

MOSCOW SCHOOL DISTRICT:

SCHOOL CLOSURE AND
REDUCTION IN FORCE



AGENDA

- Please sign in if you are planning to testify.
- What are the proposals?
- Why are we doing this?
- What are some of the challenges?
- Frequently asked Questions and Answers
- Public Comment/Dialogue



BIG PICTURE

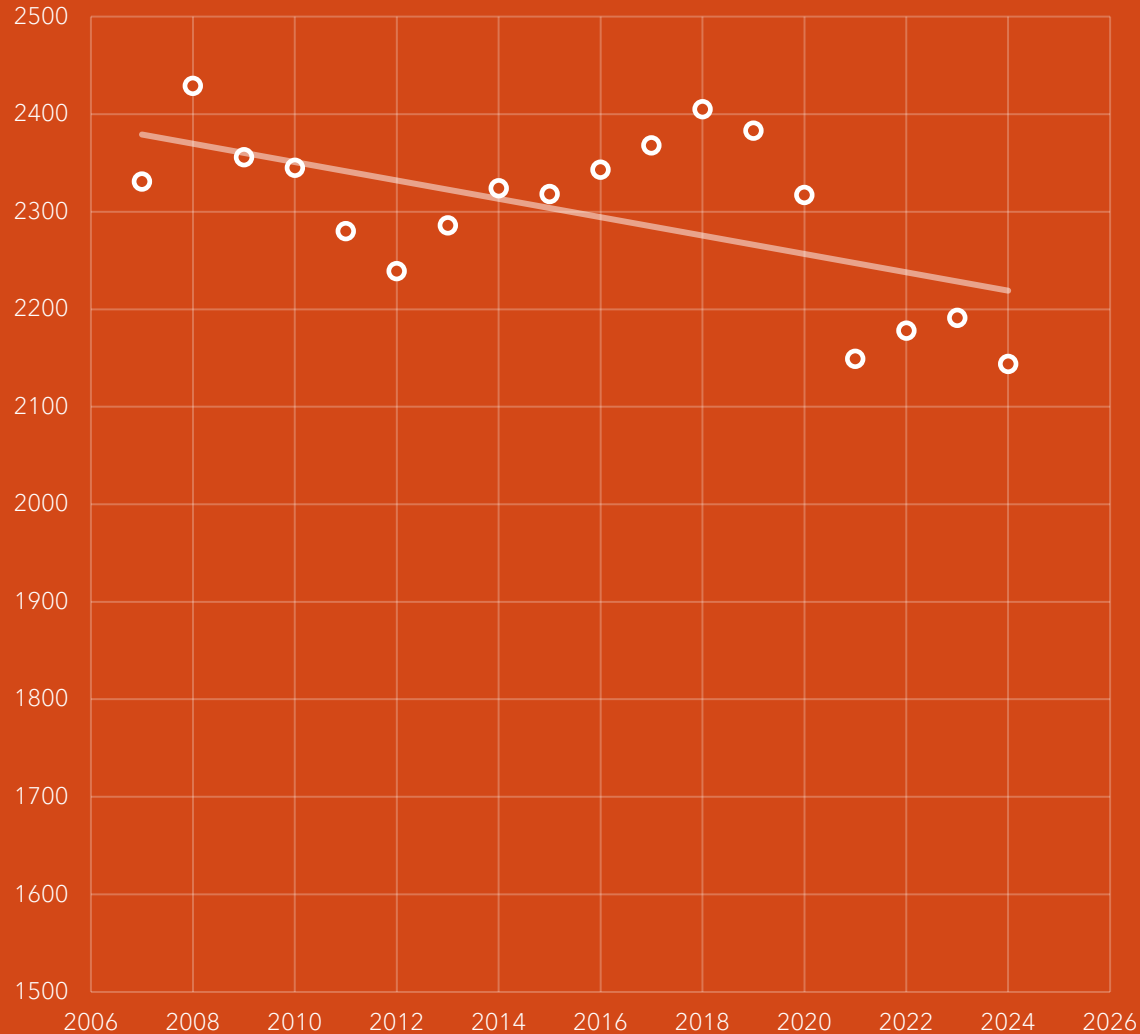
- Aging and educationally deficient facilities and infrastructure in an environment of flat to decreasing enrollment.
- An obligation to commit fully as a district to providing all day Kindergarten and robust literacy interventions
- A deficit of Career and Technical opportunities for our High School and Middle School students
- A need to grow our existing community partnerships and to better integrate ourselves into our community.



PROPOSAL PART 1 ELEMENTARY REDUCTION IN FORCE



MOSCOW SCHOOL DISTRICT #281 - HISORICAL ENROLLMENT



DECLINING ENROLLMENT

1. District wide enrollment has dropped
2. Elementary enrollment has dropped
3. This has not been a cliff (other than COVID) but has been slow
4. Our Special Education, ESL and Literacy Intervention students have not declined
5. The quality of teaching and learning remains at a high level!

A QUICK PAUSE

- Charters and school choice are certainly part of the educational landscape.
- Choice in all forms tends to filter out students and families but doesn't necessarily lead to higher performance.
- We take every kid that walks through our doors.
- I believe the Moscow School District is the highest quality form of education in this town!
- We have to compete and demonstrate to all that we have a superior product.
- To compete we have to refocus our resources.
- We have a nearly \$12Million dollar supplemental levy that we receive every year without a vote.
- The state legislature continues to make it more difficult to pass a levy or bond.
- Dates are restricted, language is severely restricted, and bond passage rates are the highest bar in the nation.





CLASSROOM SIZE DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE... BUT...

Effect size of:

Classroom size reduction 0.21

Strong classroom cohesion 0.42

School Finances 0.21

Early years interventions 0.44

Music Programs 0.37

Drama/arts programs 0.38

Acceleration programs 0.68

Enrichment programs 0.53

Behavior Intervention 0.62

*INTERVENTIONS FOR STUDENTS
WITH LEARNING NEEDS 0.77*

And more!

AGREED UPON CLASSROOM STRUCTURE

1.13 Case Load

In the interest of a sound learning environment, the Moscow School District No. 281 shall endeavor to maintain classroom sizes based on the following guidelines for maximum number of students:

K-1	22 per classroom
2-3	23 per classroom
4-5	26 per classroom

CURRENT STUDENT:CLASSROOM RATIOS

CURRENT STUDENT:CLASSROOM

- Kindergarten - 18.2 (83%)
- First Grade - 19.3 (88%)
- Second Grade - 17 (74%)
- Third Grade - 17.9 (78%)
- Fourth Grade - 18.9 (73%)
- Fifth Grade - 18.8 (72%)

NEGOTIATED STUDENT:CLASSROOM

- Kindergarten - 22
- First Grade - 22
- Second Grade - 23
- Third Grade - 23
- Fourth Grade - 26
- Fifth Grade - 26

IN ALL DECISIONS THERE ARE POTENTIAL POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES

*My job as a leader of this district is to
present you with a plan that will be net
positive for all and will position our district
for future improvement and success!*



PROS AND CONS OF A REDUCTION IN FORCE

Pro - Resulting financial savings can be applied in meaningful ways

- Future Facility Construction
- Future Facility Renovations/Repair
- Increased investment in impactful instructional areas
- Stabilized funding for District emphasized programs (All day K)
- An opportunity to review, contract OR expand existing district programs and to grow and develop new opportunities for our students..

Con - loss of high-quality certified staff and increase in classroom size

- Potential loss of staff morale with change
 - Job loss -even theoretical job loss - is a huge stress
 - Fear of being overwhelmed with more students.
- If class sizes become too large can result in learning lost
- Displaced Students and families
- Potential loss of parent and community moral - "losing students, failing schools, etc."

THE BOTTOM LINE

I believe that it is possible to reduce the number of classroom teachers that we currently have at the elementary level while maintaining the quality of instruction in our district and generating savings that can be applied to the long term health of the district and to increasing student performance.



IF IT IS BENEFICIAL TO UNDERGO
A REBALANCING AND
ELEMENTARY REDUCTION OF
FORCE -

*Would it be possible to fit the remaining
elementary classrooms into 3 buildings
instead of 4?*



NET IMPACT OF REDUCTION IN FORCE

3 classroom positions and 1 specialist position

Board would need to make a motion declaring a Reduction in force due to "Substantial reduction in total pupil enrollment" for the 3 classroom positions

And due to a "discontinuance by the Board of Trustees of a particular type of teaching service" due to the closure of Russell (Part 2) for the 1 specialist position.



PROPOSAL PART 2 CLOSURE OF RUSSELL ELEMENTARY



THE CHALLENGES OF RUSSELL ELEMENTARY

- 96 year old building
- Not ADA compliant and not even close. Active OCR complaint.
- Past solutions have involved transportation of students to another elementary but have not addressed parent, family or community member access.
- Difficult to navigate regardless of disabling conditions.
- Built in 1928, last renovation 1971, any changes would require update to 2024 standards.



THE CHALLENGES OF RUSSELL ELEMENTARY PT.2

- Annual cost of operation ~ \$50,000
 - *This is slightly less than an FTE position*
- Asbestos (likely original) flooring is at end of life and will need to be remediated and abated.
- Difficult to navigate regardless of disabling conditions.
- Built in 1928, last renovation 1971, any changes would require update to 2024 standards.
- Lack of green spaces



THE CHALLENGES OF RUSSELL ELEMENTARY

- Most major maintenance throughout Russell has been deferred for the last decade plus. (Roofing-flooring-playground-etc.)
- Investment in new projects – like potential electrical and HVAC must be considered
 - *McDonald HVAC project is \$2.2 Million, does the district want to invest this much in this building to provide equitable experience?*
- Neither West Park or Russell has current space for 2 classrooms of K-5 like Lena (2) or McDonald(3). Neither site is ideal but is Russell a good space /building for expansion?
- Equity of experience for elementary students. Other students do not transition to a new building



A COUPLING OF TWO CONCEPTS

1. If a reduction of force is a needed step to allow us to refocus our investments
2. Closing 4 classrooms would result in a reduction of space that is necessary
3. There is now space at the 3 other sites to house all of the classrooms

The long term feasibility of operating the Russell Elementary school is difficult at best due to multiple factors and the operation of a 4th elementary is similar in cost to an additional teaching position.

- Frees up a physical asset for improve decision making
- Concentrates available resources (nursing, ExL, Sped)
- Meets the needs of our current and future students and prepares our district for success

PROPOSAL PART 3
SHIFT WEST PARK
ELEMENTARY TO A K-5
BUILDING



WEST PARK K-5 CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Ideal model is 3 K-5 classrooms per grade level at McDonald and 2 classrooms per grade level at Lena Whitmore AND a 3rd Elementary – The New West Park
- If you subtract out space needed for Special Education, ESL, ExL, Music, and Title I we simply do not have quite enough space for this.
- My initial proposal is to have 5th grade students attend Lena and McDonald. Other options we are exploring include:
 - *Changing grade level that would move (K vs 5th).*
 - *Creating an All K/PreK school at West Park or McDonald*
 - *Purchasing 1 or two portable classrooms*
 - *Consolidating some special services into 1 room and creating a single 5th grade room*
- Equity of experience for elementary students. Currently only Russell and West Park Students transition to a new building



STAFF MOVEMENT

Grade	West Park/Russell	McDonald	Lena
K	2 positions	3 positions	2 positions
1 109	2 positions	2 positions	1 position
2 155	2 positions	3 positions	2 positions
3 136	2 positions	3 positions	2 positions
	CAT 1 position not advertised		
4 143	2 positions	2 positions	2 positions
5 132	1 position	3 positions	2 positions
	LOA - not filled		

- All classified staff will be retained and Russell staff will be shifted to new buildings and potentially new duties.
- Reassignments and Balancing Needs
 - Title I - Literacy
 - Special Education
 - Extended Learning
 - School Psychologist
 - Enrichment - Reduced and Transferred
 - Nursing
 - Library

Each one of these conversations is an opportunity to improve what we are doing. This is a part that makes me most excited!

STUDENT MOVEMENT

Grade 24-25	Lena			McDonald			WP/Russ			Total	Classrooms Needed	WP Classes	Mc Classes	Lena Classes
	HZ	OE	Total	HZ	OE	Total	HZ	OE	Total					
K											7	2	3	2
1	19	3WP	<u>22</u>	34	6	<u>40</u>	44	3	<u>47</u>	109	5	2 Move all 3 OE to McD	2	1
2	39	5	<u>44</u>	50	7WP	<u>57</u>	53	1Mc	<u>54</u>	155	7	2 Move 8 to Mc	3	2
3	33	5	<u>38</u>	37	5R	<u>42</u>	56		<u>56</u>	136	7	2 Move 10 to Mc	3	2
4	39	6R	<u>45</u>	40	6R	<u>46</u>	50	2Mc	<u>52</u>	143	6	2	2	2
5	30	10	<u>40</u>	46	9R	<u>55</u>	37		<u>37</u>	132	6	2 Move 10 to Mc & 27 to Lena	3	3

Overall, just 7% of our student population is being asked to move
 Movement decisions based on Open Enrollment, volunteer, siblings, address
 Zones may be shifted over time. If we add a 5th grade at Russell it would be less than 4%

ADMINISTRATIVE SHIFTS



Lena and McDonald Principals remain in positions



Continue process for identifying, selecting and hiring Middle School Principal



Assign Mrs. Sletteland to new West Park Elementary as 1.0 FTE



Keep Mr. Smith as Paradise Creek Regional High School Principal and reassign new duties as a District-wide Career Technical and Community Engagement director.



New duties will include development of K-12 Career and Technical Programming, development of Community-School engagement programs, School Nurse program, Adventure Club, etc!!



We are actively pursuing grant opportunities to fund this position fully for a few years. I am confident that long term this position will be a net financial positive for the district.

DOES THIS HAVE TO BE DONE
RIGHT NOW?
WHY NOT WAIT FOR ANOTHER
YEAR?

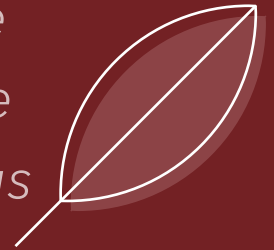
I am presenting this proposal not with the argument that we are facing a disaster or emergency. If denied, we could maintain the status quo for now.

We are, however, at a crossroads and if we want to BEST serve our students, I believe that this is the right decision.



IS RUSSELL CRUMBLING TO THE GROUND AND UNSAFE RIGHT NOW?

No - We can continue to maintain safe and effective instruction at Russell in the short term if needed. The district will need to decide relatively quickly if the building is worth investing in to make it safe and productive in the future. This is not an emergency but the status quo at Russell is not sustainable. Avoidance of the issue only makes future decisions more difficult



WHAT ABOUT TRANSPORTATION? HOW WILL THIS IMPACT FAMILIES THAT CURRENTLY WALK TO RUSSELL?

Certainly there is a potential negative impact for students who live very close to Russell. Overall Russell is difficult to bus to. Transportation department believes that this will simplify bussing of students

My Map



WILL THE REDUCTION IN FORCE AND INCREASE IN CLASSROOM SIZE HARM STUDENTS OR LOWER THE QUALITY OF TEACHING/LEARNING?

No – We can rebalance our staffing and still maintain appropriate and effective classroom sizes while freeing up resources to make targeted investments for our current and future students. This isn't just about saving money but about an opportunity to apply the resources we have more effectively.



ARE WE FACING A FINANCIAL EMERGENCY?

No, although there are some future financial challenges. Loss of enrollment, coupled with the shift back to ADA from enrollment has and will continue to produce a reduction in state funding units. This change allows us to refocus financial resources and also consider future facilities projects.



WHY IS JUST THE ELEMENTARY FACING A REDUCTION? WHAT ABOUT ADMIN AND SECONDARY BUILDINGS?

*The Middle School has absorbed positions through attrition over the
last several years*

The High School enrollment has remained more resilient so far

*We are concentrating administrative forces and refocusing our
investments in admin to get more benefit for our staff and students.*



IS IT POSSIBLE TO AVOID THE FORMAL REDUCTION IN FORCE PROCESS?

It is possible but complicated. There are currently 3 positions at the MS and 1 elementary music education positions open as well as a HS math. Any elementary teacher who applies internally and is selected could reduce the total number of reductions. These determinations would have to be in the best interest of the middle school and the district.

The board could also consider some form of an "early retirement" pay out. At your direction I could put together a plan for this.

One other consideration is to open the above the identified positions prior to the actual RIF decision. All decisions would be made in the best interest of students. Any elementary teachers selected would reduce the Reduction in Force.



WHAT ARE THE PLANS FOR THE RUSSELL BUILDING AND CAMPUS?

There are a wide variety of options that we can now begin to explore from remodel/rebuild to sell and invest for a future elementary building.



WHAT WOULD BE THE PROCESS TO DETERMINE WHICH STAFF MEMBERS WILL NOT HAVE A CONTRACT NEXT YEAR?

The administrative team has been working on a rubric that considers the 5 factors in the negotiated agreement. Impacted staff would be notified the day after the board determines a RIF is necessary that they will be on the list to not have their contract renewed and their ranking on that list.



FACTORS FOR REDUCTION IN FORCE RUBRIC

- Number of areas of certifications and endorsements
- Number of years of certified experience in the District
- Teacher evaluation – including compliance with professional standards and conduct
- Contribution and/or involvement in leadership positions, extra-curricular or co-curricular positions
- Educational attainment

The final rubric will be shared with staff prior to implementation. Upon Board declaration of RIF, staff will be notified the next day of the intent of the district to either renew contract or not renew. Staff would then be able to apply for an in-district transfer if available.

I will open up the current MS and Elementary positions to give staff an opportunity to put in for a transfer prior to the RIF board decision.

OTHER QUESTIONS REGARDING RIF

- Lots of questions and uncertainty about the rubric... This will be shared with all staff.
- Why not include Title I or Special Education?
- Why not include Middle School since Elementary is K-8 Certification?
- Will staff members who are not issued a contract have recall rights?
- What if growth occurs and enrollment increases?
- What about supporting teachers who will be required to move classrooms?

WHAT THIS IS NOT ABOUT



Saving a
buck



Comparing
to others



Admitting
defeat



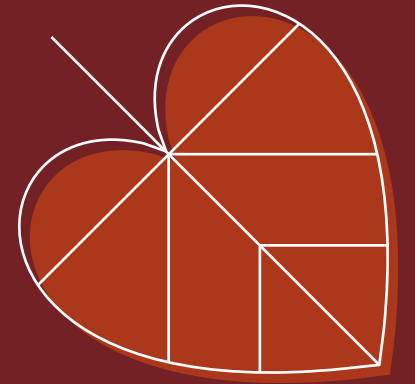
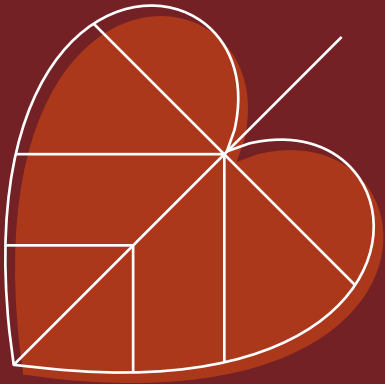
Giving up



Being Tricky

WHAT THIS IS ABOUT

- Serving our community more efficiently
- Serving our students and families more effectively
- Focusing our resources on students
- Preparing for future facilities
- Improving equity
- Creating a sustainable and consistent base
- We never filter! We have the best product!



BIG PICTURE – WHAT WILL THIS ALLOW US TO DO?

- Renew our focus on an aging educational infrastructure. Maintain existing buildings while planning to build future structures and educational environments. We are WAY behind
- Renewal of our focus on what is best for individual students. We have that focus, but change like this pushes the conversation to the next level.
- *What are the important things we do? What should we invest more in? What should we invest less in? How can we demonstrate that we are the premier educational product?*
- If we want to survive and thrive we MUST grow the Career Technical and Community based opportunities for our students!
- The status quo will give us more of the same.





THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY

Just in the time since my formal announcement, I have had the opportunity to meet with staff members of all levels and experience and backgrounds and we are having conversations that weren't possible before about how we can use this situation as a catalyst for positive change!

Parents have reached out as well and while some have expressed concerns many are supportive and recognize that the only path to equity for our students is through a change in the status quo.

THE RUSSELL BUILDING HAS
SERVED THE STUDENTS OF
MOSCOW FOR NEARLY 100 YEARS!



We love Russell!



WHAT ARE WE DOING TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT 100 YEARS?

- *We are facing flat to declining enrollment*
- *We have an obligation to serve all who come*
- *We need to maintain some old buildings and invest in new*
- *We will remain the best choice for education in Moscow!*
- *We have to be here and ready to serve!*



THANK YOU



*The Moscow School District commits all
assets, facilities, time and energy to provide
students with the tools needed to become
positive members of society.*

All are welcome to testify!

- Please approach the microphone if you would like to speak
 - Identify yourself
- Please keep comments respectful
 - 3 minutes maximum
- Superintendent may respond to address concerns, but the board may not respond
 - No decision will be made at tonight's meeting. At the end of testimony, the board will adjourn the meeting

COMMUNITY TESTIMONY

