

Benton Community Study Committee to Present Elementary Sectioning Recommendation

The Benton Community Enrollment and Elementary Sectioning Committee has been meeting during the past couple of months reviewing a variety of materials pertaining to enrollment and elementary sectioning as well as considering several different options as to how best to move forward. The Benton Community School Board appointed the committee made up of parents, staff, and administration with a purpose of providing a recommendation on elementary sectioning to the Board.

In the past 10 years the Benton CSD headcount enrollment has decreased by 175 students and the District experienced a significant drop in enrollment this school year moving from an enrollment headcount of 1542 students in 2010-11 to 1476 students this school year. While the district has been able to maintain a system of delivery supporting 40-42 sections, the current enrollments at the elementary level have required consideration of modifying the elementary sectioning from six sections to five sections where applicable based on the total number of students at any given grade level.

As a result the Board of Education will consider a recommendation to transition K-2 students from the community of Blairstown and the area to the west of Blairstown from the Norway Center to the VH Center to better balance the number of students attending elementary school in the District and reduce one section of Kindergarten, 1st Grade, and 2nd Grade at the Norway Center for the 2012-13 school year. As a result the District would have 5 sections of Kindergarten, 1st Grade, and 2nd Grade next school year. This sectioning plan option could potentially impact 33 students in the district next school year. Students transitioning to the VH Center would also attend the Keystone Center in grades 3-6 as students progress to these grade levels. The committee considered and discussed several different options regarding elementary sectioning before a super majority of committee members agreed upon this plan to present to the Board of Education.

The Benton Community School Board of Education will consider a recommendation from the committee at the regular meeting of the Board on Wednesday, December 21, 2011. The meeting will be held at the Keystone Center starting at 7:00 p.m. The District believes that this plan continues to support small class sizes at the elementary level, allows for continued use of all elementary attendance centers, and supports the data available regarding student demographics.