



# News Release

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## **School Board Approves New Student Assignment Plan Directs Further Review of Capacity Needs, and Considers Cleveland High School as an OPTION school with a STEM focus**

**Seattle** – In a major step forward in Seattle Public Schools' central goal to deliver *Excellence for All* for every child, the School Board voted today 6-1 to approve the final recommendations for a new student assignment plan that is predictable, equitable, and easy for families to understand. Under the new plan, each student will have a school assignment based on his or her address. Families will still have the option to apply to another school, and open choice seats will be available at all high schools. The new plan will increase the opportunity for family engagement at each school in the District. It will also reduce transportation and administration costs - resources better spent educating Seattle's children. Responsive to concerns raised by families during the engagement process to develop the plan, the Board approved an amendment to address sibling enrollment in the creation of a transition plan that will guide implementation starting in the 2010-2011 academic year.

The Board also took action this evening to direct the Superintendent to evaluate options to meet capacity needs in areas of Seattle projected to grow in the years ahead. Additionally, a motion was introduced that would designate Cleveland High School as an option school open to applications from students across the District. Designating Cleveland as an option school would open the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) program to students throughout the District.

The new student assignment plan is a key component of the District's five-year strategic plan, *Excellence For All*, designed to advance academic achievement and increase family involvement in every school in the District. Closely connected with the District's

work on enrollment, capacity management, and levy planning, the new student assignment plan will support plans to strengthen educational programs across the District.

“The passage of the new student assignment plan is a watershed moment for Seattle families and Seattle Public Schools,” said School Board President Michael DeBell. “First and foremost, the plan’s focus on academic achievement and family involvement moves us closer to the reality of providing every child in Seattle Public Schools with an excellent education. The student assignment plan’s clarity and consistency makes it predictable, easy for families to understand, and feasible for the District to administer. The community has every right to be proud of it.”

“I want to congratulate our School Board for its exemplary leadership in passing the new student assignment plan—it is another example of how board members have risen to the challenge of making tough decisions on behalf of Seattle students and families,” said Superintendent Maria L. Goodloe-Johnson, Ph.D. “Families told us they want a student assignment plan that is equitable, predictable, and is easy for them to understand; makes the most of taxpayer resources; and is feasible for the District to implement. This plan does exactly that and I commend the Board for approving it.”

The final student assignment plan included an amendment regarding the grandfathering of incoming kindergarten siblings. The amendment expressed the Board’s desire to address the grandfathering of those siblings as part of a transition plan to be developed by the District, provided that doing so is feasible and does not displace incoming attendance area kindergarten students.

The Board approved the new student assignment plan by a vote of 6-1. The plan is scheduled to take effect beginning in the 2010-11 school year.

### **ASSIGNMENT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION: NEXT STEPS**

With the approval of the new student assignment plan, the District will begin to create attendance area boundaries. These boundaries will establish a student’s initial assignment for elementary-, middle-, and high school, based on where they live.

Assignment area boundary maps will be available to the public for comment this fall. After approval by the School Board, the District will begin to craft a transition plan to begin implementing the new student assignment plan.

### **ADDRESSING ADDITIONAL CAPACITY NEEDS**

The Board approved a motion that directs the Superintendent to evaluate elementary and middle school capacity across the district and to make recommendations to add capacity, including opening one or more schools if necessary. Multiple closed buildings will be evaluated, including at least John Marshall, McDonald, Old Hay, Sand Point, Viewlands and Wilson-Pacific.

The evaluation of elementary school capacity, including any necessary Board action, is to be completed in time for notifying families prior to the open enrollment period for the 2010—11 school year. The evaluation of middle school and K-8 capacity and facilities, including the Jane Addams K-8 school, is to be included in the BEX IV capital program planning; there would be no change to the Jane Addams K-8 program prior to completion of BEX IV levy planning in 2012. This means that families would have the predictability of Jane Addams being a K-8 program at least through the 2012-2013 academic year.

### **PROPOSAL TO DESIGNATE CLEVELAND HIGH AS AN OPTION SCHOOL**

A separate motion introduced the concept of designating Cleveland High School as an option school for the purposes of the new student assignment plan. If approved, this designation would be used in boundary planning. The board is scheduled to vote on this motion on July 1.

Cleveland High School has increasingly focused on science and math. Cleveland's Building leadership Team and the District plan to further transform the school's academic program to a full focus on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). STEM high schools are unique, and offer a four-year course of study with a focus on preparing students for academic and professional futures in science, technology, engineering and math. A STEM school may not necessarily be desirable to all students, so an Option designation means that students living in the area of the

school would have a comprehensive attendance-area high school option while still having access to the Cleveland STEM program if desirable for them.

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