Exploring Expansion of Lincoln Middle and Lincoln Prep – Phase 2

Facilitator Questions and Notes

August 3, 2017

1. Changing the entrance requirements slightly has been identified as a possible means to encourage more students to attend Lincoln Middle. Tonight we discussed the idea of keeping the current requirements in place for the high school; however, providing an alternative for middle school students who do not meet the absolute 60/60 in reading and math. The alternative would allow students with a cumulative score of 130 in both reading and math to be eligible. Students could then receive targeted support to reach the rigor. This is a higher standard than what was proposed during phase 1 meetings (120 cumulative). What do you think of this alternative? Do you think it would uphold the integrity of the program while still allowing for increased access?

- Fair to capture kids that excel in one area but not the other
- Some students have been admitted on a probationary basis. Maybe this could work the same way
- Not all elementary schools are preparing students the same. This alternative would be a good opportunity for good students that are coming from lower performing schools
- Some students don’t have testing at their elementary schools (private) so giving some flexibility would be good for them
- What is the reason for lower entrance requirements? (staff advised that a few things are being looked at (for example, some students excel in one subject but not the other and can’t be admitted currently; opportunity to increase the number of capable students to meet enrollment targets)
- What would be the impact to students that are really excelling – want them to have higher level offerings that aren’t currently offered
- Is there research re: scoring at a 50 vs 55 and readiness?
- Makes sense to have a floor. Could be missing out on students that could excel
- Have seen students achieve growth if right program in place – could be ready
- If lower to 50, should submit a letter of recommendation
- If at 50 in one subject and the student excels in the other subject – lot of opportunity for growth in middle school
- Look at other districts and their IB programs—what are they doing – do they have entrance requirements with testing?
- Some concern about can of worms re: teacher letter standard format
- Makes sense to drop floor if excelling in another because they have potential to grow in the other
- Keep the minimum at 50-55% (teacher at FLA); students need the opportunity to succeed
- Concern about the whole child
- Teacher recommendations should be required
- Interest in a standardized letter of recommendation
• Too much paperwork as an application may only get parents who can meet/chase the requirements
• May also show the initiative
• Question: Why increase the numbers in Lincoln HS building?
• increase 9th to 250 Ok start in 6th with the increase
• Example: election in HS eats up 7 class hours per year
• Did not have the application to support the increase 6th grade
• Allowing some students to enter at 9th disrupts the flow from middle school
• Too many 9th graders are not ready for the rigor of Lincoln
• 50th is the bottom
• Answer: as long as integrity is in place
• How much time is given to the probationary kids?
• Teachers: tend to teach down to the level of lower kids. Crammed Lesson
  ▪ After school tutoring
  ▪ Pull out
  ▪ No isolating
• 2.5 GPA too low
• Mixture of scores are a good thing
• Allow for student growth
• 130 still not struggling students
• Reason for opening the middle classrooms

2. Currently, enrollment at Lincoln is based upon a first come first served basis. At our last meeting, some folks expressed interest in giving priority to existing KCPS students. This could be accomplished through an early bird application window for students currently attending KCPS schools. (For example, all applications could be accepted starting on Nov. 1st; however, KCPS students could begin turning in applications on Oct 1st.) What do you think of this idea?
  • Absolutely support for KCPS students to have 1st opportunity to open seats
  • Support the idea as long as doesn’t fill up with only KCPS students (need to have seats open for charter and private school students)
  • Want best students at best school
  • Prefer merit-based; make final deadline earlier so it’s totally merit based (recognition that currently the system doesn’t distinguish how high students score so long as they score above 60)
  • Concerns that a merit based only puts lot of pressure on test scores
  • Think may have outflow (out of the district to charters or to suburban districts) because not enough quality options
  • Polarizing situation but sees point of giving priority to KCPS students
  • This could bring families back to KCPS at an earlier grade
  • Consistency of feeder system would be nice (yet, families fought to keep FLA a K-8 b/c the students achieve much more growth in language skills if stay through 8th grade)
  • Signature schools pose biases → imbalance
• Signatures have had longevity not necessarily because parents want theme (i.e., Montessori), but because it is successful, quality program
• Not a fan because it may discourage parents who are not in the district
• Would increase the likelihood of charter HS start up; more competition
• Early-bird – parents love this idea
• For charter schools: lottery
• Still thinking
• Where are we? Still moving forward with the board. Must be the board members. Who are teachers need to talk the board member
• If board say no then what?
• Plan B why do we have plan B
• Planning for the KC growth.
• CTE/ parent need places for kids
• Declining enrollment/losing kids
• Hard decision based on FTE
• Grooming children earlier for rigor
• 6-12; 600 more seats
• FLA kids
• Expanding options
• Allowing middle school student to enroll into high school courses
• FLA middle years IB program
• Middle years
• Mixed information about the “golden ticket”. Automatic K-8 no test; 5th or 6th

3. Opening the school in the fall of 2019 allows more time for planning, hiring staff, and design/construction. Would you support the forming of a stakeholder input committee to assist with planning throughout the process? Would you be interested in serving on this committee? What kind of things would you like to provide input?
• Support doing this if it is a best practice to engage families
• Why delay opening until the fall of 2019?
• What are we doing for next 2 years? What is the plan in the meantime?
• School is packed. Need to do something.
• How is Lincoln only place this IB is offered? Why aren’t IB classes offered in other HS?
• Other schools have needs that aren’t being fulfilled (note: counselor only there 1 day/week)
• Depends on the frequency of meetings, demands
• Interested in responsibilities up front before making decision about the involvement
• What kinds of input??
• What to do in the meantime?
• Weighing in on principal choice
• Question about timeline—is that the standard?
• Question about enrollment at Central and NE
• Question about the logic of making Lincoln start at 6th vs 7th grade
- Lack of alignment with current middle school configuration
- How does our being here help to move the decision (parent) forward? Is there something we can do to help?
- Question about budget concerns
- Idea: can students help with development of projects to move along construction
- Concern about lack of communication about tonight from district level
- Question about the current enrollment make-up of Lincoln—class size; how many new 8th→9th (Lincoln parent)
- Concerns about having to wait until 2019
- CONSENSUS: short term: Can we do a 6th grade annex portables to open in 2018
- What are the options do
- Missing out on interest in Lincoln by having to wait (charter, private)
- Better to have a portable than to turn a child away
- Not seizing the momentum
- Harness the momentum
- tradition
- Interim principal
- Building share
- Question from board member: families that opt out: why?
  - Too rigorous
  - No broad class choice
  - Inconsistency with teacher, principal
  - Move across the state
  - Lingering trust issues
  - Name recognition – lack thereof
  - Opposite perspective
- Stakeholder input is always good
- Middle school
- Excelling kids
- Mid-year
- Instrumental music / middle school program/ meet candidate for middle school principal
- Tap the alumni for assistance

4. At our last meeting and within the online survey, we asked parents what they were looking for in a middle school experience. Overwhelmingly, parents identified “more attention given for middle school needs.” How could this be improved at all KCPS middle schools?
  - Later start times that align with developing brains
  - More mentoring – interactions with faculty to grow
  - Get to know students
  - Focus beyond academics → more social emotional relationships
  - Safe space to be students – be goofy and make mistakes but still grow
• IB introduction at the middle school level to ensure H.S. readiness – strong foundation – building - bridges the gap between Elementary – IB →
• Under staffed to provide additional support
• Better introduction at the MS level for neighborhood high schools (exposure)
• Questions to students:
  ▪ I wish MS could play sports.
  ▪ Want Spanish, Chinese languages
  ▪ Arts; rising 7th grade → doesn’t care about the type
• Middle School needs: support system at all schools
• Lincoln is the model for all schools to follow
• AP & IB course at all schools
• Pre-AP classes
• AP teachers trained
• Ban/sports/pep rallies
• Being punished for attending smaller school
• Combined extra-curricular; Debate: consolidation
• Tenured teachers that are not teaching
• Union protecting teachers
• Evaluation models for teachers
  ▪ Professionalism
  ▪ Culture span
  ▪ CIPd is there to support teacher
• New method of help teacher find their places
• Influence of new teachers. Young or new to district
  ▪ Part of professionalism
  ▪ Teachers just need to be taught what is appropriate
  ▪ Principal should help
  ▪ Teacher quality
  ▪ Retiring good teachers
  ▪ Back to the point