

SCHOOL BOARD ACTION REPORT



DATE: December 2, 2016
FROM: School Board Director Sue Peters

1. TITLE

Amendment 1 to the Student Assignment Plan for 2017-2018: Allow Grandfathering with Transportation for All Rising 8th Graders

For Introduction: December 7,
For Action: January 4,

2. PURPOSE

Due to the opening of two new middle schools, Eagle Staff and Meany Middle Schools, the proposed Student Assignment Plan would move some existing students to these new schools from their existing middle schools. This amendment would allow rising 8th graders the choice to stay at their existing school or move to the new school.

3. RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that the School Board amend the proposed Student Assignment Plan for 2017-18 to permit and implement grandfathering with transportation at comprehensive middle schools for all rising 8th graders in the 2017-2018 school year who live within any area that is changing from one middle school to another for the 2017-18 school year due to the opening of Eagle Staff and Meany Middle Schools, adding language to the Assignment Plan as shown in the amendment attached to this Board Action Report.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

a. Background

Under the recently adopted growth boundaries changes, a number of boundary changes are scheduled for the 2017-18 school year with the purpose of sending students to two new middle schools, Eagle Staff and Meany.

This amendment would mean that all students rising to the 8th grade next year would be able to continue through 8th grade at their current 2016-17 middle school and thus matriculate from the school that they are currently attending. This amendment applies only to students at comprehensive middle schools; it would not apply to students at Madrona K-8, as that school is proposed to be truncated to a K-5 elementary school by the Student Assignment Plan.

Dir. Peters has proposed this amendment as a way to minimize disruption for these students and families, in accordance with the commitment to students outlined in the District's Strategic Plan: "Our Students Come First: We believe it is essential to place the interests of students above all others in every decision we make."

The implication of this change would be to open the two new middle schools with full 6th grade and 7th grade classes, but potentially limited numbers of 8th grade students. The

two schools' planning principals have been actively working with their communities to plan for an opening with full classes at all three grades and, in November, started the search for their school leadership team. The amendment also potentially poses additional capacity challenges over the next year for Hamilton and Washington Middle Schools, which are currently overenrolled.

The last comprehensive middle school to open, Jane Addams, was opened with full classes at all three grades. The 2013 Facilities and Capacity Management Advisory Committee recommended this approach over a "roll up" approach that starts with only 6th graders, stating this approach "will facilitate the strongest start for new schools or programs and in doing so will offer both a high quality and comprehensive educational experience during the brief three-year cycle of middle school." However, this plan was also disruptive to many students, and resulted in removing students from their existing middle school, preventing 8th graders from matriculating from their school. This caused great anguish for students and families and is not in the best interest of student stability. Also, the proposed amendment would not create a 6th grade "roll up," but would allow a full and robust population of 6th and 7th graders to be established in the new schools.

This amendment would not affect any areas that have been separately approved for grandfathering in either approved staff recommendations or an approved Director amendment.

Any costs or impacts would be restricted to this one transitional year.

b. Alternatives

Proceed with previously approved boundary adjustments for the 2017-18 school year. This is not recommended as implementing boundary changes without grandfathering would create significant disruption by reassigning families and preventing eighth grade students from matriculating from their school.

c. Research

Evidence indicates that changing schools can be highly disruptive to students, academically and emotionally:

"Frequent moves can have a negative impact on a student's academic routine and potential success (Alexander, et al, 1996; Family Housing Fund, 2003; Kariuki & Nash, 1999; Popp, et al., 2003). Mobility and absenteeism are often associated with poor school performance (Alexander, et al.). When students were administered a measure of stressful life events, researchers found that students reported changing schools being as stressful as the hospitalization or incarceration of a parent (Alexander, et al.)." School Stability and School Performance. National Center for Homeless Education, 2009 (https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/school_stab_lit_rev.doc - Attachment B).

"Children who move schools often are more likely to have experienced peer problems. School mobility, in turn, appears to be a robust marker for psychotic symptoms in late adolescence. Clinicians and teachers should consider school mobility as an important risk indicator for both peer problems and psychopathology." The Journal of Child

Psychiatry and Psychology, 2016
(<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcpp.12572/full> Attachment C).

5. FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE

This amendment could have significant financial implications for the 2017-18 school year. It would limit the 8th grade enrollment in the District's two new middle schools, Eagle Staff and Meany. As a result, significant mitigation funding for staffing may be needed in order to provide a comprehensive middle school experience at these schools in their initial years of operation. The Budget Office estimates that as much as \$432,000 in staff mitigation funding may be needed to provide a comprehensive educational experience for 8th graders at the new schools, but the exact amount of this mitigation is difficult to determine at this time because there is no recent precedent for this action that would allow for predictions on the number of students who might opt into the new schools.

The estimated cost impact on transportation is approximately \$~~136,000~~154,900 for 2 additional buses. The amendment will require 6 additional bus routes in total, but because the Board has previously approved amendments to the Growth Boundaries Plan that require the addition of 4 buses, those buses can be used in both Tier 1 and again in Tier 2 for the 8th graders. Therefore, the impact of this amendment is only two additional buses.

This amendment could also potentially create additional capacity constraints at the existing schools for the grandfathered students, particularly Hamilton and Washington. Schools that face capacity constraints either have to repurpose existing space or add portables, where possible. Each additional portable costs the District approximately \$~~160,000~~180,000.

The revenue source for this motion is general funds for transportation and capital fund for portable costs.

Expenditure: One-time Annual Multi-Year N/A

Revenue: One-time Annual Multi-Year N/A

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

With guidance from the District's Community Engagement tool, this action was determined to merit the following tier of community engagement:

Not applicable

Tier 1: Inform

Tier 2: Consult/Involve

Tier 3: Collaborate

This amendment was first introduced as an amendment to the Growth Boundaries plan in November, but Director Peters delayed action on this amendment and reintroduced it as an

8 weeks, this idea has been available for public review and members of the community have sent comments directly to the Board about it. Director Peters also held community meetings on this topic and reached out to PTSAs and principals to receive feedback.

7. EQUITY ANALYSIS

This action would grant all rising 8th graders the option to remain at their current middle school to complete their final year. It would also provide transportation for all students, ensuring that all students are afforded the ability to remain at their current school without incurring added costs.

Research shows that disruption (including changing schools) can negatively impact students' educational trajectory and success. [See attachments B and C] In the case of at-risk or disadvantaged students, change and instability can have a compounded and even greater detrimental effect.

While some 8th grade students may be able to remain at their current school by re-applying during the open enrollment process because space may be available, this will not be the case for all students at all impacted schools without the option of grandfathering.

Mitigation may be offered to both new schools, Robert Eagle Staff and Meany, in the event that enrollment does not meet expectations, as is often the case with new schools in the first year.

8. STUDENT BENEFIT

This action would allow rising 8th graders the choice to stay at and matriculate from their current school, mitigating any potential unwanted disruption for these students.

9. WHY BOARD ACTION IS NECESSARY

- Amount of contract initial value or contract amendment exceeds \$250,000 (Policy No. 6220)
- Amount of grant exceeds \$250,000 in a single fiscal year (Policy No. 6114)
- Adopting, amending, or repealing a Board policy
- Formally accepting the completion of a public works project and closing out the contract
- Legal requirement for the School Board to take action on this matter
- Board Policy No. _____, [TITLE], provides the Board shall approve this item
- Other: Board action is necessary for any formal amendments to another proposed Board action

10. POLICY IMPLICATION

Board Policy No. 3130, Student Assignment, states that students shall have the opportunity to attend an elementary, middle, or high school in a designated attendance area based upon home

address, unless the school designated by a student's home address does not have the appropriate services for the student's needs, as determined by the District.

Any changes to boundaries, geographic zones, or assignment rules subsequent to implementation of the Student Assignment Plan require Board action.

11. BOARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

This motion was not discussed by a Board Committee.

12. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Upon approval of this motion, the underlying Board Action Report for the Student Assignment Plan for 2017-18 would be amended.

13. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Student Assignment Plan Amendment Language (for approval)
- B. "School Stability and School Performance – A Review of the Literature," National Center for Homeless Education, 2009.
https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/school_stab_lit_rev.doc
- C. "School mobility during childhood predicts psychotic symptoms in late adolescence,"
The Journal of Child Psychiatry and Psychology, May 2016.
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jcpp.12572/full>; and
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/newsandevents/pressreleases/frequent_school_moves/
(copy available upon request to Board Office)