



Essex County Public Schools

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4th and 8th Grade Relocation Report

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This report is the result of an extensive review by Essex County Public Schools' (ECPS) administrative team. The report examines the possibility of relocating grade 8 from Essex Intermediate School (EIS) to Essex High School (EHS) and relocating grade 4 from Tappahannock Elementary School (TES) to Essex Intermediate School (EIS). In summary, the rationale for the recommendation is that it aligns with our Mission of "serve(ing) the individual educational needs of our students," particularly as it relates to improving the specific needs of our 4th and 8th grade students. By housing the 8th grade at EHS we strengthen our ability to offer high school credit courses to our students. The plan also provides greater coordination of services for our 4th and 5th grade students. It allows all TES students to have classrooms within the main elementary school building, which has logistical and safety advantages. In addition, TES can more squarely focus on "primary" instruction with a strong emphasis on literacy. As good stewards of community resources, this change results in savings of capital and operational funds.

Enrollment Projections*:

School	2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019	
	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
EHS	426	NA	444	552	429	539
EIS	437	NA	427	430	430	427
TES (PK up)	574	NA	575	464	569	462

- Based on current enrollment in PowerSchool as of 2/14/17.

Facilities:

EHS

- EHS has sufficient classroom space to accommodate an additional English, math, science, and history classroom for grade 8 students.

EIS

- At EIS, fourth grade classes will be located in the front of the building. This will ensure that 4th grade students are close to the office, the clinic, the gym, the cafeteria, and the office. Sixth and 7th grade will remain in the middle hallway, which will mean that they have less interaction with 4th and 5th grade students.

TES

- At TES, the second grade classrooms could be moved to the current fourth grade classrooms inside the building. Students and staff would not have to go outside to access their classrooms.

In partnership with our students, faculty, staff, parents, and the community, Essex County Public Schools is committed to creating *Pathways to Excellence* by promoting a positive, student-focused culture striving for continuous improvement that meets the academic, athletic, artistic, and career-occupational needs of all our students by guiding, inspiring, celebrating, and teaching our students as we equip them to meet the challenges of a global society.

- The TES second grade move to the inside of the main building would result in savings on capital costs targeted for renovating the 2nd grade wing at TES and on daily cleaning of the building.
- At TES, there would no longer be a need to roll the laptop carts to the second grade building. It is difficult to maneuver the carts over the sidewalk and within the current second grade classrooms, due to their size.
- TES students would no longer need to move between buildings and be monitored during bus waves. The adults who monitor students during these times could be moved into the building to provide extra support in the cafeteria and the hallways.
- During times of severe weather, the second grade would no longer be moved into the main building. Students would no longer need to be rerouted through the mini-gym when sidewalks flood.
- Current technology installed in second grade classrooms could be moved for use inside of the main TES building.

Scheduling:

EHS

- Creates more flexibility with the EHS PE schedule and the possibility of adding another PE elective.
- The 8th grade students are extremely limited in their options related to high school course offerings at EIS because of the constraints of the schedule as well as a lack of certified teachers in difficult to fill positions (Math, Foreign Language). Moving 8th grade to the high school will provide more opportunities for students to enroll in high school level classes during their 8th grade year.
- Creates more elective options for 8th grade students and possibly more elective options for all students.
- EHS may be able to increase the number of students participating in band since some 8th grade students (not double-blocked for English or math) will be able to enroll in two electives instead of one.
- Teachers (Geometry and foreign language) would not have to travel between two schools (saving instructional time).

EIS

- Alleviates the challenge of scheduling 8th grade students at EIS who are taking courses for high school credit.

TES

- A new bell schedule at TES could eliminate extremely early and late lunch shifts. With the change, the first lunch shift would begin at 10:45 a.m. and the last lunch shift would end at 1:15 p.m. (Lunch currently runs from 10:30 to 1:30.)
- It may be possible to extend teacher planning time at TES by 5 minutes per day. This would add 25 minutes of planning time per week. Elementary school teachers have significantly less planning time than other district teachers.
- A reading support block could be created at TES using the four specials teachers and 1 paraprofessional. They could provide daily small group reading for 45 minutes daily.

Staffing:

- Increase EHS staff by 1 FTE already in the 2017-2018 budget.
- Increased ability to attract staff because it is difficult to staff the 8th grade at the Intermediate School due to high school licensure requirements.
- Savings of 1 FTE at approximately \$65K. Staffing level concerns have been addressed by current high school staff. These concerns will be reviewed in parameters of allocated resources in May/June.

Other:

EHS

- Work on post-secondary transition for special needs students could begin at EHS with 8th grade students.
- EHS would have to examine the current lunch schedule to accommodate the 8th grade students.

EIS

- EIS will be able to be a true “Intermediate School” rather than a middle school. EIS will be able to focus on instructional strategies and social skills support specific to the intermediate grades. This includes providing more structured elementary support at 4th and 5th grade, and providing more young adult support (peer relations, transition to high school) at the 6th and 7th grade.
- Moving 4th grade to EIS will enable us to provide more consistency between 4th and 5th grade, ultimately strengthening the academic foundation for all of the grade levels.

TES

- TES could become a primary school. TES will be able to have a primary school focus, strengthening the early literacy foundational skills, which will ultimately result in increased academic success for all grade levels.

Frequently Asked Questions/Answers

Regarding 4th Grade Students at EIS

***How will this affect my child's promotion ceremony at EIS?**

EIS will have separate promotion ceremonies this year for 7th and 8th grade. Both groups of students will get their own promotion ceremony where students are recognized for their accomplishments as well as celebrated for their promotion to the high school.

***What about the concept of having my 4th grade student at a middle school?**

EIS will not function as a middle school, it will be structured as an intermediate school. This means that EIS will have an elementary schedule for both 4th and 5th grade. These students will eat lunch with students from their grade level, just like at TES, and their schedule will mirror what they had at the elementary school (only two teachers, and they switch between those two teachers one time during the day).

***How will discipline be handled?**

Because EIS is an intermediate school, discipline will be handled at the 4th and 5th grade levels based on the code of conduct as it applies to elementary/primary school students. Discipline at the 6th and 7th grade levels will be handled based on the code of conduct as it applies to secondary school students.

***What about electives for my 4th grade student?**

Fourth grade students will attend electives on a weekly rotation much in the same way that they did at the elementary school.

***Will after school care similar to what is provided at TES this year be available for my child?**

Children who want to participate in the Parks and Rec after school program will ride the bus to TES after school.

***Will my 4th grade student still get recess?**

Yes, 4th grade students will get the same amount of recess time that they currently get at TES each day. Students will be able to use the outdoor PE equipment on the field during recess.

Regarding Opportunities for Special Education Students In Grades 8 – 12 at Essex High School

1. Expanded opportunities exist for special education students to take more electives in an 8th-12th high school. Currently special education students, who are enrolled in a Resource class at Essex Intermediate, only have the opportunity to take 1 other elective, which is PE. If these students were at Essex High School, they would have the opportunity to enroll in an additional elective and still take a class similar to the Resource class to get additional assistance for their class work.
2. Transitioning from high school to post-secondary education is an important factor for special education students. Planning for this is even more critical and starting to plan early can help special education students improve their chances of more and better opportunities. The high school curriculum is incorporating more transition programs, internships, and resources to help students toward the right path. Students will have the opportunity to take advantage of more

employment prep and college prep resources to help them develop the necessary skills to pursue their career or college path.

3. Special Education students will be exposed earlier to information about the programs at the Northern Neck Technical Center and have the opportunity to receive guidance on taking the necessary classes and meeting the criteria to possibly attend the Northern Neck Technical Center to work towards earning a certificate in a desired career.