

To: Board of Education
 Dr. Laurie Heinz, Superintendent

From: Dr. Lori Lopez, Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning

Date: January 23, 2017

Re: Recommendation for Outdoor Education Schedule 2017-18

In the fall, District 64 students in grade 5 participate in an overnight outdoor education program. For the past several years, District 64 has utilized Camp Duncan, a YMCA of Metro Chicago facility in Ingleside. Recently, we convened an Outdoor Education subcommittee comprised of two representatives from each 5th grade team and all of the elementary building principals. This subcommittee discussed the current structure of the outdoor education program (2.5 days/2 nights) and the benefits of moving to a compact 2-day/1-night format by eliminating the extra half-day. **All members of the subcommittee fully support moving to a 2-day/1-night format beginning in 2017-18.**

The benefits of a 2-day/1-night program include:

- Students will be able to participate in all of their favorite activities, including the Night Hike, 5th Grade Campfire Sing-a-Long, and the ever-popular Mission Impossible game. Courses linked to the District 64 Science curriculum will also be included. The new schedule will be:

Day One	Day Two
8:15 - Departure from school 9:45 - Arrival - Settle into cabins 10:15 - Welcome / Orientation 10:55 - <u>Activity #1</u> 11:45 - Table-Setting (Hoppers) 12:00 - Lunch 12:40 - <u>Activity #2</u> 1:50 - <u>Activity #3</u> 3:00 - <u>Activity #4</u> 4:15 - <u>Activity #5</u> 5:15 - <u>Recreation Time</u> 6:00 - Table-Setting (Hoppers) 6:10 - Dinner 6:45 - <u>Drumming / Night Hike</u> 7:25 - <u>Drumming / Night Hike</u> 8:10 - <u>Campfire - Whole Group</u> 9:00 - Back to Cabins	*Move out of cabins before breakfast 7:45 - Table-Setting (Hoppers) 8:00 - Breakfast 8:30 - <u>Activity #6</u> 9:40 - <u>Activity #7</u> 10:50 - <u>Activity #8</u> 11:50 - Table-Setting (Hoppers) 12:00 - Lunch 12:30 - <u>Mission Impossible</u> 1:40 - <u>Pictures/Rec Time/ Pack-Up</u> 2:15 - Departure By 3:30 - Arrival at school

- We will reduce potential risks related to supervision and safety. Camp Duncan is a District-sponsored program, however students (including students with complex medical care plans) are under the direct supervision of parent chaperones from bedtime until breakfast. A registered nurse is available onsite.
- We will reduce the impact on nursing staff and student care. The Board has approved nursing staff at each elementary school building next year based on the complexity of student care plans. Depending on the needs of 5th grade students, we staff Camp Duncan with either a District 64 nurse or a substitute registered nurse. One less overnight and half-day of camp means less time students will have nursing care from a substitute nurse.
- We will achieve an acceptable balance between staffing Camp Duncan appropriately and impacting other programs. In the past, we have staffed Camp Duncan with both 5th grade teachers and teachers from other programs outside of 5th grade (e.g., physical education, Special Education). This significantly impacted K-4th grade students who potentially had a substitute teacher for three days. This past year, we staffed Camp Duncan only with 5th grade teachers and did not bring additional staff unless a 5th grade teacher chose not to participate. Feedback from staff indicates that sending at least one additional staff member outside of the 5th grade team is ideal. In the 2-day/1-night format, the impact on other programs is reduced when we include this additional staff member.
- The new compact two-day schedule will preserve vital professional development time. The three-day format meant that staff had to miss professional development on Wednesdays. Wednesday professional development is a significant financial and human resource investment. It is critical that all staff participate in these activities.
- Students will return to school at the regular dismissal time after a full Day 2 of camp. Parents will no longer need to make arrangements to pick students up from school early from a half-day of camp on Day 3.
- In 2016-17, the fee was \$190. Based on these modifications, we anticipate that the program cost to families will be reduced. The fee is paid by parents, unless the student qualifies for a free lunch waiver. Scholarships also are available through the school principals.

We believe this modification enhances the best features of a “favorite” educational experience of students and their families, better supports the new Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)-aligned Science curriculum and meets goals for Social-Emotional Learning, and places the program on a more sustainable basis for the future.

The Outdoor Education Program is a valuable part of the District 64 curriculum for 5th graders. The 2-day/1-night format enables us to maintain a rich outdoor education experience for students and introduces the many other benefits outlined above.