACDONALD ELEMENTARY

WILL THERE BE REDISTRICTING TO EQUALIZING NUMBERS IN THE BUILDINGS?

As population continues to shift in the district, we will need to continually adjust boundaries to ensure buildings have ample room for students. It is projected in 2027 that we will need to adjust some boundaries in order to ensure that buildings have balanced populations.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST TO BRING BACK AS ELEMENTARY?

It would cost about \$2.5 million to bring MacDonald back online as an elementary building. This would entail relocating the current administration offices and removing showers and other facilities that were installed as part of the dorms that used to exist at MacDonald. This would be done in phases on an as needed basis. This would also be impacted by the forthcoming expansion of 26 mile and the potential population growth on the north end of the district.

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE?

MacDonald would be used to hold early childhood programs until work at Lighthouse is complete and it opens as our Early Childhood Center. Therefore, MacDonald would not reopen until Fall of 2028.

HOW DOES OPENING MACDONALD KEEP CLASS SIZE SMALLER?

As the population shifts across the district, opening MacDonald provides more classrooms for us to use, which in turn enables us to keep class sizes smaller across the district.

WILL THERE BE A PROBLEM WITH TRAFFIC AT COUNTY LINE & 26 MILE?

The majority of students who would attend MacDonald live north of 26 mile and County line, so there would be less traffic on 26 mile as those students would be travelling north away from 26 mile rather than towards and on 26 mile as they do now.



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ASHLEY VS. LIGHTHOUSE

**WHICH BUILDING WOULD BE BEST FOR AN ELEMENTARY:
ASHLEY OR LIGHTHOUSE? (THE OTHER WOULD BE EARLY
CHILDHOOD)**

After reviewing the feedback and the available options, it is best to adhere to the original plan and keep Ashley as the elementary school and make Lighthouse the early childhood center.