

Potential Orca Truncation

Prepared by: Enrollment Planning and School Operations

Overview

Seattle Public Schools strives to provide a variety of school options for families across the district to meet the needs of each and every student. K-8 schools are one of those options, and they serve as an alternative option for families who desire extended continuity for their children from kindergarten through 8th grade.

Currently, Orca K-8 (Orca) is not serving as a traditional K-8 school given the significant number of students who leave after grade 5 and the low enrollment across the middle school grades. The Orca community has voiced concerns about the challenges of operating as a K-8 and have requested consideration to become a K-5 school. As a result, Seattle Public Schools is considering a grade truncation of the middle school grades at Orca. Orca currently serves students in grades kindergarten through eight. If the Board approves a grade truncation, Orca would no longer serve students in grade 6-8 beginning in the 2017-18 school year. Orca would continue to serve students in grades K-5 as an option school.

Background

Orca K-8 is a small attendance area K-8 school with declining enrollment in grades 6 through 8 and a significant number of students articulating out of the school before 8th grade. In the 201516 school year, 63 students who attended the school the year prior in grades 5-7, did not return for grades 6-8. Enrollment in grades 6-8 has declined from 172 students in 2011, to 126 students across grades 6-8 in the 2015-16 school year. There are currently only 100 students assigned to grades 6-8 at Orca for the 2016-17 school year. The low middle school enrollment results in staffing and scheduling challenges that may not best support student needs.

Historical Grade 6-8 Enrollment:

GRADE	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	Currently Assigned 2016-17
6	57	59	52	52	36	25
7	55	62	60	59	40	25
8	60	48	61	55	50	36
Total	172	169	173	166	126	86

What would the proposal mean for current students?

If this proposal is approved, Orca would no longer offer middle school grades beginning in the 2017-18 school year. Orca would only serve students in grades K-5.

Below are the enrollment plans for current Orca students in grades K-8.

Grades K-5

- Current kindergarten through fourth-grade students can remain at Orca through fifth grade, which would be the highest grade offered at Orca.
- Current fifth-grade students would attend their attendance area middle school based on their home address or could participate in the School Choice process beginning in February 2017 for an opportunity to apply to another K-8 or middle school in the 2017-18 school year. More information on Open Enrollment and the School Choice process for 2017-18 will be available in the coming months.

Grades 6-8

- Current eighth-grade students will have the opportunity to complete the 2016-17 school year at Orca.
- Current sixth and seventh-grade students would attend their attendance area middle school based on their home address or could participate in the School Choice process beginning in February 2017 for an opportunity to apply to another K-8 or middle school in the 2017-18 school year. More information on Open Enrollment and the School Choice process for 2017-18 will be available in the coming months.
- Orca would not admit a new sixth grade class in fall 2017.

Supporting Current and Future Students

Seattle Public Schools remains focused on supporting each and every student at Orca and all schools across the district. If this proposal is approved, Enrollment Planning, Admissions, and Teaching and Learning will work with the leadership and staff at Orca to support the continued growth of the school as a K-5 school as well as support the students transitioning from Orca to complete their educational experience at another school within the district serving grades 6-8.

Next Steps

There will be a community meeting at Orca on **October 17, 2016** from **6:30-7:30pm**, in the lunchroom, to discuss this potential change. Central office staff will be in attendance to hear your feedback and answer questions. Any changes in the grades served at Orca would require School Board approval and would be presented in a Board Action Report (BAR) prior to Open Enrollment for the 2017-18 school year.

Sharing your feedback

We welcome your feedback. If you have additional questions, comments, or concerns, please email enrollmentplanning@seattleschools.org. Prepared by: Enrollment Planning and School Operations