GRADE CONFIGURATION STUDY
Fifth and Eighth Grade Students

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Board of Education
December 11, 2018
Purpose: Why conduct this study?

- To evaluate our current grade configuration and how it supports the age/developmental needs of students
- To research and consider alternative models
- To evaluate the effective & efficient utilization of space & resources
- To responsibly respond to community interest in a study
Roadmap for study (projected)

- Examine the current program for 5th graders & 8th graders – Dec. 11
- Gather stakeholder input from focus groups – Jan 2019
- Present focus group results and recommend research agenda to Board of Education – February 12, 2019
- Conduct feasibility study (based on all feedback & research) – March 2019
- Present recommendation to the Board of Education – March 12, 2019
Life as a 5th Grader in Pearl River Middle School
**Transition Plan – 4th to 5th Grade**

As 4th Graders:

- Students attend MS Play
- School Counselors visit all elementary classrooms
- Students visit MS for ½ Day
- 4th grade Parent Orientation Night
- Band, Orchestra, and Chorus Teachers meet with students
- School Counselors meet with all 4th grade teachers
- School Counselors attend grade 4 – 504 and CSE Annual Reviews
- Current 5th graders write letters to 4th graders with advice
- 4th Graders and Families are invited to the MS Art Show and Book Fair
Transition Plan – 4th to 5th Grade

As 5th graders:

● Locker Day
● 1st day of school - no academics, focus on transition
● Getting to Know You Events – 3 days
● School Supply Kit – Pre-organized by teachers
● PE Class – No changing
● Bus Seating Arrangements
● Lockers assigned near student Homerooms
Current Program, Grade 5

- Two Teams
- 9 period day – 6 different teachers throughout the day
  - ELA – 2 periods – Literacy Block
  - Math
  - Science
  - Social Studies
  - Unified Arts – 2 periods
  - PEP (Personalized Education Program)
  - Lunch
- Core Academics primarily housed in 1 wing
5th grade in PRMS – Advantages

- Increased Academic Rigor due to subject specific content based instruction
- Expanded UA & PEP offerings
- Expanded extra curricular offerings
- Opportunities to form relationships with numerous adults
  - Multiple Teachers
  - Olweus Anti-Bullying Program
  - Availability of school counselors & social worker for social and emotional support
- Student independence and autonomy
- Opportunities for relationship building with peers
5th grade in PRMS – Challenges

- Adjustment to multiple teachers
- Organization of materials and self
- Meeting expectations for more rigorous coursework
- Shift to numeric grading
- Navigation of larger school
5th grade in PRMS – Opportunities for Improvement

- Review of program/schedule for additional opportunities to ease transition within the core subject areas, such as smaller teams
- Increase opportunities vertical alignment across buildings
- Review of current grading procedures
- Parent Teacher Conferences
- Curriculum Alignment
  - TC Writing k–6
  - Social Studies 5–8 Framework Alignment
  - Math Alignment 5–8
  - Science Next Generations Standards Alignment 5–8
Life as an 8th Grader in Pearl River High School
Transition Plan – 7th to 8th Grade

As 7th Graders:

- Fall – Communication sent about academic requirements
- February/March – Students receive the PRHS Program of Studies
- March – 7th Grade Parent Orientation
- Students visit with the PRHS Band, Orchestra, and Chorus (TBD)
- June/July MS and HS counselors review student rosters to discuss preparation and needs
Transition Plan – 7th to 8th Grade (cont.)

● Late August – Student Orientation hosted by the PRHS Counselors
● Late August – Building available for students to walk their schedules
● Early September – Students attend an 8th grade class assembly
● 5 weeks in, PRHS Counselors meet with each student individually to check in
Current Program, Grade 8

9 period day

- ELA
- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- Unified Arts (4 Rotations/Quarterly)
- PE (Not scheduled with Seniors and Juniors)
- Art / Music / Technological Studies
- Lab/ AIS / Study Hall
- Lunch (5th and 6th Periods)
8th grade in PRHS – Advantages

- Increased Academic Rigor
- Elective Offerings
- Expanded extra curricular offerings
- Opportunities to become acclimated to the HS environment before official HS transcripts begin to develop
- Finding their way (experiences)
- Supportive Environment (ie: PLUS)
8th grade in PRHS – Challenges

- Adjustment to a new and increased quantity of teachers (7-10)
- Meeting expectations for rigor
- Navigating choices and goals – Balancing freedom and responsibility
- Getting comfortable using supports
- Navigating an EVEN LARGER building (space and time)
- Lack of available space limits program growth & enhancements
8th grade in PRHS – Opportunities for Improvement

- Increase transition opportunities
- Retain MS identity while transitioning to HS (Physical Plant and Program)
- Review of program to consider 8th grade offerings
- Modified teacher team concept
- Social experiences according to age/maturity
Next Steps...

- Gather stakeholder input from focus groups – Jan 2019
- Present focus group results and recommend research agenda to Board of Education – February 12, 2019
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- Present recommendation to the Board of Education – March 12, 2019