

December, 2013

News from Dr. Emily Palmer, Principal at Sanford Middle School:

Exciting things are happening at Sanford! I am very pleased to share news with you about what we are doing now, and some of what will be happening over the next few years. In a nutshell, we are growing!

On Tuesday, 12-10-13, the Board voted to build a new gym & new classrooms for Sanford, so that we can continue to accept all students from our five pathway feeder schools as that number of students grows. The proposal of Sanford & Howe “co-locating” is gone, and Sanford will have increased capacity to serve our students in our current location. The timeline proposed at the Board meeting has the construction finished for the 2016-17 school year.

This change to the plan was clearly the result of parent advocacy from Area B, and we are grateful to all the parents who took time to contact the district. We also really appreciate the support of our Area B Superintendent Steven Flisk throughout this process.

The Board also voted to commit needed resources to the International Baccalaureate (IB) pathways in all areas of the district. For Sanford, our understanding is that this means that in 2014-15, we will be moving to a longer school day to facilitate a 7-period school day, which we need in order to achieve IB authorization for the Middle Years Program (MYP). This will mean starting earlier than our current 9:30am starting time – probably 9:00 or 9:10am. We will continue to have a strong morning activities program even with the earlier start.

The longer school day – and funding for increased staffing - will mean that our students can take 7 classes per day instead of 6. This will allow all Sanford students to have coursework in all eight MYP content areas: Language A (English), Language B (Arabic or Spanish), Humanities (Soc Studies), Sciences,

Mathematics, Arts (Band, Choir, Drama and/or Visual Art), Technology (PLTW Engineering and/or Tech Design Process – and eventually possibly Coding), and Phy. Ed./Health. In addition, students will still have space in the schedule for Reading, Focus Math, ESL, and other Electives that are not in the MYP-defined areas, or a whole year of Arts, Tech or PE. Please note that Spanish and Choir are additions that we anticipate starting next year in 2014-15.

Finally, the Board has approved a plan to explore bringing a STEAM (Science, Tech, Engineering, Arts & Math) program to Sanford. STEAM is an update of STEM that includes Arts integration as instructional strategies in the content classes. Our understanding is that this will come after MYP has been completely implemented & authorized, so that our teachers are not stretched too thin with multiple trainings. Our Science department is very excited about the STEAM discussion and what that could bring to our Sanford students. We hope it will include new Science labs!

Sanford's Open House/Information Night for incoming families is coming up on Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Please come that night to learn more about what's happening at Sanford! In addition, we invite all Hiawatha & Howe families to come tour Sanford & see our students & teachers in action. We know you don't have to have a 5<sup>th</sup> grader to be thinking about middle school. Our wonderful family liaison, Vicki Jones, can be reached at 612-668-4914 to schedule a time to tour.

Please contact me at 612-668-4901 or [emily.palmer@mpls.k12.mn.us](mailto:emily.palmer@mpls.k12.mn.us) with questions. I look forward to talking more, and to welcoming your students to Sanford in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.