

Considering a Later Start at the High School

Dr. Frances Wills

Presentation based on work of “Later Start
Committee”

PVCSD

Later Start Time Committee

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Ferraro, Joseph

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Pedersen, Erin

Admin:

Bellino, Patrick
Burrow, Brian
Doherty, Natalie
Figarella, Jill
Intrieri, Sandra
McCarty, Travis
O'Connor, Christopher
Podesta, Margaret
Wills, Fran

Why consider a later start?





Why consider the change?

- Recent research findings on the effect of school start time on adolescent academic achievement and mental health compel our attention.
- The start time of our high school is among the earliest in the region starting at 7:10 am. (Carmel also starts at 7:10; other neighboring schools begin as early as 7:17, 7:20, 7:30; a few begin at 8:00)
- We see student tardiness and absenteeism as issues to address.
- We are seeking to improve academic accomplishment and support students social-emotional health.
- Students are at their bus stops, some by 6:10 am in complete darkness walking in the dark on country roads and arriving at the high school by 6:45 am.
- Students now begin lunch at 9:30 am at the High School.



Research findings on impact of early school start on adolescents

Academic impact:

- **Biological research shows that circadian rhythms shift during the teen years, pushing boys and girls to stay up later at night and sleep later into the morning.” (Scientific American, 2014)**
- **“Because educational start times do not adjust for this change, early school start times effectively limit sleep in adolescents.” (Student Health)**
- **Kyla Wahlstrom, Director of the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota, published a large study in February that tracked more than 9,000 students in eight public high schools in Minnesota, Colorado and Wyoming. After one semester, when school began at 8:35 am or later, grades earned in math, English, science and social studies typically rose a quarter step—for example, up halfway from B to B+.” (Scientific American, 2014)**

Research findings

- “Researchers find higher grade point averages in core academic classes (Wahlstrom et al, 2014), higher grades in general (Carrell et al., 2011; Perkinson-Gloor et al., 2013; Short et al, 2013), and generally higher test scores (Edwards, 2012) for adolescents in schools with later start times.”

http://www.newpaltz.edu/media/crreo/crreo/2020_school_start_times.pdf

- Nauset school officials in 2012 ...pushed their start time back to 8:35 a.m., giving students an extra hour to sleep in....More students showed up to school refreshed. Tardiness fell by 35 percent, and the number of Ds and Fs dropped by half.” (Boston Globe, 2016)



Research findings

- **In the past three years, however, scientific studies have piled up, and they all lead to the same conclusion: a later start time improves learning. And the later the start, the better.” (Scientific American, 2014)**
- **“A 2012 study of North Carolina school districts that varied school times because of transportation problems showed that later start times correlated with higher scores in math and reading. “ (Scientific American, 20)**



Findings on impact of later start

- Impact of even a small change on truancy, behavioral problems in school (Owens et al., 2010)
- The later first period begins, the higher the distribution of student grades. (Carrell, et.al., 2011)
- Less likely to skip first period class (Walstrom, 2002)
- Better driving and fewer accidents (Vorona, 2011)
- Other factors noted as result of insufficient sleep: Lack of exercise, poor diet, use of computers for three or more hours per day, physical fighting, cigarette, alcohol, and marijuana use, sexual activity, depression, suicidal tendencies. (CDC, 2011)
- Early start may impact risk-taking behaviors.

Research findings:

- **Shifting school start times to 8:30 or later can bring about powerful change to students' academic performance and overall health, according to a study by the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement at the University of Minnesota, which examined eight schools with later start times in Minnesota, Colorado, and Wyoming. The later times allowed about 60 percent of students to get at least eight hours of sleep, and the schools saw increases in standardized test scores and attendance rates and a decrease in tardiness...." (Boston Globe, 2016)**

Start times in region

- Survey of region-27 responses
 - 2 schools start at 7:10 am (Carmel, PV)
 - 3 schools start at 8:00 am or later-(latest is Katonah at 8:15 am)
 - remaining 22 schools between 7:17 am and 8:00 am

Findings of committee on alternative options

- Three alternatives were reviewed based on analysis by transportation consultant; each involved moving from three tier to two tier bus system in order to create a later start within contractual requirements of a 3:30 dismissal at the Elementary School (also recognizing impact of later dismissal).
 - 1) Adding fifth grade to elementary structure (K-5 and 6-12 transportation)
 - 2) Creating staggered K-6 and 7-12 system
 - 3) Transporting students in grades 5-12 and K-4 on two runs.

Impact of each of the findings :

K-5 and 6-12 model

Most salient advantages:

- Provide a developmental consistency and continuity of curriculum and structure for 6 years at the Elementary School
- Transportation divided equally with addition of three buses
- More opportunity for professional collaboration

Most salient disadvantages

- Analysis of capacity and usage of Elementary School indicates a usage that would require additional classrooms and/or reduction of current resources provided by the current utilization, i.e. additional ENL requirements, square footage for special education classes, speech and language, reading, and square footage requirements; maker-space.
- Program disruption at Middle School with elective opportunities and 5-6/7-8 balance; 5th grade students create a “younger” environment that appears to reduce behavioral concerns for early teens.
- Student perspective offers sense of readiness for increased independence
- Potential loss of instructional space
- Possible impact on program or shared staffing required
- Increased load for nurse, psychologist, specialists

Overall consensus: Not recommended at this time

Impact of findings: K-6 and 7-12 model

Most salient advantages

- Even distribution of students on buses-addition of two or three buses
- Results in aligned classes for 7-12 with opportunities for shared staff and students

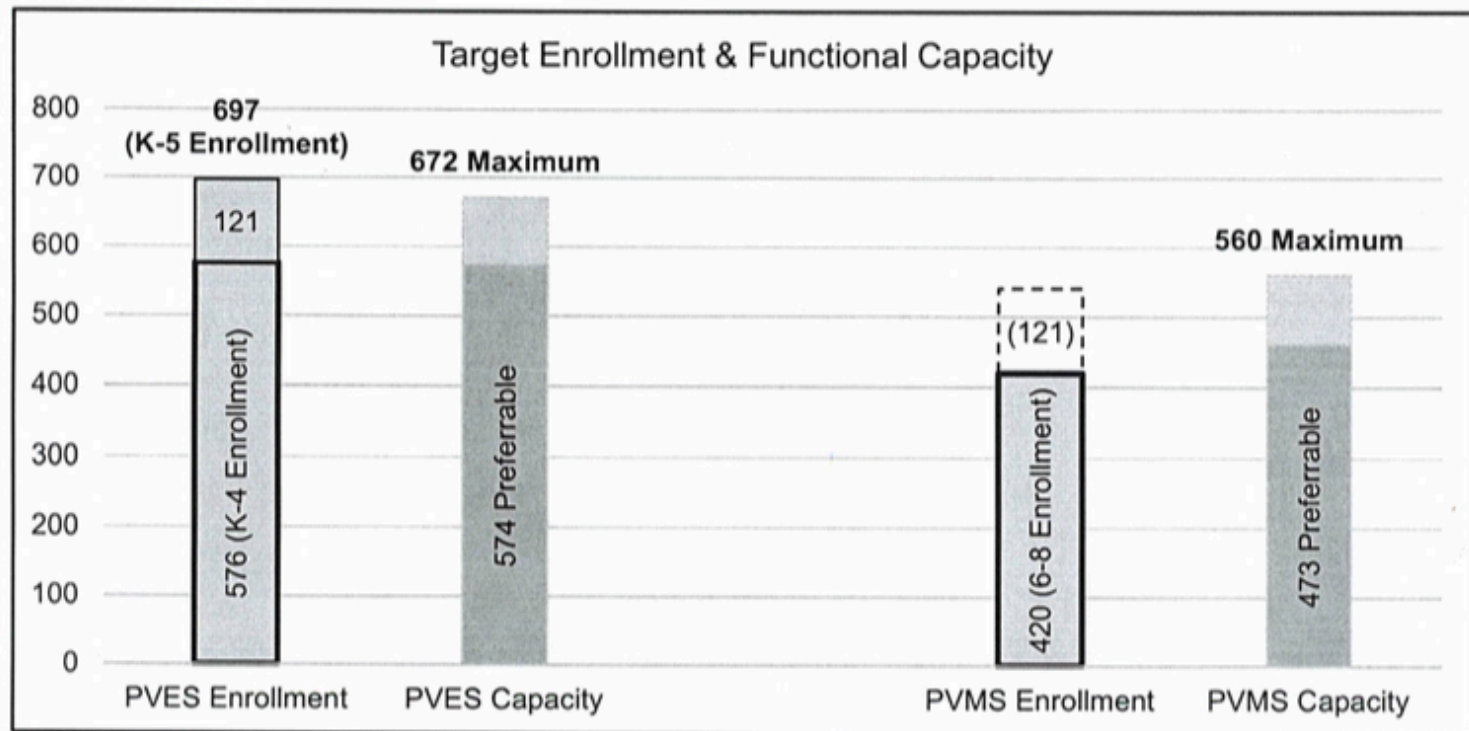
Most salient disadvantages

- Disrupts the Middle School community
- Complicates staffing and contractual considerations
- Removes opportunities within the Middle School for some electives, participating in clubs and scheduling accommodations
- Disrupts educational resources and program

Overall consensus: Not recommended at this time

Capacity study: Elementary School and Middle School

School Building	Current Enrollment	Relocation of 5th Grade	Projected Enrollment	Preferred Functional Capacity	Maximum Functional Capacity
Putnam Valley Elementary School	576	121	697	574	672
Putnam Valley Middle School	541	(121)	420	462	560
Putnam Valley High School	--- Not Included in Study ---				





Focus on K-4 and 5-12 option

- Least disruptive to other school communities and resources
- Possibility of moving to uniform 5-12 start time of 7:40 with dismissal of 2:18 or 7:50 with dismissal of 2:30
- Analysis of this model indicates that the addition of four buses would permit execution of this plan
- Cost per bus is approximately \$60,000; however, reduction in fuel and efficiencies could result in reduction of this cost

Advantages and disadvantages of the K-4/5-12 plan--Parents

- Parent perspective pro:
 - Responds to preponderance of research-based evidence on impact of early start time on student achievement, physical and mental health
 - Promotes safety for walking and waiting in dark early morning hours
- Parent perspective con:
 - Concerns about students from Middle School and High School on same buses
 - Concerns about time for after school help and conflicts with clubs and athletics
 - Concern about possibility of later return impacting homework and actual sleep time



Student perspective

- Student survey indicates that 108 respondents (about 25% of each class responding) are not in favor of the later start. 64% of those responding prefer the current time. 38% would prefer a start between 7:30 and 8:00.
- A follow up survey is planned with more concrete information
- In the narrative responses, students were concerned primarily about impact on their after-school responsibilities and ability to participate in extra-help, clubs and athletics
- Student expressed concern about lateness of homework which would affect bed-time.
- Students generally like the current early dismissal time (1:50) They see that there is time for practice, work, clubs, etc.



Teacher perspective

- Comments:
 - High School teachers acknowledge the research on adolescent well-being and academic achievement.
 - A recent survey of teacher opinions provided responses from 34 teachers. 50% of the teachers feel the change to a later start would have a positive impact on student performance.
 - 48% of the teacher respondents felt that students were not alert during 1st period, but 75% felt that they were alert during second period.
 - Most of the teachers felt that first period absenteeism was a problem for only a small group of students.
- Concerns:
 - Teachers are concerned about the scheduling and opportunity for after-school help
 - Concern about traffic at drop-off of students in the morning and more traffic on road at later time
 - Teachers are very positive about the new leadership at the High School and engaged in a number of initiatives (IB, analysis of possible rotating schedule) that they feel will be disrupted with the additional challenge a later start.
 - Later start will impact the schedule of after school activities and possibly extra help; some discussion of activities before the regular day
 - There were comments on both sides in the survey, with concern about mixing ages of students on the buses, and the desire to maintain the current system that they feel works satisfactorily.

Administrative perspective:

Benefits to later start

- Research-based evidence on student well-being and academic achievement points to the later start time as a positive direction.
- Student safety in early morning hours would be greatly improved.
- Further opportunity to address attendance and tardiness
- Weather delay decisions would be less constrained by the current need to make decisions very early, by 5:00 am due to the early start.
- The alignment of Middle School and High School schedules provides flexibility in teacher assignments and student opportunity for advanced coursework.
- With additional runs in the morning, the time on the bus would not lengthen; this change could result in shorter, neighborhood runs.
- This configuration (K-4/5-12) would not disrupt basic functions of other schools, including Middle School program and Elementary School dismissal time.
- Four buses would be posted at Elementary School to expedite dismissals



Why not? Concerns

- Fixed annual cost for transportation increases by between \$200,000 to \$240,000- approximately \$60,000 per bus for four buses.
- BOCES and private school transportation would require an additional bus prior to school start. (Cost could be mitigated by the transferring one of the later runs to an early morning run.)
- Time will be needed to look at scheduling at the High School and other initiatives that are in the planning stages.
- The period before school at Middle School now provides some flexibility for tutoring, intramurals or other opportunities.



Response to some concerns expressed by constituents: Buses and ridership

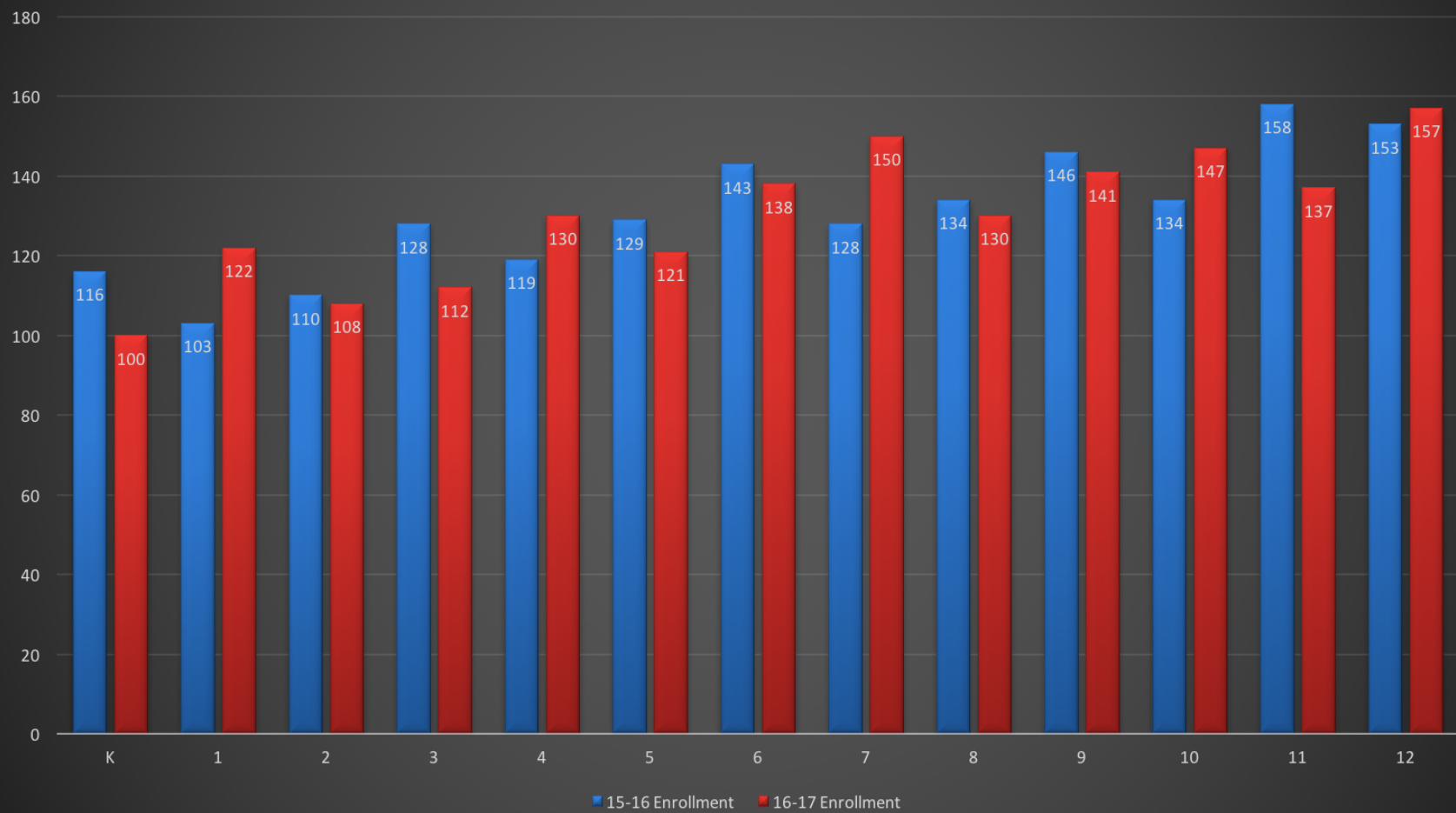
- Time on bus to be determined, but will more than likely be similar or less time than current runs due to shorter runs with more dense household ridership.
- Grades 5-12 on one bus: probability of siblings, neighbors and almost no seniors and few high school students on the buses. Older students often provide a protective tempering of middle school student behavior; currently, high school students do ride the Middle School buses in am and pm for various reasons.



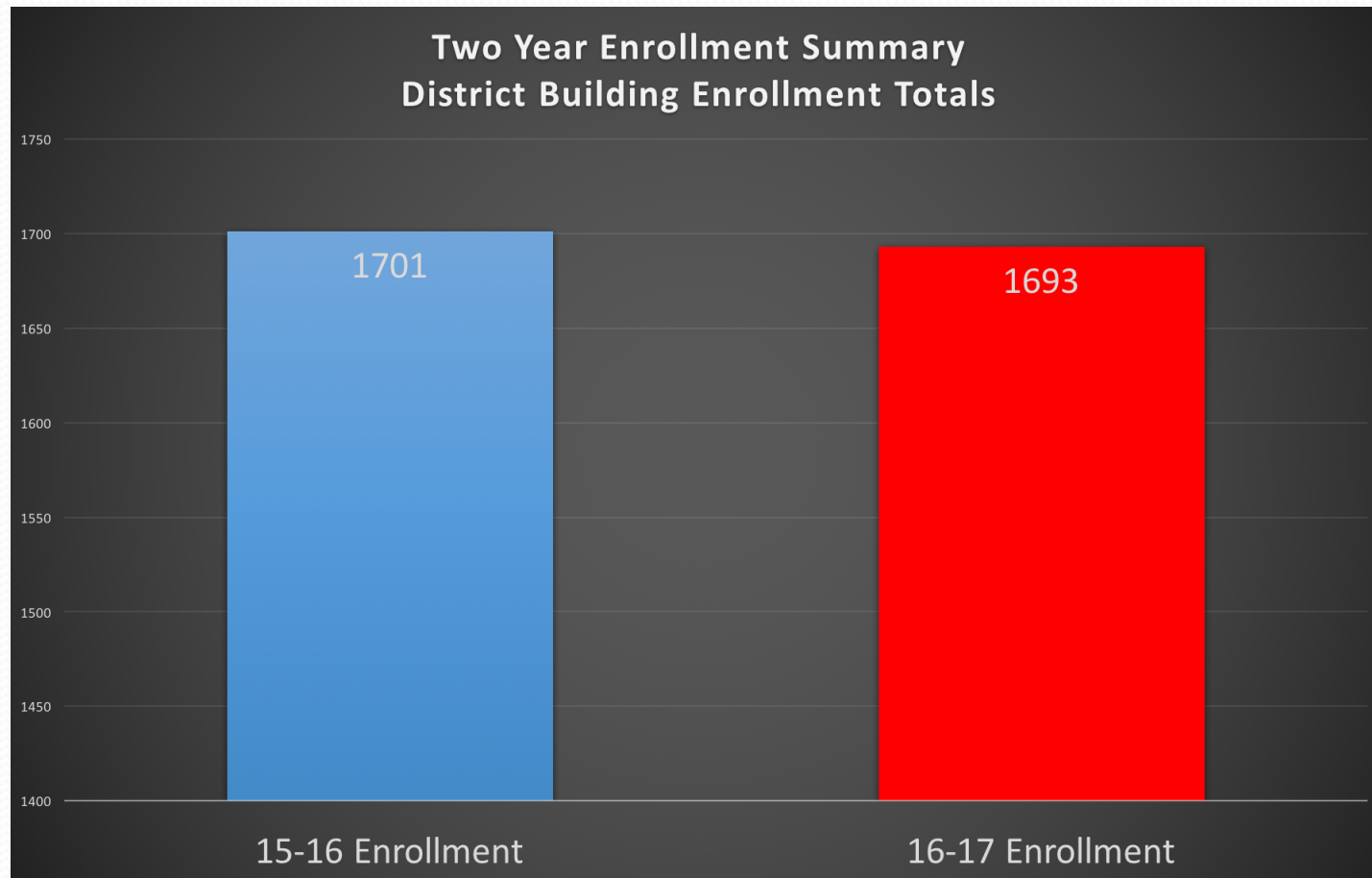
Suggested clarification and responses to concerns of later afternoon activities with 2:18 dismissal

- Current departure time of athletic away games is 2:45; dismissal with later start would be 2:18
- Clubs and extra-help would be available before practices if these are moved to 3:00; drama participation would still be available
- Somewhat later homework time would occur if students chose not to do homework prior to game time or practice time

Two Year Enrollment Comparison

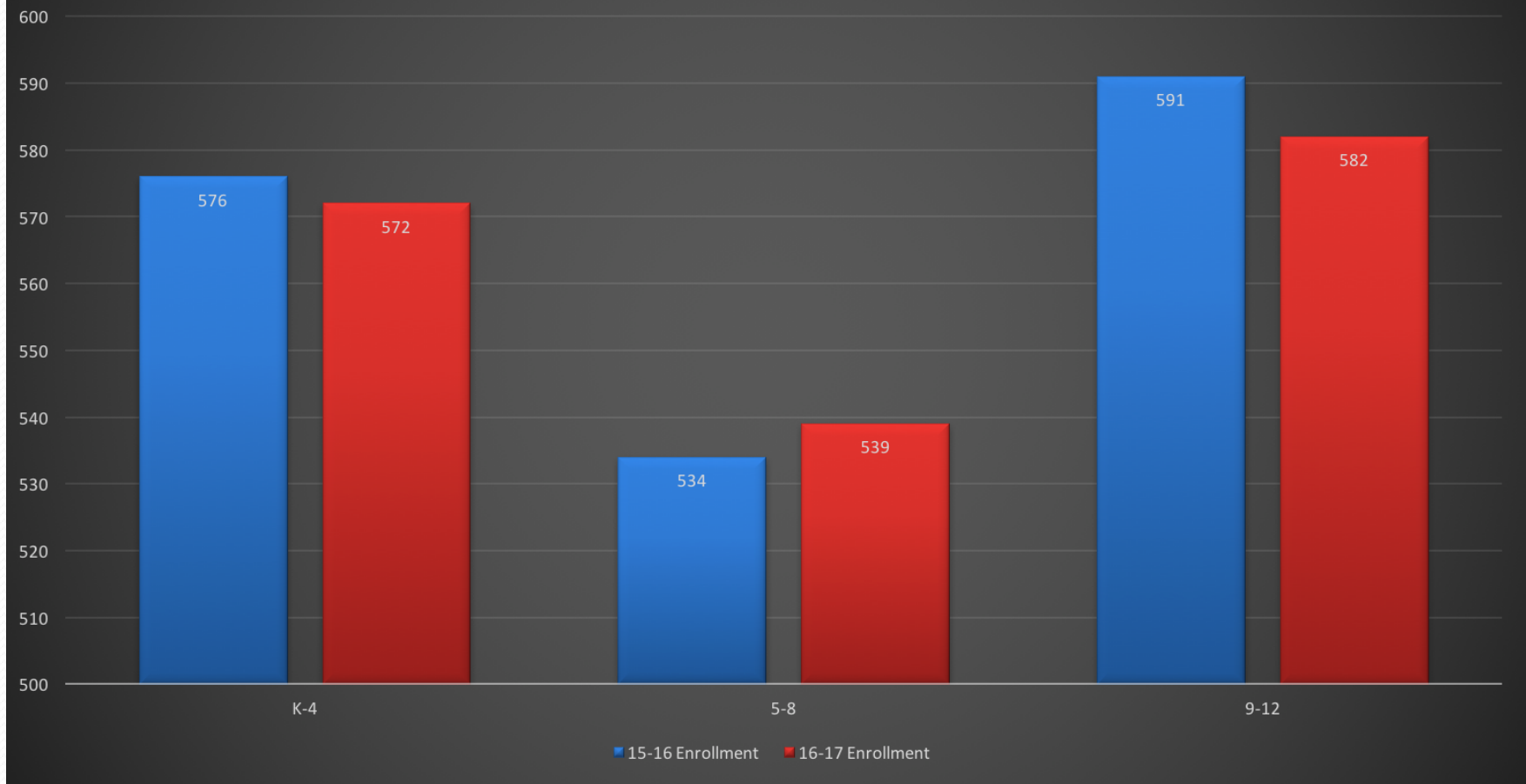


2015-16 and 2016-17 District Enrollment



Building Enrollments

Two Year Enrollment Summary
By Building





Next steps

- Board review
- Public comment invited through the website special email section in-box and a number of formal meetings
- Inside Putnam Valley video with information in early December
- Formal meetings (to be live streamed and posted):
 - Public forum on Thursday, December 8 at 6:00 pm
 - Public forum prior to Board meeting on Thursday, December 15, 2016 from 6:00 pm-7:00 pm.
 - Project Board of Education formal consideration at the first January meeting: January 5, 2017