

2006 Elementary School Boundary Recommendation

Executive Summary

As one of the fastest growing school districts in Colorado, Adams 12 Five Star Schools serves about 1,000 new students every year. In order to continue to provide a high quality education, the Five Star community recognizes the need to respond to this growth. The community passed bond issues in 2000 and 2004, paving the way for the construction of new schools to address this growth and the overcrowding of existing schools.

With growth and new schools comes the need to change school boundaries. In September 2006, the community-driven boundary change process began for elementary schools. This process addressed growth in existing elementary schools and the opening of Elementary 32 scheduled for August 2007. It also addressed the need to develop new attendance boundaries for former Wyco Drive Elementary students, since Wyco will transition from a neighborhood school to housing the Hulstrom magnet program in August 2007.

Five Star District forms Community Participation/Boundary Process Team and Consensus Team

As with the community-driven process for high school, middle school and Elementary 31 boundary changes, the Five Star District reconvened the Community Participation/Boundary Process Team (Boundary Team) made up of community members, administrative staff and school principals to ensure the integrity of the boundary process and community participation through two-way communication. As part of that dialogue, community members initiated the elementary boundary change process in September 2006 by modifying and reprioritizing the guiding principles the community identified during previous boundary change processes.

The community's guiding principles were used to evaluate options for elementary school boundary realignment, often referred to as boundary scenarios.

Five community members who served on the Boundary Team also served on the Community Participation/Boundary Process Consensus Team (Consensus Team). This team was charged with reviewing the feedback from all community members participating in the boundary change process, and making sure the community's analysis of the boundary scenarios was fully considered in finalizing its recommendation to the superintendent.

Boundary Team encourages everyone to participate in process

In September 2006, every family with elementary students in the Five Star District received a letter outlining the process for changing elementary school boundaries. This letter included the dates, times and locations of all the open house meetings for the elementary school boundary change process. Superintendent Mike Paskewicz encouraged every community member to take an active role in the boundary process since the process aims to represent the best interest of our more than 37,000 students and their families throughout the district.

In addition, the district established an entire portion of its Web site, www.adams12.org, to informing the public about the boundary change process. Community members could access meeting dates, view scenario maps, provide their feedback and ask questions. The district posted information about the dates, times and locations of the boundary open house meetings on Five Star Schools Television, FSSTV – Cable Channel 22. FSSTV also provided the community with the district's Web address and phone number for those who wanted to learn more about or participate in the boundary change process. In addition, FSSTV produced a video outlining the process for changing school boundaries which aired on Cable Channel 22 and was posted on the district Web site.

More than 625 community and staff members signed up to receive boundary updates via e-mail.

Community determines guiding principles for elementary school boundary process

As the first step in the elementary school boundary change process, the community determined the guiding principles to be used in developing and evaluating boundary scenarios.

In September 2006, 132 people either attended an open house meeting regarding the guiding principles, or provided their feedback online at www.adams12.org or through their school by completing a survey. Those who participated in the guiding principle portion of the process represented 24 schools.

The Boundary Team considered all of the responses from those surveys. The community defined the guiding principles in priority order:

- 1. Minimize the impact on existing schools/students**
 - Minimize the decrease/increase of students moved from one school to another.
 - Minimize splitting neighborhoods.
 - Minimize split feeders.
 - Evaluate the balance of diversity and socioeconomic factors created by the boundary plan.
- 2. Operate schools with enough enrollment to provide an adequate program**
 - Operate schools with enough enrollment to provide adequate programs and to be financially viable.
 - Minimize program changes at schools affected by a boundary change (decrease in enrollment).
 - Evaluate opportunities to accommodate “Choice” in schools.
 - Balance the number of students at each school relative to building capacity.
- 3. Accommodate growth**
 - Boundaries are changed to alleviate overcrowding in existing schools due to new housing growth.
 - Minimize the use of modular classrooms.
 - Minimize overcrowding so as to not increase class sizes.
- 4. Minimize future changes in existing school boundaries**
 - Using five-year enrollment projections, minimize the number of boundary changes that impact a specific neighborhood.
- 5. Minimize busing**
 - Minimize the distance and time a student is bused to school.
 - Boundaries should be compact and logical.
 - Minimize the number of students bused.

District staff develops scenarios based on community’s guiding principles

Using the community’s guiding principles, district staff developed 14 scenarios for the Boundary Team to review. The Boundary Team then screened those scenarios against the community’s guiding principles to see how well they matched. The Consensus Team then reviewed the Boundary Team’s evaluation of the scenarios and confirmed that the selected scenarios adequately addressed the guiding principles of the community-at-large. The three scenarios that best met the community’s guiding principles (scenarios A, B and C) were selected to be presented to the community for feedback.

Community evaluates how well boundary scenarios meet the guiding principles

The Boundary Team organized three open houses for the community to view the scenarios, ask questions and evaluate how well the boundary scenarios met the community’s guiding principles. As a reminder, the district distributed postcards to every family with elementary students, notifying them of the meetings. In addition, community members not able to attend one of the open houses had the opportunity to provide their feedback online at www.adams12.org.

Between the three open houses and the district’s Web site, 29 community members completed a survey on the three boundary scenarios.

Community determines scenario C best meets the guiding principles

Through the public evaluation process, the community determined scenario C best meets the guiding principles. Scenario C had the highest percentage (80 percent) of respondents who thought the scenario met the guiding principles very or somewhat well. It also had the lowest percentage (8 percent) of respondents who thought the scenario met the guiding principles not very well or not at all.

The table on the next page shows how strongly the community felt scenario C met the guiding principles relative to scenarios A and B.

Meeting the Community's Guiding Principles

Scenarios	Very or Somewhat Well	Neutral	Not Very Well or Not At All
A	30%	20%	50%
B	21%	22%	57%
C	80%	12%	8%

Consensus Team recommends scenario C be adopted

Using the community's evaluation of scenarios A, B and C as the basis for its decision, the Consensus Team has recommended to the superintendent that scenario C be adopted for the elementary school boundaries to be implemented in August 2007 when Elementary School 32 is scheduled to open. The following outlines how scenario C overall better meets the guiding principles as compared to the other scenarios.

- 1. Minimize the impact on existing schools/students**
 - Scenario C is the only scenario that keeps the Fox Run neighborhood together.
 - Scenarios A and B split Fox Run between Elementary 32 and Leroy Drive while scenario C moves all students from Fox Run to Elementary 32.
- 2. Operate schools with enough enrollment to provide an adequate program**
 - In scenario C, all schools remain above the minimum enrollment target of 400 students for years 2007-2011. This allows schools to provide adequate programming and to be financially viable.
 - In scenario B, McElwain falls below the minimum enrollment target for years 2007-2011.
- 3. Accommodate growth**
 - Scenario C reduces overcrowding from six schools in 2006 to three schools in 2007.
 - Unlike scenario B, none of the schools in scenario C are projected to have enrollments greater than their capacity with mobile classrooms. Based on projections, Scenario B places Thornton Elementary over its capacity with mobiles from 2009-2011.
- 4. Minimize future changes in existing school boundaries**
 - Based on enrollment projections, scenario C leaves space at Leroy Drive Elementary, Thornton Elementary and Elementary 32 for a small amount of new growth in the area.
- 5. Minimize busing**
 - All three scenarios result in the elimination of three bus routes currently serving Hunters Glen, Woodglen and Tarver Elementary Schools.
 - Scenario C extends the distance of two existing bus routes, reduces the distance of two existing bus routes and creates one new bus route.

Superintendent to act on recommendation

The superintendent has received the recommendation of the Consensus Team, and will announce his decision Dec. 8, 2006. In the meantime, a process has been developed for those who wish to file a formal appeal of the Consensus Team's recommendation.

Appeals can be made to the superintendent by submitting a written explanation of how scenario C does not meet each of the community's five guiding principles (and its subsections) for the entire district, its families and students. The superintendent must receive these materials by 4 p.m., Dec. 6, 2006. Appeal materials must be submitted via fax, mail or hand-delivered to:

Mike Paskewicz, Superintendent
1500 E. 128th Ave.
Thornton, CO 80241
Fax: 720-972-4008

You can continue to get the latest information on the boundary change process by logging on to the district Web site, www.adams12.org. To review the full boundary report, including all the raw data from the boundary process, please contact Lynn Stasz at 720-972-4227.