

## Reenvisioning Our Elementary Schools Email - Tuesday, September 3rd, 2024

Dear Families and Staff,

We are excited to share that we are in the beginning stages of a comprehensive look at our elementary schools to ensure the best educational experience for our students. Following preliminary discussions, our Board has expressed interest in exploring the development of 18-section schools to improve opportunities for all students while ensuring a more consistent and effective use of our resources.

This aims to bring several benefits to our school community, including:

- **Equitable Opportunities:** Ensuring every student has access to the same high-quality education.
- **More Consistent Class Sizes:** Maintaining balanced class sizes across all grades.
- **Maximum Building Efficiency:** Making the best use of our school buildings.
- **Standardized District-Wide Cost:** Streamlining our budget per student across the district.
- **More Consistent Staffing and Scheduling:** Improving the stability of our teaching staff and schedules.
- **Increased Collaboration:** Encouraging more teamwork among teachers.
- **Efficient Use of Support Staff:** Making the most of our support staff resources.
- **Dedicated Specials Teachers:** Providing consistent Art, Music, and P.E. instruction.

To help us achieve these goals, we're considering a few key concepts:

1. **Paired Schools:** This approach would balance the total number of sections and class sizes by pairing two elementary schools. One school would house preschool through 2nd grade, and another would house 3rd through 5th grade students.
2. **Academy Schools:** These are specialized public schools that offer unique programs to attract a diverse student body. Possible focuses include Performing Arts, World Languages/Language Immersion, Leadership, and STEM. Academy schools would help us create 18-section buildings, which could be established in underutilized schools near other elementary locations.
3. **Early Childhood Learning Centers:** Dedicated to early childhood education, these centers would serve three and four-year-olds, providing extended hours and centralized locations. We're considering up to three centers, one in each feeder pattern: Coralville, Iowa City, and North Liberty. Locations could be developed by repurposing existing underutilized elementary buildings.

The Board has just begun discussing this topic. For more details, view the presentations from the [July 23, 2024](#), and [August 27, 2024](#), board meetings or visit our [Reenvisioning Our Elementary Schools](#) webpage for updates.

Our next steps this school year include:

- Forming a committee to explore future elementary options.
- Creating subgroups to focus on academy schools, early childhood centers, and paired schools.
- Developing detailed timelines for each subgroup.
- Gathering community feedback.
- Researching and visiting established academy schools and early childhood centers.
- Providing regular updates to the Board and the community.

We're committed to keeping you informed and engaged throughout this exploration process. Your input is crucial as we move forward, so please stay tuned for more updates and opportunities to share your thoughts.

Sincerely,

Matt Degner  
Superintendent  
Iowa City Community School District