

Middle School Boundary Adjustment Project Superintendent's Decision

(November 9, 2020)

A. Introduction

The Middle School Boundary Adjustment (MSBA) project began in June 2019 with the School Board adopting Objectives for the boundary adjustment project. An advisory committee comprised of 17 community members was appointed to deliver a recommendation to me. The committee held 13 public meetings beginning in October 2019 and concluding in October 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there was a six-month hiatus in committee meetings between March 2020 and September 2020. When the committee resumed meeting in September 2020, the meetings were conducted virtually and livestreamed on the District's YouTube channel.

I want to express my appreciation to the members of the committee for their dedication and diligence throughout this process. I thank them for their level of engagement, their patient review of an unprecedented amount public input and testimony, and their willingness to consider multiple proposals from the public, staff and of their own design. They conducted all their deliberations before the public and arrived at their recommendation through thoughtful and measured deliberation, taking all factors into consideration.

I also want to express my gratitude to the community for their commitment in participating in this process by submitting more than 12,000 comments and letters, providing oral testimony at committee meetings, and attending advisory committee, PTO, and community meetings. Prior to the suspension of public meetings due to the Covid-19 pandemic in March, the public attended the meetings in large numbers.

I want to acknowledge District staff for their efforts to make the MSBA process transparent and to be proactive to solicit public participation in this process. The MSBA project web page received over 56,000 unique views. Staff presented at 12 different Parent Teacher Organization groups and initiated the livestreaming of the public meetings. All of the committee meetings throughout the process were livestreamed. Over 21,700 views of the livestream videos occurred during the MSBA process. This broke new ground for the District and when the process resumed after the Covid-19 pandemic hiatus, the District and the public were able to continue the MSBA work without any hesitation or drawback.

District Goal: WE Empower all students to achieve post-high school success.

"The District prohibits discrimination and harassment based on any basis protected by law, including but not limited to, an individual's actual or perceived race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national or ethnic origin, marital status, age, mental or physical disability, pregnancy, familial status, economic status, veteran status, or because of a perceived or actual association with any other persons within these protected classes."

At the conclusion of this process, I must stress that attendance boundary processes will take place periodically in the future. As a result of this yearlong process and the feedback I have received from the advisory committee and the public, I have learned how the MSBA process worked well and how future attendance boundary processes can be improved. Suggestions for improvement include, but were not limited to, having the ability to test map boundary ideas in real time at the meetings, having separate meetings for public testimony, and conducting early community surveys. These ideas and others will be evaluated for future boundary projects.

I also heard from members of the committee and public on the desire to review all of the District's attendance boundaries with specific attention to poverty and social justice concerns in our community. The School Board and I are committed to addressing systemic racism and its negative impacts to our students' ability to thrive and succeed. We are committed to creating an equitable educational organization for our students, families, and staff.

In conclusion, I am gratified to find that the entire Middle School Boundary Adjustment process to be a testament to the commitment and dedication by all who were involved in this project to the well-being of the District's students, families, and staff.

B. Decision – Attendance Boundary Map

I have reviewed the record established by the committee and understand the range of ideas, concerns, and issues the committee considered. I have also met with the committee to listen to their individual thoughts on the committee's recommendation. I have consulted with District staff, conducted a public listening session on the committee's recommendation, and have reviewed written testimony submitted to me.

I find that the committee thoroughly considered multiple viewpoints and carefully balanced unique factors in developing their recommendations. I find that the committee's vote of 10 - 3 to recommend the map reflective of the fair, thoughtful, and difficult deliberations. As a result of my review of the record and review of the committee's recommendation, I concur with the committee's recommendation on the Middle School Boundary Adjustment map without modification. The following is a brief description of the Board Objectives, the Policy JC factors, and my determination on how the recommended map meets the objectives and factors.

C. Board Objectives

The School Board considered draft objectives at its May 20, 2019 regular meeting and adopted its objectives at the June 24, 2019 regular meeting. The Board's Objectives are as follows:

1. *Create an attendance boundary for the Timberland-area middle school that provides a projected student population sufficient for comprehensive middle school programming.*
2. *Adjust the attendance boundary for Stoller MS to provide a projected student population of approximately 90% of the permanent capacity of Stoller MS.*
3. *Review and adjust the attendance boundaries of other middle schools, as needed, to accommodate the new Timberland-area middle school boundary.*
4. *If warranted, study and recommend minor adjustments to elementary and/or high school attendance boundaries in order to reconcile split feeder patterns or otherwise improve the alignment of attendance boundaries between all school levels.*

Findings

The committee has created an attendance boundary for the Timberland area middle school with a projected enrollment sufficient for comprehensive middle school programming. The committee spent considerable time deliberating on the relief of current and future overcrowding at Stoller MS by considering many different mapping options. The committee also balanced projected enrollments to reduce overcrowding with other competing factors identified in Policy JC and concerns raised by the North Bethany community. While projection for the resident student population for the new Stoller MS attendance area may not fully meet the Board Objective of approximately 90% permanent building utilization, the balance with Policy JC factors such as proximity and clean elementary to middle school feeder patterns makes this boundary acceptable.

Because of the need to move students from Stoller MS and create a new boundary for the Timberland area middle school, the committee adjusted other middle school boundary lines. The committee tried to minimize student transitions both through careful consideration of the boundaries and by attempting to keep elementary school areas whole when considering changes to their high school feeder patterns. The committee also considered minor amendments to selected elementary and high school boundaries and chose not to recommend any changes to elementary or high school boundaries.

The boundary map, as developed by the MSBA advisory committee and reviewed by me, meet the Board's adopted objectives.

D. Board Policy JC Factors

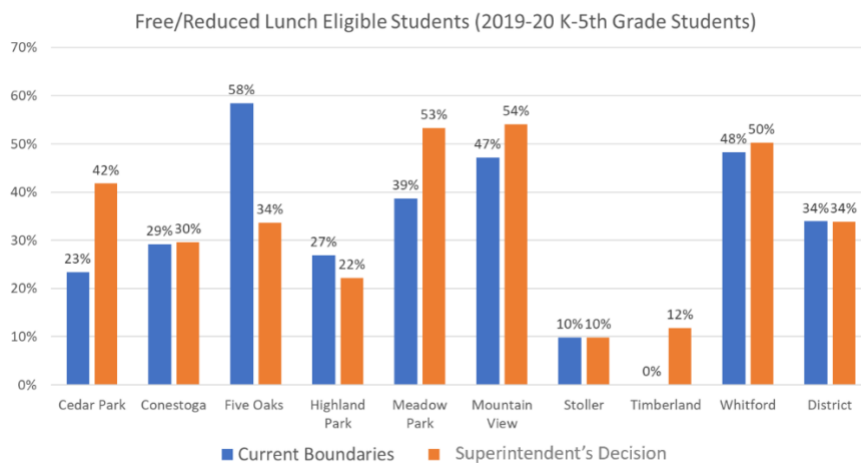
Board Policy JC has been adopted to address any attendance boundary adjustments. Contained within the Board Policy are four (4) factors for evaluating boundary adjustments. The factors are of equal priority and are as follows:

- *Student body composition;*
- *Current and future availability of space at a school;*
- *Feeder patterns from elementary, middle to high school; and*
- *Neighborhood proximity and accessibility.*

Findings

1. *Student body composition.*

Student body composition consists of socio-economic indicators such as Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) eligibility numbers and other demographic indicators such as ethnic heritage. Balancing FRL as a percentage of each school's total enrollment across the nine (9) middle schools is extremely difficult given the reality of where communities of higher poverty are located. Meadow Park MS and Mountain View MS are estimated to have more than 50% of their resident students eligible for FRL. This percentage is higher than what would otherwise be preferred. However, I support the boundaries for Meadow Park MS and Mountain View MS because of the positive outcomes associated with other factors.



For example, Aloha-Huber Park K-8 will now feed Mountain View MS rather than Five Oaks MS. This change contributes to the increase in FRL eligibility at Mountain View MS but the closer proximity of the Aloha-Huber Park community to Mountain View MS is a positive outcome. Furthermore, the District has established a staffing model wherein schools with higher rates of poverty receive additional support. Therefore, I believe that the potentially negative impacts of a higher FRL eligibility rates at some middle schools can be mitigated by additional staffing resources.

2. *Current and future availability of space at a school.*

Exceeding the permanent structure capacity at Stoller MS has been a critical issue; hence, the Board’s Objective to reduce enrollment. I find that the new attendance boundary will substantially reduce the current overcrowding at Stoller MS and reduce the enrollment of resident students to approximately 84% of the permanent capacity of the school in SY 2021-22. Enrollment is projected to grow through SY 2025-26 to the potential detriment of space availability at the school.

MS Boundaries SY 2021-22 Projected*	Cedar Park	Conestoga	Five Oaks	Highland Park	Meadow Park	Mtn View	Stoller	New Middle School	Whitford	Total
Net Residents Students	524	870	870	743	616	978	908	846	777	7,132
Utilization of Permanent Capacity	60%	91%	83%	85%	72%	99%	84%	77%	91%	83%

*These figures do not include SUMMA programs students or the location of Rachel Carson, which will be determined by the Teaching & Learning department.

The other eight (8) middle schools have projected resident enrollments below 100% permanent structure capacity and will have ability to accommodate projected enrollment growth. I do find that the low projected enrollments at Cedar Park MS and Meadow Park MS concerning. The Rachel Carson option program may be relocated to Cedar Park MS to bolster the enrollment numbers at that school. The SUMMA program at Meadow Park MS may also be an opportunity to bolster enrollment growth at that school. The District will monitor the enrollments at these two schools to ensure that the student populations will be sufficient to support comprehensive middle school programming.

The one remaining area of the District where substantial residential development is anticipated to take place is the South Cooper Mountain area of the City of Beaverton. This area is located within the Highland Park MS attendance boundary. Highland Park MS has sufficient capacity to accommodate projected enrollment from this area.

3. *Feeder patterns from elementary, middle to high school.*

I find the advisory committee improved feeder patterns with the recommended map by prioritizing complete elementary school feeders to middle school and eliminating split feeders to the extent possible. The Stoller boundary will keep three (3) elementary schools feeding Stoller MS; Jacob Wismer, Sato, and Springville ES.

I find that the map also improves middle school to high school feeder patterns as well. For example, Five Oaks MS will be a complete feeder to Westview HS, the Timberland area middle school will be a complete feeder to Sunset HS, and Cedar Park will be a complete feeder to Beaverton HS

A new split feeder will be created by the middle school boundary map that involves the Oak Hills ES community. I support the middle school boundary split of the Oak Hills ES attendance boundary because the new split is in response to and matches the split previously created by the 2017 high school boundary adjustment decision. Those students residing west of Bethany

Boulevard will feed to Five Oaks MS and Westview HS. Those students east of Bethany Boulevard will feed to the Timberland area middle school and Sunset HS.

4. *Neighborhood proximity and accessibility.*

The public record clearly states that neighborhood proximity was an important point of deliberation for establishing the attendance boundaries for Stoller MS and the Timberland area middle school. I find that the committee's discussion was thoughtful and thorough. Coupled with the recommendation based on the feeder pattern factor, I find that the committee's recommendation to me for Stoller MS is correct. While portions of the Findley ES attendance area are proximate and walkable to Stoller MS, I find that creating split feeders from multiple elementary schools to Stoller MS is not an acceptable outcome to address the factor of proximity.

I find that the addition of the Aloha-Huber Park K-8 to the Mountain View MS attendance boundary will benefit the students and families of Aloha Huber K8 due to the proximity of that community to Mountain View MS.

There are examples of elementary school attendance boundaries being closer to one middle school than their assigned middle school. However, I find that these limited examples are superseded by other factors such as feeder patterns and/or building capacity to accommodate future growth.

E. Decision – Legacy Student Option

The MSBA advisory committee recommended that the District offer a Legacy Student program to students who will be entering 8th Grade in SY 2021-22. These students are currently in the 7th Grade. The program will allow these students the OPTION to remain at the middle school they attended in SY 2020-21. I find that this is an acceptable program and recommend that the Board approve the Legacy Student program as a part of the transition plan for implementing the new middle school attendance boundaries.

District staff will develop and publish materials to implement the program in January 2021 should the Board approve the Legacy Student program.

The MSBA advisory committee also recommended that I amend Policy JEA-AR to allow siblings of 8th Grade Legacy Students in SY 2021-22 to attend the same middle school as their incoming 8th Grade sibling under an administrative transfer procedure. I have decided to not implement this committee recommendation. The incoming 8th Grade Legacy Student program is an optional program which may be chosen by families with qualifying students. I find that if having students at two middle school locations is problematic, it can be mitigated by not choosing to remain at the former middle school.

F. Middle School Programs – Dual Language, Rachel Carson, and SUMMA

1. Dual Language

The dual language program is unique in that it is available to students from kindergarten to 12th grade. The program intends to develop multilingual, multi-literate, and multicultural students. The advisory committee was mindful of ensuring its recommended boundaries preserve the established feeder patterns for the students enrolled in the dual language program. I find that the committee's recommendation will not adversely impact current or future students enrolled in the district's dual language program. I do not find it necessary to change the location(s) of dual language programming or add dual language programming as a result of the committee's boundaries recommendation.

2. Rachel Carson

The Rachel Carson School of Environmental Science is an options program designed for middle school students with an interest in science. The program has been located at the Five Oaks MS campus since Fall 2004, and as an options program, draws students from across the district. While the location of Rachel Carson options program was not a topic for the advisory committee to address, the committee did make an assumption in its recommendation to me that the program be relocated to Cedar Park MS to increase the number of students at Cedar Park MS to a level that will better support comprehensive middle school programming. The relocation of the Rachel Carson options program will also create more capacity for potential enrollment growth at Five Oaks MS.

In consultation with Teaching and Learning Department leadership, I have determined that the Rachel Carson School of Environmental Science options program will be relocated to Cedar Park MS starting in SY 2021-22.

3. SUMMA

The district's SUMMA program is not an options program but is a program which provides a differentiated, challenging curriculum that meets the cognitive, emotional, and social needs of highly gifted middle school students. The program is located in three (3) middle schools; Meadow Park, Stoller, and Whitford. To qualify for the program, students must have reading and math scores at specified testing percentiles. Each school year, the number of qualifying students who enroll in the SUMMA program varies and in recent years the number has increased.

The advisory committee was not directed to advise me on the location of SUMMA programming as a part of the MSBA process. However, because the SUMMA program at Stoller MS is an important consideration in understanding the utilization of building capacity, the committee and the public went to great lengths discussing the future of SUMMA programming at Stoller MS. I have decided that due to the amount of concern expressed by both the committee and the public concerning the location of SUMMA programming in the northern

part of the district, a decision on the location of SUMMA programming for SY 2021-22 must be made at this time.

Prior to making a decision, I have reviewed the following data:

- The enrollment projections for SUMMA students,
- The amount of SUMMA participation by district grid codes, and
- The amount of building space available within middle schools.

In consultation with Teaching and Learning Department leadership, I have decided that a fourth SUMMA program will be added to the district and be located at the Timberland area middle school starting in SY 2021-22. This will result in SUMMA programs being located at Meadow Park, Stoller, Timberland area, and Whitford middle schools.