



Dear Shamrock Community,

"Change is easy, transitioning is the real challenge." This quote, from organizational consultant William Bridges, reminds us that change itself is not usually the problem; it's the transition from the old to the new that is most challenging, because that process is often emotionally charged.

I'm pausing my series of letters on our district's Core Values (I shared two in my last letter, with four more to come) to update you on a significant strategic decision: the upcoming change in our district's grade-level configurations, and more importantly, the transition that follows.

During the 2022-23 school year, we asked CSO, our long-time architect partner, to conduct a facilities study using our recent demographic data to help us plan for WWS's student enrollment growth. As a result of that study, and after conversations with our educators, parents, and community, we made the strategic decision to:

- Move from K-4 elementary schools to K-5 elementary schools.
- Move from one 5-6 intermediate school and one 7-8 middle school to two 6-8 middle schools.

The decision was well received, with the feedback confirming it as a positive step for our students and their educational journey within our district. This encouraged us to move forward with Destination Westfield, ensuring we have the necessary facilities in place to execute our plan, which is set to start in August 2026.

At the beginning of this school year, we officially began the transition. In late August, we put out a notice to our community that we would be forming a committee to rebalance our attendance areas to accommodate eight K-5 elementary schools and two 6-8 middle schools. Anyone in the community was invited to attend. Nearly 90 community members volunteered to join the approximately 20 WWS administrators in this important work, committing to six 90-minute evening meetings.

Last night, our committee finished its fourth meeting. Each session has included presentations of data and information, followed by small-group discussions, questions, and feedback. Topics have included:

- September 3: Introduction and Overview ✓
- September 10: Details and Boundary Considerations ✓

- September 17: Boundary Considerations & Predictive Enrollment ✓
- September 24: Review Draft Maps ✓
- October 1: Consensus on a Map, School Start and End Times, Transportation
- October 8: Wrap-up
- November 11: Board of School Trustees Meeting

The committee's work is guided by the following objectives:

- To create a rebalancing process involving parents and community members
- To share current information regarding student enrollments, demographics, school capacities, and future growth projections for WWS schools and the community
- To discuss the considerations for rebalancing and to determine which should be prioritized
- To provide viable rebalancing options and a recommendation to the WWS Board of School Trustees for their consideration at the November 11, 2025, regular school board meeting

The committee was asked to prioritize the following ten considerations when constructing attendance boundary maps:

1. Balanced Enrollment
2. Creating Safe Walking Zones
3. Demographically Balanced
4. Feeder Schools
5. Geographic Proximity
6. Longevity of Boundaries
7. Minimize Impact on Families
8. School Capacity
9. Specialized Programs
10. Transportation & Operations Efficiency

Over the first three meetings, the committee identified its top priority as creating demographically balanced schools, ensuring that each school population looks as demographically similar as possible. We know that diverse learning environments enrich the experience for all students, and we want each of our schools to be a mini representation of our community.

The second key priority is ensuring the longevity of the boundaries. We are using future enrollment projections and growth data to draw boundaries that will remain stable for as long as possible, providing consistency for families. Ultimately, the goal is to complete the 2030-31 school year without needing to adjust boundaries again. Additionally, we are giving weight to school capacity and feeder schools to ensure balanced enrollment across our district and a smooth transition for students from elementary to middle school to high school.

Redrawing attendance boundaries for schools is a tedious and complex process. You quickly learn that everything impacts everything, and moving one boundary line creates unintended changes in other areas. It is also a process where it is natural for parents to want to know how their family will be impacted, making it challenging to look at it from the entire district perspective. Knowing this, I have been asked several times why I would want to do this work with a large group where anyone can participate. My answer is simple: we are better together! No single person possesses all the talent, skill, experience, and knowledge necessary to achieve the best outcome. This is true whether we are trying to rebalance our attendance lines or execute our mission of achieving high levels of learning and growth for each student. This is why we work in collaborative teams, focusing on building consensus and learning from one another through our work. Collaboration ensures that we will emerge on the other side with a better outcome and a stronger community because we did the work together.

As the committee works toward finalizing its recommendation to the Board of School Trustees on November 11, we are reminded that this effort is ultimately about one thing: ensuring every WWS student has access to an exceptional and consistent educational experience, no matter which school they attend, while keeping our district strong, united, and prepared for the future. We are incredibly grateful for the hard work of these community members who are dedicated to this process.

We are thankful for your support as we undertake this important work to prepare our students to be Life Ready on the day after graduation.

Yours in Shamrock Pride,

Dr. John Atha

For more information about the rebalancing process, please visit our [Rebalancing Information](#)

[webpage.](#)