

## Washington Central Unified Union School District

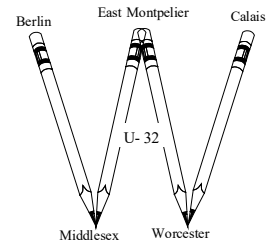
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*WCUUSD exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity and power to contribute to their local and global communities.*

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As requested by the Configuration Committee of the WCUUSD Board, I have prepared a model emphasizing a shift of Grade 6 students to U-32 and a consolidation of elementary schools into three primary K-5 campuses.

This model is driven by the core principle that **programming should drive structural decisions**. It aligns with our goals to ensure inclusive, high-quality, enriching instruction for all students by addressing current inconsistencies in program delivery, resource allocation, and maintaining financial sustainability, particularly in light of external pressures like Act 73.

### **Recommended Configuration Structure**

1. **Grade 6 Reconfiguration:** Move Grade 6 students from the elementary schools to U-32.
2. **Elementary Consolidation:** Consolidate the current five elementary schools (Berlin, Calais, Doty, EMES, Rumney) into three sustained K-5 sites. Based on current enrollments, capacity utilization, and geographic considerations, the most sustainable sites to maintain are likely Berlin, East Montpelier, and Middlesex.
3. **Student Reassignment:** Students from the closed facilities would be reassigned to the remaining three sites.

### **Rationale and Alignment with WCUUSD Criteria**

This model directly addresses multiple programmatic and structural criteria identified by the administration and the board:

#### **1. Achieving Consistent, Robust Programming (K-5)**

A key finding is the inconsistency of core systems and programming across the five elementary schools, particularly regarding articulated curriculum, access to allied arts, and intervention structures (MTSS).

- **Optimizing Class Sizes and Curriculum:** Moving to larger elementary schools (K-5) mitigates the challenge of providing a consistently articulated curriculum, which is difficult in small, multi-age configurations created reactively due to low enrollment. This model would allow adherence to administrative recommendations for optimizing classroom configurations proactively, such as linking grades 1-2, and 3-4 when necessary.

- **Core Program Access:** Consolidation enables the district to meet the baseline elementary program standards consistently, which include: 150 minutes/day for Literacy, 90 minutes/day for Math, and 40 minutes/day for Art, Music, PE/Health, and Library (5 days/week total). Currently, allied arts teachers are often spread across multiple smaller schools, making consistent implementation difficult.
- **Special Education Consistency:** Consolidating sites creates larger student cohorts, allowing for more targeted interventions for special education services and increased efficiency. Reduced travel time for specialists (Psychs, OTs, ECSES) is also an anticipated opportunity.
- **Enhanced Nursing, Library Media, and School Counselor services:** Larger school sizes and fewer locations would allow for full time positions.

## **2. Enhancing Middle School Experience (Grade 6 Transition)**

Shifting Grade 6 students to U-32 directly addresses developmental appropriateness and access criteria.

- **Developmental Appropriateness:** Grade 6 students are developmentally ready to move on from elementary settings that may include Pre-K students. Moving Grade 6 allows for a middle school structure 6-8.
- **Equitable Access:** A 6-12 model at U-32 provides greater access to co-curricular activities, allows for teacher specialization (Middle Grade Endorsement for Grades 5-9), and offers a more diverse cohort of learners.

## **3. Addressing Financial and Facility Sustainability**

The decision to consolidate addresses the sustainability pressures facing our smallest facilities.

- **Financial Sustainability:** Schools with fewer than 150 students are **likely to face greater financial pressure** under the new foundation funding model (Act 73) because fixed costs remain constant regardless of enrollment. Closing Doty and Calais (projected K-5 enrollment 42 and 62, respectively) helps achieve the necessary "**economy of scale**".

## **4. Managing Travel Time and Geographic Constraints**

The proposed consolidation minimizes new travel burdens.

- **Doty and Rumney:** Doty is 5.6 miles from Rumney. Closing Doty and relocating students to Middlesex is feasible in terms of distance. Notably, Doty currently has the longest maximum bus ride time in the district. Consolidating Doty students could potentially lower this maximum travel time, aligning closer to the administrative recommendation of a **maximum 45 minutes one-way for elementary students**.
- **Calais and EMES:** Calais is only 6 miles from EMES. Relocating Calais students to East Montpelier is geographically sensible and aligns with the goal of family travel distance being no more than 7 miles or 15 minutes for 80% of families.
- **Berlin:** Berlin is at least 10 miles from all other schools. Keeping Berlin open maintains access and accommodates its current students.

This analysis details the projected enrollment and resulting grade configuration for the elementary schools (K-5) for the upcoming school year (/2026-2076), assuming **Grade 6 is moved to U-32** and the **PK4 cohort moves up to Kindergarten** in their respective schools.

The data used for this projection comes from the October 2025 Enrollment Report (projected figures) and applies the structural criteria outlined by the administration concerning optimal class sizes and configurations.

### **Summary of Projected K-5 Enrollment (2026-2027)**

If Grade 6 (86 students total) moves to U-32 and the PK4 students (47 students total) form the new Kindergarten class, the district's K-5 enrollment would be approximately **453 students** distributed across the five schools.

| <b>School</b>    | <b>Projected K-5 Enrollment<br/>(Next Year)</b> | <b>Change in Total Enrollment (from K-6 Total of<br/>575 in the current year)</b> |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Berlin</b>    | 125                                             | Down 28 students                                                                  |
| <b>Calais</b>    | 62                                              | Down 27 students                                                                  |
| <b>Doty</b>      | 42                                              | Down 15 students                                                                  |
| <b>EMES</b>      | 136                                             | Down 38 students                                                                  |
| <b>Rumney</b>    | 88                                              | Down 14 students                                                                  |
| <b>Total K-5</b> | <b>453</b>                                      | Down 122 students                                                                 |

*(Note on Calculation: Grades 1-5 enrollments are based on the Oct 2025 grade-level projections. Kindergarten enrollments are explicitly replaced by the Oct 2025 PK4 enrollment count. Grade 6 enrollments are removed from the elementary total.)*

Based on the recommended model of consolidating elementary education into three K-5 campuses (Berlin, East Montpelier, and Middlesex) and moving Grade 6 students to U-32, the projected grade level configurations for the next school year (2026-2027) would look like the distribution summarized below.

This scenario results in a total of **28 K-5 classrooms** across the three remaining sites, with the 86 projected Grade 6 students shifting to U-32.

### **Possible K-5 Grade Configurations (2026-2027)**

#### **1. East Montpelier**

EMES is projected to be the largest elementary school in this configuration, supporting a total of **11 classes** across grades K-5. This size allows for multiple classes at nearly every grade level, maximizing stability and programmatic consistency.

| <b>Grade Level</b> | <b>Number of Classes</b> | <b>Projected Student Enrollment per Class</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>K</b>           | 1                        | 20 students                                   |
| <b>Grade 1</b>     | 2                        | 17 students, 16 students                      |
| <b>Grade 2</b>     | 2                        | 16 students, 16 students                      |
| <b>Grade 3</b>     | 2                        | 20 students, 19 students                      |
| <b>Grade 4</b>     | 2                        | 19 students, 19 students                      |
| <b>Grade 5</b>     | 2                        | 18 students, 18 students                      |

#### **2. Berlin**

Berlin is projected to support a total of **8 classes** across grades K-5. The proposed enrollment enables Berlin to host single-grade classrooms although class size maximum and minimums are still problematic.

| <b>Grade Level</b> | <b>Number of Classes</b> | <b>Projected Student Enrollment per Class</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>K</b>           | 1                        | 16 students                                   |
| <b>Grade 1</b>     | 1                        | 22 students                                   |
| <b>Grade 2</b>     | 1                        | 21 students                                   |
| <b>Grade 3</b>     | 2                        | 13 students, 13 students                      |

|                |   |                          |
|----------------|---|--------------------------|
| <b>Grade 4</b> | 1 | 13 students              |
| <b>Grade 5</b> | 2 | 13 students, 14 students |

### 3. Middlesex

Middlesex is projected to support a total of **9 classes** across grades K-5. Under this proposed consolidation model, Middlesex is projected to maintain a slightly leaner configuration:

| <b>Grade Level</b> | <b>Number of Classes</b> | <b>Projected Student Enrollment per Class</b> |
|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>K</b>           | 1                        | 11 students                                   |
| <b>Grade 1</b>     | 2                        | 13 students, 14 students                      |
| <b>Grade 2</b>     | 1                        | 10 students                                   |
| <b>Grade 3</b>     | 2                        | 12 students, 13 students                      |
| <b>Grade 4</b>     | 1                        | 20 students                                   |
| <b>Grade 5</b>     | 2                        | 19 students, 18 students                      |

### Significance of This Configuration

This shift to three larger K-5 sites supports the overarching goal that **programming should drive structural decisions**. Specifically, this configuration allows the district to:

1. **Maintain Class Size Guidelines:** Most classes across all three schools fall within the recommended maximums and minimums. The overall structure significantly stabilizes enrollments compared to the scenarios involving five small schools.
2. **Enhance Program Consistency:** Larger cohorts at these three sites facilitate the consistent delivery of services, particularly enabling **more targeted interventions for special education services/supports** and **increased efficiency**.
3. **Ensure Developmentally Appropriate Environments:** By shifting Grade 6 students away from the elementary schools, the K-5 configuration ensures that the environment is focused on the needs of younger students. Moving Grade 6 to U-32 allows for more middle-school specific programming and greater access to co-curricular activities and teacher specialization through the Middle Grade Endorsement.

**Detailed Configuration Analysis (K-5 Model) if all 5 elementary schools remain.**

This scenario highlights the non-compliance with the WCUUSD Model Class Size Chart and administrative recommendations for optimum class configurations in the smaller schools if the district moves the 6th grade to U-32 and maintains 5 elementary schools. Many of the areas of non-compliance will exist even if 6th grade remains in the elementary schools.

**1. Berlin Elementary (New K-5 Enrollment: 125)**

| <b>Grade Cluster</b> | <b>Classes</b> | <b>Enrollment</b>        | <b>Class Size/Configuration Check</b> |
|----------------------|----------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>K</b>             | 1              | 16 students              | Meets minimum (13) and maximum (20).  |
| <b>Grade 1</b>       | 1              | 22 students              | <b>Above the Max</b>                  |
| <b>Grade 2</b>       | 1              | 21 students              | <b>Above the Max</b>                  |
| <b>Grade 3</b>       | 2              | 13 students, 13 students | At the minimum                        |
| <b>Grade 4</b>       | 1              | 13 students              | <b>Below the Min</b>                  |
| <b>Grade 5</b>       | 2              | 13 students, 14 students | <b>Below the Min</b>                  |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>8</b>       |                          |                                       |

**2. EMES (East Montpelier Elementary School) (New K-5 Enrollment: 136)**

| <b>Grade Cluster</b> | <b>Classes</b> | <b>Enrollment</b> | <b>Class Size / Configuration Check</b> |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <b>K</b>             | 1              | 15 students       | Meets minimum (13).                     |
| <b>Grades 1</b>      | 1              | 22 students       | <b>Above the Max</b>                    |
| <b>Grade 2</b>       | 1              | 22 students       | <b>Above the Max</b>                    |

|                      |   |                       |                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------|---|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Grades 3-4</b>    | 3 | 51 students (25 + 26) | <b>Average 17 students/class.</b> Meets average target (18) and remains well within the maximum limit (25) for Grades 4-6. |
| <b>Grade 5</b>       | 1 | 26                    | <b>Above the Max</b>                                                                                                       |
| <b>Total Classes</b> | 7 |                       |                                                                                                                            |

### 3. Rumney Elementary (New K-5 Enrollment: 88)

| <b>Grade Cluster</b> | <b>Classes</b> | <b>Enrollment</b>    | <b>Class Size / Configuration Check</b>                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>K</b>             | 1              | 9 students           | <b>Below K-3 Minimum of 13 students.</b>                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Grades 1-2</b>    | 2              | 26 students (20 + 6) | At Min                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Grade 3</b>       | 1              | 17 students          | Meets requirements                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Grade 4</b>       | 1              | 11 students          | <b>Below the Min</b>                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Grade 5</b>       | 1              | 25 students          | At the Max                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Total Classes</b> | 6              |                      | This small size creates inconsistent classroom structures and minimum/ maximum class size violations, making delivery of articulated curriculum difficult. |

### 4. Calais Elementary (New K-5 Enrollment: 62)

| <b>Grade Cluster</b> | <b>Classes</b> | <b>Enrollment</b> | <b>Class Size / Configuration Check</b>  |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>K</b>             | 1              | 5 students        | <b>Below K-3 Minimum of 13 students.</b> |

|                      |          |                       |                                          |
|----------------------|----------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>Grades 1-2</b>    | 1        | 21 students (11 + 10) | <b>Above K-3 Maximum of 20 students.</b> |
| <b>Grade 3</b>       | 1        | 14 students           | Meets requirements                       |
| <b>Grade 4</b>       | 1        | 12 students           | <b>Below the Min (15)</b>                |
| <b>Grade 5</b>       | 1        | 10 students           | <b>Below the Min (15)</b>                |
| <b>Total Classes</b> | <b>5</b> |                       | Calais exhibits class size failures      |

#### 5. Doty Elementary (New K-5 Enrollment: 42)

| <b>Grade Cluster</b> | <b>Classes</b> | <b>Enrollment</b>   | <b>Class Size / Configuration Check</b>                          |
|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>K</b>             | 1              | 2 students          | <b>Below K-3 Minimum of 13 students.</b>                         |
| <b>Grades 1-2</b>    | 1              | 11 students (7 + 4) | <b>Below K-3 Minimum of 13 students.</b>                         |
| <b>Grades 3-4</b>    | 1              | 17 students (8 + 9) | Meets requirements                                               |
| <b>Grade 5</b>       | 1              | 12 students         | <b>Below 4-6 Minimum of 15 students.</b>                         |
| <b>Total Classes</b> | <b>4</b>       |                     | Doty faces class configuration challenges, forcing small classes |

## **Conclusion and Programmatic Impact**

This specific K-5 model, where Grade 6 is shifted to U-32 and all five elementary schools remain open, reinforces the systemic challenge of maintaining equitable programming across the district.

1. **Inconsistent Configuration:** Many classrooms do not meet our class size or configuration recommendations. Reactively creating multi-grade classes due to low enrollment makes delivering an articulated curriculum difficult.
2. **Act 73 Pressure:** Doty (42 students), Calais (62 students), and Rumney (88 students) remain small by enrollment. All our elementary schools have fewer than 150 students and are "likely to face **greater financial pressure**" under Act 73.

**Impact on Allied Arts and Special Education:** The continuation of five small sites means that specialized staff, such as allied arts teachers (Art, Music, PE/Health, Library), must remain spread across multiple schools, limiting the ability to consistently deliver the baseline program (5 days/week, 40 minutes/day for allied arts). Similarly, small schools constrain special education delivery, forcing special educators to support seven grade levels across all disability types, whereas larger schools allow for a narrower focus and increased efficiency.