



SCHOOL BOARD ACTION REPORT

DATE: January 26, 2021
FROM: School Board Director Brandon Hersey

For Introduction: January 27, 2021
For Action: January 27, 2021

1. TITLE

Amendment 1 to the Board Action Report titled “Approval of Southeast Middle School Attendance Area Boundaries for 2021-22”

2. PURPOSE

Amendment 1 amends the underlying Board Action Report on Southeast Middle School Attendance Area Boundary changes to provide mitigation for the impacts of moving Kimball area residents to Washington for middle school and Hawthorne area residents to Aki Kurose for middle school. This will help address concerns around transportation, keeping siblings together, and providing access to programs to support students of color furthest from educational justice.

3. RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that the School Board approve Amendment 1 to the Board Action Report titled “Approval of Southeast Middle School Attendance Area Boundaries for 2021-22” to require the following mitigations in addition to those described in the underlying Board Action Report:

- Sibling grandfathering for students currently in grades 4 and 5 who live in the Kimball and Hawthorne attendance areas and have a sibling(s) currently in grades 6 and 7 at Mercer Middle School. This would apply for the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years;
- Yellow bus transportation for two years to Washington for all students who live in the Kimball attendance area and that will attend Washington, if the district is providing to/from transportation for students beyond what is mandated by law. After two years of service this will be reassessed as part of the transportation service standards;
- Transportation from afterschool activities at Washington for Kimball area residents contingent upon the number of interested students;
- Transportation to Mercer for Kingmakers activities for eligible students contingent on the number of interested students;
- Coordinate informational opportunities for students impacted by the changes to learn about Washington and Aki Kurose as well as the programs and services offered at each school including Technology Access Foundation (TAF) at Washington;
- Coordinate dialogue between Kimball families and Washington administrators to address school discipline concerns and learn about the school culture.
- Check-ins with Kimball and Hawthorne area residents beginning in October 2021 to address transition concerns (this will include Transportation check-ins);

- Planning with the Office of African American Male Achievement for the advertisement of Kingmakers for African American Male students at Washington for them to access Kingmakers at Mercer;
- Discussion with the City of Seattle about safer routes between the Kimball attendance area and Washington.
- District staff will share their annual and five-year enrollment reports with southeast schools and families and engage families early around over and under enrollment across schools.
- District staff will review the boundary decision if there are changes in programs and services such as changes to the Dual Language Immersion pathway.
- District staff will conduct outreach to the District 7 community to understand concerns from families about lack of accessibility to the Dual Language Immersion program, particularly for those families for which these languages are their native language.

4. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- a. **Background** Mercer is the largest middle school in the district with 1,185 students in October 2020. Its right-sized capacity – which does not include the 25 portables on campus – accommodates 792 students. The overcapacity at Mercer is a result of the fact that too many students are assigned to Mercer. Washington Middle School and Aki Kurose Middle School have space for more students. Boundary changes have been proposed to reduce the number of students at Mercer. These boundary changes are being implemented in fall of 2021 as a result of the upcoming move of Mercer to its temporary location in fall of 2023 which can only hold 1,000 students.

The boundary changes proposed in the underlying Board Action Report titled “Approval of Southeast Middle School Attendance Area Boundaries for 2021-22” would assign future Kimball area residents in grades 6-8 to Washington Middle School and future Hawthorne area residents in grades 6-8 to Aki Kurose Middle School. Concerns have been raised about the commute for Kimball area students to Washington, grandfathering students to keep them together with their siblings, and continued access to programs that support African American males and students of color furthest from educational justice.

In regard to transportation concerns, Kimball families have requested additional supports to get students safely and efficiently to school given the overall increase in distance to school for students. In addition to the request for yellow busses, concerns have been raised about the route between Kimball and Washington. Requests to improve walkability will require collaboration with the City of Seattle and include discussions regarding implementing a sidewalk on 23rd Avenue between College and Walker Streets, proper lighting on stairs through Cheasty Greenspace leading to Mt. Baker light rail station, and making the intersection of 23rd and Rainier Ave safer for students to cross.

Sibling grandfathering is being recommended since currently 6th and 7th graders at Mercer who live in the Kimball and Hawthorne attendance areas are grandfathered at Mercer in the original Board Action Report. This will allow families to have students at the same middle school over the next two years. After the 2022-23 school year, any

students at Mercer with a future sibling could apply for Mercer during Open Enrollment and would have priority for available seats.

Washington currently has bussing for students participating in afterschool activities, so it is not anticipated that this will be an additional need, but it is included. Washington has My Brother's Keeper, which promotes and supports brotherhood among African American boys. This proposal also outlines a commitment to ensure all interested students have access to Kingmakers.

Alternatives The alternative to this amendment is to leave the current boundary proposal as is without additional mitigations for students. This is not recommended because this is a higher equity area and the boundary proposal increases the distance and travel time for Kimball area families to middle school, would result in siblings being at two different schools, and the district is committed to providing access to programs that support African American males and students furthest from educational Justice and this amendment allows for those opportunities.

- b. **Research** There are 24 students in grades 4 and 5 at Kimball who would have overlapped with siblings at Mercer and 14 at Hawthorne. These numbers are too small to break out by demographic groups. Currently all students who live in the Kimball attendance area live in the walk zone for Mercer, and less than 10 students would be in the walk zone for Washington. Under the proposed boundary option, approximately 135 students would be eligible for a bus, but 82 students would only be eligible for an ORCA card. Of these students, 76% are nonwhite and less than 10 students identify as African American. Although this is less than the population of Kimball as a whole, it still represents high equity. Kimball is 83% students of color, 14% African American Males, 15% English Learners, 13% students receiving special education services.

5. FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE

Fiscal impact to this action in 2021-22 is estimated to be \$167,484 for two additional buses to transport students to Washington from the Kimball area who do not qualify for bussing and up to one additional bus to transport students from Washington to Mercer for additional programs such as Kingmakers. Each bus costs \$83,742 for the 2021-22 school year.

The revenue source for this motion is the general fund.

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 proposal is the result of engagement with the impacted communities around their concerns with the boundary proposal. Families from the Hawthorne and Kimball communities provided emails, board testimony, and comments at community meetings with feedback on the challenges of the proposal and potential ways to remedy those challenges.

Additional engagements took place on January 19 with over 60 Kimball families and on January 25 with over 25 Hawthorne families which were attended by School Board Director Hersey. Families expressed concerns with the boundary proposal which are addressed in this amendment.

Ten additional targeted engagements occurred online starting in November by district staff.

7. **EQUITY ANALYSIS**

As outlined in the research section, Kimball serves a majority nonwhite population, and a high percentage of students on free and reduced-price lunch. In line with the District Strategic Plan in support of students of color furthest from education justice, the district considers the disproportionate impact that decisions may have on furthest from education justice which is why these mitigations are being proposed.

8. **STUDENT BENEFIT**

This action will reduce transportation times for students who would have used ORCA cards and address safety concerns. Current students can remain with their siblings and future siblings would be together at Mercer. African American boys and students furthest from educational justice will have continued access to supportive programming.

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. 3130, Student Assignment, provides the Board shall approve this item

Other: _____

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 students' needs, as determined by the district. Per the Student Assignment Transition Plan for 2020-21, any changes to boundaries, feeder patterns, geographic zones, or assignment rules subsequent to the implementation of the Student Assignment Plan require Board action.

11. BOARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

This amendment was not discussed in committee.

12. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

If approved, this amendment will immediately take effect with regard to the underlying motion.

13. ATTACHMENTS

None