

Questions Regarding Reconfiguration

Q How will the district support schools in obtaining resources needed for all grade levels?

- *The district has dedicated ESSER funds for necessary materials/resources.*
- *In the coming weeks inventories will be completed by both schools to identify needs.*
- *Estill County School District is a Title I District. Title I funds are distributed to schools based on Free and Reduced lunch numbers. In small districts, funding is primarily used for staffing, but will be distributed, by law, based on the needs within individual schools.*

Q How will the district ensure vertical alignment of curriculum?

- *The district is participating in a High Quality Curriculum Pilot for English and Language Arts. Each school in the district is working to align the curriculum K-12.*
- *The district coaches will be working with teams from each school and grade level (K-5) to align the math curriculum. Our Southeast South Central Cooperative has already met with the administrators to discuss needs and make plans for support for our district.*

Q How do we ensure healthy competition among schools?

- *Our belief is that we are one school, one district. The reconfiguration of our schools to K-5 will only strengthen that belief.*
- *The Board desires that both Estill Springs and West Irvine remain "Engineers", and school colors to remain the same.*

Q What systems are in place to ensure that behavior issues between grade levels are addressed?

- *Both schools have worked hard to develop Positive Behavior Intervention Systems (PBIS) and PBIS teams. Our guidance counselors at each school provide regular lessons within classrooms and each principal has worked this year to make sure their staff has had the time to focus on the needs of students.*

Q Are there any facility updates that would be needed to address younger students at West Irvine?

- *All changes will be addressed in our District Facilities Plan.*

Q Certification requirements for elementary teachers:

- *All teachers with a K-5 Certification from the Educational Professional Standards Board, can teach any grade level in a K-5 school.*

Q How will we support teachers as they learn new standards?

- *Three staff work days, April 6 and May 11-12, have been dedicated to begin standards work.*
- *Summer Professional development opportunities will be focused on staff needs.*
- *Professional learning communities will work to deconstruct standards throughout the school year.*
- *Teachers will lean on one another across schools as they learn new content.*
- *District curriculum coaches will help support individual needs.*

Q What system will be used to determine placement of staff?

- *Currently, all certified staff members will remain at their current school.*
- *Some classified staff, exp. Kindergarten Instructional Assistants, can be transferred based on student needs & numbers.*
- *All staff will be given the opportunity to request a transfer to a different building. Once staff requests are received, decisions will be made based on student needs after consultation with the principals.*

Q Is there a way to ensure professional learning between teachers at both schools?

- *Both principals have completed NISL (National Institute for School Leadership) training, and know how to implement professional learning systems for their staff.*
- *The principals are responsible for ensuring that their staff collaborates with one another to meet the professional needs of teachers, and the needs of all students. It will be a part of their professional growth plan.*
- *Professional Learning is developed based on the needs for each individual school and teacher. The needs are determined by state assessment, district assessment, classroom assessment data, evidence based instructional practices, and student growth.*

Q School Counselor Certification

- *All counselors hold K-12 Certification from the Educational Professional Standards Board.*

Q Will the school's Family Resource Plans need to be revised?

- *Yes, the Family Resource Plans will need to be revised and approved by Lisa Gay, regional coordinator.*
- *Both FRC's will partner with South Irvine Early Learning Center to provide student services.*

Q How does the district strategic plan align with the reconfiguration?

- *The District Strategic Plan sets goals for all schools to ensure that ALL students are prepared for life after they graduate from high school. The strategic plan guides the work for everyone in the district for continuous improvement. Some goals may have to be revised based on the reconfiguration of students, however, the reorganization of these two schools does NOT hinder the implementation of our current three year strategic plan.*

Q What systems will be put into place to address transients and hardships?

- *Each school is required to serve the students who live within its attendance area prior to accepting any students from outside its boundary or from outside the district.*
- *Parents will be given the opportunity to request enrollment in their non-resident elementary school, due to hardship circumstances.*
- *A district committee will review and consider each request, based on merit and available space at each grade level.*
- *Students residing inside the district receive priority over students residing outside the district.*

Q What does the research say about the configuration of elementary schools?

- *There are a number of research sources that support both configurations. As both leadership teams reviewed research during the March 3rd Board Meeting and found benefits and concerns within each model.*

Q Some students have just now developed bonds with adults and other students. As a district, what will be in place to assure that each child in some way still has that connection or the opportunity to build upon pre-existing connections?

- *The school staff will be meeting together to discuss the needs of students who will be transferring schools. This will take place before or during the scheduling process to help better connect students with needed staff.*
- *Staff from both schools will participate in back to school/transition activities, to help introduce families (especially those who need these connections) to staff at their new location.*
- *To build further unity between the schools and district, we plan on offering combined extracurricular activities and school learning activities between the schools and grade levels. For example, our local 4H chapter can provide activities to bring students together.*

Q Engineer one, Engineer all– Does this vision fit with this possible restructuring?

- *Although this is a signature cheer for our district, our district vision statement is to become a District of Excellence by providing a high quality education for all students in a safe and supportive environment.*
- *Since both schools will continue to be “Engineers”, and wear blue/white, we can proudly continue to use this signature cheer at all events.*
- *We are all still Engineers!*

Q What data has been considered before making this choice?

- *In the state of Kentucky there are only 11 schools with a 3-5 configuration. Of these, the top performing school is ranked 235 out of 516. Overall K-5 school configurations have been the norm in Kentucky and these schools perform better than 3-5 schools. West Irvine ranked 487 out of 516, after the last spring assessment.*
- *With no state accountability at Estill Springs, it is hard to measure student performance on the state level, and the data obtained does not provide the necessary information needed for students entering third grade.*
- *With two new K-5 schools, each school will have state accountability for all students. This will provide student performance data that leadership teams shall use to guide continuous improvement.*

Q Why so quick? Can you not plan for a year then change?

- *This discussion has been ongoing for some time with board members and district leadership.*
- *The superintendent met with both principals in January 2022 to explore options.*
- *Principals worked with their leadership teams to research best practices and generate a benefits/challenges list.*
- *Due to COVID, there is an increased sense of urgency to address the academic and social and emotional challenges of students.*

- *For complete transparency, these issues have not been caused by COVID.*
- *If the Board approves reconfiguration, district timelines have been determined and will be communicated.*

Q What will be some of the actions that will ensure student and staff needs are being met? Is there a plan made or will there be one in place?

- *Staff have been given the options to remain in their current location or request a transfer to the other school.*
- *Each school principal will be reviewing professional development plans to make sure the needed learning activities are available for staff over the summer and throughout the next school year.*
- *Both schools have worked hard to address social and emotional needs of students and staff within their buildings. These systems will remain in place as they are already allowing for immediate support for staff and students.*
- *The district has already begun work on a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) for students that address behavioral, emotional and academic needs. This will be an aligned system throughout the district that includes specific interventions and supports based on a variety of data, not one screening, observation or data point.*

Q In order for reconfiguration to take place, resources will be needed for each school. With supply chain issues, how can we ensure that the materials will be here on time?

- *Supply chain issues would be an issue regardless of our configuration, as schools continually need instructional resources and materials.*
- *Part of our work through the ELA curriculum pilot work involves making sure our resources are high quality. During this process, we know that new/different resources will be needed and regardless of the configuration we will get the resources that teachers need. We have already reached out to some publishing companies for resource reviews. Both schools have also been working with our District Math Coach for math manipulatives lists that can be used within both schools.*

Q West Irvine currently has a Mac lab- would Estill Springs have access to a similar lab?

- *During the regularly called March Board Meeting, Mr. Saylor announced that the district will be pursuing a DataSeam partnership that would allow for a MAC Lab for Estill Springs, which is dependent upon state funding.*
- *Currently the MAC lab at West Irvine has not been used to its fullest potential.*
- *Both schools will receive a technology teacher as part of the district staffing policy. This will improve technology instruction at both schools.*
- *The district is currently a 1:1 device district so all students have access to needed technology.*

Q Building facilities are not the same. West has the high school regulation size gym yet Estill Springs does not. The computer lab is currently behind curtains within the library. How does this move affect these situations?

- *The district will approve a new facilities plan during the fall of 2022, which will include a regulation gym for Estill Springs.*
- *The central office gym has been updated and can be used by Estill Springs as needed for practices/games.*
- *A reduction of the total student population will help to alleviate some of the overcrowding situation at Estill Springs.*
- *With a renewed focus on core instruction, there should not be a need for multiple interventionists within our buildings, thus creating more space.*

Q Concern about 5 year olds and 10 year olds being in the same building. How will schools work to ensure that younger students are not exposed to some of the things a 10 year old may do/discuss?

- *The administration at each school will create a floorplan of where each grade level is located. They will also create a master schedule, so that the different grade levels are not in the same areas at the same time (cafeteria, playgrounds, etc).*
- *Students of multiple grade levels already are together on buses and during other school functions.*

Q We as parents get to have input on fall and spring breaks. Why do we not get to vote on this as well?

- *The meeting on March 24, 2022 was an opportunity for all stakeholders to provide feedback on this topic.*
- *All stakeholders are encouraged to provide feedback, such as the school calendar, but they do not have a vote on the final decision.*
- *The Board and SBDM councils are the duly elected bodies representing the students, parents, and citizens of Estill County in all matters.*
- *The Board of Education will make the final decision concerning this matter.*

Q How will reconfiguration affect our students in specialized classrooms who have higher needs?

- *Some specialized classrooms will include students K-5. This is the norm and these classrooms only include a limited number of students and have extra support staff. Staff will receive any necessary training to make sure that students' needs shall be met. The classrooms already include a variety of diverse learners with diverse needs.*
- *Teaching staff have been working hard to look at scheduling to include these students more often in the general education settings. Scheduling and planning will be utilized to best meet the needs of individual students.*
- *Families may submit Hardship applications if their students have specialized needs and would benefit from receiving instruction at a specific location.*