

**Regional School District 13
Utilization Study Committee
Frequently Asked Questions
Korn School Closing
September 2015**

The District is in the midst of a prolonged trend of declining enrollment. This decrease is currently being reflected most profoundly in our elementary schools where enrollment in grades K-6 has dropped from a high of nearly 1,200 students in the 2008-09 school year to 830 students in the 2015-16 school year. As a consequence, there are more classrooms than needed to accommodate the educational needs of our students. The Utilization Study Committee has been working to understand and address this issue for the past 5 years and recommends that the Board of Education support the recommendation to close Korn School at the end of the 2015-16 school year.

This document is intended to briefly answer the most common questions related to the Korn School closing in the following categories:

- **Enrollment: Predictions/Changes**
- **Relocation of Korn Students: Process/ Impact**
- **Associated Costs: Cost Avoidance/Moving Costs**
- **Korn School Building: Selection/Future Use**
- **Next Steps: Utilization Study Committee**

Enrollment: Predictions/Changes

How is enrollment predicted?

The District hired two independent demographic experts who based their predictions on several factors including economic and employment trends, birth trends and projections, childbearing-age women in both communities, fertility rates, housing (available housing units), and building permits.

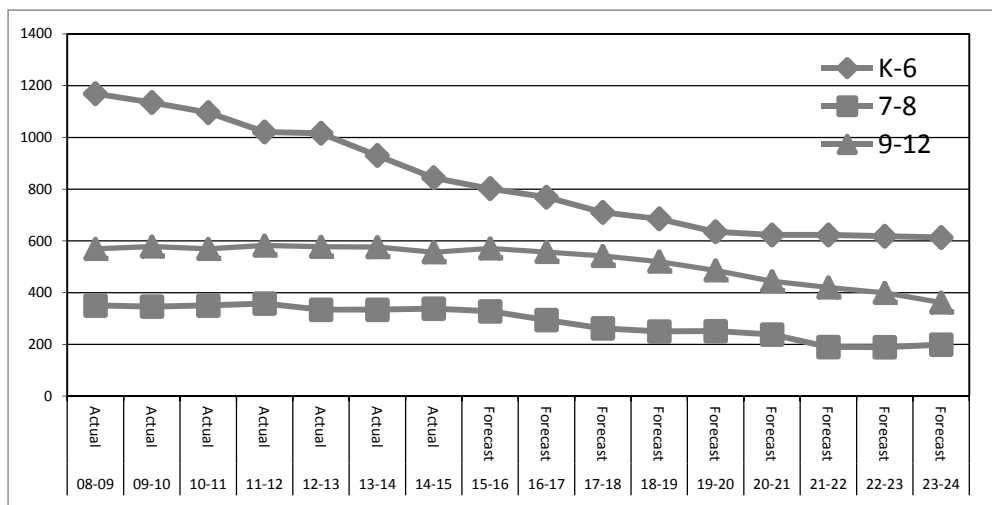
How accurate have the predictions been in the past?

The predictions have been accurate in the past with a less than 2% fluctuation between predicted and actual. The actual total enrollment has been lower than predicted.

What will happen if the enrollment increases in the future?

Based on enrollment projections and the projected space availability in the remaining buildings, there will be sufficient space to support unanticipated increases in student population.

Actual/Projected RSD13 Student Enrollment



Relocation of Korn Students: Process/Impact

Where will the 2016-17 Korn School students attend school?

In 2016-17 the second graders who would otherwise move up to Korn as third graders will remain at Brewster. The 3rd graders from Korn will move to and attend 4th grade at Memorial, thus moving to Memorial one year ahead of schedule. After the 2016-17 school year, 4th graders may continue to attend Memorial if renovations are needed at Brewster School.

Is there room at Memorial and Brewster; will additional classrooms have to be built to accommodate them?

Having 3rd graders remain at Brewster School and having 4th graders go to Memorial does not necessitate adding additional classrooms; however studying these issues is a part of the ongoing work of the Utilization Study Committee.

Will class sizes exceed BOE class size guidelines as a result of the school closing?

No, class sizes will remain within the Board of Education class size guidelines which are 18 for K and 1st grade, 20 for 2nd grade, 20-24 for 3rd and 4th grade, 21-25 for 5th and 6th grade, and 22-26 for 7th and 8th grade.

Associated Costs: Cost Avoidance/Moving Costs

What are the Korn School operating costs?

The annual cost of operating Korn School exclusive of all salary and benefits is approximately \$167,000. This includes costs such as heating and cooling, electricity, grounds maintenance, insurance, security, general repairs, and maintenance.

What building operating costs will be maintained until such time as a decision is made regarding the alternative use of the Korn building?

Building maintenance costs including heating, electricity, snow removal, lawn care and other miscellaneous building upkeep is approximately \$100,000.

Will there be salary savings?

Salaries at Korn School fall into two categories: **Non-certified** and support salaries directly related to operating the building (such as custodial, cafeteria, secretarial, etc.). **Certified** and other salaries (teachers, teacher assistants, etc.) that are staffed based on specific student needs.

What is the estimated total cost avoidance in the first year?

Estimated annual savings for non-certified building-specific salaries are approximately \$435,000 per year and \$67,000 in building operating costs.

District-wide, and certified and support staff salary reductions directly related to student enrollment for the 2016-17 school year are a normal part of the budgeting process and will be determined as part of the 2016-17 budget process. Staff reductions over the past 2 years are as follows:

Recent Budgeted Staff Reductions

Year	Staff Reductions	Savings Per Year	Accumulated Annual Savings
2014-15	-8.8	\$311,600	
2015-16	-4.2	\$270,900	\$582,500

What costs will be incurred as a result of the closing?

The one-time costs associated with relocating the Korn School students and staff are approximately \$100,000. This includes moving expenses, equipment rental, data networking, unemployment expenses, mailings, limited subcontractor expenses for plumbing, carpentry, etc.

Are there any incremental construction costs for the Korn building associated with the relocation of the students?

No, there are no anticipated incremental construction costs for the building.

Korn School Building: Selection/Future Use

Why was Korn School recommended as the school to close, especially because it is on the Durham "school campus"?

Korn was recommended because of the size and age of the building. The school building has 8 classrooms, 4 support rooms, 2 Unified Arts rooms, 1 auxiliary room and 2 portables. By the 2016-17 school year, only 7 classes will be needed which will be reduced to 6 over the next 3 years and finally to 5 classrooms by 2020-21. Educationally it is not best practice to have so few students in one building and is not best practice in terms of teacher collaboration for coherence in programming.

What will happen to the programs that are currently held at Korn School i.e. afterschool programs?

The Utilization Study Committee understands that Korn School is used by our communities for many non-school purposes. The District has been and will continue to work with those groups, including town registrars, who currently use the building and may need to be relocated to other schools.

Why not close and shutter the Korn building immediately?

Included in the on-going work of the Utilization Study Committee is the determination of the ultimate disposition of the Korn building. Keeping the building partially open during the interim will prevent deterioration of the building caused by non-use and allows for continued use of the gymnasium for recreation activities.

What will happen to the building after it is closed?

The Utilization Study Committee's work is on-going. A top priority is to evaluate and report on possible options for alternative uses. The BOE has deferred the decision regarding future use of the Korn building until such time as the Board votes to relocate the students. Until final disposition is determined, the District will retain ownership of Korn. This allows for the building to be "mothballed" for a period of time while plans for the balance of the project are completed, and disposition of the building for either school use or public use can be fully developed.

Will the District be required to repay the state for Korn School construction grants previously made to the District?

The District received a state building grant for partial renovations done at Korn School in 2004. If the District disposes of Korn School under certain conditions, the unamortized portion of that state grant will have to be repaid to the state. As of May 2016 the potential payback amount is \$708,032.

The District is not required to refund the unamortized balance of the state building grant as long as it retains ownership of the building. The grant repayment requirement may be waived by the state under certain circumstances. The Utilization Study Committee is currently reviewing alternative use options for Korn School, including the grant repayment and waiver requirements.

Who is responsible for the final decision regarding Korn School?

The final decision will be made by a vote of the RSD 13 Board of Education at the October 2015 meeting.

Next Steps: Utilization Study Committee

The work of the Utilization Study Committee is ongoing and will continue into the foreseeable future. In addition to the tasks noted above, some of the most important next steps are:

Evaluate Korn School building disposition or use alternatives.

Work with the Administration to finalize detailed transition plans for the Korn School closing and revised bus routes to determine impact on transportation costs.

Finalize cost analysis of the move including costs to relocate Korn classrooms to Brewster and Memorial.

Finalize costs associated with maintaining ownership of Korn School after transfer of classrooms.

Develop additional school facility use plans to address on-going district-wide declining enrollment.

Support development of a coordinated plan to ensure continued progress with the implementation of Common Core Curriculum and other program enhancements to our educational programs that secure the continued success of all RSD13 students.

Regional School District 13
Utilization Study Committee
Community Information Session

October 6, 2015

7:00pm

Coginchaug Regional High School Auditorium

Distributed by Regional School District 13 Board of Education

Kerrie Flanagan, Chair

Dr. Kathryn Veronesi, Superintendent