

Date: February 8, 2008

To: East Metro Integration District School Board

From: Kristine Black, Principal

Overview:

The 2/3 teaching team has made a recommendation to explore moving from a multiage delivery approach (two grade levels learning together) to a looping delivery approach (a graded approach with students learning with the same teacher over a period of two years). This proposal was presented at a Union meeting and was strongly supported by a majority of the teaching staff at Harambee. As the administrator, I am supportive of further exploring stakeholder support for this proposal. I am formally requesting support from the EMID School Board in initiating a task force for further exploration of this proposal.

Goals:

- To assess Harambee stakeholder support in exploring a move from a multiage delivery model to a looping delivery model.
- If support is present, to smoothly implement the recommended approach at the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year.

The proposal to transition from a multiage approach to a looping approach supports:

- Greater efficiency with planning time.
- Differentiation within one grade level rather than two.
- Our recently adopted curriculum that is written in a graded format.
- Our commitment to teachers remaining with the same group of students and families for two consecutive years.
- More effective and efficient methods for providing instruction to better meet student needs.
- Developing one consistent definition and application of an approach bringing greater clarity and consistency for teachers, families, and students.
- The Minnesota State Standards which are written by grade level rather than by multiage levels.
- More focused and manageable instruction.
- More time for meaningful integration of our school's foci.
- Fewer daily student transitions between core instructional blocks.
- The overall wishes of staff to strengthen student achievement through exploring a different approach than the one currently being implemented.

Month	Looping Proposal Timeline
January, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present timeline proposal to the Administrative Team for questions and comments.
February, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formally request support from the EMID Board for exploring the Looping Proposal during February Work Session.• Establish a task force with stakeholder representation (parents, staff, administration, union representation).
March-April, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present the proposal as a formal agenda item at the EMID School Board in March. Present task force representation.• Partner with EMID Communications / Marketing to ensure effective communication throughout the decision making process.• Communicate to families regarding the proposal through the Harambee Life newsletter.• Determine task force meeting schedule to address the proposal, complete research, and make a final recommendation to the EMID Board.• Review formal findings from the 2004-2005 Transition Task force through documentation, records, etc. regarding approaches explored, statements of core values, priorities for staff and families, etc.• Research and compile current availability of multiage curriculum.• Define formal approaches being discussed (multiage, looping, graded) through research and staff and parent input.• Begin the identification of core values within the multiage model that can be addressed in a similar way with a change to a looping model.• Begin designing a parent survey to determine parental support / lack of support for the proposed change. Survey should also include an assessment of parental support for and prioritization of school's core values and approaches.

May-June, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task force meeting – early in the month. • Formally report the research findings from previous months to the task force. • Designate fourth quarter meetings (extended planning sessions and / or whole staff meetings) to gather input, communicate next steps, etc. Use meetings to gather additional input on core values and how a switch in approach from multiage to looping would impact content, curriculum delivery, meeting student needs, etc. • Formally identify school core values and formal methods for addressing core values. Align core values within all considered approaches. Present this information to all stakeholders. • Finalize parent survey. Distribute during May Conferences.
July, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request of one .5 day for teacher task force members (with invited family representatives) to compile results from returned surveys. • Formally communicate survey results and task force findings gathered from March through June with all stakeholders. • Task force meeting – late in the month to review task force responsibilities completed and plan for future tasks.
August-September, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal task force work due to school-wide break and the start of the 2008-09 school year.
October-December, 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold an informational meeting with families in the evening to publicly and formally overview data gathered and data from family survey. • Based on data gathered, finalize a recommendation on format for 2009-2010 year if all stakeholders are in agreement. • Report to school board on recommendations of the task force based on stakeholder input or progress so far if a recommendation has not been reached at this time. • If consensus on a format is not reached, the task force will continue to meet with stakeholders to gain consensus. At this time the task force will create a new schedule of tasks to complete in relation to the proposal.
January, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task force designs a new process for creating class lists based on task force results if the looping approach is recommended. Formally communicate this process to staff. • If the result is to remain with multiage classrooms, then the currently used process for setting up multiage classrooms will remain in place. Formally communicate this process to staff. • Gather input about and finalize classroom arrangements from staff (next to each other, in a multiage format). • Report to families on recommendations of the task force based on stakeholder input after the EMID Board has given approval. • If approval is not granted by the EMID Board, then questions and concerns from the EMID Board will be addressed by the task force.
February-April, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address and report back to staff regarding EMID Board questions and / or concerns, if any. • Task force designates a formal timeline for reviewing and revisiting the finalized decision. • Present a final task force report to the EMID School Board. • Continue to communicate the final decision on a regular basis to all stakeholders through EMID communications. • Update internal documents (expectations binders, new staff training, etc.) to reflect decision. • Conclude the task force.
May-August, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to communicate the final decision on a regular basis to all stakeholders through EMID communications. • Publicize teaching and room assignments to all staff. • Administration makes last minute changes and additions to staffing and room assignments. • Class lists and room assignments shared with families at Harambee Picnic. • Prepare for full implementation of the approach supported by stakeholders in September, 2009.
September, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally implement the approach supported by stakeholders (multiage or looping). • Formally schedule feedback sessions to discuss effectiveness of chosen approach.