

McLean County Unit District No. 5

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Memorandum

To: Board of Education

From: Alan Chapman
Superintendent

Date: November 29, 2006

Subject: **Results of October 27, 2006 Parent/Guardian Survey**

A Parent/Guardian Survey addressing issues related to actual and projected growth in student enrollment was administered during the October 27, 2006 Parent-Teacher Conference Day.

A total of 1820 surveys were completed, compiled, and analyzed. A summary of the data collected from the Parent/Guardian Survey appears below. This summary reflects input from each school, with most schools providing approximately 2-5% of the total responses.

Survey items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were answered using a scale of 1 to 5 that was defined as follows:

- 1 - Extremely Unfavorable
- 2 - Unfavorable
- 3 - Neutral or No Opinion
- 4 - Favorable
- 5 - Extremely Favorable

Survey items 3a and 4a allowed respondents to provide a response of “yes”, “possibly”, or “no”.

The responses to the Parent/Guardian Survey were generally consistent across grade levels. Little variation was observed in responses submitted by parents/guardians of elementary, middle, and high school level students.

Survey Item 1

Our current elementary class size target ranges are 20-25 for Kindergarten and 1st grade, 22-27 for 2nd and 3rd grades, and 24-29 for 4th and 5th grades. Our average class size for all elementary sections, using these ranges, is 22.1. Increasing these ranges to 22-30 for Kindergarten through 2nd grade, and 24-32 for 3rd through 5th grades will raise this average to 24.5 and increase the capacity of our 283 classrooms by approximately 680 students. My opinion of increasing elementary class size is:

<u>Response (1-5)</u>	<u>Number of Responses/(Percent of Total)</u>
1 – Extremely Unfavorable	767 (42.1%)
2 – Unfavorable	722 (39.7%)
3 – Neutral or No Opinion	169 (9.3%)
4 – Favorable	134 (7.4%)
5 – Extremely Favorable	16 (0.9%)
No Response – Unanswered Item	12 (0.7%)

Average Response - 1.84

Survey Item 2

We currently provide all-day Kindergarten in 42 classrooms. Current projections indicate that we will need 47 classrooms for Kindergarten in 2009, 51 in 2012, and 56 in 2015. Returning to a half-day Kindergarten program reduces this need by 35-40%, creating space for approximately 400 more students in 2009, 450 more in 2012, and 500 more in 2015. My opinion of returning to a half-day Kindergarten program is:

<u>Response (1-5)</u>	<u>Number of Responses/(Percent of Total)</u>
1 – Extremely Unfavorable	541 (29.7%)
2 – Unfavorable	440 (24.2%)
3 – Neutral or No Opinion	368 (20.2%)
4 – Favorable	284 (15.6%)
5 – Extremely Favorable	172 (9.5%)
No Response – Unanswered Item	15 (0.8%)

Average Response - 2.50

Survey Item 3

A form of year-round schooling consists of a calendar in which the 180 days of school are arranged in four blocks of approximately nine weeks of instruction separated by vacation periods of approximately three-four weeks. These vacation periods in total are roughly equal to the traditional summer vacation, but are spread out in periods of shorter duration throughout the year. This approach has virtually no impact upon the capacity of our buildings to serve students. My opinion of this type of year-round schooling is:

<u>Response (1-5)</u>	<u>Number of Responses/(Percent of Total)</u>
1 – Extremely Unfavorable	524 (28.8%)
2 – Unfavorable	416 (22.9%)
3 – Neutral or No Opinion	313 (17.2%)
4 – Favorable	375 (20.6%)
5 – Extremely Favorable	176 (9.7%)
No Response – Unanswered Item	16 (0.9%)

Average Response - 2.59

Survey Item 3a

If this year-round schooling approach was offered at selected schools on an optional basis, would you be inclined to have your student(s) participate?

<u>Response (Yes, Possibly, No)</u>	<u>Number of Responses/(Percent of Total)</u>
Yes	316 (17.4%)
Possibly	546 (30%)
No	825 (45.3%)
No Response – Unanswered Item	133 (7.3%)

Survey Item 4

In another year-round schooling format, buildings are used for instruction nearly every week day throughout the entire calendar year. At any given time, approximately 75% of the students assigned to a school are in class while the other 25% are on vacation. Other than significant holidays and a short summer break, no common period would exist during which all students were on vacation at the same time. This approach increases the capacity of buildings by 33%. For example, a building designed to accommodate 600 students will be able to serve 800 students in this format. My opinion of this type of year-round schooling is:

<u>Response (1-5)</u>	<u>Number of Responses/(Percent of Total)</u>
1 – Extremely Unfavorable	556 (30.5%)
2 – Unfavorable	528 (29.0%)
3 – Neutral or No Opinion	302 (16.6%)
4 – Favorable	258 (14.2%)
5 – Extremely Favorable	56 (3.1%)
No Response – Unanswered Item	120 (6.6%)

Average Response - 2.25

Survey Item 4a

If this year-round schooling approach was offered at selected schools on an optional basis, would you be inclined to have your student(s) participate?

<u>Response (Yes, Possibly, No)</u>	<u>Number of Responses/(Percent of Total)</u>
Yes	183 (10.1%)
Possibly	457 (25.1%)
No	1002 (55.1%)
No Response – Unanswered Item	178 (9.8%)

Survey Item 5

A “split shift” schedule basically provides for one-half of all students to attend school in the morning and the other one-half to attend school in the afternoon. An example would be 7:00 am-12:00 pm and 12:30-5:30 pm. Virtually twice as many students could be served with the same building capacity. Instructional time would almost certainly be reduced. My opinion of a “split shift” schedule is:

<u>Response (1-5)</u>	<u>Number of Responses/(Percent of Total)</u>
1 – Extremely Unfavorable	919 (50.5%)
2 – Unfavorable	482 (26.5%)
3 – Neutral or No Opinion	167 (9.2%)
4 – Favorable	107 (5.9%)
5 – Extremely Favorable	26 (1.4%)
No Response – Unanswered Item	119 (6.5%)

Average Response - 1.73

Comments or Suggestions Regarding Growth

Of the 1820 survey respondents, 531 (29.2%) provided additional comments. Primary comment themes included, but were not limited to:

- requests for additional research and/or information sharing prior to implementing any of the ideas described in the survey instrument;
- justification for “extremely unfavorable” and “unfavorable” responses to survey items;
- input regarding potential referenda efforts;
- support of a traditional school vacation schedule; and
- concerns regarding the impact of ideas described in the survey instrument upon child care options.

Note: Percentages and averages have been rounded.