

How has enrollment changed at Woodland?

During the growth years in the 1990's enrollment reached nearly 7,000 students in preschool through eighth grades, but for the past decade the Woodland community has been experiencing demographic and socioeconomic changes as communities age. New housing being built is mostly for special populations who do not generate families with children. We anticipate enrollment will level off around 5,200 students in the next five years. While growth in numbers decreases, growth in our ethnic and socioeconomic diversity increases. English is not the first language of 16 percent of the students and low-income students make up a third of the student population.

How will proposed changes affect my child?

Your child should not see any noticeable difference. Woodland will still maintain a "house" system where students are placed in a house of 100 students for kindergarten through fifth grades. They will stay with that group of 100 students through fifth grade. Once a child reaches sixth grade at the Middle School, he or she stays with 25 percent of that 100 and a new house of 200 is created while in attendance at the Middle School. Woodland also will continue to go a step further than the "house" and cluster each student annually with three or four other children they know as the move from one grade level to the next.

How many students are there in a classroom?

Our class size goals will continue to be the same through the 2020-2021 school year with 22 to 25 students in kindergarten through third grade classes and 25 to 27 students in fourth through eighth grade classes. In fact, our plan to move from two teams of four sections per grade to one team of eight sections per grade is expected to result in more balanced numbers of students per classroom.

How is the dual language program trending?

The interest continues to grow in the program where students are immersed in spending half the school day speaking only Spanish and half the school day spent speaking only English. This year's Kindergarten Dual Language classes was increased from 8 sections to 10 sections. The program currently serves students grades K-4 with a total enrollment of just over 850 students. Each year the Dual Language Program will roll up to the next grade level. Current planning for the Middle School Dual Language Program is currently underway.

Will you be cutting staff?

Yes, there are proposed reductions for staff positions. Approximately 73 percent of our budget is devoted to personnel costs, salaries and benefits. Staff reductions are part of the discussions.

With honorable dismissal of staff, are years of experience taken into consideration?

Years of experience, credentials and job performance are among criteria taken into consideration for honorable dismissal. We follow established guidelines in line with Senate Bill 7

and Woodland District 50's Joint Honorable Dismissal Committee. There is a series of legal criteria that is taken into consideration and experience may affect where one is placed in the honorable dismissal process.

How does the reduction of the sections impact the special education instructional classrooms?

Special education instructional classroom placements are determined by the student's individualized education plan (IEP). The number of students requiring services in an instructional classroom will determine the number of special education instructional classrooms needed.

Has this information about budget reductions been shared with teachers and the union?

Yes, each of the principals held meetings with the staff at each school and presented powerpoint slides about the changes in December.

Will any programs or classes be taken away for my child such as band, music or art?

No. Students will not see any reduction in any of the fine arts programs.

When would these changes go into effect if the plan is approved by the Board?

These changes would begin with the 2017-2018 school year.

How can I stay updated on the Board of Education's discussions and final decision?

The administration presented a report to the Board of Education on December 20. That report is available at www.dist50.net/br. The Board will discuss the report at its regularly scheduled public meeting on January 24 at the Educational Support Center, 1105 North Hunt Club Road, Gurnee. Members of the public are always welcome to attend Board of Education meetings, which are also live streamed and available later for viewing through our website, www.dist50.net. The long-term financial plan for Woodland District 50 is included among topics at a Board Forum scheduled for February 9 at the Educational Support Center. The forum will be live streamed as well and available later for viewing through the website. You may also look under About Us on the District website for more information. A Board of Education vote is planned for February 28.

Why are budget reductions needed now?

The plan is to make measured budget reductions now, which will have a compounding effect over time, therefore avoiding larger budget reductions in future years. Despite retiree savings and limited increases in spending, future budget deficits are expected primarily due to loss of general state aid. As long as enrollment declines, general state aid will continue to decrease. Plus, Woodland never sees half of its general state aid because it goes directly from the state to support Prairie Crossing Charter School in Grayslake.

How much does the state-chartered school, Prairie Crossing Charter School, cost Woodland?

The charter school tuition obligations equal \$3.7 million annually, which is half of the total general state aid. District 50 is one of five districts in Illinois that must fund a state-chartered school from its operating budget.

Why isn't the funding to Prairie Crossing proportional?

The state created the rules of how funding supports the charter school. Children from Woodland District 50 and Fremont District 79 may attend the school. A tuition cost per pupil, which is based on average daily attendance, follows every child who attends Prairie Crossing Charter School, rather than Woodland or Fremont. For every child who lives within Woodland District 50's boundaries and attends the charter school, the state diverts \$11,396 from Woodland to the charter school.

Do you have plans to send out a link of who our state legislators are?

State legislators whose districts overlap Woodland District 50 are as follows:

District 31 State Sen. Melinda Bush, melinda@senatormelindabush.com (847) 548-5631

District 30 State Sen. Terry Link, senator@link30.org, (847) 623-3006

District 26 State Sen. Dan McConchie, dan@senatormcconchie.com (224) 662-4544

District 51 State Rep. Nicholas Sauer, sauer@ilhousegop.org (847) 566-5115

District 62 State Rep. Sam Yingling, repsamyingling@gmail.com, (847) 231-6262

District 59 State Rep. Carol Sente, repsente@gmail.com (847) 478-9909

District 61 State Rep. Sheri Jesiel, jesiel@ilhousegop.org (847) 395-8000

Is there a reason why at K-3, it is Apple and then a switch to Chromebooks in the upper grades? Is it a money issue?

We have had Apple computers at Woodland for many years, but when it came to providing 1:1 technology at the Middle School, the Chromebooks were more affordable and provided us with the necessary curriculum capabilities.