

FAQs January 2020

Attendees @ the 1/22/20 Community Meeting @ Alameda Int'l generated the following questions. Responses are provided.

Q: Why are we even talking about this? Why can't we just leave it as it is?

R: *The successful passage of a Bond issue opened up the opportunity for a potential 6th grade transition in the Alameda Area. The Alameda Area families and staff are being provided information so that they can decide what they want for their children and students. It would be a disservice to this community if the option was not offered knowing that it is feasible. District leadership and principals are being transparent. Everyone will have the opportunity to vote.*

Q: Why was this articulation area changed to a 7-12 model 5 years ago? And why are the areas serving primarily students of color (Jefferson and Alameda) the only neighborhood schools with this structure?

R: *In the Alameda area there were several factors. The primary reason cited was severe overcrowding in the elementary schools in particular at Rose Stein. The option selected at the time was to close O'Connell Middle School in order to maximize capacity in the elementary schools. Additionally, O'Connell Middle School was struggling to prepare students academically and socially for high school. Eliminating one of the transitions for students was identified as a strategy that could increase achievement. A K-6/7-12 model was the result. Based on the lack of School District funding at the time, few solutions were fiscally possible.*

In the Jefferson area, Wheat Ridge Middle School was struggling to prepare students academically and socially for High School. The Principals in the articulation area engaged in a conversation with their stakeholders and agreed that a K-6/7-12 model would positively impact their students.

Both Alameda and Jefferson High School were under-enrolled and there was unused classroom space in the buildings that could accommodate the additional grade levels and students.

The fact that both of these articulation areas serve primarily students of color is something that we are considering deeply as we consider the implications on the success of our students, families, and communities. We are committed to providing equitable support to help improve outcomes for our students within Jeffco Schools. We value the community voice in this endeavor.

Q: Why is there a proposal to move the 6th grade to the middle school at Alameda International?

R: *All 6th grade students in the school district (with the exception of those in the Alameda and Jefferson Areas) attend school in a middle school. Three years ago, central leadership made the decision to transition the 6th grade students to the middle schools. One reason for this decision was the opportunity for 6th grade students to have expanded elective choices. These 6th grade students have additional elective choices that 6th grade students in the Alameda Area do not have. For example, the 6th grade students in middle schools have the choice to take band every day as a class. Alameda principals and district leadership want to inform families of this substantive difference and ask families if they want this option for their children.*

Q: What electives will be offered to 6th grade students?

R: *6th grade students in district middle school settings have access to a wide variety of electives. At Alameda International, 6th grade students will have four core classes (language arts, science, math, and social studies). These classes are the 6th grade district curriculum. In addition, they will have three electives each semester and also, a world language class to meet the requirements of the International Baccalaureate Early Years program. A complete list of Alameda's elective offerings is available in the office at your school.*

Q: How does the 6th grade elementary schedule compare to the high school 6th grade schedule?

R: *6th grade students will not have a high school schedule. They will have a middle school schedule. They will switch classes throughout the day just as our 6th grade students in the other district middle schools switch classes. They will be supported by their teachers. They will also have a daily advisement period, which is a classroom of 15-18 students, 40 minutes per day with a homeroom teacher. Advisement provides an opportunity for teachers to deliver social emotional support as well as academic support in a smaller setting.*

The middle school schedule is a rotating block schedule with four, 80 minute classes per day. Over two days, students have their four core classes (language arts, science, math, and social studies), 3 elective classes, and 1 world language class required by the International Baccalaureate Early Years program.

Q: Will there be different start/ end times for middle school students and high school students?

R: *All students will have the same start and end time at this point.*

Q: What will services look like for special education and ESL programming? Will their minutes of support be decreased?

R: *Services follow students, and are based upon district caseload standards, so we can anticipate that the school will receive additional staffing if they enroll additional students.*

Students' IEPs determine the support students are to receive regardless if they are in an elementary school, middle school, or high school. Students receive the minutes identified in the IEP, again, regardless of where they attend school. At Alameda, Learning Specialists co-teach with general education teachers in English and math to provide instructional support to students in these content areas.

ESL services include all levels of support as well as sheltered core classes in English and math.

Q: Will there be additional counselors, teachers, security?

R: *Teachers are staffed based on a ratio regardless of the level.. An increase in students means an increase in teaching staff.*

Alameda International already has additional security to ensure the school is covered until 4:30 pm. Security staffing is assessed annually at which time the need for additional security will be addressed.

The middle schools who transitioned students the past two years added counseling support. Alameda International administration with input from the Transition Advisory Committee will determine if additional counseling is needed prior to the 6th grade students attending Alameda International.

Q: How will 6th grade students be safe at Alameda International?

R: *Alameda International administration and staff address all behavior incidents immediately and will continue to do so if the 6th grade students join Alameda International. Unfortunately, bullying and other misbehaviors occur at all schools. Administration follows the district's discipline guidelines when an incident occurs. There have not been significant issues between middle school students and high school students at Alameda International.*

Q: Will there still be an open campus for HS students to leave for lunch and off periods?

R: *Only 11/12 grade students have off-campus privileges and this is for **lunch only**. 7th and 8th grade students have different lunch periods than 9-12 students. Grades 7-10*

have a closed campus during lunch. 6th grade students will have closed campus and separate lunches from the high school students.

Q: What is the impact on busing?

R: *If the decision is made to move the 6th grade students to Alameda, the district transportation staff will create routes to transport students to their appropriate schools. They did this with the initial transition of 6th grade students in 2018 and 2019. The initial transition involved over 75 elementary and 15 middle schools. Transportation staff will be able to determine routes for 5 elementary schools if this transition happens.*

Q: Will the transportation commitment to Emory be negatively impacted if they have to shift resources to provide more busses to Alameda?

R: *This is still a topic for discussion. The commitment from the district was to provide bussing until the first group of kinder students at Emory completed elementary school, which will be in two years. Regardless of that, 6th graders moving to Alameda should not affect the original commitment.*

Q: How would this potential transition of 6th grade students impact the elementary schools?

R: *Currently 4 of 5 elementary schools are what we would call "large" elementary schools. The 6th grade shift would have minimal impacts on these schools. Rose Stein, which is the smallest of the elementary schools, is increasing in enrollment, and has added two preschool classrooms, therefore transitioning 6th grade out of Rose Stein should not be impactful. Jeffco has successfully supported schools smaller than Rose Stein for many years.*

Q: What will be the enrollment of Alameda Int'l with the addition of the 6th grade students?

R: *Alameda currently has an enrollment of approximately 1,120 students. If 6th grade moved to Alameda International, the enrollment would increase to approximately 1,350 students.*

**This number is an estimate based on current enrollments in the Alameda area.*

Q: Will teachers be displaced and not treated right? Will they strike?

R: *Teachers will be supported all throughout the process just as our Human Resources department supported teachers when the district transitioned 6th grade students to 15 middle schools district-wide the past two years. Many 6th grade teachers were hired to teach at the middle schools. We anticipate the same to happen if Alameda were to transition.*

Q: Will specials teachers be shared between the elementary schools?

R: *AMP (art, music, PE) needs will be determined by section numbers at the elementary school so moving 6th grade to Alameda Int'l may impact that number. Some schools that have not paired in the past may need to be paired just as a majority of the elementary schools in the district are paired.*

Q: Is the construction happening even if 6th grade students do not move to Alameda? Will the 3rd floor be eliminated?

R: *The renovation of Alameda International will occur regardless of the 6th grade moving to Alameda. The funding for the badly needed renovation was part of the Bond that successfully passed in November 2018. If the decision is made to not transition the 6th grade students, Alameda International will still be renovated. The architects and design group will review options for reducing square footage.*

Q: How many classrooms are in design for 6th grade students?

R: *There are seven classrooms that would be used by sixth grade and could also be used by seventh or even eighth depending upon schedules and team teaching approaches between middle school grades.*

Q: Why can't we have a 6-8 middle school option in this area?

R: *The only building in the Alameda Area large enough to accommodate a middle school is Emory. Turning Emory into a middle school would entail moving the current Emory students back to Rose Stein and moving the 7th and 8th grade students currently attending Alameda Int'l to Emory. These communities have expressed no desire to make these changes. Furthermore, this would create significant overcrowding at Stein, and could also overcrowd Lasley and Deane.*

There is neither funding or land to build a brand new 6-8 middle school in the Alameda Area.

Q: Is it strictly necessary to have a "hard cut" between K-5/6-12? Could we apply the Chatfield and D'Evelyn model indefinitely?

As a point of information, the Chatfield schools allowed 6th grade students to attend either the elementary school or the middle schools for a few years until 2016, at which point staff and families determined it to be unmanageable. Now, all Chatfield area 6th grade students attend middle school.

The D'Evelyn model does have a "hard cut." 6th grade students who currently attend Dennison have two years to transition to D'Evelyn. All Dennison 6th grade students will be attending D'Evelyn the 2023-2024 school year.

R: *The reason the Chatfield Area ended the option for 6th grade students to attend either the elementary school or the middle school is because it is very difficult to manage enrollment at both levels. At the elementary level it is hard to maintain staffing and consistency because one year they would have a combined 5th/6th grade class making it difficult to provide quality instruction. Then, the next year they would need 2 teachers because of enrollment. At the middle school, trying to plan for a 6th grade model with fluctuating enrollment made it difficult to offer a robust electives program one year and then not be able to do so the following year. The bottom line is hiring and providing quality instruction became major problems when allowing 6th grade students the option of either elementary or middle school. This will not be an option for the Alameda Area.*

However, we have discussed a "soft" transition where:

2021-2022 school year: *6th grade students may choose to remain in their elementary school or attend Alameda Int'l.*

2022-2023 school year: *All 6th grade students would attend Alameda Int'l. This is similar to the D'Evelyn transition.*

Q: What are the lessons learned with other transition schools?

R: *Ensuring that the perspectives of families and students were heard and understood. Creating a clear process for how the decision to change school structures will be made. Ensuring there is regular communication to share progress and facts with the community. Creating intentional structures for the transition between the elementary school and the high school is important for school culture and climate and student social emotional health. If the decision is made to move the 6th grade students to Alameda International, stakeholders will be involved in the planning and implementation via elementary school advisory/accountability committees and the [Transition Advisory Committee](#).*

Q: How and when will families and staff vote?

R: *Families will receive a paper ballot in their youngest or only child's Friday Folder on February, 21, 2020. Staff will receive an electronic ballot on the same date. Paper ballots will be returned to the students' teachers. Teachers track which students have returned their ballots. Teachers will give the ballots to the school principal. Principals will be the keeper of the ballots until voting is closed. Ballots must be returned by Friday, March 6, 2020. Ballots will be turned over to the Alameda Area Community Superintendents. District level staff independent from the Alameda Area will count the ballots. The*

outcome will be made known to the Alameda staff and families prior to Spring Break, March 20, 2020.

Q: Will the community at large be included in the survey? For example: taxpayers without students in an Alameda school?

R: *Yes, if they are on school or district accountability committees or have attended one of the community meetings and provided contact information.*

Q: Approximately how many 6th graders in the Alameda Artic Area would move?

R: *The question is unclear making it difficult to provide a response.*

Q: What is the specific impact to Patterson? There was a “shake-up” in AMP this year. Will it get worse?

R: *The Patterson principal will have the most accurate information to respond to this question.*

Alameda Area Transition Facts & FAQs Distributed at the 1/22/20 Community Meeting