

UPDATE

Single Campus K-12 Comprehensive School Program



Issue #1

This is the first in a series of “Updates” regarding Sherman County School District’s development of a single campus K-12 comprehensive school program, slated to begin in its new facility with the start of the 2016-17 school year.

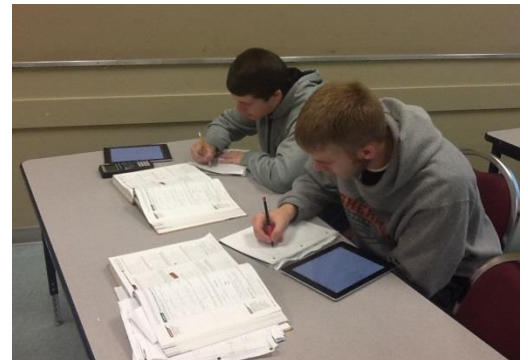
Many viewpoints exist regarding the school district’s use of its available reserves to upgrade and add to its facilities to support a single campus K-12 concept, but for educators the benefits are clear and conclusive – a single campus school program with the possibility for flexible grade level learning environments offers both teachers and students substantial and engaging opportunities to teach and learn.

For Sherman County students, a single facility that utilizes the specific subject focus of high school teachers and the developmental orientation of elementary educators results in an optimum learning environment for student success. Also, opportunities for jointly planned rather than individually developed lessons can create superior depth and application in a collaborative school environment, giving rise to greater differentiation in instruction which is a requisite in today’s 21st Century classroom.

Additionally, our single campus program is designed to allow us the flexibility to create diverse education experiences that are rich in opportunities for academics as well as career and community oriented education. Special classes in Music, Art, Agribusiness, Environmental Studies, and Horticulture are possible potential offerings, from Kindergarten through the 12th grade, along with greater opportunities for extracurricular activities and sports in upgraded facilities.

Finally, the school complex, which may include elementary, middle, and high school learning platforms, enables maximum utilization of teaching and administrative staff. This allows for additional elective and learning options for students as they progress through the school, as well as the maximum utilization of the combined Sherman County Public and School Library.

On the reverse side of this “Update” is an expanded list of expected benefits. Currently, the District is reviewing proposed footprint layouts for the new school with its staff and citizen Design Committee. A contractor “request for proposals” for CMGC participation is scheduled for a “public hearing” on February 2nd, with the possible selection of a CMGC contractor by the end of February. The estimated total cost of the project is \$8.6 million, which includes substantial remodels to the existing building and a new elementary wing. Ground breaking is scheduled for early June 2015.



Sherman County School District
Working Together to Put Student Success First

Potential Educational Advantages of a K-12 Campus

- 1) Climate and culture of K-12 buildings are typically more conducive to learning. Older students are sensitive to the presence of younger children. Older students are also confronted with having their first grade teacher watch them as they travel through the hallway or come and go from school and school events. The presence for these former teachers becomes a constant reminder of the investment that the system has made in the individual student from the student's perspective, and they rise to the regular opportunity to show the former teachers that they are still making the most of their educational opportunities.
- 2) Younger children are provided with daily examples of role models in the successful middle and high school students. Tutoring programs, awards assemblies facilitated by high school students, the reward of reading with an older child or shooting hoops with a star from the high school basketball team can be strong motivators to work hard on academics and/or social skills.
- 3) Having the K-12 span at a single site allows for academic acceleration or remediation support across any grade span required to support the academic needs of each individual student. These learning opportunities can be extremely flexible, no longer limited to the first or last hours of the day. Likewise, the sharing of curriculum, library books and resources, technology tools, and science labs allow for elementary teachers and secondary teacher to "tap into" twice the resources they would otherwise have access to without physically removing either the resources or the students from the building.
- 4) Instructional support for students can be enhanced with creative space for teachers and instructional aides.
- 5) Ties to collaborate and better understand the knowledge and content requirements for each grade level.
- 6) Travel time between the two buildings will be eliminated allowing this time to be utilized for teacher training, collaboration and student behavioral support across all grade levels.
- 7) Consistent behavioral expectations and incentive programs will be set for all grade levels.
- 8) Stress for elementary students is reduced as they transitions between schools. (i.e. elementary to middle school/high school) This stress can undermine student success.
- 9) Elementary students and their parents will have greater opportunities to meet and interact with middle and high school teachers in a one school environment.
- 10) Teachers will be able to drop into an elementary classroom to ask the teacher about how they motivated a student or resolved issues with a parent.
- 11) Staff time will not be needed to prepare for the transfer of records at the same level currently required between the two school buildings.
- 12) Student behavior records/programs can be retained and continued in support of what has worked for individual student's success.
- 13) Current middle school teachers will be able to meet with elementary students to talk about the challenges and opportunities of the secondary level without having to secure a substitute teacher to provide the time.
- 14) Elementary teachers will understand what soft skills are needed by secondary students and integrate into the elementary years direct instruction of and programs to support the study skills, time management, organizational, note taking, etc. that will be needed when students reach these grades.
- 15) Parents will have a single campus at which all of their children are dropped off and picked up each day. When lunches are forgotten, bills need to be paid, doctors' appointments necessitate early withdrawal, etc., the parents can take care of all of their children regardless of their grade in school at one central location.
- 16) The presence of an older sibling on the same campus can also be a tremendous asset to the emotional needs of a younger child. When a younger sibling is hurt on the playground, gets sick and is waiting for the parent to arrive, has an emotional break-down or conflict with the teacher, the older sibling can provide reassurance, support, redirection, and/or needed encouragement.
- 17) Building and student safety is targeted for substantial improvement with this project.
- 18) This project allows for the possible conversion of the K-12 program to an elementary, middle, and high school structure, with additional instructional support at the middle and high school levels.

