



BOARD BRIEFS

Authored by the Davis School District Community Relations Department

Initial approval given to high school boundaries

Board members recognize impact changes have on many district families

The Board of Education of the Davis School District gave unanimous first-reading approval Tuesday evening to attendance boundaries that will affect six of the district's nine traditional high schools.

The reason for the boundary change is due to the addition of Farmington High School — currently under construction on Glovers Lane just west of Interstate 15 — which will open its doors in the fall of 2018.

Farmington High School was the first major project slated in the district's bond proposal that voters approved in 2015. And the reason for its construction was due to the population growth in Davis County and overcrowded conditions at Layton, Davis and Viewmont high schools.

During the recent school board meeting, the Board's boundary consultant, Dr. Darrell White, emphasized, "As of right now, Davis School District has a total high school enrollment of 15,852 students with a total building capacity of 13,591. That's 2,261 more high school students attending school today than we have building capacity for."

He continued, "The excess number of students, just in three high schools alone — Viewmont with more than 450

over capacity, Davis with over 475 over capacity, and Layton, with over 400 over capacity — ... taking the excess capacity, would fill a new high school."

White later said, "To have a building with 500 more students than it is designed for is not educationally sound nor is it in the best interest of students' safety or personal welfare."

The proposal, recommended by White and given preliminary approval by the board, is the same that was

presented on Nov. 8 to the seven-member group. It was that same night that the board heard from 93 individual residents who each addressed them via an open microphone in the Layton High School auditorium.

From the beginning of the study, the board charged White with three goals:

- Open the new high school with a sufficient number of students to make it viable;
- Maintain enrollment in the other high schools at a level that keeps them viable;
- And reduce enrollment at overcrowded high schools.

Additionally, the study took into consideration priorities established by the public, including proximity to

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Board considers 2018-19 school year calendar, approves policy changes

The Board of Education will consider adopting the 2018-19 school year calendar during its next meeting after considering comments received.

Elementary School Director Helene Van Natter said the traditional nine-month calendar includes a start date of Wednesday, Aug. 22 and end date of Friday, May 31. The draft calendar also schedules a winter recess from Dec. 21 through Jan. 2 and week-long spring break from April 1-5.

Additionally, a professional development day for teachers has been set for Sept. 17. State board rule allows up to four regular school days to be used as professional development days. The district is using one of those.

"We figured if it was before school, teachers are worried about setting up their room, at the end of the term they are worried about report cards," she said. "This would make it a very strong professional development day."

On the year-round calendar, which currently is only for Sand Springs Elementary, two professional development days are being sought.

In other business, the Board of Education approved:

- Hogan & Associates for a drainage project for Davis High practice field for \$106,104.
- Precision Construction for a \$205,695 restroom remodel project at

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Music of the season



The Millcreek Junior High Saxophone Quartet performs at the opening of the Board of Education meeting.

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Bountiful Elementary.

- Hogan & Associates as the construction manager for the Mountain High addition and remodel.
- Changes to the employee sexual harassment policy, school board meetings procedures, students with accommodations policy and a provision of reasonable workplace accommodations. The board postponed adopting the student sexual harassment policy to make further clarifications.

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school, keeping neighborhoods together, junior high feeder patterns and travel routes.

“All of those were important,” White said. “And I cannot remember a single discussion I had with the staff who were helping me, when those priorities did not play a prominent role in that discussion.”

Each member of the school board, in explaining their affirmative first-reading vote, pointed out the effort to reach their decision was a challenging one. They added some students would be traveling a greater distance to their new boundary school than their existing school; that traveling a congested I-15 or roads in west Kaysville were not great options; and that some couldn’t take school busses because of extra-curricular activities.

“I have really wrestled with this,” Board Member Julie Tanner said. “... I acknowledge that this is not a perfect solution for everyone. ... I feel this is our best option. We do not do this haphazardly.”

Board Member Bridget Gerrard commented, “This has just been an agonizing decision, and there are some changes I wish we could make, but we are constrained by overcrowding at our high schools.”

Board Member Gordon Eckersley stated, “This really has been a difficult decision,” adding he had spent a lot of time in his occupation researching the adolescent brain and what adolescents need.

“One of the things they need is safety and security,” he said, “... And when a school gets too large — up around 2,300, 2,400, 2,500 students — we are taking a risk.”

Board President John Robison commented that following the Nov. 8 public hearing, the board had a list of concerns, and that each of those concerns and possible new boundary alternatives were reconsidered by White. However, the proposal, as presented that night, remained the best option, especially considering future growth.

“One of the most positive things that has come from this, from my perspective,” Robison said, “is a validation of what we’ve already known, ... and that is the quality of people that make up the school district in relationship to the parents, the patrons, the constituents. We recognize

that this is going to be a difficult thing for many families as they make this transition. But through all of that, ... you’ve approached us and this issue with professionalism and civility.”

Board Vice President Mona Andrus stated, “This has been a difficult decision. But I do have to say I appreciate the feedback I’ve received from constituents who understand that ... no matter what decision is made, not everyone can be happy.

“... To me, this recommendation does what we asked Dr. White to do,” Andrus said.

Board Member Tamara Lowe also stated her wrestle with the decision and that her top concern was safety. She explained some of her constituents’ students, who live in Clinton City, go to three high schools, and that groups of students drive past Clearfield High’s fence and parking lot on their way to Northridge High School.

She said White’s boundary proposal is “not easy, but not more terrible than what I see in other areas in the school district.”

She added, “The very best bet would be to say no single high school kid can take a car to school, and we will bus you all. I don’t want to be on the board when we make that decision, but I will support this.”

Board Member Liz Mumford said she felt a great responsibility to listen to the public and to respond to every email that was sent to her.

“I have three teenage drivers, and I empathize with the parents in West Kaysville. I’ve been out there and have driven those roads, ... and I understand what it is like to put your kids out there on the roads at 6:45 and worry about their safety.”

While adding their comments, Mumford, like Tanner and Andrus, asked district representatives to look into late start times, activity busses, decreasing the amount of time special education students are bussed and working with cities as ways to alleviate safety issues.

The Board will consider giving the boundary proposal final approval in its next meeting Dec. 5.

For additional information on the boundary proposal, visit www.davis.k12.ut.us/boundary .