

Rocky Mountain Elementary
Inspiring and empowering students to lead successful lives.
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 Lindon, Utah 84042
 796-3130

David Turner, Principal

We have concluded our information-gathering phase in exploring a change in schedule for the upcoming school year. We have appreciated the input received from teachers and community members. Your concerns and questions will continue to be influential in shaping the culture of learning at Rocky Mountain Elementary.

The Decision and Rationale

A consensual decision has been reached to implement a modified extended day schedule for the upcoming school year 2007-2008.

Modified Extended Day will offer:

- **75 minutes of small group (half class size) instructional time**
- **flexibility for teachers to focus upon core subjects of math and literacy**
- **increased number of instructional minutes allotted for math and literacy**
- **greater equity among teachers and class loads**
- **teaching assignments facilitate the formation of professional learning communities and shared responsibility at every grade level**

Anne Conzemius, a former Executive Assistant to the State Superintendent for the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, current adjunct faculty member for Cardinal Stritch University in Milwaukee, and co-author of *Building Shared Responsibility for Student Learning*. (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001) advocates the following for fostering continuous school improvement. She writes:

- *Focus* creates shared clarity of thought, direction, and purpose.
 - *Reflection* helps people learn from what they've done in the past and identify better ways of accomplishing their goals.
 - *Collaboration* brings people together to share ideas and knowledge
- Conzemius, A. (2000). Framework. *Journal of Staff Development*, 21(1), 38-41.

The International Reading Association has called out for schools to examine the use of academic time and "make every moment count."

International Reading Association—President's Message "Urgency and Instructional Time." www.reading.org/publications/reading_today/samples

Modified schedules decrease the number of transitions for teachers and students and increase the amount of time for instruction.

Total # of Elementary Schools	# of Schools Operating a Traditional Schedule	# of Schools Operating a Standard Extended Day (<i>current model</i>)	# of Schools Operating a Modified Extended Day	# of schools in transition to Modified Extended Day
46	14	5	22	5

The modified schedule is becoming the model of choice throughout the Alpine School District because of the reduced student teacher ratios.

Class size reduction has been a topic in the Utah State Legislature for many years. The modified extended day schedule reduces student/teacher ratios to allow more individualized instruction which has a direct correlation to individual student achievement.

Modified Extended Day

Students are assigned a home-base teacher. Instruction stems from that teacher except for specialty classes (P.E., Computers, or Music) taught by specialty teachers and grade level rotations during a portion of the middle of the day. Each teacher's home-base class is divided into two tracks. The early track attends school from 8:00 am—2:15 pm, and the later track attends from 9:15 am—3:30 pm. 75 minutes of the day is dedicated to small group instruction with ½ class size which each student receives either at the beginning or end of the day depending on their track. During small group instruction, teachers are able to focus on improving all students' skills in reading, writing, and math in a setting that increases individualized instruction. During the middle of the day (9:15 am—2:15 pm), teachers have their entire class, 25—30 students. It is during this time that announcements are made, assemblies are held, and students have recesses, lunch, library, and specialty classes. Teachers continue with additional math and literacy instruction and teach science, social studies, and art. These special content areas can be rotated within the grade level for specialization of subject matter and allow students an opportunity to be with different teachers on a regular basis.

Time	AM Track	Student Activities	PM Track
8:00	School Begins— Small Group Instruction	<i>75-minutes small group instruction with home-base teacher and 12-15 students.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literacy• Guided Reading/Reading Conferences• One-on-one and small group	
9:15	PM Track joins	<i>Instruction continues from home-base teacher with a full class size of 25-30.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literacy continues with full class—75 minutes (Comprehension Study, Shared Reading, Phonics/Spelling, Writing)• Math instruction—75 minutes• Specialty Class—30 min/day Tues-Fri (Computer, Music, or PE)—home-base teacher has 30 minute prep• Grade Level Rotation—75 minutes (Science, Social Studies, Art)• Lunch—30 minutes• Recess—15 minutes	School Begins— Whole Class Instruction
2:15	School Ends	<i>75-minutes small group instruction with home-base teacher and 12-15 students.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Literacy• Guided Reading/Reading Conferences• One-on-one and small group	Small Group Instruction
3:30			School Ends

**Kindergarten and Special Education Small Group Classes will continue on a traditional schedule.*

Each student and teacher receive the benefit of:

- Small class sizes of 12-15 students for 75 minutes of every day focusing on individualized instruction in reading and writing
- Flexibility to extend instruction across all areas of the curriculum
- Increased instructional minutes in mathematics and literacy
- Less transition time to maximize learning opportunities throughout the school day
- Teachers track the progress of the same 25 – 30 students each day
- Increased connectedness and cohesion of curriculum
- Shared Responsibility for student learning

What happens to our Specialties, Choir and Orchestra, and Special Performances?

Specialties will continue in all grades and include computers, music, and P.E. Teachers will also continue their specialized instruction and expertise of subject matter by conducting grade level rotations for a portion of the day and integrating concepts throughout the day.

Choir and orchestra will continue as important before and after school programs, similar to how they are conducted now with students arriving before their start time or staying after the conclusion of their day. Teachers will be encouraged to have a grade level performance. In addition, we are seeking after-school enrichment opportunities for our students.

What will teachers' assignments look like?

Kindergarten:

Mrs. Reese
Mrs. Smith

1st Grade:

Mrs. Aase
Mrs. Ball
Mrs. Forsyth
Mrs. Pratt

2nd Grade:

Mrs. MacMurdo
Mrs. Nelson
Spanish Immersion--TBA

2nd3rd Combination:

Mrs. Donithorne

3rd Grade:

Mrs. Ratliff
TBA
Spanish Immersion--TBA

4th Grade:

Mrs. Gordon/Mrs. Mikelson
Mr. Sheffer
TBA
Spanish Immersion—Mrs. Beach

5th Grade:

Mrs. Galloway
Mrs. Rawson
Mrs. Stansfield

5th/6th Spanish Immersion:

TBA

6th Grade:

TBA
Mrs. Monson
Mrs. Stahle

Specialties:

Mrs. Bellitti—Computer
Miss Cardiff—PE
Mrs. Caringella--Music

*Teaching assignments may change based on enrollment and unforeseen circumstances in teachers' lives

*Mrs. Amonson and Miss Adams have successfully completed their internship and will seek employment opportunities with Alpine School District.

*Miss Carlson will be leaving us to fill a two-year position at BYU working with new interns throughout the district.

*Mrs. Vera will be working on a Master's Degree through BYU in Special Education/ESL.

*Mrs. Gordon and Mrs. Mikelson announced their retirement, and will return part-time.

How will class placement be decided and do parents have input?

We recognize that students—and parents—look forward to new class assignments with anticipation and a certain amount of anxiety. Our goal is to group children so that their individual academic and social needs can be met. We also recognize that parents know their children and their needs and we value your input. Parents' input actually began when first meeting this year's teacher and sharing your knowledge and expertise about your child. We invite you to give additional input, by picking up a Parent Input Form in the office. The form will allow parents the opportunity to share your child's strengths, weaknesses, any other concerns you may have, or list teachers you feel could best meet your child's needs.

To ensure balanced classrooms, we will consider:

- Gender, achievement, ability, specific learning styles, self-management skills, leadership skills, peer conflict situations, and student energy levels
- Information from Parent Input Forms
- Input from grade level teachers
- Input from principal

Considerable time, attention, and care will be given to create the best groupings for each classroom. **Parent Input Forms will be available in the office beginning Monday, March 12th and must be returned no later than Thursday, April 26th at 4:00 pm.**

How will curriculum be supported?

- Math training will be provided at district and school levels as we adopt a new math curriculum
- All staff will be participating in a reading/writing inservice on March 19 conducted by Brad Wilcox from BYU
- District support in literacy (reading and writing) will occur throughout the year through STRAND trainings and individual school training
- Elementary CORE Academy will be funded in a joint effort of school and PTA giving teachers the opportunity to receive hands-on training and materials from premier teachers across the state in math and science
- Faculty meetings, professional development, and collaboration meetings will focus on instructional techniques and implementation of Robert Marzano’s research *Classroom Instruction that Works*, and the work of Rick DuFour and Robert Eaker, Professional Learning Communities. (Marzano, Pickering, Pollock. McREL, 2001. *Classroom Instruction that Works—Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*; DuFour, DuFour, Eaker. National Educational Service, 2002. *Getting Started—Restructuring Schools to Become Professional Learning Communities*.)

How will our decision be measured and evaluated?

We will continue to monitor student achievement as follows:

- CRT test scores in Language Arts (Grades 1-6), Mathematics (Grades 1-6), and Science (Grades 4-6)
- Developmental Reading Assessment (Grades K-6)
- Developmental Writing Assessment (6th grade)
- DIBELS progress monitoring (Grades K-3)
- UTIPS Testing Tools

We will adhere to plans made in our School Land Trust proposal for 2006-2007 and use those results as a benchmark. A School Land Trust proposal for the 2007-2008 school year will be drafted by the School Community Council and future targets and details to measure improvement will be identified. All information can be viewed from the Utah State Office of Education website, or www.schoollandtrust.org/quickview2007.php

Our mission at Rocky Mountain is to inspire and empower all students to lead successful lives. Your continued support and partnership is valued and appreciated.

David Turner
Principal

Susan Mattinson
Assistant Principal

Hollie Carlson
*School Community Council
President*

Lisa Anderson
*School Community Council
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Allison Southard
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