

# HERALD-WHIG

## New QPS plan minimizes student transitions



Work continues on the new Monroe School currently under construction Tuesday, June 28, 2016 on Payson Road. | H-W Photo/Phil Carlson Construction workers focus their efforts on a section of roof during a tour of the new Monroe School Tuesday, June 28, 2016. The school is one of several construction projects either under way or scheduled to be started soon in Quincy. | H-W Photo/Phil Carlson  
*Phil Carlson 1*

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**By Deborah Gertz Husar** Herald-Whig

Posted: Dec. 2, 2016 1:35 pm

QUINCY -- A new plan under consideration by Quincy Public Schools would reduce the number of transitions facing students as construction continues on new elementary schools.

The plan, outlined for district staff on Friday, will be presented to the Quincy School Board at its Dec. 21 meeting.

Instead of shifting students and staff to K-5 learning communities for the 2017-18 year, the plan calls for largely "status quo" operation of the existing elementary schools.

"The only difference is to move Monroe into the new building and keep it a K-3 building for one year," QPS Business Manager Joel Murphy said.

Baldwin will continue to house fourth- and fifth-grade students. "The only difference there is looking at condensing it to two sections, to try to consolidate into certain parts of the building to start demolition and construction on the Baldwin site before school ends next year," Murphy said.

"These are all preliminary," he said. "A lot of planning still needs to go into this, but this is the direction we're moving toward."

The district's "major move" will come in the 2018-19 year with a shift to three K-5 buildings -- the Monroe, 12th Street and 48th Street sites -- and two transitional schools.

The Ellington and Madison buildings will be the transitional school for the Baldwin site, which was part of the original plan, with Adams School as a K-5 building for the still-to-be-determined fifth elementary site.

The new Baldwin and as-yet-undetermined sites will open for the 2019-20 school year.

"The buildings are still going to be built on the same schedule. We'll have everybody in new buildings in two-and-one-half years," Superintendent Roy Webb said. "Our plan was very complex. This makes it a lot more simple and eliminates some transitions."

Under the initial plan, some students might have spent three years at Monroe School, for example, then potentially would have shifted to Adams or Berrian for third grade and moved to a new K-5 building in fourth grade.

"We heard a lot of comments, not just from those parents, but parents throughout the city concerned about the number of transitions," Webb said. "I liked the first plan. It got us into our school communities, but I do understand making it more simple and not having so many moving parts for families."

Murphy said the new plan came in response to those transition concerns and planning concerns within district.

"It gives us a little breathing room," Murphy said. "I'm very confident we would have accomplished it without any major issues, but it does give us extra time to do planning and work through the process ... to get these plans a little more concrete and have a better opportunity to communicate those so everybody is understanding the direction we're going."

Several courses of action were looked at to reduce the number of student transitions, Murphy said, including opening the Monroe site as scheduled as a K-5 building.

"Logistically, it didn't work out to make Monroe a K-5 building to start with," Murphy said. "There was too much shifting of staff."

Adams and Berrian schools already are operating as a K-5 learning community, and the proposal to consolidate the community at Adams came with input from administrators and staff.

Adams has operated with as many as 600 students in the past, and "for a year, it's something we can work with, so we're not splitting between two buildings, and make the operation a little bit more efficient," Murphy said.