

North Fayette Valley Community School District

Proud to be NFV

600 N. Pine Street, P.O. Box 73, West Union, Iowa 52175

Phone (563) 422-3851 - Fax (563) 422-3854

www.nfvschools.com

Below is a list of questions that have been frequently asked as the district considers closing Fayette Elementary, where those students should attend school, and if this is the right time to consider a grade-alike model for NFV.

The Fayette Elementary Facility

Why are we considering closing Fayette Elementary?

- Financially, a district's two main expenses are staffing and buildings. The district currently has open classroom space at West Union Elementary, Fayette Elementary, Valley Elementary, and North Fayette Valley Middle School. If the Board were to choose to close Fayette Elementary, it would reduce the costs for maintenance and upkeep for one of the five buildings in the district.

Where is the staffing savings?

- The estimated initial cost savings is \$100,000 per year if Fayette Elementary is closed. The district is not planning on "pink slipping" any employees; rather, we will look for staff cost savings through attrition or reassignments to current positions we have not been able to fill.

What will the district do with the building?

- The final decision for the building is a board decision. One option we could explore is the possibility of selling the building and property.

What are the upcoming maintenance expenses at Fayette Elementary?

- The roof of the gym is due for replacement in the upcoming years.
- The boiler in the gym has had issues this fall and will need attention in the future.

What will happen with the solar panels?

- If the board would decide to sell the Fayette Elementary School, we could look at exploring the option of moving them to another location owned by NFV Schools, selling the panels, or including them in the sale price of the building.

Grade Alignment

Why were other alignment options not presented at the work session?

- Multiple options were drafted. The ones that provided cost savings, building space reallocation, and fit within transportation guidelines were selected to investigate/research further.
 - K-3 at WUE, 4-5 at Valley Elementary, 6-8 at NFV MS, and 9-12 at the HS
 - K-3 remain at current buildings, 4-5 at Valley Elementary, 6-8 at NFV MS, and 9-12 at the HS
 - K-2 at WUE, 3-5 at Valley Elementary, 6-8 at NFV MS, and 9-12 at the HS

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- K-3 remain at current buildings, 4 at WUE, 5 at Valley Elementary, 6-8 and NFV MS, and 9-12 at the HS

Where would kids eat breakfast?

- Currently, all attendance centers serve breakfast. The high school serves breakfast for any student who would like to eat at that location, including students there for a shuttle bus. Students who are transported to school on the route buses would be able to eat breakfast once they arrived at their attendance center.

What would happen with before and after-school programming?

- We currently have before and after-school programming at Valley Elementary and West Union Elementary. Our goal is to continue to offer this service to parents. Because parents drop their student(s) off before school and pick up their student(s) from the afterschool program, the parents would be able to select which after-school location they would want their child to attend.

Childcare

- Fayette County lacks sufficient childcare with having 1 childcare spots for every 3.8 students. The district will continue to work with childcare providers to support parental needs for student supervision (i.e. renting space to Valley Childcare and Preschool, working with Kaleidoscope Kids, offering transportation for students 4 years old and up, etc.).

Class size

- The intention is to be able to balance students of a respective grade level between buildings.
- Class size and its effect can vary depending on the makeup of the students. Having grade levels in the same location would provide the opportunity for students to be assigned to a teacher/classroom that best suits their needs. It allows flexibility in class assignments to support personality traits or separate students to support learning and development.
- The projected enrollment decline will impact class sizes but that is dependent on an equitable decline across the district.

What consideration has the district given to transitions between schools?

- Currently, a VE student has 1 transition, from NFV MS to the NFV HS prior to graduation. A WUE/FE student will have 3 transitions before they would graduate. WUE-FE-MS-HS.
- A guaranteed and viable curriculum is the number one school-level factor that has an impact on student achievement (Marzano, 2003). While both elementary buildings have the same curricular materials, multi-aging brings different pacing, schedules, and scope and sequence.
- Professional learning communities (PLC) by grade level provide a structured opportunity for teachers to collaborate and focus on student learning and teacher-professional learning. Efforts

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would be focused on student results and common formative assessments, which would focus more on effective teaching strategies rather than instructional intentions. (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many, Mattos, 2016)

Why is multiaging a bad thing?

- Multiage classrooms are not a bad thing. Research would support portions of multiaging such as looping, enhanced differentiation, collective efficacy, and increased social-emotional learning (<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504569.pdf>). The concern with multiaging over traditional classrooms deals with the time needed to manage and sustain multiaging (<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED504569.pdf>). As we look at hiring, this challenge would excite some people in the profession; however, with the hiring shortages, increased workloads of multiple grades, family commitments, and lack of preservice training for multiage, it is becoming more challenging to sustain the multiage model.

What are intensive services?

- Intensive services are unique as it takes a special degree and continuous training to teach in these intensive areas. We are at a unique district size as we are not large enough to need 2 teachers for these services; however, it becomes a challenge for 1 teacher to be in two locations as the students with these services need intensive support. With this, the district is currently busing students needing intensive services to the location of the teacher (see below).
 - Currently, we offer a Behavioral Special Education classroom for grades K-3rd at WUE. This means that all students in Kindergarten through third grade who need this intensive support are bused to WUE. The 4-8th classroom is offered at Valley Campus. This means that all students in 4th and 5th who need this intensive support are bused to Valley Campus.
 - Currently, we offer an Intensive Academic Special Education classroom for grades K-5 at VE. This means that all students in Kindergarten through fifth grade who need this intensive support are bused to Valley Campus. There is also a 6-8th grade Intensive Academic Classroom at NFVMS.
 - The district currently has three teachers who support Title I. WUE has 2 teachers and VE has a .75 teacher. The goal of our Title I programs are to close the reading gap for our students learning to read in grades K-3.

Why can't we build a new school that would house all of the students?

- There are a couple of factors to consider when looking at buildings.
 - The cost to build a facility of this scale would be substantial, which would mean looking at a voted bond referendum to increase property taxes in the district.
 - Our current facilities are in need of repair and updating, not replacement.

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Transportation

How long can kids ride on a school bus?

- Elementary students may ride the school bus for up to 60 minutes per route.
- Secondary students may ride the school bus for up to 75 minutes per route. (Iowa Code 43.1(3))
- Shuttle time is considered a part of the time limit, however, wait time (parked) while on the bus is not considered ride time.

What time do kids get on the bus in the morning?

- Currently, our earliest pick-up is at 6:45 AM. Routes vary in time and distance within the district.

Will route buses have to start picking students up earlier?

- Route buses will not need to start picking up students earlier than they currently do.
- To determine how long your child will be on a bus, add the route time to shuttle time.
- We use 15-minute shuttle times between the Valley campus and West Union.

Will the district have to shorten the school day?

- The number of hours mandated by the state is 1080 per year. The NFV academic calendar has 1110 hours planned for the 2022-2023 school year.
- The educational hours a school has for reporting purposes are based on the building with the shortest school day.
- Currently, the students at Valley Elementary have a much longer school day than other students throughout the district; therefore, there would not be a change in hours reported. A majority of the extended school day at VE is recess or non-instructional time.

What is the additional time a student will ride the bus?

- Determining bus ride time is unique depending on the individual student's situation. For purposes of shuttles, we are considering a trip between West Union and our Valley Campus to be 15 minutes.

What is the cost of additional shuttles?

- The option of closing Fayette Elementary, moving all 4-5 to Valley Elementary, and each building keeping K-3 at their respective building estimated cost for transportation is \$8,110 due to it being a bit further to Valley Elementary than to Fayette Elementary from West Union. Total cost savings of \$91,890.
- The grade-alike option with all K-3 at WUE, 4-5 at Valley Elementary, and closing Fayette estimated cost increase for transportation is \$43,000; thus, the total cost savings of this option would be \$57,000.

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If adding shuttles, will the district be able to find drivers?

- We are very fortunate to have a group of dedicated bus drivers. At this point in time, we would be able to support the additional shuttles with our current drivers.

Will there be paras on the shuttles for younger kids?

- It has been very beneficial for our MS shuttles to have para support. With that said it has proven tough to hire paras over the past few years. Given the need and opportunity, paras on buses is something we would consider if staffing is available.

Miscellaneous

What would administrative responsibilities look like?

- As a plan solidifies we will want to assign administrative responsibilities to have respective grade levels evaluated and supervised by a single principal. One example would be Mr. Elliott as the PK-3 principal and Mr. Gearhart 4-8 grades. This would allow for consistent evaluation of curriculum and instructional strategies.

What guarantee is there that teacher collaboration and curriculum alignment will happen?

- There is an increasing amount of research that shows when teachers work together, student outcomes can improve, teachers are more satisfied in their jobs, and teacher turnover is decreased (p.3 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED591332.pdf>). Most teachers value collaboration as they realize the importance of collective efficacy and teacher effectiveness. A couple of our current barriers are time and distance when it comes to grade-level collaboration. While video conferencing has helped in our collaborative efforts, it isn't a replacement for being together in one location. Shifting to grade-alike centers would eliminate these two barriers as a concern.

How will teacher assignments be determined if a change is made?

- The district would work with the teacher association to find a fair way to make this determination. One method would be that staff follow the grade they are currently teaching.

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When will the community and parent surveys close?

- The surveys will close Monday, November 28 @8:00 am.