

Boundaries and Articulation Area Analysis Final Update



Agenda

1. Project Overview and Key Findings
2. Boundary Modeling Process and Recommendations
3. Additional Recommendations



An aerial photograph of a residential development, likely a new housing project, set against a backdrop of rugged, forested mountains. The foreground shows a large, flat, undeveloped area with some construction activity. In the middle ground, there is a cluster of modern, multi-story houses. To the left, a winding road or path leads towards the houses. The sky is overcast with soft clouds. The overall tone of the image is blue and slightly desaturated, giving it a professional, architectural feel.

Project Overview

Purpose of the Project

Why we are doing this work

- Since 2001, Jeffco has experienced a shift in demographics, which has led to declining enrollment.
- Birth rates have slowed, and the affordability and availability of housing has resulted in fewer families with school-age children in Jeffco.
- As the school-age population has shrunk, some District schools have become significantly under-enrolled and buildings underutilized.

Project Objectives

FLO conducted a comprehensive study to increase Jeffco's understanding of its current school boundaries, articulation patterns, and enrollment patterns.

GBSM engaged the community to understand what matters most to families when choosing a school.

Analysis and Deliverables

FLO Analytics

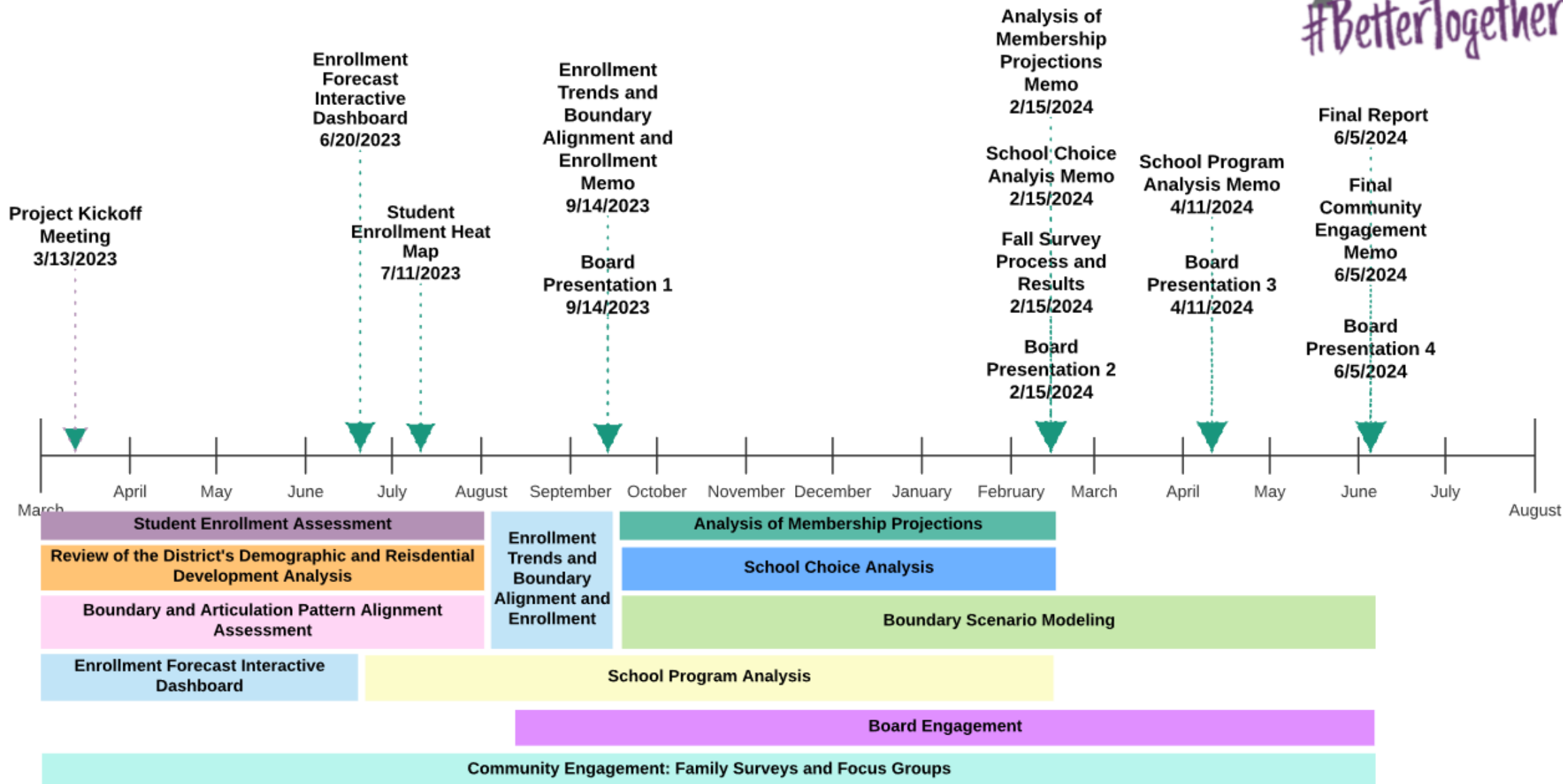
- September 14, 2023: Enrollment Trends, Boundary Alignment, and Enrollment Analysis
- February 15, 2024: Analysis of Membership Projections
- February 15, 2024: School Choice Analysis
- April 11, 2024: School Program Analysis
- **June 5, 2024: Final Report**

GBSM

- Fall 2023 School Enrollment Survey
- Spring 2024 Focus Groups
- **June 5, 2024: Community Engagement Memo**



Boundary and Articulation Area Analysis Project Timeline



Key Findings Across the Analyses

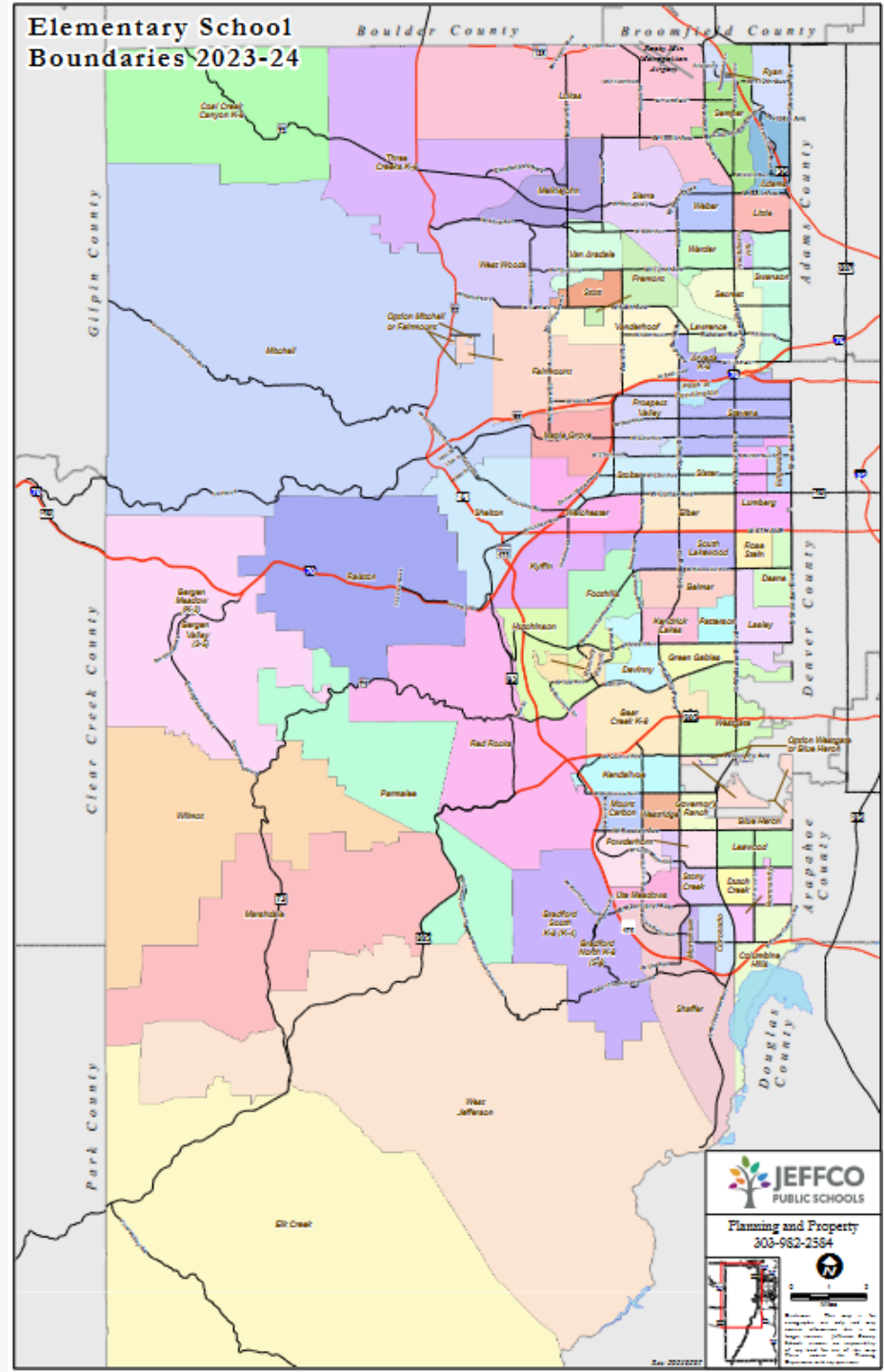
Population declines have resulted in underenrolled schools and created the need to continually assess the District's enrollment footprint.

There are a significant number of schools that are under 60 percent utilization or are projected to be in the future. The District should include solutions for this in their long-term strategic planning.

There are high levels of school choice in the District and the District does not yet have formal guidance established to support principals in strategically managing school choice aligned with student enrollment monitoring systems and facility planning in the context of declining enrollment.

Program offerings are one of many factors that influence family decision making about which school to send their child to. The District does not centrally track enrollment in all programs.
Note: FLO did not analyze the quality of programs.

Boundary Modeling Process and Recommendations



Guiding Principles and Modeling Parameters

A clear thread throughout the guiding principles is creating a roadmap to continuously progress towards a sustainable enrollment footprint across its buildings.

At times, the priorities conflicted. Above all, the District prioritized minimizing disruption to students, families, and communities through this process.

Guiding Principles

1. Evaluate multiple ways to achieve our goals and analyze the impact on students, our community, and schools, all with the primary focus of how to maximize resources to best serve all students.
2. Affect as few current students as possible through boundary changes.
3. Reduce the impact to students who live in Phase I or Phase II Regional Opportunities for Thriving Schools boundary change areas.

Modeling Parameters

1. Balance enrollment for schools that have low or high utilization (enrollment does not need to be balanced precisely among all schools).
2. Align boundary adjustments with existing student choice patterns.
3. Avoid boundary changes in school walk zones.
4. Review school option areas (where students are zoned for two schools) for benefits to students.
5. Review future residential development areas for boundary changes that would not impact current students.

Data Assumptions

- School choice patterns continue in the future (District-created enrollment projections).
- Current students choice enrolling continue to choice enroll to the same school even if boundaries are changed in their home attendance area.
- Program classrooms were kept in the capacity total for a school, and pre-kindergarten classrooms were removed.
- Pre-kindergarten students were not included in the enrollment totals.

*Enrollment data is from the 2023-24 school year, and the projections data is from Spring 2023.

One challenge with the modeling process was how to account for student choice. For example, the District's enrollment projections assume that, in the future, schools will continue accepting choice students at the same rate they have historically. This created unique challenges given recent boundary changes resulting from consolidations.

Introduction to Recommendations

The final recommendations were drawn from what was learned in prior work and options were classified as either short-term adjustments or long-term considerations:

- **Short-term recommendations** are on a smaller scale, more time sensitive, or reflected a need to balance enrollment in the next two school years.
- **Long-term boundary considerations** are options the District could implement in the future based on projected enrollment and to be made in tandem with the District's Strategic Capital Plan.

The final recommendations include short-term adjustments for seven out of 17 articulation areas and long-term considerations for seven out of the 17 articulation areas.

Short-Term Recommendations

All final recommendations were developed and evaluated with the primary goal to best serve all students in Jeffco as reflected in the guiding principles.

There are four short-term recommendations in the following areas:

1. Assigning the Trailstone Development (to be voted on by the Board in June) – *located in Arvada*
2. Blue Heron ES/Westgate ES Option Area* (Bear Creek and Dakota Ridge) – *located in Lakewood*
3. Fairmount ES/Mitchell ES Option Area (Arvada West and Golden) – *located in Golden*
4. Jefferson Articulation Area Study

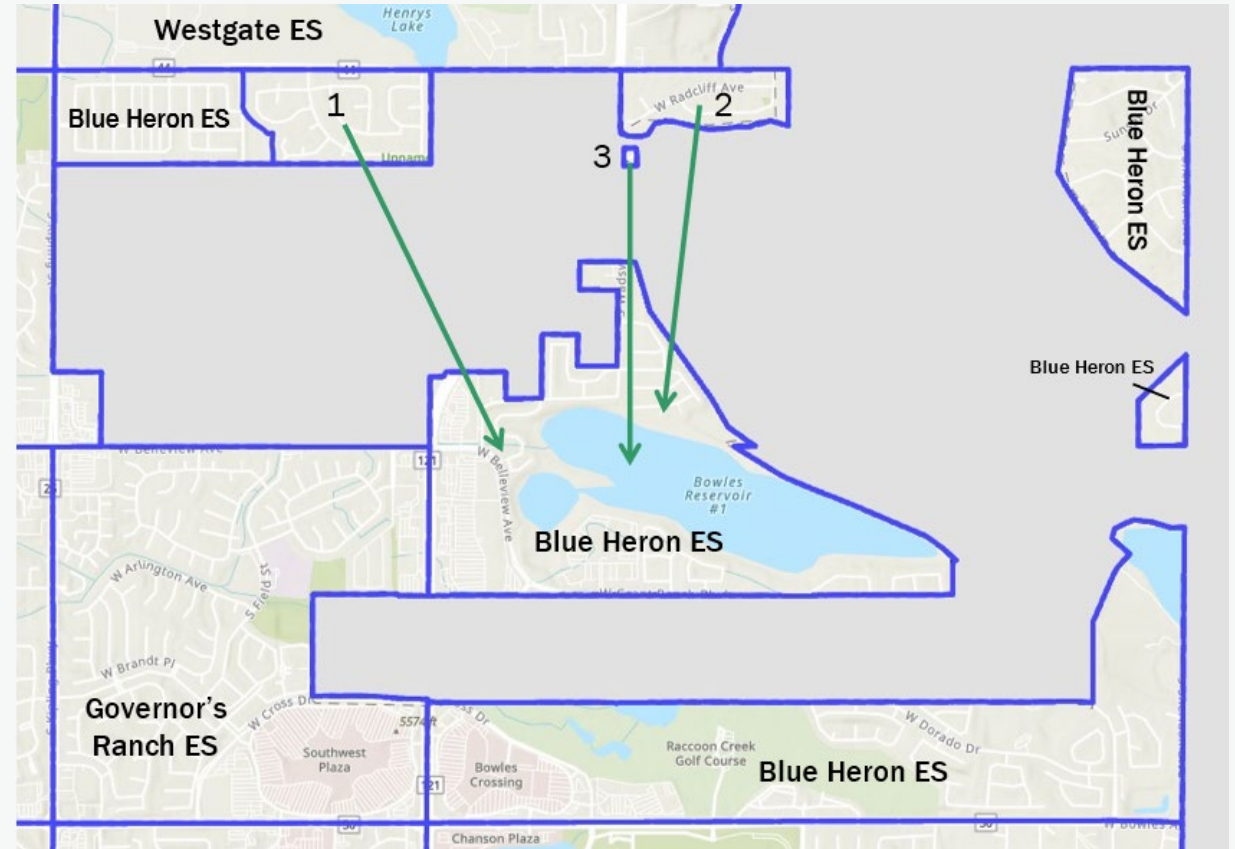
*Option Areas are unique areas where students have dedicated or reserved spots at two different schools.

Trailstone Development

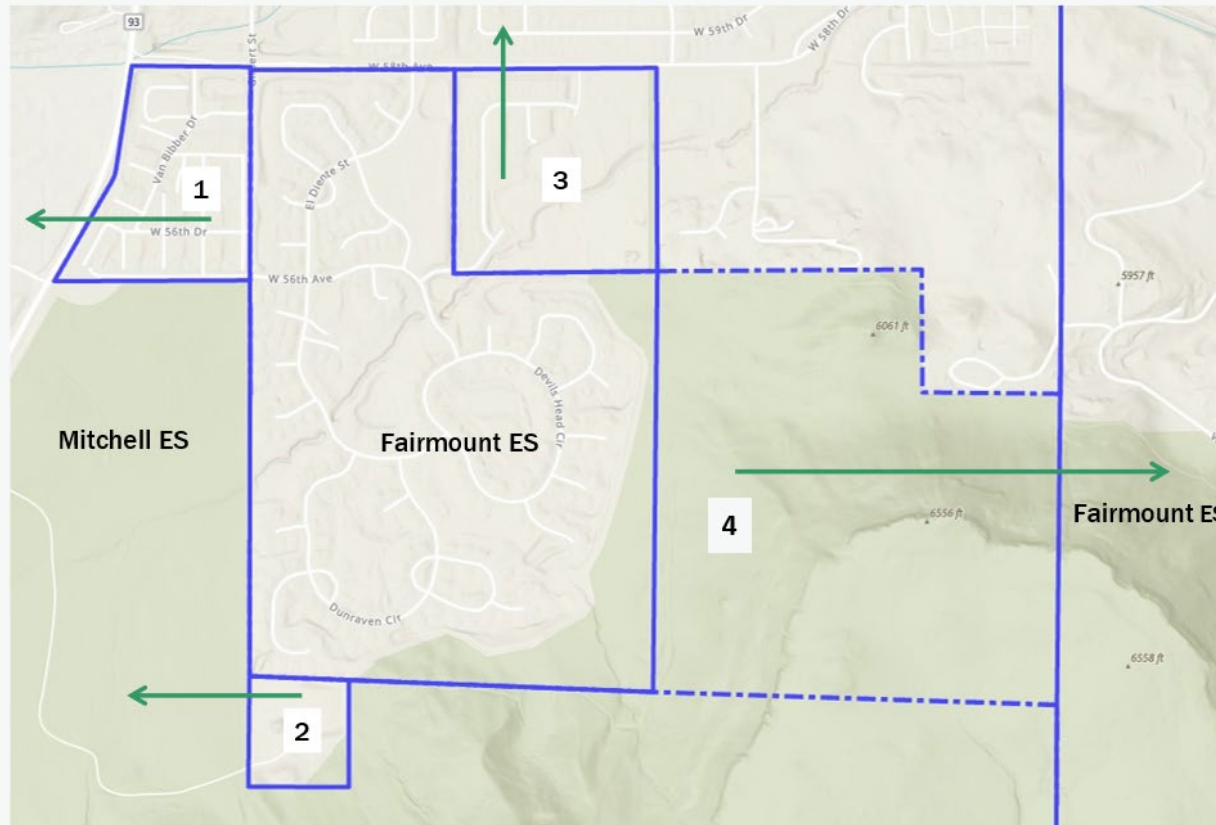
- It is recommended that students who move into the new Trailstone development in the City of Arvada, south of Candelas Parkway, attend Meiklejohn ES and Ralston Valley HS in the Ralston Valley articulation area, and Wayne Carle MS in the Standley Lake articulation area.
- There are no current students in this area.
- By assigning the Trailstone development the district can balance out enrollment across the Ralston Valley articulation area specifically for students attending Three Creeks K-8 and Meiklejohn Elementary schools.
- Analysis performed demonstrates maintaining enrollment at Three Creeks K-8, while being able to grow enrollment at Meiklejohn Elementary school and Wayne Carle Middle school, both of which have seen declining enrollment in recent years.

Recommendation for Option Area 1

- Blue Heron ES/Westgate ES Option Area: made up of three small areas located northwest of the Marston Reservoir.
- The recommendation is for the option area to be incorporated into Blue Heron ES and feed into Summit Ridge MS and Dakota Ridge HS.
- *Students in this area could still choose to go to Westgate ES or other schools. This aligns with the patterns in school choices families are already making.*



Recommendation for Option Area 2



- Fairmount ES/Mitchell ES Option Area, made up of three areas north of North Table Mountain adjacent to the Tablerock neighborhood.
- Two parts of the option area (labeled 1 and 2 on the map) have no current resident students and would join the Mitchell ES attendance area.
- The third area (labeled 3 on the map), the Wildhorse Ranch neighborhood, would join the Mitchell ES attendance area.
- The area labeled 4 on the map would join the Fairmount ES area on the map to the rest of the Fairmount ES attendance area.

Jefferson Articulation Area Study

- The District should look at 2024-25 October count information, and if the information confirms these findings, the District should design a plan for long-term sustainability aligned with existing choice patterns with community engagement, principal leadership, and in tandem with the District’s strategic capital plan.
- Enrollment in the Jefferson articulation area is projected to have a high decline (30.9 percent) by 2027-28, primarily at Jefferson Jr-Sr High School (627 students in 2023-24 to 372 students by 2027-28).
- Jefferson articulation area has capacity to serve more than 2,000 students, but by the 2027-28 school year the enrollment projections suggest it will serve less than 1,200.

School Name	Historical Utilization						Projected Utilization			
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Jefferson Jr-Sr HS	60.0	60.5	59.3	56.4	55.1	56.4	48.8	43.0	36.7	33.5
Edgewater ES	99.5	88.9	77.5	67.4	69.0	76.8	68.1	63.2	61.7	62.2
Lumberg ES	79.4	72.5	60.9	57.3	57.6	98.6	89.9	91.3	93.8	96.0

Long-Term Considerations

There are seven remaining articulation areas with a recommendation for future considerations based on enrollment patterns and projections leading up to the 2027-28 school year. These can be grouped into the following three categories:

1. Elementary considerations
2. Secondary considerations
3. Articulation area-wide considerations

All final recommendations were developed and evaluated with the primary goal to best serve all students in Jeffco as reflected in the Guiding Principles.

Elementary Long-Term Boundary Adjustment Considerations

- Considerations: Alameda (*Lakewood region*), Arvada (*Arvada region*), Columbine (*Littleton region*), Lakewood (*Lakewood region*), and Standley Lake (*Westminster region*)
- Identified because enrollment projections suggest lower enrollment by 27-28.
- Three articulation areas currently have four elementary schools but may only need three in the future. Columbine currently has five elementary schools and may only need four in the future.
- All have moderate to high enrollment declines and only one has a school projected to be over 100 percent enrollment in the future.
- Four of the articulation areas also had Phase I closures (excluding Columbine).
- **It is recommended that decisions about potential consolidation or boundary adjustments should be made by including community engagement and principal leadership.**

Elementary Long-Term Boundary Considerations

Articulation Area	Phase I or II Closures	Has Option Areas	Enrollment Declines to 2027 ^a	Enrollment Increases to 2027 ^a	Projected Utilization Over 100 Percent (2027)	Choice Out of School Attendance Area (2022)
Alameda	Yes	No	High	No	No	Low (11–20%)
Arvada	Yes	No	Moderate	No	Lawrence ES*	High (12–31%)
Columbine	No	No	Moderate	No	No	Low (7–17%)
Lakewood	Yes	No	Moderate	No	No	Middle (14–26%)
Standley Lake	Yes	No	Moderate	No	No	High (17–42%)

*Should be managed through strategic choice management.

Secondary Long-Term Boundary Considerations

Chatfield:

- Chatfield articulation area (*Littleton region*) has three buildings that serve middle school grades, which is unique.
- Most articulation areas serve middle school grades in one building (there are three articulation areas serving middle school grades in two buildings).
- By the 2027-28 school year, enrollment patterns suggest the area might only need two buildings to serve middle school grades.

Articulation Area	Phase I or II Closures	Has Option Areas	Enrollment Declines to 2027	Enrollment Increases to 2027	Projected Utilization Over 100 Percent (2027)	Choice Out of School Attendance Area (2022)
Chatfield	No	No	Moderate	No	No	Low (5–17%)

Articulation Area Wide Long-Term Boundary Considerations

Green Mountain

- Enrollment projections through the 2027-28 school year suggest that the projected short-term growth in enrollment, due to large housing developments like Red Rocks Ranch, can be accommodated using the capacity of existing buildings in the Green Mountain articulation area (*Lakewood region*).
- Green Mountain is one of two (along with Wheat Ridge) articulation areas that are projected to see stable enrollment through 2027-28.

Articulation Area	Phase I or II Closures	Has Option Areas	Enrollment Declines to 2027	Enrollment Increases to 2027	Projected Utilization Over 100 Percent (2027)	Choice Out of School Attendance Area (2022)
Green Mountain	Yes	No	No	No	No	Middle (14–21%)



**Additional
Recommendations**

Additional Recommendations

Establish a clear methodology for determining school capacities and set utilization parameters.

Create a mechanism for program enrollment to be tracked in the Student Information System and define 'program'.

Develop a strategic choice management plan that includes more clearly delineating between the number of students who live in a boundary and the number of choice students as drivers of future enrollment patterns.

Develop an annual reporting system and structure to regularly evaluate enrollment trends, projections, and facility capacities to inform long-term planning and promote transparent information-sharing.



The District's Next Steps Related to the Boundary Study

June 5, 2024

Thank you.

We wish to share our gratitude to the current and previous Board for their support of the boundary study project. We are also grateful to our partners at FLO Analytics and GBSM for their expertise and partnership.

The boundary study—the collection of reports and analysis conducted by our partners FLO Analytics with community engagement from GBSM—was unique in that it followed on the heels of 21 boundary changes over three years.

Our partners were agile, flexible and innovative in their thinking. This approach, which resulted in findings related to short-term improvements and long-term planning for future footprint adjustments, **provides the district and our Board a critical guide where there was previously none.**

Limitations of Boundary Changes

91% of Jeffco students attend a Jeffco school.

In the past, boundary changes helped to balance enrollment across schools about half the time. However, simply moving boundary lines without closing a school and eliminating that option is unlikely to force a change in enrollment behavior of our families. Essentially, **boundary adjustments will not fix declining enrollment.**



3 Main Outcomes

1. The boundary study provides insight into how the district, in the short-term, can strengthen our systems.
2. The boundary study finds that the district can, consistent with its principles in this process, make very small adjustments aligned with established enrollment patterns and trends.
3. The boundary study shares longer-term insights into enrollment trends to guide the district as we deal with isolated areas of growth and continued enrollment declines in most areas of our district.

As the district embarks on a capital planning process that includes all of our buildings, we will incorporate these findings into a strategic capital plan that helps us plan responsibly and proactively for our future.

Timeline for next steps

At this time, the district does not expect to recommend additional school closures in the next three years.

This summer:

- Jeffco staff will create an action plan from the boundary study findings that it will bring forward to the Board of Education in August 2024.
- In September 2024, the Board will study and take action on the district's recommendation for the minor, short-term, boundary changes based on the study's findings.*
- Jeffco staff conducting impact studies on two scenarios – building two schools (contemplated in 2018 CIP) or not building the schools and the impact each scenario would have on surrounding schools. Board will study this in late fall 2024 for a decision by the end of the calendar year.

* This timeline is aligned with the 2025-26 choice enrollment process which will launch in December 2024.

Timeline for next steps

Fall/Winter 2024-25:

- The district will conduct its third demographic study which will focus on articulation areas within the City of Arvada to understand shifting or changing demographics specific to school-aged children.*
- Following the release of official October Count numbers for the 2024-25 school year, the district will reexamine the report finding on articulation-area sustainability and future consolidations.
- Future decisions that would impact school communities will be made with principal leadership and community engagement.

*Previous studies focused on the City of Edgewater and the City of Wheat Ridge.

Discussion

