

AGENDA SUMMARY SHEET

Agenda Item: Summary of Proposed Changes at Council Bluffs High Schools, 2008-2009

Meeting Date: March 25, 2008

Department: Office of Superintendent

Description: This report outlines the changes that we are working to implement at Thomas Jefferson High School, Abraham Lincoln High School, Kaneshville High School, and the Harmon Tucker Career Center for next school year.

Action Desired: _____ Approval X Discussion _____ Information Only

Overview: Several recommendations came out of the Dropout Summit meetings that were held during first semester of this year. The changes in this report relate to recommendation #6: **Develop a system of engaging, future-focused secondary schools using Tucker Center and Kaneshville School as flexible opportunities to help meet varying needs of students from Jefferson and Lincoln High Schools.**

Recommendation: The Board should understand the changes that are being proposed and provide feedback to the educators who are working to implement them.

Future Considerations or Plans: Work on this strategy is not yet complete. There are “next steps” described in the text of the report. In addition to the continuing work on this strategy, district administrators and teachers need to continue their work to implement other recommendations from the Dropout Summit, including the following:

- Prevent failure by intervening early
- Increase flexibility to award full or partial credit in multiple ways, times, locations.
- Develop and implement a system to “drop” students when attendance suggests they have moved from category 2 (potential dropout) to category 1 (dropout).
- Increase mentoring services to students at risk.
- Compare graduation requirements in Council Bluffs with other UEN districts. Decide if there is a benefit to offering multiple diploma tracks.
- Coordinate intervention efforts so that a clear and concise process of helping students is articulated and implemented.

Summary of Proposed Changes at Council Bluffs High Schools, 2008-2009

“If we truly believed that every child could learn under the proper circumstances, we would be relentless in the search of those circumstances...” “If we truly believed that all schools could ensure the success of all children, then the failure of even a single child would be cause for great alarm and immediate, forceful intervention.”
(Slavin, Madden, Dolan, Wasik, 1996)

Background information

During first semester, 2007-2008, there were four meetings designated as Dropout Summits. Participants developed 12 proposals aimed at reducing the district’s dropout rate in both the short term and for the future. One proposal stated that the District develop a system of engaging, future-focused secondary schools using Tucker Center and Kanesville School as flexible opportunities to help meet varying needs of students from Jefferson and Lincoln High Schools.

A separate “High School Redesign Committee” met four times to try to put specific strategies together to implement the recommendation.

Specific changes

Planned changes at Kanesville and Tucker Center are being designed to increase flexibility for students and use of alternate programs. Our goal is that the district will work together to respond to the needs of our students rather than having schools “pass” challenging student issues from one school to another school. The enclosed chart compares current procedures with those that we are proposing. In addition to the changes summarized in the chart, our committee is working on the following additional pieces:

- There should be a common course request/enrollment forms at each of the traditional high schools. It was agreed that it is logical to have separate registration forms for students who wish to attend Tucker Center and/or Kanesville.
- Students currently enrolled at Kanesville will be left on the Kanesville roles until end of this semester. The Kanesville counselor will work with a counselor from Jefferson or Lincoln to enroll current Kanesville students for 2008-2009.
- Plans are being made to develop effective ways to use the High Tech GED program (probably called the Kanesville Academic Center) for 3rd and 4th year (and beyond) high school students in the district.
- Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln High School educators will develop effective ways to intervene (“Academic Centers”) with 9th and 10th grade students who are struggling. Central office support will be provided as needed and possible. It was suggested that representatives of the two schools plan interventions together and that the district have one agreed-upon “pyramid of interventions” for the high schools to use.

- There is a need for a consistent message about the upcoming changes. The superintendent met with students (March 12) at Kaneshville and will meet with parents if a parent meeting is desired. The other high schools would like to have a presentation (power point or streaming video or interactive flash) available on their building web site or the district web site.)
- ESC representatives will be available as needed to meet with staff groups from Tucker Center, Kaneshville, Jefferson and Lincoln as requested by building leaders.
- Martha Bruckner and Diane Ostrowski will work with our Nonpareil reporter to encourage a story or series of stories about the planned changes. If needed, a brochure or graphic about the changes and/or about the pyramid of interventions will be developed.
- There is a need for teachers from Jefferson, Lincoln, and Kaneshville to work together over the summer (with additional pay) to plan project-based activities for the blocked classes planned for Kaneshville. Some of the projects may be useful at the traditional school centers as we work toward increased rigor and relevance of our curriculum.

Recommendations for the future:

- We need to decide the impact of staffing changes at high school and support sites and design a way to fill those spaces.
- We need to continue to explore the possibility of expanding the school day in some or all sites to afford extra opportunities for credit recovery or embellishment. We need to make final plans for credit recovery and “night school,” including continued and expanded use of the Apex program.
- We need to decide activities students can complete to earn partial credit with a plan for how the student work can result in credits toward graduation when in transition. Perhaps students can have a list of acceptable projects that could be selected for work while in transition programs.
- We need to review and refine consistent ways through which students can earn “work credit” at any of the secondary sites.
- We may want to look for ways through which students can study for and complete the Asset Test during summer time.
- We must “Develop and implement a system to “drop” students when attendance suggests they have moved from category 2 (potential dropout, critical) to category 1 (dropout) and from category 3 (potential dropout) to category 2 (potential dropout, critical). This was a major recommendation of the Dropout Summit meetings.

The next meeting of the High School Redesign Committee will be Friday, May 9.

KANESVILLE		
Program Component	Current	Future
Philosophy	<p>Kanesville is seen as a separate high school.</p> <p>Students are listed as Kanesville students. Their achievement and graduation levels were figured independently. Rates for both have been lower, but it is known that most of the students had previously failed at a different school.</p> <p>Students generally attend Kanesville only; a few students also attend Tucker Center or a traditional high school.</p>	<p>Kanesville will primarily be seen as a credit recovery center supporting students from other schools.</p> <p>Students will be listed as Jefferson or Lincoln students. They will impact the achievement and graduation levels at those high schools.</p> <p>Students would be encouraged to attend Kanesville and/or their home school as most appropriate.</p>
Curriculum	<p>Individual packets and group learning have been a component of this program.</p>	<p>Engaging curriculum will be developed that focuses on project based learning. Individual learning opportunities will be offered through APEX.</p>
Schedule	<p>Students generally attend school for half days. During 07-08, some students have been encouraged to attend full days.</p> <p>Classes are scheduled for 40 minutes a day with no passing time allowed. Students can earn a quarter-credit for each session. There are 8 sessions a year.</p>	<p>Students will generally attend school for full days. Students with specific needs will (rarely) be allowed part time schedules.</p> <p>Classes will be scheduled for approximately 85 minutes a day. Students can earn a full credit for each quarter. There are 4 quarters a year.</p>

KANESVILLE		
Program Component	Current	Future
Credit Accrual	Students can fulfill all graduation requirements at Kanessville. Due to different regulations for alternative schools, there were nontraditional routes to gaining credit in some areas such as physical education.	Students will be able to fulfill many graduation requirements, but there will definitely be times when students will need to return to their “home” school for some courses.
Placement	Students generally choose to go to Kanessville, usually attending there after failing at another school. Students could come to Kanessville from all grade levels, although for the past year freshmen students have not been allowed.	Current Kanessville students would be individually scheduled, allowing them to remain in Kanessville as much as possible, although there would be times when students would return to home school. Students NEW to Kanessville will only be scheduled if home counselor and KV counselor agree that the assignment is most appropriate. Students would come to Kanessville after two years of schooling. In rare cases, a 2nd year high school student would be allowed to attend.
Transportation	Transportation is rarely provided, generally only when students attend Kanessville and Tucker Center.	Transportation would be provided regularly to and from Kanessville. The goal would be to transport students at throughout the day.
Diploma and Graduation Ceremonies	Students receive a Kanessville diploma and attend a separate graduation ceremony.	Students will receive a diploma from the home school and attend that school’s graduation ceremony. Additional celebrations will be held for students from Kanessville.
GED Options	The High Tech GED Center, operated by IWCC but paid for by CBCSD funding, meets with small numbers of students to help them prepare to pass the GED.	The Kanessville Academic Center, still operated by IWCC, will work individually with students in transition between sites or programs as well as help students prepare to pass the GED.

**THOMAS JEFFERSON AND
ABRAHAM LINCOLN HIGH SCHOOLS**

Program Component	Current	Future
Interventions	<p>9th grade teams exist at Jefferson.</p> <p>Academic Success Centers have been implemented to meet needs of struggling students.</p>	<p>9th grade teams will exist at Jefferson and Lincoln High Schools.</p> <p>Traditional high schools will be expected to meet the needs of struggling students at the 9th and 10th grade levels.</p> <p>Academic Success Centers will be in place. Students will not be encouraged to attend Kanesville prior to year 3.</p>
Schedules	Two traditional schools have different schedules. Lincoln has an 8 period day; Jefferson has a 7 period day.	Schools will have similar breaks in middle of day to encourage movement to other sites.
Kanesville	<p>When students exit a traditional school to attend Kanesville, they are included in Kanesville achievement and dropout data, not in any data in the home school.</p> <p>Students generally leave the home school to attend Kanesville.</p> <p>Kanesville teachers work fairly independently in selecting schedule and developing courses.</p>	<p>Students will be registered as Jefferson or Lincoln students. Their achievement and drop out data will impact statistics at the home school.</p> <p>Students may attend Kanesville as they and counselors see most beneficial to their achievement. Kanesville teachers and counselor will work more closely with Jefferson and Lincoln teachers / counselors.</p>
Transportation	Transportation is not provided to Kanesville or Tucker Center.	Transportation would be provided to Kanesville and Tucker Center.
Student Classification	Students are seen as freshmen, sophomores, etc. based on number of credits completed.	Students will be seen as 1 st year, 2 nd year, 3 rd year, 4 th year students. Students may be “seniors” for more than one year but will generally be “freshmen” for only one year.

TUCKER CENTER		
	CURRENT	FUTURE
Curriculum	No core classes are held.	Core classes would be offered, and students would be encouraged to attend Tucker Center in half day increments, taking both career courses and core courses.
Schedule	Three sessions are held each day.	Four sessions will be held each day.
Transportation	Transportation is provided in the mornings.	Transportation would be provided throughout the day.