

May 5, 2017

Ryan Noss, Superintendent
Kim Patten, Facilities and Transportation Director
Corvallis School District
1555 SW 35th Street
Corvallis, Oregon 97333

Dear Superintendent Noss, Director Patten, and the Facilities Planning Committee –

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with the following correspondence regarding the Facilities Planning Committees (FPC) efforts to determine the most cost-effective and beneficial plan for improving the Corvallis School District's (CSD) facilities. I appreciate your efforts in trying to answer the complex question of how best to provide the exceptional educational experience our children deserve. I have not attended the FPC meetings, but I have reviewed the workshops' documentation. I have been in communication with several Franklin parents over the last two weeks regarding the FPC's progress and current direction regarding the future of the Franklin School. Base on the feedback from this parent group, I believe that if CSD proactively informed Franklin parents with the likely FPC recommendation to relocate Franklin to north Corvallis, there would be a considerable parent response.

This correspondence includes this cover letter intended to be a quick-read, followed by a more extensive discussion of Franklin School, FPC's task, and the direction the FPC is trending towards in recommending relocating Franklin School to the current Mountain View Elementary School campus.

From our review of the materials, there are three preferred alternatives for addressing Franklin School's future:

- Keep Franklin School in its current location and complete necessary repairs.
- If Franklin School is too expensive to repair, then build a new Franklin School on the Harding School property. Tearing down Franklin School would achieve Corvallis High School goals for fields and parking.
- If building a new Franklin School at Harding is not feasible, move Franklin to another Corvallis core area school campus that is vacated by a school that relocates to the Harding School property or another location.

There are potential problems with relocating Franklin School to the Mountain View Elementary School campus.

- The distance from where most current students live would require an inconvenient commute for parents for drop off/pick up assuming no bus system.
- There unique community atmosphere would be lost since Franklin would be a commuter school.
- Exclusion of families who do not have the flexibility or resources to drive their kids to Mountain View campus from the Corvallis core area and south Corvallis, attendance areas with higher economically disadvantaged families.
- Likely loss of parent volunteers due to inconvenient commute. Franklin parents have volunteered over 1,600 hours during the 2016-2017 school year.
- These issues will likely result in reduced enrollment, volunteer participation, and student participation in extracurricular activities. Over time, many of the unique qualities that make Franklin successful and special would likely be lost. This attrition would eventually lead to the closure of Franklin, to the detriment of CSD, our kids, and Corvallis.

Respectfully,



Troy Brandt
124 NW 29th Street

The following correspondence provides a more detailed review of information pertaining to Franklin School, its students and parent volunteers, and comments on the FPC’s scenario review process. We believe this information is important for your consideration as we expect the exceptional attributes that make Franklin School special, would be impacted with a relocation of Franklin School to outside of the Corvallis core area.

Student Demographics and Performance

The State of Oregon issues annual school performance reports. I expect you are very familiar with these reports, more so than I am. Individually, the Report Card output is easy to digest and informative. However, the individual school Report Cards only provide comparisons to similar schools in the state and “like schools” which have similar characteristics as the comparison school. I acquired the Excel workbooks that aggregate the school information and allow for not only the noted comparisons, but also comparisons to other elementary schools in the Corvallis School District (CSD). I thought this would be a worthwhile effort to see how Franklin stacks up relative to other CSD elementary schools and what could potentially be lost by changing the geographic location and potential culture of Franklin.

Larger scale graphics for the following charts are included at the end of this letter. Figure 1 includes summary demographic information. I included the total enrollment for the elementary school portion of Franklin. Based on the annual wait list to enter the lower grades, Franklin’s enrollment is limited by class space rather than attendance demand. The median class size at Franklin (K-8, not broken out for K-5) is 27.5 students, only Wilson has a higher median class size (28 students). The range at other CSD elementary schools is 26.5 (Adams) to 20.5 (Lincoln).

The Report Card includes a more detailed break out of student group outcomes, with numerous demographic categories. I selected students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged groups as two diversity metrics of underrepresented groups in our community (Figure 2). Franklin has a similar percentage of disable students as other CSD elementary schools and has a similar economically disadvantaged student population as Hoover and Jefferson. By these two metrics, Franklin has similar characteristics as comparable elementary schools in CSD.

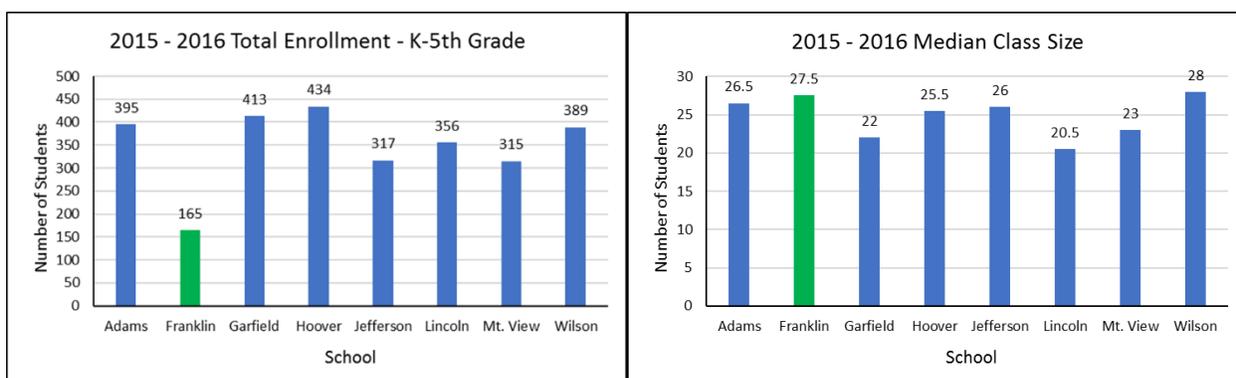


Figure 1. Total enrollment comparisons among CSD elementary schools (left) and median class size (right).

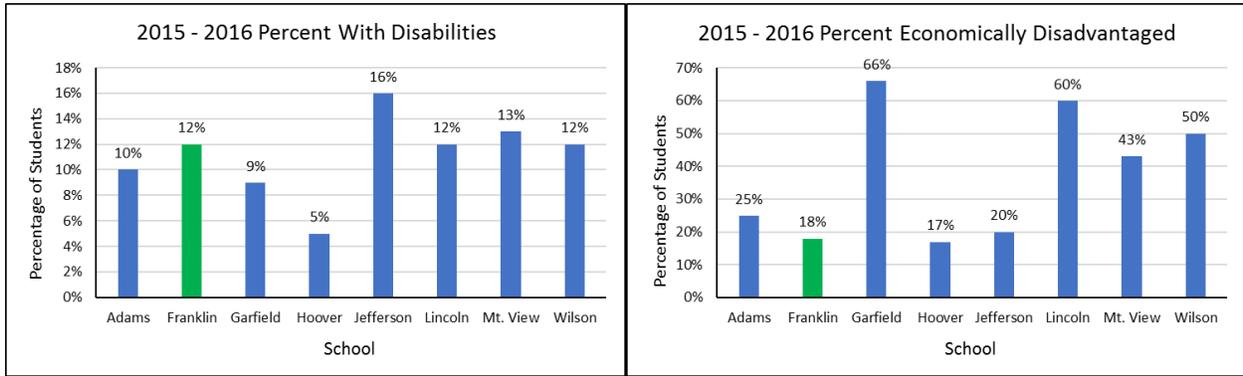


Figure 2. Proportion of students with disabilities (left) and proportion of economically disadvantaged students (right) as CSD elementary schools.

Franklin students achieve an exceptional level academic performance. A comparison of Franklin student performance in English Language Arts and Math (Figure 3), and Science (Figure 4) exemplifies the level of excellence that Franklin students strive for and parents expect. In two of the three comparisons, Franklin is the top school in comparison to the other elementary schools, and far exceeds the state average and achievement of “like schools”. In addition to Jefferson and Hoover students, Franklin students are setting the standard for academic performance in CSD schools.

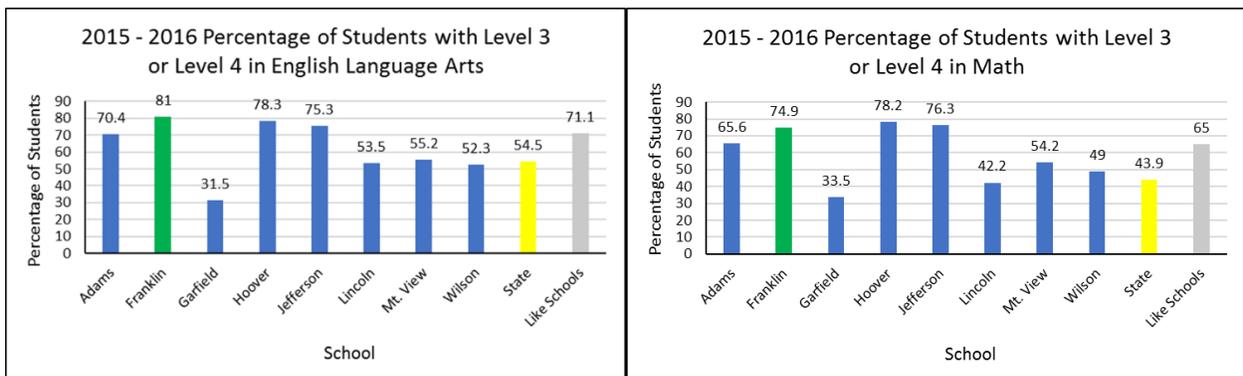


Figure 3. Academic performance in English Language Arts (left) and Math (right). Franklin, Hoover, and Jefferson are the academic leaders of the CSD elementary school programs.

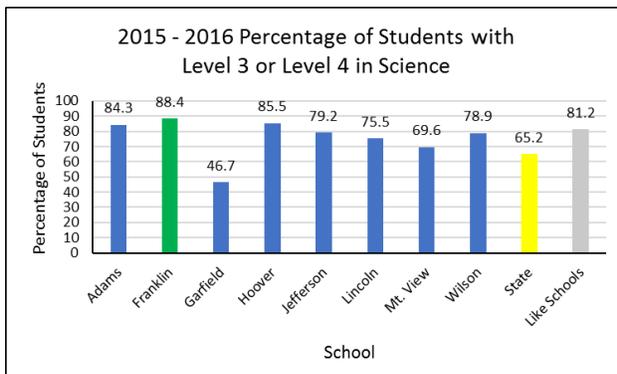


Figure 4. Academic performance in Science (left). Franklin, Hoover, and Jefferson are the academic leaders of the CSD elementary school programs.

Parent Volunteer Effort

Franklin's parent volunteers participate at many levels. Students may be in-class volunteers who help students with reading, spelling, and math; they may assist with after school programs; or act as chaperones on field trips. Volunteers assist Franklin teachers, enabling teachers to focus on kids who need help catching up to the class. Volunteers also help keep the classrooms clean and orderly and provide a level of student-parent interaction that is likely unique to Franklin relative to other schools in CSD. Table 1 includes a summary of Franklin parent volunteer time during the 2016-2017 school year.

Table 1. Franklin parent volunteer summary for the 2016-2017 school year.

	Unique Monthly Volunteers (#)	Total Volunteer Time (hours)	Average Time per Volunteer (hours/month)
September	57	78.7	1.4
October	102	283.4	2.8
November	87	222.9	2.6
December	70	120.8	1.7
January	80	207.9	2.6
February	82	261.4	3.2
March	81	226.7	2.8
April	80	233.9	2.9
Total	-	1635.7	-
Average	79.9	204.5	2.5

In summary, Franklin students perform at the highest academic levels relative to similar schools in Corvallis and across the state. This performance is a testament to the teachers and administrators that make Franklin a school that kids are excited to attend and to challenge themselves. Likewise, parent volunteers contribute to the betterment of the school and assist Franklin's staff in educating our kids. I would also expect that the high level of parent involvement also results in better student behavior, an enhanced sense of community, and teacher support.

Scenario Review

From my review of the workshop notes and presentations provided on the Facilities Planning Committee (FPC) website, I have several comments that I would like to provide for your consideration. Comments are provided in relation to the three scenarios the FPC is currently considering. The intent of these comments is to highlight the following concerns.

- Franklin draws from surrounding attendance areas, resulting in a diverse student body. This diversity would be lost with relocating Franklin to a site outside of the Corvallis core area.
- Franklin student performance is an indication of teacher and staff excellence, parent involvement, and student effort. While a new school building would be a benefit, current student performance does not appear to be limited by the building.
- Moving Franklin to outside of the Corvallis core would change the community character as the school would become a destination school for most of the current students. For families

economically disadvantage students, the travel distance could preclude attendance. Similarly, parental volunteer effort would also likely decrease due to commute inconvenience.

Scenario 1 – Traditionalist: Maintain Franklin School in its current location

As the second oldest school building in the district, Franklin School is undoubtedly in need of upgrades. Maintaining the school in its current location and addressing the most critical upgrades would maintain the curriculum and the physical learning environment (beneficial for the most part), and provide CSD with flexibility to make a change in the future.

Scenario 2 – New Elementary Schools Option: Move Franklin School

Corvallis High School (CHS) would benefit from taking over the space currently occupied by Franklin. If fields and parking areas are deemed to be more valuable than the school, other options for Franklin School should be explored. The option that seems to have the support of the FPC is to move Franklin to the Mountain View School campus. There are a number of reasons why moving Franklin to Mountain View would be problematic and may result in the eventual demise of the program.

First, Franklin benefits from being in the center of Corvallis and draws students from other schools in CSD. Based on the By the Numbers Report (2015-16) excerpt included in the Workshop #2 presentation (the By the Numbers Report link does not work on the website), 17% (29 students) of the K-5 students at Franklin are from the Mountain View ES attendance area. Therefore 83% (138 students) of the K-5 students are from other attendance areas. The third highest number of transfer students are from the Adams ES attendance area, at the opposite end of Corvallis relative to Mountain View ES.

Secondly, the location of Mountain View ES would require all students to be driven to school. Students are currently able to walk, bike, or ride the city bus to Franklin School. Using the locations of the other elementary schools in the district to compare travel distances, over 30% of the K-5 student attendance areas are within 2 miles of Franklin. In short, the Mountain View ES location would turn Franklin into a destination school that would lack the community feel of Franklin's current location. I would also question whether this location would achieve the "inclusiveness" goal of CSD as only parents with vehicles and a sufficiently flexible schedule would be able to meet the time commitment involved with commuting to the Mountain View ES campus twice a day. For our family, this would amount to nearly an hour per day of driving back and forth to the Mountain View school location. Over time, it would not be unlikely that enrollment would decrease due to the travel requirements to reach the Mountain View ES campus.

Finally, Franklin has a large number of parent volunteers who assist in classrooms, support after-school activities, and other STEM programs (e.g., Science Night). We enjoy volunteering in the classroom and I would hope that CSD appreciates this assistance and would encourage more parent volunteering at all schools. For me, moving to Mountain View would require at least a 30 minute round trip plus my volunteer time. I would expect many other parents would experience similar issues.

Scenario 3 – Grade Reconfiguration

Maintaining Franklin in its current location would be great, but I'm not certain a \$4m expenditure to separate the gym and cafeteria would be the most beneficial use of the funding. If the FPC moved forward with this scenario, there would appear to be sufficient space on the southeast corner of the Franklin property adjacent to the current multi-purpose room

Other Ideas

There is currently a wait list to attend Franklin and enrollment is capped due to the size of the current facility, not the demand to attend the school. I understand that 20/24 spaces for the incoming kindergarten class are taken by siblings of current students, leaving a mere four spaces for other families interested in Franklin's kindergarten program. Increasing the facility size would address unmet demand of other families in Corvallis. A few ideas that I would ask the FPC to consider include:

- Demolish the Harding School building and build a new K-8 with an expanded number of classes. This would ensure a centrally-located school, increase capacity for families interested in Franklin's curriculum, and make better use of the large CSD property that is currently underutilized. The current College Hill program could continue on the campus as well.
- Demolish the Harding School building and build an elementary school and relocate Jefferson to the new school as Jefferson draws from a similar attendance area relative to the Harding School location. Move Franklin to the current Jefferson School property.
- Move Franklin to new school built at Western View Center property. The Western View property is not as centrally located, but the location is closer to south town and the Corvallis core area than these areas are to Mountain View.

Thank you for your interest in considering these comments. I look forward to participating in future discussions on the future of Franklin and other CSD schools.

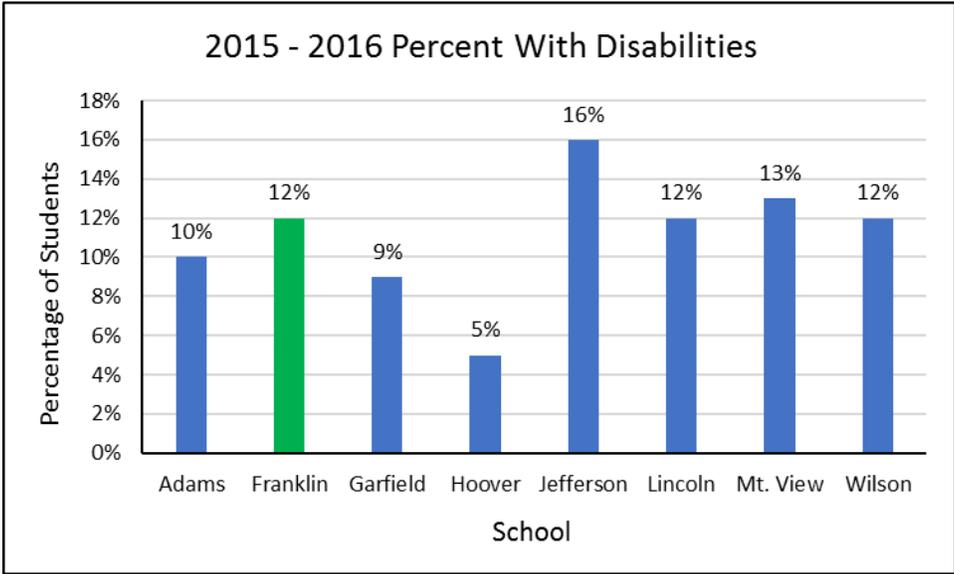
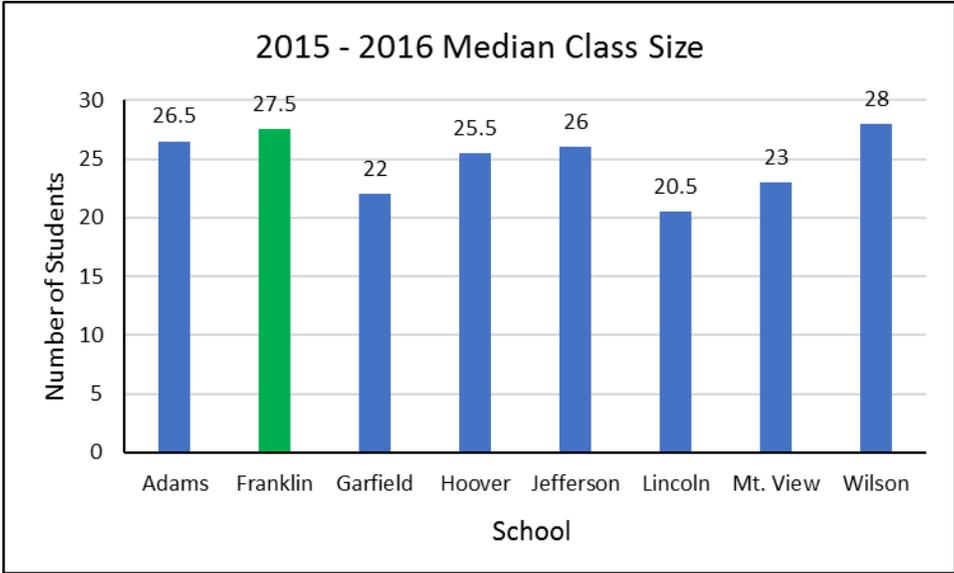
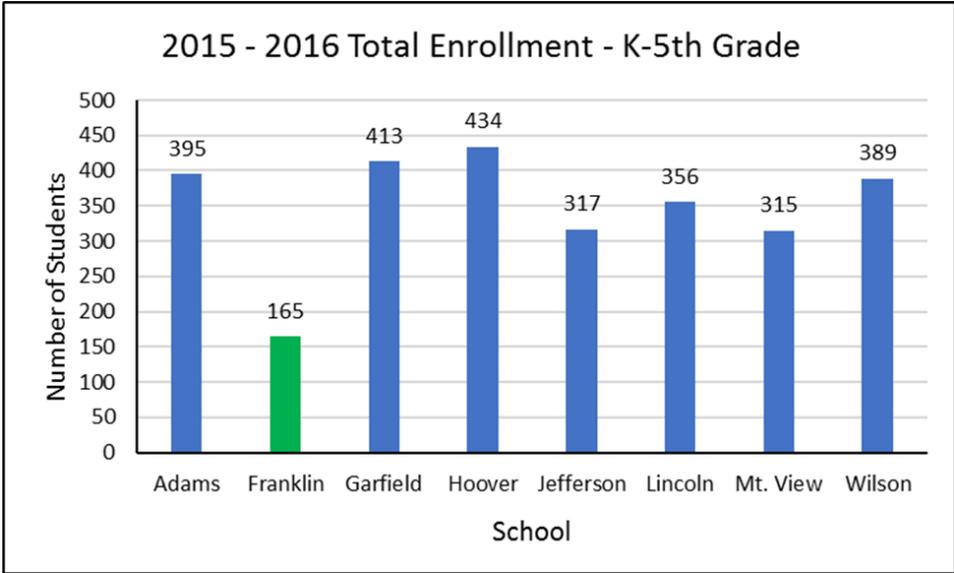
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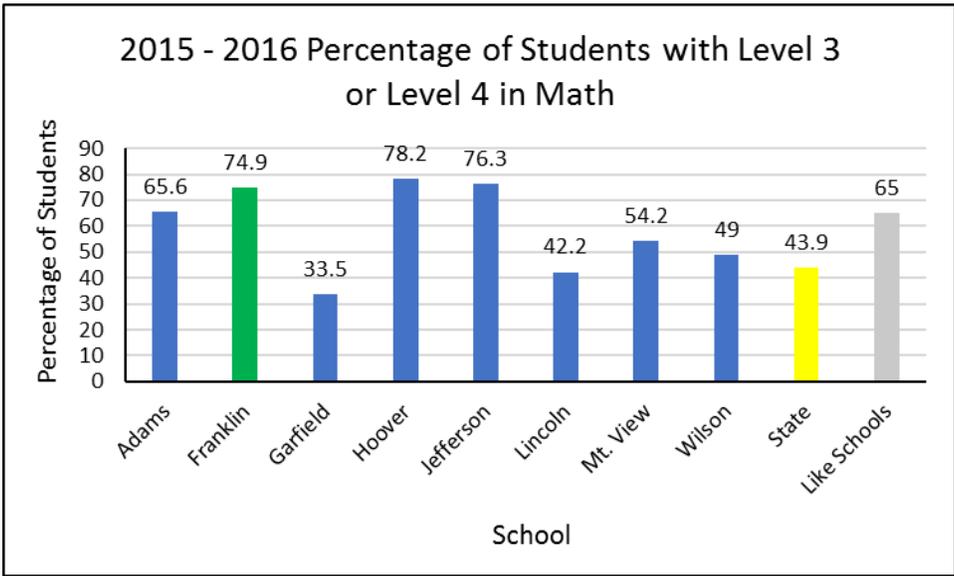
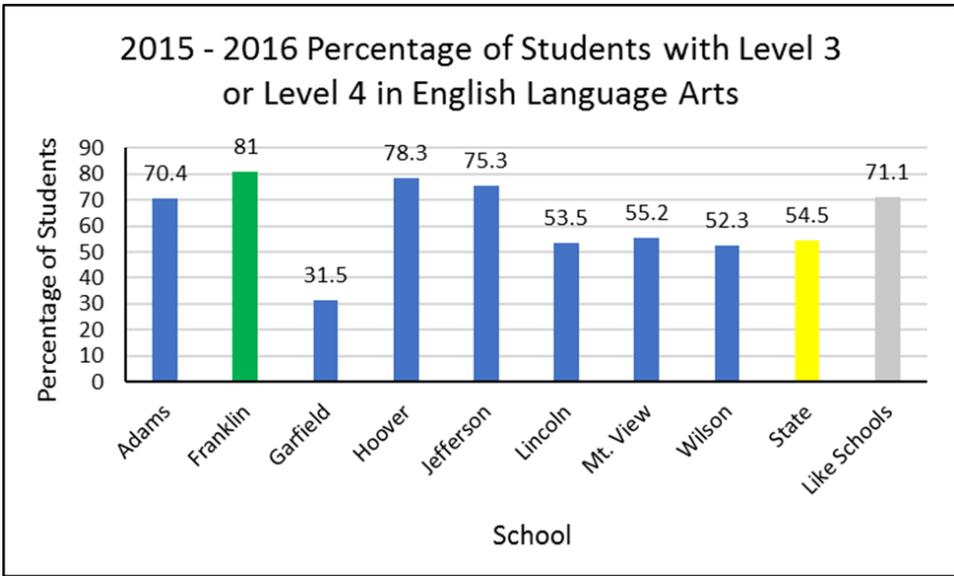
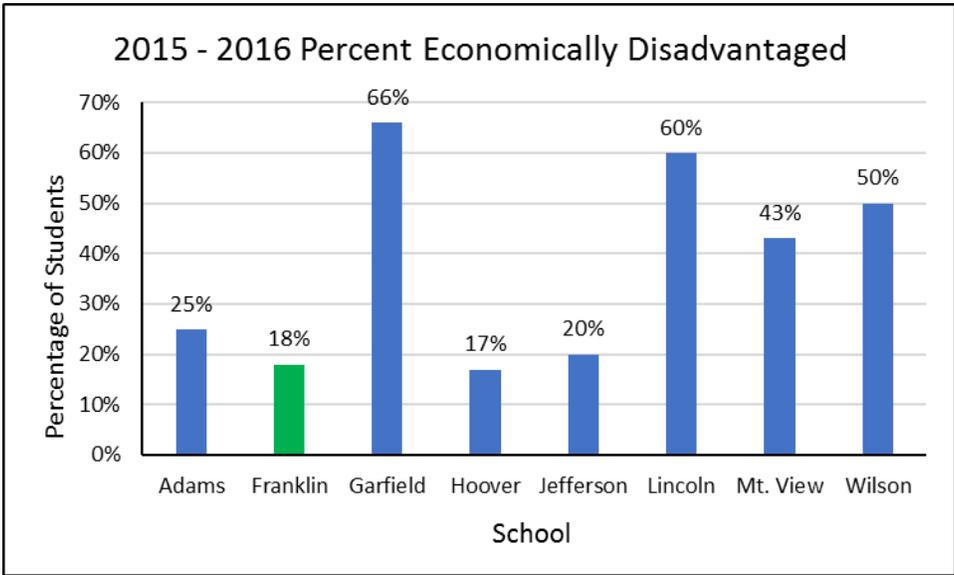


Troy Brandt
124 NW 29th Street



Laura Peterson
PTA President





2015 - 2016 Percentage of Students with Level 3 or Level 4 in Science

