

## **STUDENT ASSIGNMENT PLAN UPDATE**

We are moving ahead with work on revising the student assignment plan. Here's an update on our progress.

### Step 1 – Framework

- After extensive community involvement and work by the School Board, this step was completed in June with Board approval of the Framework.

### Step 2 – Planning

- Planning to develop the details of the approved Framework has been ongoing. The focus over the summer has been on gathering and organizing data that will inform the planning process. The new assignment plan will have far-reaching systemic impacts, and the work at this stage of the process is extremely complex, with “ripple” effects throughout the District.
- A key element in the planning process is modeling the impact of proposals. Modeling will show not just where lines are proposed, but what the impact will be on students and schools in terms of numbers, demographics, and program needs of students (such as special education, bilingual students, and advanced learners).
- Changes to the assignment plan are intended to support improved student achievement. The Southeast Education Initiative is a crucial component in this regard, with the potential for significant impact on student achievement. The Southeast Education Initiative is underway, and central office leadership has been designated to work with the schools and communities in a collaborative planning process, and to keep this effort moving forward.
- The approach taken in developing the Framework – open and collaborative interaction with stakeholders – will continue. Staff will work with internal stakeholders, including mapping out critical timelines to ensure careful project management. Internal and external stakeholders will have access to information through the web, and through ongoing meetings similar to the process used in developing the Framework. Opportunities for engagement will continue to be posted on the web and publicized through other means as well, as we work together to examine the benefits and impacts of draft proposals.

### Step 3 – Implementation

- The goal is to move forward as quickly as we can responsibly do so, both with planning and with implementation. Changes of the magnitude envisioned by the Board and community have to be phased in – as we balance the desire for change with the need for carefully thought out implementation steps.

Here are current responses to some frequently asked questions.

**Are there going to be any changes in how students are assigned to school for the 2008-09 school year?**

There will not be changes in the assignment process for elementary and middle school students that soon – a great deal more detailed planning and modeling are essential before we'll be ready to begin a phased implementation of the elementary and middle school components of the plan.

In terms of the process for assigning high school students, the honest answer is that we don't know at this point whether or not we'll be ready to start phasing that in for 2008-09. We are currently working on the high school assignment model.

This work is very complex, and in addition to being committed to getting it right, we are committed to working with families so they understand how and when changes will affect their children.

**What is the update on the Southeast Education Initiative?**

Development of The Southeast Education Initiative reflects a recognition that District-level intervention is needed to support efforts of selected secondary schools in southeast Seattle to enhance the range of quality programs and instruction that they offer to students.

This work cannot wait. Additional resources have been allocated for the 2007-08 school year, including funds to support planning efforts by each school and community. Central office teams have been designated to work with the schools and communities in a collaborative planning process. An instructional director has been designated to specifically work with and support the Southeast Education Initiative and the Flight initiative.

**I'm happy with the schools my children attend – will they have to change schools when the new plan is implemented?**

No. One of the reasons for having a phased implementation is to address this concern. Students who will be affected by assignment plan changes will have a continuity assignment ("grandfathering") to the current school. The extent of continued ("grandfathered") transportation will depend on the implementation schedule.

**Depending on where they live, some high school students in the north end have a good chance of getting into several schools, while others have very little chance of getting into a nearby school. When will this get fixed?**

The high school components of the Framework are receiving priority attention from District staff, including:

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- Work on the Southeast Education Initiative.
- Development of designated assignment areas for comprehensive high schools.
- Determination of Open Choice seats for oversubscribed high schools.
- Consideration of what tiebreakers should be used for Open Choice seats.

**When will families know if there are going to be changes for 2008-09?**

Changes in how applications are processed for 2008-09 need to be approved by the School Board by the end of October. This allows time for re-programming the computerized assignment system, revising Enrollment Guides, conducting public outreach and information, and providing individualized information to families about changes that may affect their children.

**What will happen to sibling priority when the assignment plan changes?**

Sibling priority is currently applied as the first tiebreaker for assignment to every type and level of school. This supports family engagement, allowing families to be involved with fewer schools, and allows families and schools to build long term relationships.

The School Board has already decided that sibling priority will continue to be the first tiebreaker for oversubscribed schools. This is part of the approved Framework.