

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Washington Elementary Retirement

General Questions About the Retirement of Washington

Why is Washington Elementary being retired?

While the decision to retire Washington Elementary was a difficult one, the decision was made for two primary reasons:

- 1) Declining Enrollment – Our incoming elementary class sizes have decreased from an average of 160 -170 to 125 – 135 over the past 10 years. With fewer students, it was no longer reasonable to maintain 5 elementary buildings and 8 sections of each grade level.
- 2) Facility Needs – Washington Elementary was originally built in 1929. The district’s capital projects plan targeted about \$5 million in facility needs at Washington, which doesn’t include renovation or educational improvement costs.

While making the decision to retire Washington Elementary was difficult, it helps the district best focus our resources and maintain a high-quality education for our elementary students and families.

When will the Washington Elementary officially be retired?

Washington Elementary will close at the end of this school year (2024/2025). All students attending Washington will be attending new schools in the Fall of 2025 for the 2025/2026 School Year.

How was this decision made and how was input from the community considered?

The decision to retire Washington Elementary was made after years of study and discussion. Most recently, this included:

2022: A task force of stakeholders (parents, teachers, administrators, community leaders, and school board members) studied enrollment trends and facility needs. This group provided ideas to the board on how to best proceed with declining enrollment and aging facilities.

2023: The board reviewed this feedback and analyzed different options.

2024: Another stakeholder group began to meet to review the board’s options and provide additional feedback.

2025: Consultants studied school boundaries, enrollment trends, and facility costs. The board voted unanimously to retire Washington Elementary and adopted new elementary boundaries.

What will happen with the Washington Elementary building after it closes?

At this time, no final decision has been made about the future of the Washington Elementary building. If the board decides to pursue a referendum for a new elementary facility, the Washington Elementary campus is the recommended site for that new building.

How can I find out more about the decision to retire Washington?

A Resource Center has been placed on the district's website, www.jamestown.k12.nd.us. This Resource Center includes school-community studies like the Enrollment and Facilities Task Force Report, RSP & Associates Enrollment and Boundary Analysis, new boundary maps, and various board memos outlining the decision-making process that led to the determination to retire Washington Elementary.

Student Placement, Waivers, and 2025/2026 SY Transition

How will I know which school my child will be attending?

The central office will be sending individualized letters no later than the end of March that definitively state the new school for each Washington family based on the board-approved boundaries. Families that have waived into Washington or were placed in Washington will be assigned the school within their approved boundary.

My family has an approved waiver to Washington, where will my students attend school next year?

Students that have waived, or been placed, in Washinton Elementary will be assigned to schools within the new elementary boundaries. The exception to this will be students receiving English Learner (EL) services. Students being supported through EL will be assigned to either Gussner Elementary or Roosevelt Elementary.

Will families have an option to seek waivers for their child?

The board determined that, to limit the number of families being asked to move schools, existing waivers and placements will be honored. As such, students that are currently attending Gussner, Lincoln, Louis L'Amour and Roosevelt will be able to stay in those schools or move to their new

boundary school. However, families will not be able to apply for waivers for any newly enrolled student to attend a school outside their assigned boundary school.

Will siblings be placed in the same school?

All newly enrolled students, including kindergarten students, will be placed in their designated boundary school. If an older sibling already has a waiver/placement and is currently attending a school in the 2024/2025 School Year, they may continue at that school.

What happens if a family has a child waived into a school, but also has incoming child who has not registered?

In this case, a family would need to make the choice to either move all students to the assigned boundary school or have only the newly registered students attend the boundary school.

Will my child be placed in a classroom with any of their current classmates and/or teachers and staff from Washington?

While the district cannot guarantee specific placements, the building administrator will consider the impact of the transition and connections for Washington students when possible.

Current Washington staff have already been assigned in Roosevelt, Lincoln, and Louis L'Amour, so Washington students and families will see familiar faces at any of those three buildings.

Will my child's school day schedule change?

No. All elementary schools operate on the same general schedule.

What resources or activities will be available to help students transition to their new schools?

The district is currently planning for this transition and will consider the individual needs of students and families. This will include tours of new elementary facilities and opportunities for Washington students to meet new classmates and teachers.

More details will be shared with Washington families as those events are finalized.

What are the plans to celebrate the retirement of Washington Elementary?

The district has tentative plans on how to best celebrate the legacy of Washington Elementary. This includes an Open House for current and former students, staff and families, Farewell Fair

for the community to celebrate through activities, displays and memory-sharing, and a Farewell Program to recognize the history of Washington Elementary, honor staff and students, and celebrate the impact of the school.

Further details will be shared as plans are finalized and fundraising is completed. Community support is welcomed to make this important tribute to Washington Elementary possible.

New Elementary School Boundaries

How were the new elementary boundaries determined?

The new elementary boundaries were determined through comprehensive review process that included a consultant and school board/administrative review. RSP & Associates was hired to conduct an Enrollment and Boundary Analysis Report that considered school capacity and enrollment trends, geographic proximity to student homes, equitable resource allocation, and long-term planning.

What changed about the boundaries?

The new boundaries were adjusted to balance enrollment and demographics across the remaining elementary schools after the retirement of Washington Elementary. This means that boundary zones of Gussner, Lincoln, Louis L'Amour, and Roosevelt have expanded. Additionally, the students currently enrolled in Washington Elementary will be reassigned to new schools based on these updated boundaries. Lastly, students living outside of city limits will no longer have fixed elementary boundaries.

We live outside of city limits. What elementary school will my family attend?

Students living outside of city limits will be placed by central office during registration in elementary schools based on elementary capacity, location, and travel distance.

Is a map of the new boundaries available?

Yes, the map, which details the elementary boundaries within city limits, is available on the JPS website.

Do I need to re-enroll my child in their new school?

No. Jamestown Public Schools will move your child(ren) into their new school without the need to re-enroll.

Transportation and Logistics

Will school transportation be provided for students who currently walk to Washington?

JPS will continue to operate city busing services with the same parameters. Students that are further than 10 blocks from their school building will be eligible for city busing. City busing includes a \$30 per student monthly charge.

Will drop-off and pickup procedures need to change at the other schools with more students?

No. Drop-off and pickup will remain the same at each of the elementary schools. These procedures were established when class sizes were even larger than what they will be next year. If minor tweaks are needed, they will be communicated by the building principal.

Class Sizes and School Capacity

How will class sizes be impacted by the retirement of Washington Elementary School?

With the declining enrollment trends across Jamestown Public Schools, class sizes will remain small and manageable even with the retirement of Washington. The average class size with the retirement of Washington will still be under 20. As enrollment continues to decline, as projected in our enrollment analysis by RSP, these class sizes will slightly decrease.

The board did establish enrollment guidelines of 22 in Grades K-2 and 24 in Grades 3-5. If class sizes rise above these trigger points, additional steps will be considered to support the needs of students and teachers. This includes, but is not limited to, adjusting staffing to accommodate student needs, adding classroom sections, or the allowance for some student movement between elementary buildings.

Will additional staff be hired to support the increased student density at the four remaining schools?

Title I and interventionist staffing will be increasing. The current Title I/interventionist staffing will be shifted from Washington to the remaining elementary schools. In addition, one additional Title I/interventionist will be added for the four remaining elementary schools to ensure student needs can be met.

In general, personnel decisions are made annually based on the needs at each building. If staffing changes are required due to the new student enrollment, those decisions will be made in the spring for the 2025/2026 school year.

Programs and Services

Will there be a change in Title I services?

There will be no modifications in Title I services based on the boundaries. Currently, all schools have intervention programs with some being funded by Title I and others being funded by the district's general fund. The only change that could result from the boundary changes is that Gussner Elementary may become eligible for Title I funding. This will depend on each elementary school's free and reduced population.

Will the after-school program still be available at my child(ren)'s new school?

Schools must be eligible for Title I services to be funded by the after school program grant. Lincoln, Roosevelt, and Louis L'Amour will continue to be eligible for the grant based on projected free and reduced percentages. Gussner was not eligible in the current school year but may with the new boundaries. If Gussner does meet the minimum free and reduced percentage, it will be eligible for the after school program grant.