



M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Patrick Murphy, Superintendent, Olympia School District
FROM: Shannon Bingham, Western Demographics
DATE: December 4, 2023
RE: Addendum #2 to School Facility Efficiency Report

The following pages include two additional items of information that have been supplied to me by staff after the publication of the School Facility Efficiency report. Both of these items address educational implications of various scenarios. Please consider these items as an addendum to my report and forward them to the Board and others as you see fit.

1. Pros and Cons of a mixture of K-5 / 6-8 and K-8 structures in OSD.
 - Pros
 - Diverse programming
 - Meeting the needs of efficiency
 - Could meet equity needs
 - Cons
 - Different structures and programs
 - Can cause PD struggles, programming challenges, elective challenges, certification struggles because each site has a different structure.
 - Could be very different experiences for students depending on location and program
 - Could not meet equity needs (this is a pro and con because it has potential to be both)
 - Surveyed Middle schools principals– overwhelmingly they are against this model and have numerous reasons. We could collect reasons, but would need more time to theme and shift through the data.
2. Staff development / certification issues associated with K-8.
 - Potential certification issues for 7th-8th grade teachers being asked to teach elementary sections and if elementary certified teachers are being asked to teach middle school. This is most likely to be an issue with electives.
3. Issues with multi-grade / multi-content instructional issues resulting in multiple preps for teachers. Need for multi-certified "unicorn" instructors.
 - Is this for elective teachers or teachers teaching combined grades like a 1-2 grade teacher?
 - This could potentially being an issue is P-8 schools or in situations where we don't have enough FTE to provide specific staff.
4. Pros and Cons of 7/8 middle schools. Student tenure in buildings.
 - Pros
 - Potential to be more efficient
 - Could still run typically elective program
 - content specialization opportunities associated with
 - 7-8, appropriateness for the "college town / capitol city" environment.
 - Potentially more students to core
 - Potentially more resources because of consolidation
 - Cons
 - Only 2 years
 - This hinders relationships, culture, sense of belonging
 - 6th grade retention in elementary
 - Less access to higher level courses and electives
5. Response to BOE continuing interest in exploring K-4 / 5-8.
 - Could explore 5-8 as an option. The removal of more elementary students from elementaries could be problematic unless additional elementary schools were closed. In addition, this could cause certification issues (moving 5th grade teachers to middle school level).
10. Service intensity issues associated with consolidating into larger student bodies, faculties and buildings.
 - This could be an issue, but our model shows teaching and para educator staff being relocated to those buildings that have increased.

“Shannon Bingham (the external consultant) has requested our insight into the following questions/ areas. He recognized that this was short notice, but if you are able to respond that would be great.

6. *Interest in consolidating Lincoln, ORLA, Avante into two buildings - Appropriate redeployment strategies, program impacts.”*

Classroom Use and Potential Availability:

ORLA has 23 classrooms with the following breakdown (note there is overlap between classroom use throughout the building, so this is approximate):

- Montessori currently occupies 9 classrooms
- ORLA Online currently occupies 2 classrooms
- hConnect (including MSA) currently occupies 12 classrooms
 - 45 of these students are in grades 9-12, but only 22 are diploma track, full time students.
 - These diploma track full time students would be the ONLY high school students that would follow a move over to Avanti if that is what the district decided to do.
 - The remaining number of high school students are being homeschooled or are in Running Start and would either stay at ORLA to engage in our multi grade blended electives that serve 6-12th graders OR would unenroll from OSD.
 - All of our secondary elective classes are multi age and most serve an age range of 6-12th graders in one class. It is not simple to calculate the impact of moving high school students, but an estimate would be ORLA could do without one of the hConnect classrooms if all diploma track high school students were moved to Avanti.

Lincoln currently occupies 14 classrooms.

Removing the ORLA online program and the hConnect high school students from utilizing ORLA could potentially open up 3 classrooms for Lincoln, but this doesn't come close to the space needed for Lincoln's student population.

Funding Impacts:

Moving Lincoln into ORLA would require at least one if not more of the following as there is not enough space to accommodate all three programs in our building. ***We are not recommending any of the following but have included it for your information only:***

Close Montessori Program

Montessori currently serves 193 students, 18% of whom are out of district, which would be a loss of revenue if this program was closed. Montessori is available through a lottery to all elementary aged students in OSD, and also draws many out of district students. It is a unique

educational opportunity which appeals to many of our families, is multi-age, and provides an alternative to a traditional classroom. The classrooms that Montessori currently occupies were designed for that program, so moving Montessori to another building would not serve the needs of the program.

Close hConnect/MSA Program

hConnect/MSA currently serves 310 students, most of whom are out of district and/or homeschooled, which would be a loss of revenue for the district if this program was closed. Our district is able to gain FTE funding from homeschooling families through the offering of our hConnect Parent Partnership program. If this program did not exist, these families would not otherwise engage in the public school system. Additionally, our MSA program pulls a portion of its enrollment from out of district as well as the homeschooling population and provides an alternative option for middle school students in our district.

Relocate Montessori or hConnect

Our building was designed for the programs it houses. hConnect classrooms and learning spaces reflect the operational and space needs of our program. Furniture appropriate for a K-12th grade range of students, classrooms designed to host the numerous, diverse types of courses we offer, and a shared space model are all critical components to the program. Additionally, the Montessori classrooms were designed and equipped for this unique type of elementary school learning model. These things are not easily replicated in another location and relocation of either of these programs would involve costs to the district which should be researched and considered before this type of decision was potentially made.

Further Important Thoughts:

Our assumption is that the committee was looking at the grade levels served at ORLA without a full understanding of the integrated nature of hConnect, online, and MSA. All classrooms are used for a range of grade bands, from K-12th grade. In addition, removing high school students decreases the viability of the K-8 program because of multi age elective offerings. Also the engagement of our high school students in classes such as Arts Alive (our performing arts class), Leadership, Art, and our Social/Emotional class are critical because these classes all require older student participants who can serve as leaders and role models..

Also, we wonder if the committee was looking at the number of high schools students in all programs (135) and was assuming that they all were in person students at ORLA, so they figured moving those students would open up more classrooms than it actually would do. We do not have 135 in person high school students who attend classes in our building. This larger number is due to the inclusion of our ORLA Online population.

Finally, as the ORLA building is the result of a fairly recent bond (for which the community is still paying taxes), there is the question of whether or not it would be legal to utilize the building for a different purpose. This should be investigated prior to any decisions regarding the building. The language of the bond clearly states in Resolution 480 on page 2 that funds would be used to “construct and equip a new school” for the Olympia Regional Learning Academy.