

# Intermediate Programming

## Frequently Asked Questions

10/27/17

The following questions regarding the new intermediate campus are commonly asked by parents and staff. We will use this Frequently Asked Questions format to address questions and direct our community to our corporation website, which will continue to document the progression of our current projects from the Feasibility Study through implementation of the Feasibility Study Action Plan.

**Question:** When is the new intermediate campus going to be completed and ready for grades 5, 6, 7, and 8?

**Answer:** The timeline for planning and implementation is located in the LPCSC Intermediate Campus: Staffing, Programming, and Planning Details dated 10-12-2017. This document is posted on our website. The document outlines that the new intermediate campus will be ready for the beginning of the 2019/2020 school year.

**Question:** Where can I find the most current information about the new intermediate schools?

**Answer:** Documentation regarding our planning efforts and Feasibility Study are posted on the main page of the corporation website. We will continue to update the planning documents as progress is made.

**Question:** Why wasn't the current Boston remodeled?

**Answer:** Documented during the Feasibility Study was the fact that the Boston building was not suitable for remodel, considering the limitations of the site with regard to safety, programming, and potential to provide a student experience similar to what our Kesling students and staff experience.

**Question:** Why wasn't a new Boston built?

**Answer:** The initial action plan called for a new Boston to be built. This is documented in the Feasibility Study Action Plan. Details regarding this decision are addressed on the corporation website in a December 2016 newsletter and another communication entitled *La Porte Community School Corporation Building Project Update October 10, 2016*. These documents reflect the fact that a search for an acceptable building location for a new Boston Middle School ended without being able to secure a safe and viable location within the city limits. At that point, we revisited the Feasibility Study to look at the documented corporation needs and identified alternatives to building a new Boston Middle School.

**Question:** What are the student and family benefits to the new 5/6 and 7/8 grade configuration model?

**Answer:** Student benefits have been a focus for the Feasibility Study work. The goal of the study was to gather facts about student programming and identify what we needed to do in order to best prepare our students for success in their future college and career paths. The result of the study led us to form planning teams to outline what our student experiences need to look like in grades Pre-K-12 in the areas of High Ability, Visual, Fine, and Performing Arts, K-12 Athletics, and K-12 College and Career Readiness. These teams are meeting throughout this year to produce recommendations.

Regarding parent benefits, we will be studying and looking to build upon the benefits of the current model of 6, 7, and 8. The current model of 6, 7, and 8 was established in 1984 and has changed very little over the years. One of the concepts we are exploring is to have parent resource centers in each of the two intermediate schools. We also identified important safety matters that we wanted to take into account for all schools, including traffic flow, bus drop-off, class size, and restricting the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders from having contact with the upper grades during the school day. The new format will also benefit parents in that we will be in a position to guarantee all of our students a consistent curriculum and experiences vs. the current situation in which students in the same grade across town may have different curriculum, instructional strategies, and other opportunities.

**Question:** The intermediate school will house a number of students equal to the high school. Four grade levels that include every student in the corporation will be at the site. Will access to facilities be equal to the high school and/or greater than they are now? Facilities in mind are the gym, lunchroom, library, etc.

**Answer:** The new Kesling Intermediate Campus will house grades 5, 6, 7 and 8. As outlined in the planning and vision document on the corporation website, grades 5 and 6 will occupy what is the current Kesling Middle school building for academic programming. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade academic programming will be delivered in the newly constructed portion of the campus. Some areas of the building will be shared by all grades. These areas include the cafeteria, library, and music areas. Although these areas will be shared, the vision is that only like grade levels will occupy these areas at any one time.

The access to parents and all who enter the campus will be improved from the current situation at Kesling Middle School. On the corporation website, you will find drawings of the phases for construction. The initial phases are now underway to create a drive that goes around the building, including the east side which currently has no access to cars or vehicles. Additional parking spaces and separation of buses from parent drop-off and pick-up are planned into the project phases.

**Question:** Currently, 5th grade students have opportunities at each elementary school to participate in athletic teams. There are no "cuts". What is the plan for the future?

**Answer:** The K-12 Athletic Programming Planning Team has been meeting over the past year to discuss the opportunities that students will experience in grades K-12. We expect to identify what each grade will look like before the end of the 17/18 school year. No update reports from the team, to date, reflects an interest in introducing cuts at any level, other than those levels that currently do so. Updates of all committees will be posted on the website throughout this school year.

**Question:** Currently, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students can participate in many extracurricular opportunities at Boston Middle School and Kesling Middle School. What is the plan to ensure that these opportunities are not cut in half by combining the schools? Examples include all sports, math club, jazz band, student council, show choir, etc.

**Answer:** Student programming and experiences are the first priority in our planning efforts. Teams are meeting to guarantee experiences for students in areas of K-12 High Ability, K-12 Visual, Fine and Performing Arts, K-12 College and Career Readiness, K-12 Athletics, STEM, and Technology. Currently, our middle schools have activities at one building, but maybe not the other. Currently, 5<sup>th</sup> graders are ready for more experiences but we are limited to the traditional elementary activities. We anticipate an overall increase in the number of activities in which students will be able to participate. Updates will be communicated as our teams finalize their recommendations.

**Question:** How will current class sizes be maintained or shrunk? Will there be double the number of classrooms at the intermediate school?

**Answer:** Our architects have concluded the drawings and plans for the new intermediate campus based on data and dialogue from their work with the staff and administration. Updates of their work can be found on the corporation website, where a blog spot is maintained by our architects, Schmidt Associates. We are confident that between the new construction and the renovation of the current Kesling classrooms, we will have the necessary space to staff programs and classes at sizes that are either consistent with current student/teacher ratios or better.

**Question:** Each middle school currently has two teachers of each subject per grade level. Will there be four teachers of each subject under the new model or is there another plan to address

class size?

**Answer:** We have yet to determine these details. The timeline posted on our website for planning the intermediate school curriculum and staffing indicates that the staffing decisions will be made toward the end of the 2017/2018 school year and that teachers will be assigned by the start of the 2018/2019 school year. Our goal is to have the staff identified so we have the entire 2018/2019 school year for staff to work together on curriculum.

**Question:** Will 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes have a "middle school" model or self-contained classes?

**Answer:** This answer will be determined in the next few months according to our timeline. A goal for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade experience is to prepare them for the next grade level. Some elementary schools are currently ability grouping at grade 5 and students have a different teacher for English than math. We expect something similar for grade 5 in the intermediate setting. In other words, more than one teacher, but not as many as students will have in the next three grades. Grade six students will likely be “pulled in” and have fewer teachers than they currently have in the middle school setting. This logic comes from our study that showed 5<sup>th</sup> graders were ready for more of a middle school experience, but 6<sup>th</sup> graders were reportedly “not ready” for the middle school schedule of teachers and classes.

**Question:** How will the busing schedule be affected? Will students have longer bus rides?

**Answer:** This is a multi-faceted question. The 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> graders who currently ride a bus to Boston Middle School would only have a short distance longer to ride on the bus. Some students will be closer to school if they currently live between Boston and Kesling. The 5<sup>th</sup> graders who ride the bus to elementary school will likely have a longer bus ride, similar to the change that our current 6<sup>th</sup> graders go through when they start 6<sup>th</sup> grade at one of the two middle schools.

We have yet to establish start and end times for the school day. Those details will be ironed out this school year when we break down the day and what classes/experiences need to fit into the student day. It is probable that the 5<sup>th</sup> grade daily schedule will be different from grade 6. Grades 7 and 8 will likely have the same daily schedule. Currently, we are working on traffic flow patterns that will enable us to have the same start and end times for all four grades. Updates will be forthcoming on our website.