

Recommendation to the Board of Education

Promoting Early Childhood Education at Parkside

2-10-25

I acknowledge . . .

- This is a challenging conversation
- It was not discussed last year during the redistricting
- The purpose tonight is to present the board with a recommendation.
 - Recommendations go to the board before a decision is made
 - As we move forward additional communication with impacted families and staff
- It appears that some feel I have not been transparent
 - For that I apologize

This is a story in four parts

- RAMS XII: Academic Excellence
- District reconfiguration
- Looking ahead - Possible action
- Why did this happen

Part One:
Academic Excellence

Evidence – M-STEP Performance

| M-STEP Comparison | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|--|
| | 2018-19 | | 2023-24 | | |
| | ELA | Math | ELA | Math | |
| 3rd | 62.3% | 69.9% | 65.8% | 76.8% | |
| 4th | 62.9% | 69.2% | 70.0% | 73.0% | |
| 5th | 65.9% | 62.4% | 73.7% | 70.1% | |
| 6th | 55.6% | 60.9% | 63.1% | 67.1% | |
| 7th | 54.7% | 63.6% | 62.5% | 64.7% | |
| 8th | 83.3% | 66.8% | 87.9% | 59.9% | |

Evidence – Comparison to other districts

- All subjects combined – Rockford 10th in the state
 - English Language Arts – Rockford 10th in the state
 - Math – Rockford 11th in the state
 - Science – Rockford 5th in the state
 - Social Studies – Rockford 22nd in the state
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- There are 904 school districts in the state of Michigan
 - 537 traditional public schools
 - 367 charter schools
 - [The top 50 Michigan school districts for each school subject, via test scores - mlive.com](#)

Why do we have this growth in academic performance?

- RAMS XII: Academic Excellence pillar
 - 1.A.1 – Guaranteed and viable curriculum
 - 1.A.2 – Tiered instruction
 - 1.A.3 – Student engagement
 - 1.A.4 – Data Response/Assessment
 - 1.A.5 – Eliminating opportunity gaps

Key factors in our academic success

- The intentional decision to give teachers and administrators time to work together to support students
 - Early release days
 - Common planning time
 - Focus on guaranteed and viable curriculum
 - Creation of a tiered system of support
- This requires teachers having colleagues with whom to work and plan
- For students having a meaningful system of tiered support is critical
 - Tiered support is facilitated with teams of teachers

Key factors in academic success

- Early childhood education
 - Providing high quality opportunities for youngest learn prepares them to be successful in grades K-12
- Our Rockford Public Schools Community Services early childhood program supports our students success in school
 - Accredited through the state of Michigan
 - Curriculum supports our kindergarten learning experiences
 - Staff trained in the PLC (professional learning community) process

Part Two:
District reconfiguration

2024 elementary boundary reconfiguration

- With the opening of the new Edgerton Trails district elementary boundaries had to be redrawn
- The process culminated last winter

Enrollment is complex

| | Actual '22-23 | Actual '23-24 | Actual '24-25 |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 5th | | | |
| 4th | | | |
| 3rd | | | |
| 2nd | | | 554 |
| 1st | | 544 | |
| Kindergarten | 537 | | |
| K-b | | | |
| ECSE | | | |
| Totals | | | |

| | Actual '22-23 | Actual '23-24 | Actual '24-25 |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 5th | | | |
| 4th | | | |
| 3rd | | | |
| 2nd | | | 559 |
| 1st | | 545 | 473 |
| Kindergarten | 537 | 457 | 471 |
| K-b | | | |
| ECSE | | | |
| Totals | | | |

| | Actual '22-23 February 2023 | Actual '23-24 | Actual '24-25 |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| 5th | 592 | 561 | 572 |
| 4th | 566 | 568 | 529 |
| 3rd | 557 | 538 | 585 |
| 2nd | 532 | 583 | 559 |
| 1st | 596 | 545 | 473 |
| Kindergarten | 537 | 457 | 471 |
| K-b | 215 | 190 | 199 |
| ECSE | 107 | 103 | 95 |
| Totals | 3702 | 3545 | 3483 |

- Cohort groups '22-23 through '24-25
 - K-2: +22
 - 1-3: -11
 - 2-4: -3
 - 3-5: +15
- Cohort change from K-5 in 2 years: +23
- But . . . overall elementary enrollment is down 153
 - ECSE: -12
 - DK: -16
 - K - K: - 66
 - 1 - 1: -123
 - 2 - 2: +27
 - 3 - 3: +28
 - 4 - 4: -37
 - 5 - 5: -20

| | Actual '22-23 | Actual '23-24 | Actual '24-25 |
|--------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| 12th | 610 | 621 | 583 |
| 11th | 599 | 576 | 588 |
| 10th | 581 | 602 | 555 |
| 9th | 608 | 566 | 586 |
| 8th | 538 | 576 | 541 |
| 7th | 561 | 539 | 587 |
| 6th | 533 | 589 | 568 |
| Totals | 4030 | 4069 | 4008 |

- Cohort groups '22-23 through '24-25
 - 4-6: +2
 - 5-7: -5
 - 6-8: +8
 - 7-9: +25
 - 8-10: +17
 - 9-11: -20
 - 10-12: +2
- Cohort change from 4-12 in 2 years: +29
- But . . . overall secondary enrollment is down 22
 - 6-6: +35
 - 7-7: +26
 - 8-8: +3
 - 9-9: -22
 - 10-10: -26
 - 11-11: -11
 - 12-12: -27

Elementary boundary changes

| Elementary School | Proposed Enrollment | Actual Enrollment |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Belmont | 276 | 274 |
| Cannonsburg | 254 | 266 |
| Crestwood | 528 | 475 |
| Edgerton Trails | 406 | 458 |
| Lakes | 415 | 414 |
| Meadow Ridge | 503 | 497 |
| Parkside | 211 | 179 |
| Roguewood | 601 | 580 |
| Valley View | 405 | 340 |
| Total elementary enrollment | 3599 | 3483 |

Actual enrollment - February

| Grade | February 2024 | February 2025 | Difference '25-'24 |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| ECSE | 103 | 95 | -8 |
| DK | 190 | 199 | +9 |
| Kindergarten | 457 | 471 | +14 |
| 1 st | 545 | 473 | -72 |
| 2 nd | 583 | 559 | -24 |
| 3 rd | 538 | 585 | +47 |
| 4 th | 568 | 529 | -39 |
| 5 th | 561 | 572 | +11 |
| | 3545 | 3483 | -62 |

Parkside 2024-2025

| | Parkside '24-25 | Parkside '24-25 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Kindergarten | 18 (+3 ASD) | 1 section |
| 1 st | 25 (+5 ASD) | 2 sections |
| 2 nd | 28 | 2 sections |
| 3 rd | 37 | 2 sections |
| 4 th | 25 (+1 ASD) | 1 section |
| 5 th | 27 | 1 section |
| ASD students | 10 | |

Looking ahead –
Possible action

Parkside

- Provides a wonderful education for our students
 - Provides a supportive environment for families and students
 - High-quality education
- In 2024-2025 we have three single grade sections
 - The forecast for 2025-2026 is for four single section grades
 - Perhaps five if we look at Kindergarten
 - Lack of collaborative experience for teachers
 - No collaborative partner for teachers during common planning time or early release
 - No ability to group students easily for tiered instruction
 - No other grade level teachers to share students with
 - Student experience is limited
 - 27 5th grade students move to a 6th grade middle school experience of 275+

Parkside

| | Parkside '24-25 | Parkside '25-26 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Kindergarten | 18 | ? |
| 1 st | 25 | 18 (1 – 18) |
| 2 nd | 29 | 25 (1 – 25) |
| 3 rd | 37 | 29 (1 – 29) |
| 4 th | 25 | 37 (2 – 19, 18) |
| 5 th | 27 | 25 (1 – 25) |
| ASD students | 18 | Moved to Meadow Ridge |
| Total | 179 | 142 (no K yet) |

179 students

- 24 ASD students
 - 32 out of district school of choice
 - 12 in district school of choice
 - 87 eligible to ride the bus
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- 23 in Parkside attendance area who in-district school of choice to other buildings

2024 – 2025 Early Childhood

- Waiting lists for early childhood
 - 67 childcare
 - 34 childcare
- 101 total on the waiting list

2025-2026 school year

- Combine the Parkside and Valley View attendance areas
- Have all students in those attendance areas attend school at Valley View
- Convert Parkside to an Early Childhood building
 - Continue services in the Admin Building as well
 - An expansion of early childhood programming
- Move the ASD program currently at Parkside to Meadow Ridge
 - Currently this program has 24 students.
 - The rationale for this move is because the students in this program move on the East Rockford Middle School in 6th grade
 - This move would allow them to make friends with students who would move with them to ERMS
- Move the Early Childhood Special Education students/program to Parkside
 - Currently we provide support to 4 and 5 year old students who have been identified as needing support

Projecting ahead

| | Parkside '25-26 | Valley View '25-26 | Combined '25-26 |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Kindergarten | ? | ? | ? |
| 1 st | 21 (1 – 21) | 52 (2 – 26) | 73 (3 – 24) |
| 2 nd | 25 (1 – 25) | 45 (2 – 23) | 70 (3 – 24) |
| 3 rd | 28 (1 – 28) | 55 (2 – 27) | 83 (3 – 27) |
| 4 th | 39 (2 – 19,20) | 67 (3 – 22) | 106 (3 – 27) |
| 5 th | 26 (1 – 26) | 42 (2 – 21) | 68 (3 – 23) |
| Total | 139 (no K yet) | 261 (No DK, K yet) | 400 (No K yet) |

- Parkside has a long history in our district
 - Parkside is a beloved elementary school
 - It is an anchor in the community
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- Parkside would continue to an anchor in the community
 - Parkside would transition to a vibrant early childhood community serving the greater Rockford community
 - Parkside would meet a community need and keep families connected to our district

Why did this happen?

Factors that impacted this recommendation

- The opening of Edgerton Trails necessitated changes in boundaries
- We made decisions on boundaries that made sense
 - Ensuring all students in an elementary building would travel together to middle school
 - Except for out of district school of choice
 - Northland Drive was the dividing line
 - Ensuring that we sent students to their closest elementary when possible

Combining Parkside and Valley View

- Valley View has space
 - There are currently 7 empty classrooms
- The combined Parkside and Valley View enrollment would create a three section school
 - Teacher and student collaboration would increase
 - 4 sections at 4th grade

Expectations for 2024-2025

- Our actual Parkside enrollment was 32 less than predicted
 - 23 in the Parkside attendance area took advantage of in-district school of choice and enrolled in other elementary schools
 - 7 5th graders who chose to remain at last year's elementary school
 - 2 Spanish Immersion
 - 2 staff member children who attend the school of their parents
 - 11 attend other Rockford elementary buildings
- The redistricting worked well overall
 - Buildings enrollment came in modestly lower
 - But overall enrollment at each building was as expected
 - Except for Parkside

Alternatives

- It is important to note opening the new elementary allowed us to remove multiple portable classrooms from the district
- Enrollment at most elementary buildings is what we anticipated
- In formulating this recommendation we looked at alternatives
- We brought this proposal to the board because as the Superintendent I have a responsibility to ensure that district resources are used well
- Revising attendance boundaries was considered but other elementary buildings are right sized
- We were hopeful that Parkside's enrollment would come in at projections
 - And it almost did
 - 23 students chose in-district school of choice to buildings other than Parkside

Impacts

- Some students will move to a third school in three years
 - Meadow Ridge to Parkside to Valley View
- Students in the neighborhood of Parkside who may walk will be bused next year
- Most staff will follow students to Parkside but some will be placed in other buildings
 - Enrollment will dictate decisions
 - Teachers will have options – declared in their letter of intent
- This is a difficult recommendation for us to bring but it is one that I think is right for the long-term health of the district

What to remember

- Parkside is not closing
- Parkside is being repurposed to help meet a community need
 - Early childhood enrollment has the potential to help our district keep families in our district
 - It meets a need for our young families
- Valley View has room
 - And room for growth

Recommendation for consideration

- Repurpose Parkside into an early childhood center
 - This will meet a community need
 - This will connect young families to our district
- Combine Parkside and Valley View attendance areas
 - Create a school of approximately 450-470 students

- Over the next month we will answer questions that arise
 - Meeting with the Parkside parents on Wednesday, February 12
 - Will attend their February PTO meeting if requested
 - Will send information to Valley View families Tuesday
 - Will inform the district in my email to district families on Tuesday
- We will bring it back to the Board in March for consideration
 - A decision needs to be made so that we can adequately plan for next year

