

American Preparatory Academy – LV New Campus Configuration Plan

Executive summary

During the 19/20 school year, our enrollment was 1,639, whereas our enrollment for 20/21 is currently 2,189. Of the 550-student increase, 78% will be in grades K-3. Given this, we think that aggregating similarly aged peers onto a single campus makes the most sense.

The primary benefit of doing so is that it will enhance the **ongoing teamwork/communication needed for instructional progress** as a result of the close physical proximity of *departmental* colleagues. As one example, consider that PLC meetings will not require faculty and staff from one campus having to go to the other campus (which would be the case if the school were to house interdepartmental teachers on both campuses).

While the above observation would hold true even if the school was not increasing its enrollment, we view it as all the more vital because of the additional faculty and staff we are hiring to serve the growth in enrollment. In grades K-3, for example, the school will need 21 total teachers, more than half of which will be new to our school. In Kindergarten itself, the ratio is even more pronounced; there will be one returning teacher and three new teachers. (In contrast, the need for additional teachers in other grades is not as great.)

A second benefit to the school can be realized in terms of simple **operational efficiencies** such as curriculum inventory and distribution.

Lastly, in terms of **physical space considerations**, the new campus itself has a maximum classroom capacity of 880. Thus, by aggregating grades K-3 onto it, approximately 74% of the building's total capacity will be utilized on opening day (which is itself a form of efficiency), while simultaneously allowing the school to enroll additional students in those grades (within the current parameters of our charter).

In the pages that follow, each of the preceding three rationales are explained further.

Ongoing teamwork/communication needed for instructional progress

A primary advantage of having all K-3 teachers and the K-3 Assistant Principal in the same building is that it facilitates frequent team discussions which leads to better communication and a more tailored focus on campus culture. In our school, frequent team discussions include, but are not limited to, the following four examples.

First, the school holds weekly departmental team meetings every Thursday. The purpose of these meetings is to foster open discussion between department teachers and leaders for such matters as effective teaching methods and strategies. In addition, these meetings sometimes include

American Preparatory Academy – LV New Campus Configuration Plan

training and discussions centered on how well the department is achieving its instructional goals. Our school also holds grade-level team meetings every Wednesday. In these meetings, teachers in each particular grade meet to discuss strategies for enhancing instruction within our curriculum as well as to share best teaching practices.

Second, our school is investing considerable resources (in both time and money) in training our instructional leadership team to utilize the seven levers in *Leverage Leadership 2.0* and *Teach Like a Champion 2.0*. (Further discussion on the addition of these resources to our program appears in section 4 of this charter amendment request.) We think that the ability of these leaders to provide consistent coaching to teachers will be enhanced by aggregating departmental grade levels by campus.

Third, one result of the school's transition to self-management is that it is reconfiguring its organizational chart *and adding instructional leadership positions*. For example, we will now have an academic coordinator/coach (a position held by licensed teachers in our school) *and* an assistant principal for each department as follows: K-3, 4-6, 7-8, and 9-12). Accordingly, locating the K-3 department at the new campus will obviate the need for that department's instructional leaders to split their time between two campuses. Not only is this a more efficient use of time, it also promotes greater consistency in discipline, coaching and best practices within each campus.

Lastly, sixth-grade students and staff members will be located in the same campus with our Jr. High students. Co-locating sixth-grade students at the same campus as seventh and eighth grade students will facilitate better collaboration between our sixth-grade team and our Junior High teachers (grades 7-8). One specific goal of this increased collaboration is to ensure proper vertical alignment to NV standards across grades 6-8. In addition, co-locating sixth-grade students in the same building as seventh and eighth-grade students may help make the transition from sixth to seventh grade easier.

Operational efficiencies

There are simple operational efficiencies that we think will arise out of locating grade level departments as articulated. One example readily serves to illustrate this: it will be more efficient for our curriculum/inventory coordinator to account for, maintain and distribute textbooks and other school assets because each campus will store its own classroom resources.

Physical space considerations

Classroom design also plays a role in the decision to arrange the campuses in the manner proposed. First, virtually all of the classrooms at the new campus were intentionally designed as

American Preparatory Academy – LV New Campus Configuration Plan

rectangles. This accommodates more front facing desks while also providing additional space at both the front and back of each classroom. The smaller width will also better accommodate younger children, as each of their desks requires less space.

Second, the new campus was not designed to include a designated cafeteria space. While not problematic for grades K-5 because they have historically eaten lunch in their classrooms, we do use our two cafeterias throughout the year for our students in 7-12 *and for part of the year with our sixth-grade students to help assimilate them into the Jr. High routines and expectations.* Thus, continuing to locate our sixth-grade students on our existing campus is consistent with our practices.

Finally, the new campus was originally designed to include a band/orchestra space for students in upper grades that we can instead, utilize to the benefit of our K-3 students. For example, we can easily configure this room as a self-contained classroom for students with special needs-