

SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS

Instructional Facilities Planning Department
Office of Instructional Support
GOMPERS TRANSITION PLAN 2004-05 AND 2005-06
April 27, 2004

Introductory Statement

The district needs to plan for the transition of the Gompers Secondary School program and organization from the current grades 7-12 structure to the goal of implementing a grades 6-8 middle school when Lincoln High School reopens in 2006-07. Transition recommendations developed in collaboration with the Lincoln/Gompers Redevelopment Committee (LGRC) are outlined in this report.

Background

Historic Context and Recent Actions

During the planning for the Lincoln rebuilding and expansion project, a key goal was the transition of Gompers Secondary School to a grades 6-8 middle school to serve as the primary feeder middle school to Lincoln and re-establish a feeder pattern school structure for the Lincoln area. This goal was outlined in the Proposition MM ballot language, and has been a continuing planning thread through the development of the plans for the new Lincoln campus and the development of the Lincoln transition process.

For the 2003-04 school year, the district began a division of the program at Gompers into its constituent middle school grades (7-8) and high school grades (9-12). A principal and vice principal on special assignment have been assigned to Gompers to administer the operation of the middle school grades, and supervise and mentor the teaching staff assigned to these grades.

In July 2003 the LGRC requested that district staff develop for their review alternatives for the transition of the Gompers program. In response, district staff worked with the Combined Education/Cluster Feeder Workgroup of the LGRC to develop a set of potential options for the Gompers transition process. These options ranged from maintaining a grades 7-12 program at Gompers through 2005-06, to the complete closure of the high school program at Gompers and establishment of a grades 6-8 middle school program beginning with the 2004-05 school year.

The LGRC reviewed this set of options with the Gompers community at two public meetings on October 9 and October 15, 2003. Both meetings attracted over 200 attendees, including Gompers students, staff, and members of the general community. There was overwhelming community support at both meetings for adopting an option which continued the high school program at Gompers until the re-opening of Lincoln High School. The primary reasons for this support focused on the significant impacts to Gompers students, families, the receiving high

schools, and the district budget implications associated with closing the Gompers high school program.

A group of Gompers students collected their peers' written responses to the possibility of closing the high school program prior to the re-opening of Lincoln High School, and presented these responses at the October 15, 2003 community meeting. Unanimously, they supported the continuation of the Gompers high school program until the re-opening of Lincoln High School.

Based on their review of the scenarios and the input received from the community, at the October 15, 2003 community meeting the LGRC unanimously approved recommending that the Board of Education adopt "Option 5" from the set of scenarios presented to the community. Option 5 recommends reconfiguration of Gompers into two independent schools for 2004-05 and 2005-06 - a grade 7-8 middle school and a grade 9-12 high school, both operating on the Gompers campus but with individual administrations, cost centers and staffing allocations. Additionally, the motion recommended the following:

- Providing additional high school athletic opportunities to Gompers students.
- Exterior repainting of the Gompers buildings.
- Evaluation of the implementation of the recommendation during the 2004-05 school year.

Staff Response and Recommendations

Staff has discussed the transition issue extensively since the LGRC recommendation was developed. Based on further review of the Gompers facilities, grade-level enrollment levels, and articulation in the upcoming two years prior to the reopening of Lincoln the following recommendations have been developed.

- Divide Gompers into two school programs: a grades 7-9 or 7-10 middle school program and a grades 10-12 or 11-12 high school program, beginning 2004-05. The final school program assignment for the 10th grade will be determined by the spring 2004 revised forecast for the 10th grade enrollment in 2004-05. If the new forecast is similar to the initial forecast of 261, grade 10 will be associated with the middle school program. If the 10th grade forecast is revised downward to 90 students or less, due to increased VEEP, Program Improvement/School Choice (PISC), Magnet and Choice enrollment at other schools, grade 10 will be associated with the high school program.
- Relocate the high school program administration and operations to the east (Wright Brothers) campus. The east campus will be retrofitted to be a largely self-contained high school program facility with a capacity of approximately 400 students, with science

classrooms/labs, library, and central office facilities and an entrance separate from the west Gompers campus.

- Establish the west campus as the dedicated site for the middle school program 2004-05 and 2005-06, reconfiguring to an independent middle school beginning 2006-07. The middle school program administrative staff will be relocated into the existing front office area. All classroom and support space on the west campus will be assigned to the middle school program,, with the exception of joint use of the physical education and music facilities with the high school program.
- Provide priority within VEEP, Program Improvement/School Choice (PISC) and Magnet programs for Gompers students wishing to attend other schools. With the high school program at Gompers open for a maximum of two more years (2004-05 and 2005-06), students in grades 9 in 2003-04 will not graduate from Gompers, spending at most three years of their high school experience there. To provide opportunities for students to transfer to other schools to complete high school, if desired, the district will provide priority this spring within VEEP, PISC and the Magnet program for Gompers students in grades 9-12.

Impact of No Child Left Behind and Program Improvement Status on Gompers' Future

For the 2003-04 school year Gompers is in Year 3 of Program Improvement, within the structure of the No Child Left Behind federal legislation. If Gompers does not show Adequate Yearly Progress from its testing period this spring, it will move into Year 4 of Program Improvement for the 2004-05 school year. Based on the board action of February 10, 2004, if Gompers enters Year 4 in 2004-05 it will be directed to work with district staff to develop a plan leading to one of the following actions:

- Reopen the school as a charter school;
- Replace all or most of the school staff, including the principal;
- Contract with an outside contractor to operate the school; or
- Allow the State of California to take over the school.

If Gompers enters Year 4 of Program Improvement, staff will consult with the LGRC about the legal impact of that status on this plan for the 2005-06 school year. This action would require developing other high school placement options for up to 580 10th – 12th grade students (based on the current 2004-05 Gompers enrollment forecast) for the 2005-06 school year, and/or the opening of a new charter school on the Gompers campus.

The Gompers site leadership has sent a letter to current Gompers families outlining this situation, as well as the recommendations in this report. The letter is included as Attachment 1 to this report.

Instructional Implications

Instructional Benefits

The separation of Gompers into geographically discrete middle school and high school programs will provide the following benefits:

- The geographic separation will give a stronger and more coherent identity to both the high school and middle school programs.
- Each leadership team will have the opportunity to focus on supporting its teaching staff and student body.

High School Athletic Program at Gompers

Relative to the LGRC recommendation on the high school athletic program at Gompers, staff recommends that additional high school athletics be implemented at the discretion of the high school program leadership and district leadership, within the constraint that the high school program at Gompers will operate at a maximum for only two more academic years (2004-05 and 2005-06) and investment in additional athletic facilities and staffing is not prudent given the district's current financial circumstances.

Facilities Implications

East Campus Facilities Modifications to Support the High School Program

Facilities modifications recommended to support a high school program on the east campus include modification of existing classroom and support space to create two science classrooms and a library, installation of fencing/gating to physically separate the facilities serving the middle school and high school programs, and completion of a number of deferred maintenance projects.

As mentioned previously, the LGRC recommendation included exterior repainting of the Gompers campus. Staff supports this action, which will assist in protecting district assets and also improve the student, staff and community perception of the campus, and has initiated this

project for the west campus. Painting of the east campus in a distinctive color scheme to differentiate it from the west campus is also recommended.

Budget Implications

Facilities Modifications

The cost estimate for implementing the facilities modifications outlined in this report is \$1.2 million. This budget will be supported by the 2A (State Facilities Fund) budget.

Staffing/Operations Budget Implications

The combined middle school program/high school program budget has been reduced by the same percentage (7%) as the district's other secondary schools. This budget will be divided between the two programs based on the final enrollment forecast for each program, and then prioritized by the two programs' leadership teams and staff through the site-based budgeting process. Once the principals have defined the scope of their respective programs, central office staff will complete a final analysis of the staffing and budget needs and recommend adjustments if necessary.

Public Support and Engagement Implications

The district held two general community meetings on October 9 and October 15, 2003 to present the transition options and receive feedback. The meetings were noticed by first class U.S. mail to families of Gompers students and the general community. Both meetings attracted over 200 attendees, including Gompers students, staff, and members of the general community.

There was overwhelming community support at both meetings for continuing the high school program at Gompers until the re-opening of Lincoln High School. The primary reasons for this support focused on the significant impacts to Gompers students, families, the receiving high schools, and the district budget implications associated with closing the Gompers high school program.

A group of Gompers students collected their peers' written responses to the possibility of closing the high school program prior to the re-opening of Lincoln High School, and presented these responses at the October 15, 2003 community meeting. Unanimously, they supported the continuation of the Gompers high school program until the re-opening of Lincoln High School.

Student meetings were held on February 18, 2004 to brief students on the recommendations in this report. Additionally, two evening parent/community meetings were held on February 25 and March 3, 2004. These meetings were noticed via fliers sent to students and parents of all current Gompers students. Additionally a letter was sent via U.S. Mail to all Gompers families after the March 3 meeting, outlining the specifics of the school program separation proposal. There was substantial support for the school program separation recommendations.

Policy Implications

The recommendations in this report comply with Policies E-2050, E-2150, E-2250 and E-2300. No policy modifications or additions are necessary.

Recommendations

The superintendent recommends that the board approve:

1. The separation of Gompers Secondary School into geographically distinct middle school and high school programs for the 2004-05 school year, as detailed in this report.
2. Facility modifications and budget allocations to support this separation, as detailed in this report.

Prepared by Mary Hopper, Chief Academic Officer, Office of Instructional Support;
Joe Wolf, Director, Instructional Facilities Planning Department; and Jim Watts, District Architect.

Attachment