



Dover City Schools

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December 18, 2018

Dear Parents,

Last night, the **Board of Education** voted to move forward with the elementary **reconfiguration plan** communicated with voters prior to the election. As we begin to make changes, our commitment to you is to **continue providing your children the first-rate educational experience** to which you are accustomed. We have excellent principals who are energized about this transition and teachers and support staff who give our students their best every day. **That will not change.**

In recent weeks, you may have seen news about other proposed reduction options. Citizen engagement is important, and we appreciate those who offered alternative solutions. **There were many ways the current reductions could have been accomplished.** However, this fall, district administrators and our Board of Education made and communicated a decision that, if reducing staff, we were going to reconfigure our elementary schools at the same time. This model is the most efficient way to make reductions to the operating budget that will also provide positive benefits for all of our elementary students.

Our goal now is to work together to address two pressing needs: (1) create a **smooth transition for all students** to our new elementary model; and (2) continue **work to address school funding issues and challenges** facing Dover Schools.

There are many benefits to this method of school configuration, and many high-performing districts are organized this way. Some of the benefits include:

- **Curriculum resources and special programs** provided in an **equitable** manner and **targeted** to developmental needs of the students
- **Greater collaboration among grade-level teachers** (will reduce or eliminate the need for two-hour delays for professional development)
- **Balanced class sizes** and the ability to easily group and re-group for specialized instruction, social-emotional needs, and/or targeted interventions
- **Age-specific special activities** such as assemblies, field trips, school/community events, creating both opportunities and efficiencies
- **Student connection with peers earlier** and prior to the crucial middle school developmental years
- **Economic efficiencies with supplies**, software purchases, and classroom resources
- **Continued valuable Title I Reading Interventions** at the early grade levels for all students in need (under current school configurations and federal regulations, one elementary school could have no Title I services in 2019-2020)

A Distinguished History and a Dynamic Future


As parents, you certainly have questions about what this will look like for your child and we want to provide you with the most accurate information possible about grade leveling. **Over the next few weeks, you will see an addition to our district webpage to address Frequently Asked Questions related to the following topics:**

- Rationale for New Configurations
- Set-Up of Schools and Family Logistics
- Staff Assignments and Classroom Organization
- Transportation
- Parent Involvement Opportunities

The page will also include a form for submitting questions that we will answer via email and/or add to our web page. We encourage you to use this webpage as your “official” source of information from Dover Schools.

We appreciate your support and feel confident that, together, we will get through challenging times. Together, we will make this transition smooth and positive for our students. Together, we will work to address the financial needs of this district into the future. We are better together, and this transition will be one more way that we show that we are a strong community that supports the education of our children.

Respectfully,



Carla Birney
Superintendent
Dover City Schools