

Ellsworth Community School District SAGE Review Committee Report

December 14, 2009

Committee Members:

Leona Johnson, Hillcrest Principal
Tara Frion, Hillcrest parent representative
Maggie Jungmann, Hillcrest teacher rep
(Mary Kees – substitute)
Katie Olson, Prairie View teacher rep

Mary Zimmerman, Prairie View Principal
Heather Brown, Prairie View parent representative
Mary Erlandson, Ellsworth School Board rep
Laurie Andrews, Ellsworth School Board president

The SAGE Review Committee met 3 times reviewing and analyzing the following data:

1. The state guidelines and philosophy for SAGE.
2. The Ellsworth Community School District's current waiver.
3. The DPI's response to the 2009-2010 status of the Ellsworth SAGE program.
4. Current class numbers and projected numbers for the next year.
5. Budget impacts of keeping the SAGE program next year.
6. Projected class sizes without SAGE program in place.
7. Average class sizes of schools in the area (from CESA #11 database)

Summary of data.

- 1) In 2010-2011, the Ellsworth Community School District will have to be fully compliant with the SAGE waiver in order to continue to receive funding through SAGE. This requirement was used to project needed staff if SAGE was kept for next year.
- 2) Because the Ellsworth Community Schools are not currently in full compliance with our waiver, the Ellsworth Community School Board will have to submit a plan to DPI by February 1st indicating how they will meet full compliance if they continue with the SAGE program for the next school year. If we are not fully compliant in both elementary buildings and in all grades K-3 as of the 3rd Friday in September, 2010, we will lose all SAGE funding for next year.
- 3) If the Ellsworth Community School District decides not to participate in the SAGE program next year, we cannot reapply for the SAGE program in the future.
- 4) The benefits of continuing in the SAGE program include having a teacher/student ratio in K-3rd grade of 1 teacher to 15 students. Subsidies from the state of Wisconsin are expected to be close to \$260,000 (estimated to be similar to current and past years.) The dollar amount of the SAGE subsidy is \$2250 for each low-income child in the grades served by the program. Thus this subsidy can vary from year to year.
- 5) The challenges of continuing in the SAGE program include configuring classrooms in order to meet the exact conditions of our waiver. For instance, DPI has approved 16 students in a class, but if 17 students are put into one class at kindergarten or first grade, 1 full time teacher must be hired. Thus the budget for SAGE can vary, depending on the 3rd Friday enrollment numbers.
- 6) The budget challenge of keeping SAGE is that the district must subsidize the additional cost of staff hired to meet the SAGE waiver. This cost to the district has averaged about \$100,000 / year for the last 2 budget years.
- 7) To compare the cost of continuing or dropping the SAGE program and its impact on the district's budget, the committee reviewed projected enrollment for next year, and has 3 scenarios to present: a) a scenario with SAGE classrooms for next year, b) a scenario without SAGE, but keeping class sizes 22 or fewer, and c) a scenario without SAGE, with class sizes of 25 or fewer.