

I asked Mrs. Gentry to solicit comments regarding a 7-12 configuration from the list serve that is used by Directors of Curriculum and Instruction. Here are responses that she has received to date.

Kelly-

I am Bill Anderson and I am the principal of the Sterling Junior/Senior High School. We have a K-6/7-12 configuration in our district. I have been in several school districts in my short 22 career of education. I personally think there are some real advantages to a 7-12 model. Being the principal in both buildings provides an opportunity for me to have a "thumb print" on students as they enter my building as 7th graders. I enjoy being able to prepare my 7th and 8th graders for the transition into my high school. I will often have conversations through orientation, class meetings etc., to reinforce the importance of what they are learning as being foundational for their success in high school. It also allows me to start early establishing relationships with them and having them get used to my leadership style. Also, when we have professional development time it helps to have my teachers working so closely with the high school teachers to help establish important curricular goals. I try to align schedules as closely as possible so that my 7-8 students can take advantage of the building facilities, which seems to support our district's goal of utilizing our staff across buildings more effectively.

I will be honest I have not checked into this closely, but if you have "marker" points in your required curriculum you certainly have greater flexibility with a (7-12) model to ensure students are exposed to the necessary instruction before they graduate.

Strictly coming from personal perspective, I do not embrace a true middle school model. I am grateful that our 6th graders are still down at the elementary. This fits with my thoughts that 6th graders do not have the maturational ability to handle the changes that come with 7th-8th grade.

Hope this helps!

William H. Anderson/Principal  
Sterling Public Schools

We have a Pk-12 building at Norwich and a K-8 bldg at Kingman. There really have not been any disadvantages to either configuration, though a PK-12 bldg or at least a 7-12 bldg would be helpful for staffing purposes.

Diepenbrock, Bob <[bdiepenbrock@knusd331.com](mailto:bdiepenbrock@knusd331.com)>

We do and it all works great! I used to worry about all these things, but the kids do great, they help each other and the culture is great. We have a K-12 campus. We structure separate lunch times, but they all eat breakfast together. No worries, they just all do what they need to do and we are so used to it. The older kids are always helping the younger ones and brothers and sisters can assist one another as well. Much LESS worry for parents and guardians as well.

Thank you,

Jan

Janet K. Neufeld

Superintendent  
Twin Valley USD #240

We try to keep our junior high in a separate location within the building. They have their own locker area and "hang out area" for after lunch and prior to school. I am noticing that my junior high students want to grow up more quickly when they mix in with the high school more. Therefore, I would also encourage separate lunches if possible. Work to help the high school students adjust to the junior high students being in the building.

Advantages: Sharing of teachers, saving on building costs by eliminating one building, transition to high school is much easier, one schedule,

Disadvantages: growing up too quickly, teachers adjusting to the junior high mentality when they've only worked with high school students, adjusting practice schedules if you lose a junior high gym,

Glenna Grinstead  
Chase High School  
Raymond Junior High  
Chase, Kansas 67524

We have grades 6-12 in the same building for the last 10 years and it's now working very well.

We found it's important to have specific MS and HS areas during free time, like lunch, before school, etc.

It's also important for teachers to be visible before school, during passing times, and after school to avoid conflicts in passing in the hallways.

For a class 1A school it's working well for us.

Kevin  
Kevin Schmidt <[kschmidt@usd360.com](mailto:kschmidt@usd360.com)>

USD #386 has a 7-12 building

Positives:

Staff can be shared 7-12

Older students have easier access to mentor younger students

Our experience has really been very positive.

Ryan Bradbury <[rbradbury@usd386.net](mailto:rbradbury@usd386.net)>

Kelly,

We are 7-12 and our greatest advantage is being able to share staff. The only down side I have witnessed is that they lose their identity as a junior high.

Shane Clark <[sclark@usd252.org](mailto:sclark@usd252.org)>

Hi Kelly,

I came to Concordia in 1998, and the building was already a 7-12 building. The 7-8 students really had their own wing, and were kept fairly separate from HS

students. However, we're in our 2nd year of a major change in configuration. Our 7-12 building is enormous, and we had empty classrooms, due to declining enrollment. So, we made the decision to move the 5th & 6th graders to the building.

Our 5th & 6th graders occupy the space that was previously used by 7-8. They are separate from the rest of the building, but share some common spaces; lunch room (have their own shift), library, music, gyms and art rooms. They have their own schedule, and their own principal.

We moved our 7th & 8th graders to the 2nd floor of the high school, and 9-12 used the main level. All have their own spaces, but they also share spaces similar to the 5th & 6th graders. 7-12 are on the same schedule and there is a little crossover with classes. For example, our high school business teacher teaches computer applications, so 8th graders go down stairs to that room. They share the library, cafeteria, music, art, and other elective and CTE spaces. One advantage is that we now have some classes with 8th & 9th graders together.

We have 2 principals for 7-12 and 2 counselors. And, a 3rd counselor that is 5-8. I really think our "overlapping" will help students with transitions. This also lends itself to mentoring by older students, and helps our "Bigs in Schools" program. High School kids didn't seem to mind, as long as they got their traditional "senior" lockers.

I am happy to answer any specific questions. But, this has worked well for us. I'm sure there are some "territory" issues, but I have had no complaints about the configuration since the first of last year.

This change actually eliminated some travel between schools for some of our elective teachers.

Please call if you have any questions.  
Bev Mortimer, Superintendent  
USD 333 Concordia

Kelly,

For over seventy years Caldwell has had that configuration. It has allowed them to share staff members on subject areas. As enrollment has dwindled here and we built a new facility we even moved the sixth grade over and eventually allowed us to drop a staff member during the budget cuts and the staff member retiring. We are at the point that K-9 certified teachers are very valuable as they can take on certain subjects and allow us a 1.5 staff to cover 6-12. Some subject areas are just one person covering all classes. People/parents will be concerned about the different age groups mingling, but we seem to be way past that and actually have the older kids looking out for the younger kids in the hallways. Good luck.

Alan Jamison <[ajamison@usd360.com](mailto:ajamison@usd360.com)>

Hi Kelly,

USD 216 Deerfield has a HS/MS facility that keeps 6-8 and 9-12 in separate wings. Students 6-8 are only allowed to be in the halls of the 9-12 for shared classes. Having grades 6-12 in one building, but separate wings is ideal for shared teachers. There is NO travel time that needs to be built into the schedule for shared classes. Grades 6-12 eat lunch in the elementary cafeteria across the street. Times are scaffold to prevent too many students

eating lunch at the same time. At present there is little concern with social-emotional issues. In fact, the governance allows for peer mentoring with little effort:). Although 6th grade cannot participate in athletics, the district encourage participation in organization activities that build relationships grades 6-12, one example is MS Leadership Team. The leadership team carries a "voice" similar to a HS STUCO. As a superintendent, and with limited time to walk through classrooms, I find this type of arrangement to be very positive.

If I can be of further help, do not hesitate to contact me.

Cheryl Cook-Keim  
USD 216 Deerfield  
Superintendent

Cheylin USD 103 is a small district but this works just fine for us and has for quite some time. No issues to speak of.

Thank you,

Shelly P. Angelos  
Superintendent/PK-12 Principal  
USD 103 Cheylin