



# Ellensburg School District #401

1300 East Third Avenue Ellensburg, WA 98926, [www.esd401.org](http://www.esd401.org), Phone: 509-925-8000, Fax: 509-925-802

## **Frequently Asked Questions as Ellensburg Moves to Neighborhood Elementary Schools**

This school year marks a historical shift for Ellensburg schools as our town moves from three to four elementary schools with the opening of the newly renovated Lincoln Elementary School. With the expansion to four schools, elementary students will now attend the school within their designated attendance zone. Our close knit community already promotes friendships with students across different schools at soccer games and other youth programs. The change to attendance zones will give students an opportunity to see friends they already know and to make new friends. This process will also promote unity and a sense of connectedness for when all ESD elementary students move to Morgan Middle School as 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

### **Why is Ellensburg moving to attendance zones for elementary students?**

- To equitably populate four elementary schools
- To cover more than 500 miles of District roads efficiently with a persistent shortage of bus drivers
- To create a stronger sense of community through neighborhood schools

### **How was this committee formed?**

- In October 2021 the ESD Board of Education called for a committee to examine attendance zones and make a recommendation on the best course of action.
- The District sent out a call for members, and a committee composed of District administrators, staff, and parents was formed.
- The committee was open to any and all interested members, with some members joining even after the initial Nov. 4 meeting.

### **What did the committee do?**

- Met on Nov. 4, twice in December, and again on January 13
- Met with experts in order to better understand demographics, growth, and the challenges of transportation
- Met with a representative from Edulog, the company that helps develop bus routes, and members of the ESD Transportation Department
- Researched zoning rules and processes in other districts in the state.
- Contracted with BERK to gain further insight into the current and projected demographics and growth trends of each neighborhood zone

- Discussed their findings and collaborated to find solutions

### **How was the Inter-District Transfer Request process determined?**

The Inter-District Transfer Request Criterion was developed by the Attendance Zone Committee. The committee researched and compared the processes that are being used in other school districts in our state. The committee developed a priority criterion to guide principals and district leadership when approving inter-district and out-of-district transfers. This criterion includes:

- 1) ESD employees requesting their student(s) be moved to the school where they work.
- 2) A request that all siblings attend one school when one (or more) child attends a place-bound program, such as the autism program at Mt. Stuart.
- 3) Hardship, as explained by the applicant.
- 4) Any other transfer requests where no hardship exists.
- 5) Out-of-District students.

### **When were the boundaries and inter-district transfer requests approved?**

The recommendation of the committee, including the boundary map and Inter-District Transfer Request process, was presented to the Board of Education and approved at the Regular Board meeting on Feb. 9, 2021.

### **Who is deciding if transfers are approved?**

Principals and district leadership met several times in June and August to review and finalize Inter-District Transfer Requests using the Board-approved criterion (listed above).

### **How did they decide who got a transfer?**

The factors that guided their decision-making regarding hardships (#3) and other inter-district transfer requests (#4) were class sizes at each grade level and fairness to all families. The district and building level administrators worked multiple hours to look at individual requests and honored as many of them as possible using the approved Criterion.

### **How many transfers were requested?**

About 200 families in ESD asked to be transferred from the schools they are zoned to attend.

### **How many transfer spots are available?**

The number of available student slots for inter-district transfers at each school were very limited, and therefore, most requests were not able to be approved.

### **When will I find out if my transfer request was approved?**

Parents who put in an inter-district request will be notified on August 19 regarding their school assignment for the 2022-2023 school year. Parents who put in an out-of-district transfer will be notified by August 26th.

**Thank you for your patience with this process. We are confident that every student will experience a sense of community regardless of what school they attend. If you have questions regarding the school that your child will attend for next year, please contact your child's Principal where they are assigned, the Superintendent or Executive Director of Student Services at:**

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**Jinger.haberer@esd401.org Superintendent**

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