

TO: BOE
FR: DAN
RE: GLCS QUARTERLY REPORT
DT: 2/26/14

I had reported to you the Steering Committee conducted a survey of staff, parents and residents regarding their perceptions on GLCs and the current D2 grade configuration.. Also, the committee expected a report from NIU on their research review findings.

This report contains those two pieces of summary information:

1. GLCS Survey Results
2. NIU Research Review

GLCS Survey Results

- * 346 parent/resident survey respondents
- * 89 staff respondents
- * approximately 27% of D2 parents participated
- * approximately 52% of D2 staff participated

To the question: *What do you believe to be the best learning structure for Nippersink SD K-5 Students?*

<u>Group</u>	<u>Current Structure</u>	<u>Grade Level Centers</u>
All parents/residents	51.2% (177)	29.2% (101)
D2 teachers/staff	39.3 (35)	40.4 (36)
RGS Parents	54.5 (61)	27.7 (31)
SGE Parents	62.9 (56)	22.5 (20)
K-5 Parents	58.3 (116)	25.1 (50)
NMS Parents	45.7 (48)	31.4 (33)
D2 Parents All	53.7 (131)	27.5 (67)
RB Parents	36 (31)	40.7 (45)
NMS & RB Parents	43.8 (70)	33.1 (53)
Residents w/ former students	45.9 (17)	29.7 (11)
Residents w/expecting students	84.6 (11)	0 (2)
Residents w/no children	30.8 (4)	38.5 (5)
Residents All	50.8 (31)	26.2 (16)
K-5 Teachers	42.9 (21)	32.7 (16)
NMS Teachers	13.3 (2)	66.7 (10)
D2 Teachers All	35.9 (23)	40.6 (26)
K-5 Support Staff	60 (9)	20 (3)
6-8 Support Staff	50 (3)	50 (3)
D2 Support Staff All	57.1 (12)	28.6 (6)

To the question: ***You Selected "Current Structure". Please rank the three top reasons.....What aspects of the current system do you value most?***

Parents/Residents

1. I would like my child to attend the school closest to my home.
2. I wish to keep k-5 siblings together at the same school.
3. A change may result with an increase in bus ride time for my child.

Another popular response:

4. Upper grades provide an opportunity to mentor younger students.

Staff

1. Would not require an additional school transition for students.
2. Upper grades provide an opportunity to mentor younger students.
3. Keep K-5 siblings together at the same school.

To the question: You Selected "Grade Level Centers". ***Please rank the three top reasons.....What aspects of the Grade Level Center configuration do you value most?***

Parent/Residents

1. Provide greater consistency of curricular and instructional practice.
2. Increase collaboration for all teachers within a single grade level.
3. Allows for more efficient scheduling, staffing, and consistent class size.

Staff

1. Provide greater consistency of curricular and instructional practice.
2. Increase collaboration for all teachers within a single grade level.
3. Allows for more efficient scheduling, staffing, and consistent class size.

Another popular response:

4. Allows for consistent specialized interventions for all students.

NIU Research Review

Dr. Kelly Summers authored the professional review. Rather than paraphrase or summarize her review, actual quotes are shared. A few aspects to highlight:

* "...an examination of school district data from the Illinois Interactive Report Card shows that even within the state of Illinois, there are a multitude of ways that districts configure grades. Some districts follow a K-1, 2-3, 4-6, and 7-8 model whereas others have K-8 buildings. Still others configure grades in different ways including K-4 buildings, 6th grade only buildings, and 5-8 buildings."

* "What is interesting is that even among these top performing districts, most of which have large per pupil expenditures, there are multiple ways in which these districts have been configured. "

* "...research has not yet provided answers on the best way to configure grades, there is growing evidence suggesting that school transitions may negatively impact student growth and achievement."

* "When it comes to answering the question, 'what is the best grade configuration for students', there is no clear answer. Grade configuration in and of itself does not appear to have a significant impact on academic achievement but research tells us that it is important to minimize the number of major school transitions."

* "Reimagining grade configurations can have many unintended consequences. ...several considerations for districts to consider regarding grade configurations; the cost and length of student travel, impacts on parental involvement, the number of students at each grade level and how that impacts class groupings, impacts on school climate the number of school transitions for students, the opportunities for interaction within and between grade levels, the influence of older students on younger ones, and building design. Even though the research on the "best" grade configuration is inconclusive, research is clear on the negative impact of transitions. If changing grade configurations, a district should strongly consider ways in which to systematically minimize the impact of frequent transitions for all students. In addition, the professional development teachers receive should be ongoing, job-embedded, strategic, systematic, and focused."