

WAYZATA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Independent School District 284
Wayzata, Minnesota

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Special Meeting - May 14, 2018 - 3:30 PM
District Administration Building
210 County Rd. 101, N, Plymouth, MN

AGENDA

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**
2. **ADMINISTRATIVE**
 - A. Attendance Area Discussion/Review

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Chace B. Anderson, Ph.D., Superintendent
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MEMO

5-13-18

To: Wayzata Public Schools School Board Members

From: Chace B. Anderson, Superintendent

Re: Reflections on Attendance Area Committee Recommendation and Community Feedback

Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide you with my reflections regarding the boundary committee's recommendation and community feedback associated with the recommendations. This document should be considered a combination of an FAQ, my reflections based on knowledge about the school district, responses to the on-line and forum feedback and some points for your consideration. It is my hope, although this is not intended to be a comprehensive response to every question you may hold or posed by the community, that the information in this document will be helpful to you as we move toward a final decision about attendance areas.

I would like to thank the staff and the attendance area committee members for their dedicated efforts in developing the proposal presented at a recent school board work session and community forum. I know that you appreciate their efforts as well. The committee, in seeking this recommendation, explored more than 80 options and brought forth what they considered to be the best of the imperfect options. The school board provided guiding principles for the committee and administrative leaders. It is not possible for all guiding principles to be implemented in full form. The guiding principles used for this process were:

1. Attendance areas will serve our district for a goal of 3-5 years with as long a horizon as possible to limit transitions.
2. Attendance areas should be largely contiguous.
3. Consider a walk area for each school.
4. Allow for initially smaller school populations in schools with higher anticipated growth rates to maximize longevity of the boundaries.
5. When possible, middle school boundaries should align with elementary boundaries, if that is not feasible, a significant portion of the elementary school should attend the middle school. All children will be expected to attend their new school. Students will not be "grandfathered" to attend their previous school. The district's intra-district process continues to be in place.
6. Transportation routes should be as efficient as possible, giving consideration to minimizing ride times within acceptable parameters while being within budget parameters.

7. Open enrolled students may be considered a “neighborhood” and could be moved with a cohort of students from their school.
8. Open enrolled students would not be isolated from their school peers.
9. Adhere to all State and Federal laws and guidelines.

Changing attendance areas can be an emotional venture for a school district. The reality is, and it is an enviable characteristic of our school district, parents love their current schools and don’t want to leave them. Unfortunately, in times of growth, it is not possible to accommodate all families’ desire to remain at their current school. Those advocating for their kids to stay at their current schools are concerned about transition and making adjustments to new surroundings, new teachers, new classmates, etc. In other words, they care about their kids! We also care about their kids and work hard to provide them with great educational experiences. As we have learned in previous attendance area changes, once students get settled into their new schools, they quickly adjust to the change. In circumstances where there are multiple variables being considered, a full consensus of a relatively large community is not likely. I commend the committee for engaging in a challenging and relatively thankless role and for coming forward with a recommendation for your consideration.

General Feedback from Community

The information below represents several themes/questions that emerged from the community feedback. I am sharing some quick general thoughts. I think several of the inputs are quite good and should be considered while others are likely not practical or possible. This is not intended to be all-inclusive but I thought it might be helpful as you develop questions/inputs for administrative consideration.

Can students move to their new school in 2018-2019 so they can start making the adjustment?

Might be possible in some cases. However, we can’t move students to Elementary #9 until it is built. And, in some cases (KL students moving to MR for example) there will not be capacity at the receiving school to accommodate more students. The intra-district transfer process will remain in place and used where possible.

Wild Meadows is fine moving its elementary kids to the new elementary school but don’t want to go to CMS/grandfather them into West.

The district has generally been accommodating of middle school intra-district transfers.

Maps were hard to read and there was a lack of data provided. Not enough transparency.

Better maps were provided that seemed to mitigate some of this concern.

Is the class size ratio the same at all schools?

Yes. The target staffing ratios are as follows (Each school uses these ratios to staff the building but actual numbers can vary from building to building and from year to year.)

Kindergarten:	20:1
Grade 1:	22:1
Grade 2:	23:1
Grade 3:	25:1
Grades 4 & 5:	27:1

Grandfather children who wish to stay at their school or let parents decide which school their child attends.
“Open grandfathering” is not a practical plan to allow students to go to whichever school their parents want them to go to. The ability to administratively plan such a school district would be impossible.

Move new developments that may develop in the future in south Medina to Gleason Lake.
The committee explored this option and it is worthy of further review.

Why is CMS so much bigger than EMS and WMS?

CMS used to be Wayzata High School; therefore it is a bigger building and can accommodate more students. Although it is large compared to Wayzata East and West Middle Schools, it is not overly sized in comparison to many middle schools across the nation.

Does WHS have the capacity to accommodate the growth? At what point does the high school get too big? Never? Should we create one gigantic elementary school and one gigantic middle school as well?

The high school currently has 3,419 students enrolled. It has capacity for approximately 4,000 students. Although the high school is large, it has a rich academic curriculum and many co-curricular opportunities for student participation. The question of when it becomes “too large” is a difficult one to answer. I am confident in our high school administrative team and staff to continue delivering excellence to each student at WHS. It is not likely that a recommendation would be developed for one gigantic elementary school or one gigantic middle school.

Committee is biased and looking out for their own interests. Why do you use a committee? Why don't you use an independent third party to help with this process? The district is intentionally not providing community members with public information so that we can come up with better solutions. Why would a multi-million dollar organization with the tax base this District has leave boundary decisions up to 20 some volunteers meeting 5-6 times? Hire consultants or task administrators with refining the plan. Quit relying on volunteers to do the dirty work.

I believe the committee worked hard to bring forth the best recommendation they could put together given the guiding principles. For those who weren't in each meeting, it is understandable they would be confused or uncertain about the process. Perhaps in the future the Board will want to consider an approach that does not include a committee. It is a tough role for community citizens to serve and a relatively thankless job that often results in some unfortunate negative commentary directed toward committee members. We have used a third party in a previous attendance area change. I think the anxiety in the community was probably greater with that process. Regardless of how the process is led, I believe dissatisfaction will evolve and be communicated by those recommended to move. I am all for finding a way that would land on a scenario that would result in all parties being fully satisfied and without concern about the recommended changes; however, I do not think it is realistic to expect that will happen.

Consider the number of times that neighborhoods have moved. If they have moved before, don't move them again. If they have never moved, they should move.

This is a consideration to think about but difficult to guarantee or to accomplish.

What is the open enrollment status in the school district?

The school district is mostly closed to open enrollment. Kindergarten siblings of currently open enrolled children are accepted as well as staff member children as per MN Statute.

Open an Early Learning School somewhere in the school district.

The school district currently leases space at its Early Learning School (corner of Highway 101 and Highway 6). Conversations are underway regarding the construction of early learning school space that would replace this leased space. No final decisions have been made regarding this at the current time. One concept has been to consider the Oakwood site for expansion and relocation of the Early Learning School. This concept holds promise along with some other possible options.

My children have emotional ties to their school and have friends there. It is too disruptive to move them.

Perhaps this suggests that the kids who don't have friends at their school or who would not be disrupted by moving should be moved. It would be safe to say that all students have emotional ties to their schools and have friends at that school. It can be disruptive to move schools. History shows that students generally adjust quickly and the staff at their new school is found to be very welcoming.

Create magnet schools to decrease crowding in some of the crowded schools.

It has not been the practice of the Wayzata Public Schools to develop and implement magnet schools. The District has maintained a value of continuity of programming across each of its schools. Creation of magnet schools can create a whole new set of anxiety-causing challenges regarding who gets in and who doesn't and it can cause a different type of rift in a community. I would not see this as a good strategy for Wayzata Public Schools to implement in an effort to balance school building enrollments. Such concepts are typically in response to specific curriculum interests or to draw more students into a school district through open enrollment.

Will the City governments consider slowing growth and the same for the builders? Control the growth and tell the City and builders to slow down or stop building!

It is out of our control and it is not likely that the currently planned housing developments will slow down. While I don't know all of the motivations for City governments to have robust housing growth, I would guess that the increased tax revenue is welcome. Also, brisk home sales are good for the bottom line of the builders. We have a good working relationship with our City governments and home builders. Given that, it is not up to us how cities develop and it is our job to respond to the changes.

Why was there only one option presented?

More than 80 scenarios were considered and one scenario emerged as the one to present for the school board's consideration. With this number of scenarios, every possible configuration was likely tested by the committee. Many such scenarios can be quickly eliminated due to obvious impracticalities and implications.

Guiding Principles not being equally applied for all neighborhoods/school attendance areas.

It is difficult to fully implement each of the guiding principles. They are "guiding principles" and not mandates.

Wayzata Schools should be more like Hopkins Schools.

Not sure what this means.

Move all the people north of County Road 47 to the Osseo District in Maple Grove. Stop issuing housing permits and place all new developments in the Maple Grove or Osseo school districts.

This would not be legal and these areas of our school district are every bit as much a part of the district as are all of the other school district communities. This suggestion is the same as asking "why not move

Medina resident students to Rockford Schools, Minnetonka resident students to Minnetonka Schools and Medicine Lake resident students to Robbinsdale Schools?” All of these students reside within the Wayzata Public Schools school district attendance area. The school district does not issue housing permits. City governments do that. We don’t have the authority to autocratically reassign individual neighborhoods into other school districts. If we had that authority, other school districts would likely do the same to send kids to us; for which we wouldn’t have capacity to accommodate.

Why not leave some capacity in the southern schools for when established neighborhoods where empty nesters live begin to sell their homes and young families move into those homes with school age children? Won’t the neighborhoods you are moving south just then need to be shifted northward again? Why displace neighborhoods based on things that may or may not happen in various areas of our community? What is the big concern or goal to move kids south?

A concept worthy of further consideration.

Start planning now for how to populate Elementary #10. Put new, yet to be opened, developments in #10. Make the new neighborhoods go to the new schools and leave existing/established neighborhoods in place. These families don’t have any friends established yet and are new to the community anyway. They should go to the new schools even if the development is not right next to their proposed school. Prioritize established neighborhoods and long-time residents and families. Why are the new residents getting preferential treatment?

Might be a good idea! All neighborhoods will be assigned to a school for the 2019-2020 school year. For areas that are just opening, or that could become housing developments in the future, could be suggested for a “Phase I” and a “Phase II” elementary and/or middle school assignment. In other words, for now you go to “School A” but when Elementary School #10 opens, you will go to the new school regardless of where the housing development is located in the school district. It is hard to know how practical this would be but worth considering to assign new developments or proposed developments as “TBD.” The home builders and realtors would likely not care for this plan but it could be a good strategy for the school district. Worthy of further exploration.

What time will Elementary School #9 start in the morning? If we have to move, at least keep the 7:45 school start time.

It is anticipated that Elementary School #9 will most likely start at 7:45 am.

Will families that have to move to Elementary #9 maintain priority for Home Base placement?

Elementary School #9 will have its own Home Base program. Protocols for Home Base in the new school will be the same as for the other elementary schools.

When would these changes go into effect?

The changes would go into effect with the 2019-2020 school year.

Don’t move Terra Vista from Kimberly Lane to Meadow Ridge.

Kimberly Lane is crowded and needs some relief. The committee determined this was the best way to bring some relief to Kimberly Lane.

Close East Middle School and Sunset Hill Elementary School and build a new elementary and middle school in the northern part of the school district.

This is not practical as we would need to adjust attendance areas to accommodate 736 middle school students and 699 elementary students which would bring forth greater change and movement in the district

than the current and previous attendance area adjustments. It is also not financially feasible or practical to close two efficiently functioning schools.

Is the Board receiving every single feedback that is submitted? Who gets these first? Are they being filtered by individuals keeping them from the board? Does everyone on the board get to see them at the same exact time?

The school board has had full access to unfiltered on-line feedback and they heard the forum feedback live and have received some e-mails from community residents. It is unlikely that all seven school board members would access the on-line feedback at the exact same time but they have had access to it since it was made available to them. No administrative filtering is occurring.

Move open enrolled and intra-district transfer students out of Greenwood.

Given our current open enrollment practices, this wouldn't have much of an impact. There aren't many open enrolled students in any of our elementary or middle schools and intra-district transfers generally only occur where there is adequate space to accept them.

There was a lot of feedback provided last night (at the forum) and two board members were unable to attend. Doesn't there have to be a meeting for the board to discuss before the final vote? Why is this not scheduled and on the calendar? If it is scheduled, please provide details. If you aren't meeting until you vote, how are you going to incorporate feedback into the boundary proposal and potentially modify it? Assuming positive intent, the board had not made any decisions before the feedback session, so what is the process? Can you be transparent with the process?

An extra work session was scheduled for Monday, May 14 and an extra board meeting to take the vote scheduled for Monday, May 21. This will allow board members to review the feedback and consider the inputs.

Does the value of my home change based on which elementary school I go to?

Home market values are determined in a number of ways. Although this is a concern that sometimes surfaces during attendance area changes, I have never had a realtor indicate that home values change as a result of moving to another Wayzata school. I have never had a resident come to me in my ten years as superintendent to inform me that after an attendance area change, the value of their home dropped because they were changed from School A to School B.

Build the new elementary schools in areas where the new home developments are going in. That should be something that the City of Plymouth should be planning for if they are allowing more homes to be built.

This is what we do. Both Meadow Ridge and Elementary #9 are in our high growth areas. The City of Plymouth doesn't plan the schools. That is the school district's responsibility in response to the community growth.

Don't move #42 to Gleason Lake.

Move Elm Creek Highlands to Kimberly Lane to free up some space at Greenwood and position them closer to a different school.

Current overcrowding at Kimberly Lane would not allow for this change to take place.

Make these changes permanent and don't change boundaries again! Don't make kids move more than one time in their elementary school career.

This would be wonderful! However, it is not likely nor feasible. As growth slows or stops, this may become a reality but not likely in the immediate future. The process does give consideration to who has moved and when but it is not always possible to have a set rule on this given the unique challenges associated with drawing boundary lines.

Many of us believe that we were tricked and the district got their new school, new homes and tax revenue and we got shorted. You guys want to keep pushing people south so does that mean Gleason kids will eventually end up in Deephaven? Minnetonka?

It is unfortunate that someone might feel this way. Not sure what "shorted" means. Clearly, the new school was needed as the student enrollment growth has materialized and more growth is on the way. It is not likely that Gleason Lake kids will get pushed into Deephaven and Minnetonka. We don't have a WPS school in Deephaven or Minnetonka and it is not legal for a school district to force students to attend school in another school district.

We reside in Aspen Hollow neighborhood and currently attend Kimberly Lane Elementary School which is 8 minutes away as per Google. The new school assigned as per the boundary change is 9 minutes away and we are very unhappy with the change. Don't move Aspen Hollow to Kimberly Lane.

Families attending a different school may need to assess their daily routines and make adjustments as necessary.

Don't move Heather Run and Seven Ponds to Oakwood.

An input from a citizen: Rather than moving students from Heather Run and Seven Ponds to Oakwood, why not move them to Gleason Lake and then they can stay at West Middle School?

Would prefer that Bonaire not be moved to Elementary School #9 but if this must happen, please ensure that there are adequate resources to fully stock a library, build a full playground, transfer some teachers from Meadow Ridge to Elementary School #9. Cluster Meadow Ridge students in the same classrooms in 2018-2019 if they are headed to ES #9. We have moved three times. Half the staff needs to come from MR along with half the Home Base and maybe even the principal. Please do not make it a difficult transition for Jenny. Do everything you can to help the transition.

Some good transition suggestions here that will be considered as planning moves forward.

We voted for the new school but did not know that it meant we would have to move to a new school. Make the new people move to the new schools!

New schools and student capacity are necessary to maintain appropriate class sizes. When a new school is built, it makes good sense to move students into that building as a district can't always wait for natural build-out to fully occupy a new school. We need to move some students to alleviate current crowding and to populate the new school. As noted earlier, predetermining new neighborhoods for a move to the new schools is an idea worthy of consideration for the future.

3. **ADJOURN**

WAYZATA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Independent School District 284
Wayzata, Minnesota

MISSION

Our Core Purpose:

The mission of Wayzata Public Schools is to ensure a world-class education that prepares each and every student to thrive today and excel tomorrow in an ever-changing global society.

VISION

What We Intend to Create and Experience:

The vision of Wayzata Public Schools is to be a model of excellence where all students discover their unique talents, develop a love and tenacity for learning and demonstrate confidence and capacity for success through:

Exceptional Student Learning, Experiences and Relationships:

- High achievement by each and every student—no exceptions, no excuses;
- Content-rich, rigorous and personalized education;
- Meaningful relationships with teachers, staff, mentors and peers in a welcoming, nurturing and safe environment where all are valued for who they are and the contributions they make.

Community Trust, Confidence and Partnership:

- Comprehensive learning opportunities meeting diverse learner needs and community aspirations;
- Committed to being the first choice for students and families;
- Maintaining the highest levels of satisfaction and pride by staff, parents and community.

Operational Excellence:

- Attraction, development and retention of exemplary, creative and engaged employees;
- Accountability by all staff for individual and collective performance;
- Effective and efficient use of time and human, financial and physical resources;
- Culture of continuous improvement and responsive innovation;
- High performing district governance, management and partnerships.