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2011 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BOUNDARY STUDY

FINAL REPORT

April 14, 2011

**Bend-La Pine Schools
520 NW Wall Street
Bend, Oregon 97701**

April 14, 2011

To the Superintendent:

Enclosed please find the final report of the Boundary Advisory Committee (BAC). It contains recommendations for several changes in Bend area middle school attendance boundaries to be implemented for the 2011-12 school year.

We thank the BAC for the countless hours spent studying enrollment information, listening to feedback, and analyzing data to develop this recommendation. Dan Wolnick and Brian Uballez assisted in facilitating the process. Their help is greatly appreciated.

Special thanks are reserved for Marsha Baro, Patty Givens, and Shawn Hasse. Marsha worked with the committee and facilitators as staff support. She also conducted research and fielded many calls and e-mails for clarification and information. Patty extracted data from the student database to provide necessary information to the committee. Shawn spent many hours working with the enrollment database to analyze student data and produce maps needed to complete this project.

This recommendation is submitted for your review and approval.

Sincerely,

John M. Rexford
Deputy Superintendent

Executive Summary

Bend-La Pine Schools has completed a limited review of its school attendance area boundaries. In December of 2010, the Superintendent appointed a 26-member Boundary Advisory Committee to review middle school attendance areas in the Bend area. The committee, made up of staff, parents, and other district patrons, was charged with the task of making a boundary change recommendation to the Superintendent to accommodate existing and projected growth in student enrollment.

To encourage public participation in the process, the committee held a series of community forums. Forums were held in March at four different locations. A total of approximately 250 people attended the first three meetings. Issues raised at the forums included:

- Keeping student cohorts together
- Effects on socioeconomic balance
- Equity of access to this review process

The last community forum was held in late March. The meeting was well attended as the committee presented its draft of middle school boundary change proposals. Input was focused on three areas of concern: participation in the boundary study process, impact on socioeconomic balance, and distance from the affected neighborhood. The committee worked in the early part of April to finalize its proposal and, based on a minimal level of consensus, this recommendation is presented to the Superintendent. The impact on socioeconomic balance continued to be the aspect of this recommendation of greatest concern to committee members.

The recommendation also includes several proposals regarding the transition of students from the existing to the new attendance area boundaries. The new boundaries are recommended for implementation in the 2011-12 school year.

- The committee recommends that students currently enrolled at a school be allowed to stay until they complete middle school. For example, current sixth- and seventh-graders in 2010-11 at Cascade Middle School would be allowed to complete through eighth grade at Cascade following the attendance boundary change. However, transportation to Cascade would be the family's responsibility.
- Families with siblings attending middle level at the same time would be allowed to have those siblings attending the same school.
- Generally, all other "grandfather" requests would be subject to the current policy and procedures regarding open enrollment and attendance boundaries.

The middle school boundary recommendation is attached, as Appendix B. Estimated student distribution in the third year of implementation is included as Appendix C.

Introduction

Cascade Middle School is experiencing overcrowding. Current enrollment of 925 exceeds the permanent building capacity of 800 by 125 students, and preliminary forecasts for next year anticipate an additional 50 students in 2011-12.

Additional student capacity was created at Pilot Butte Middle School with the completion of the most recent capital construction program, and REALMS charter school, which previously leased space at Pilot Butte, has moved to a new facility on O.B. Riley Road. After a one-year pause, student enrollment at all levels is expected to resume growing throughout the district. Attendance boundaries need to be adjusted to reflect current enrollment patterns and anticipated growth, while fully utilizing existing school capacity.

In November of 2010, the Superintendent and administrative staff agreed on the need to conduct a limited review of school attendance boundaries within the Bend area. Current Board policy delegates decisions such as determining school attendance boundaries to the Superintendent. The Board of Directors was notified and informed of the need and the proposed process.

Direction and Parameters

Based on the recommendation of district staff, the Superintendent authorized the following review.

The Superintendent established that the outcomes of the process were as follows:

Primary: Develop recommendations for attendance boundaries for Bend area middle schools beginning in the 2011- 2012 school year.

Secondary: Consider small changes to elementary and high school boundaries, as appropriate.

The process was guided by the following parameters:

1. Multiple options may be created for community input.
2. Boundary decisions will consider the following initial concepts:
 - Balance enrollment
 - Optimize student safety
 - Minimize disruption to students; “grandfather” as possible
 - Make decisions that will last long term
 - Utilize sound demographic data
 - Accommodate efficient, safe transportation, including safe routes to school

- Encourage community and neighborhood connections
- Support family connections
- Optimize educational program offerings available to each student
- Align feeder schools (K-12) whenever possible
- Strive for socioeconomic balance
- Coordinate with the development community
- Reflect core values of Bend-La Pine Schools

The recommendation contained in this report attempts to address the identified criteria to the greatest extent possible. In several cases, individual criteria conflict with each other. For example, a strict feeder school system does not allow for balanced enrollments. Likewise, equalized enrollments do not necessarily result in socioeconomic balance. The committee sought to consider each of these criteria to produce the optimum solution.

The Process

A Boundary Advisory Committee (BAC) was initially convened in December of 2010. It was composed of staff, parents, and other district patrons representing a variety of community interests. The committee also included a district transportation representative (Appendix A). The BAC acted as a guidance group to the lead facilitator, Deputy Superintendent John Rexford. The BAC reviewed enrollment and demographic data, as well as residential maps.

Many boundary change options were considered, and several maps were developed for committee and community consideration. Feedback was received in a series of community forums, through e-mail, and from the results of an on-line survey. After much debate and deliberation, this recommendation is being forwarded to the Superintendent.

Two rounds of community forums were held. The forums were scheduled as follows:

1. Forum 1 – March 1, 2 & 3, 2011, with ~ 250 attendees
 Provided information, facts, timeline, process, and decision making
 Presented working draft of boundaries
 Solicited feedback
2. Forum 2 – March 29, 2011, with ~175 attendees
 Reviewed proposed boundaries
 Solicited feedback

In advance of each forum, communication was targeted to various members of the school community, primarily parents. Each communication solicited feedback. Communication methods included a website, media releases, social media, and “auto-dialer” phone calls.

Communication and Participation

This process had a tremendous emphasis on communication and public participation.

A variety of communication methods were used during the process to communicate with families. In addition, the media took particular interest in this process. Media coverage was provided on local radio stations (Horizon Broadcasting, Combined Communications, Bend Radio Group stations), local television stations (KTVZ, KOHD, Good Morning Central Oregon) and in print (Bend Bulletin). Broad coverage by all media outlets assisted in providing information to the school community.

Four community forums were held to provide information and to solicit feedback and input from students, parents, and patrons of the district. In total over 400 people participated in the forums. In addition, the committee work meetings were all held in public. Many interested members of the community attended the work meetings.

During the community forums, the committee heard similar issues being raised by representatives of the three areas considered for movement from the Cascade attendance area. The issues included:

- Keeping student cohorts together
- Effects on socioeconomic balance
- Distance from affected neighborhoods
- Equity of access to this review process

There were more than 250 responses provided in the on-line survey. A majority of respondents in the last two weeks of online survey access supported the recommendation that is being proposed in this report.

Proposed Boundaries

Proposed attendance boundaries for Bend-area middle schools are included as Appendix B of this document. Changes proposed are primarily focused on reducing enrollment at Cascade Middle School. Labeled #1b during the process, the recommended alternative moves the entire Pine Ridge Elementary attendance area to the Pilot Butte Middle School attendance area. It is important to note that the recommendation is also to allow students residing in the

Ensworth Elementary attendance area to have the choice of attending either Pilot Butte or Sky View. However, district transportation would only be provided to Sky View.

The recommendation generally distributes enrollment proportionally amongst the four middle schools in Bend. Only Pilot Butte is anticipated to slightly exceed enrollment capacity in 2011-12. The committee feels that area change requests back to Cascade will likely bring enrollment back to within capacity at Pilot Butte.

The primary alternative to this recommendation was to move a large portion of the High Lakes Elementary area to Pilot Butte. In straw voting held twice before moving to consensus on the final recommendation, this alternative was the second choice of the committee.

Several reasons for this ranking were generally cited in related discussion. First, the committee heard clear feedback from the community to make a priority of keeping student cohorts large or intact. The alternative option left a fairly small cohort of students from the High Lakes area attending Cascade, while the majority of students would move on to Pilot Butte. The recommended proposal moves the entire Pine Ridge Elementary area to Pilot Butte. Second, there was the sense that the Awbrey Butte area would likely return to the Cascade attendance area when a new middle school is built in the future near R.E. Jewell Elementary. In the case of the recommended proposal, Pine Ridge area students will likely be moved to the new middle school and the committee feels that moving to a new school is a more attractive option to families and students. Finally, some portions of the High Lakes area alternative are within reasonable biking distance of Cascade Middle School. For these reasons and others, the committee ranked the selected option higher in two separate ballots, before and after the final forum.

Estimates of enrollment for each school are included in Appendix C.

Transitions

The BAC was also tasked with addressing the various transition issues created with the implementation of this proposal. There was input and feedback to the committee from students and parents regarding transitions. For some people, the handling of the transition is almost as important as the final location of attendance boundaries.

The committee recommends that the changes be implemented in the 2011-12 school year. The committee recommends up to two-year "grandfathering." In other words, current sixth-graders can complete the middle level at their current

middle school. However, transportation is the responsibility of the parents. Families with siblings that would be attending middle level at the same time would be allowed to have those siblings attend the same school. Generally, all other “grandfather” requests are subject to the current policy and procedures regarding open enrollment, attendance boundaries, and transportation.

Areas of Concern

As with any process of this scope and importance, the committee could not resolve every issue to the complete satisfaction of all parents and patrons participating in the process. The BAC considered each concern and strived to address as many interests as possible. Many concerns were resolved, but a couple of interests were not resolved to full satisfaction. The committee itself was concerned that there was no ideal solution.

Lack of socioeconomic balance that will result from implementation of the boundary change proposal was the most frequently expressed concern. The minimal level of consensus is indicative of the committee’s struggle to find a “best” solution. Most committee members continue to be concerned about the effect on socioeconomic balance at middle schools in Bend. While Pilot Butte’s free and reduced meal percentage is anticipated to decline slightly from 72% to 67%, the number of economically disadvantaged students will increase. Under this proposal, the estimated percentage of free and reduced meal students at Cascade drops to 16%. These shifts are unacceptable to some committee members who ultimately could not support this recommendation based on this issue. If socioeconomic balance is the overriding priority of the school district, the committee recommends that priority be expressed in specific Board policy or direction.

A continuing concern of the Pine Ridge community was a perceived lack of sufficient notice of boundary committee formation. The BAC first met in December 2010 and additional committee volunteers were accepted through January. From the start, the committee’s primary goal was focused on reducing Cascade’s population. No pre-conceived solutions were in mind, so the focus was on gaining representation from all four middle schools in Bend. Notice of the process was broadly available in the media as described above. In addition, notice about formation of the committee was included in many school’s newsletters including Cascade Middle School’s, though it was not included in the Pine Ridge newsletter until February. No mail or other direct communication to parents occurred. Of the parent members of the committee, only one was from the Pine Ridge community. Several other members of the committee currently live in the neighborhoods affected by the proposed boundary changes.

Finally, the students in the Pine Ridge neighborhood live farther from Pilot Butte Middle School than from Cascade Middle School. District staff members have checked the travel time difference, both by school bus and by personal vehicle. Generally, the travel time from the Pine Ridge neighborhood to Pilot Butte is 3 to 4 minutes more than to Cascade, but the difference may be greater or less depending on traffic conditions. The committee notes that use of the parkway and other arterial streets improves the overall travel time.

Several other issues were described in the feedback received at the community forums and from the online surveys, and the committee reviewed all of the feedback. The committee considered several possible options at length and makes this proposal as the best possible recommendation after weighing all factors.

Conclusion

The Boundary Advisory Committee presents this recommendation to the Superintendent for his consideration and approval. Please feel free to contact any committee member for additional information or clarification.

Appendix A - Boundary Committee Roster

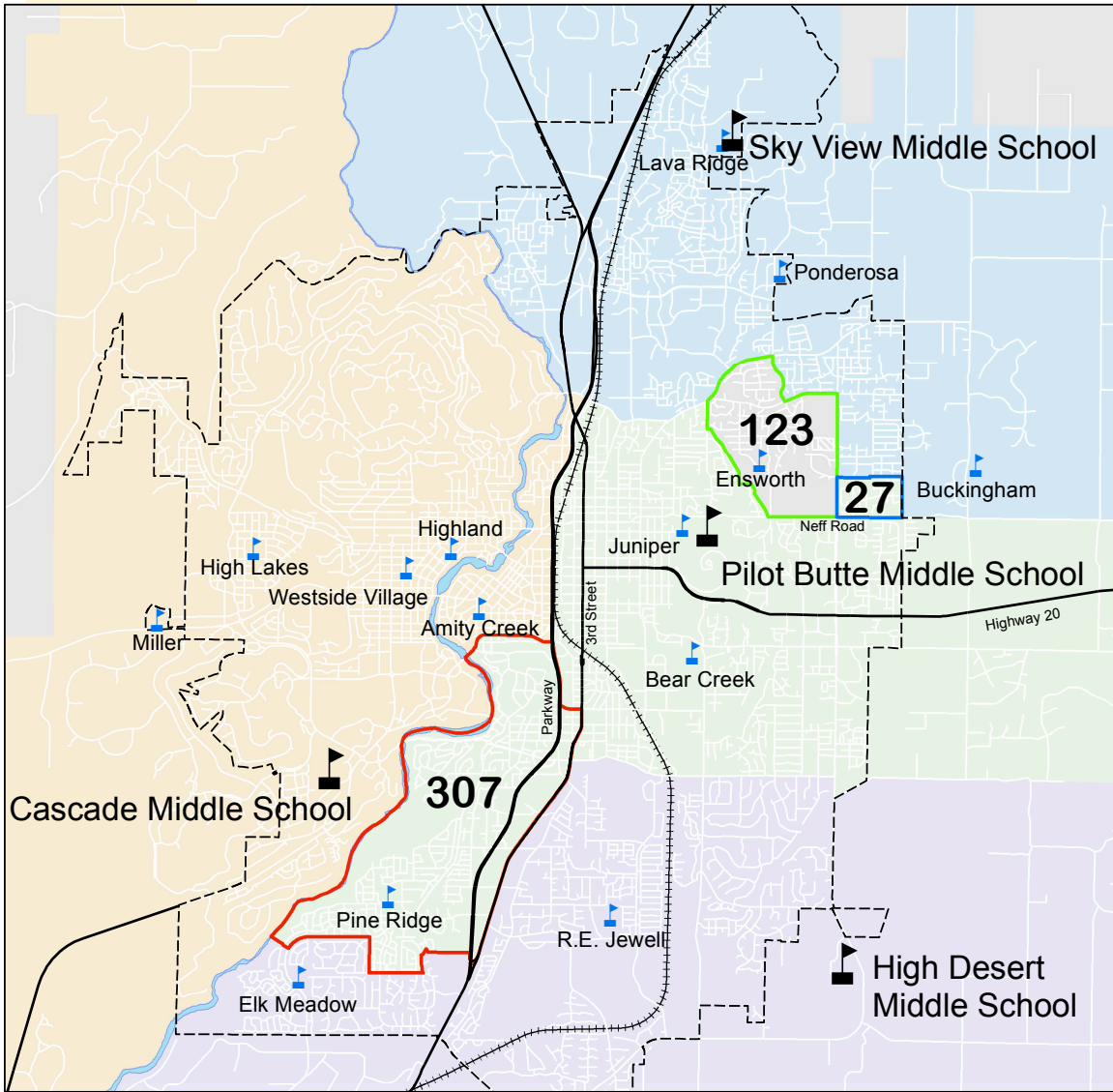
John Rexford	Facilitator
Marsha Baro	Project Support
Patty Givens	Student Data
Shawn Hasse	GIS Support
Odette Adair	Parent
Josh Boehme	Asst. Principal, R.E. Jewell
Daren Cullen	Parent
Scott Edmondson	Principal, Sky View
Carolyn Ervin	Asst. Principal, Elk Meadow
Tina Ficher	Parent
Sara Fraser	Parent
Kevin Gehrig	Principal, Pine Ridge
Frank Hanson	Student Services, Marshall
Michael Hecker	Principal, Pilot Butte
Steven Hill	Principal, W.E. Miller
Barbry Hogue	Office Manager, Highland
Mike Holtzclaw	Parent
Marshall Jackson	Asst. Principal, High Desert
Vanessa Kolar	Parent
Sue McAdam	Operations Manager, Transportation
Skip Offenhauser	Principal, Buckingham
Sue Pierce	Parent
Julianne Repman	Director, Communications
Julie Smith	Parent
Brian Uballez*	Asst. Principal, Sky View
Dan Wolnick*	Asst. Principal, Cascade

*Co-facilitators

Appendix B - Middle School Boundary Map



Middle School Boundary Option 1B



Change Areas	Proposed Boundaries
 Pine Ridge Elementary	 Cascade Middle
 Ensworth Elementary	 Pilot Butte Middle
 Buckingham corner	 Sky View Middle
	 High Desert Middle
The number indicates the current count of 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students.	 City Boundary

Appendix C – Enrollment Forecast

School	Current 11-12		<u>Option #1b</u>		New	Estimated	SES Before	SES After
Cascade	975	-307			▼ 668		28%	16%
High Desert	757				▼ 757		46%	46%
Pilot Butte	647	307	-62	-27	▼ 866		72%	67%
Sky View	709		62	27	▼ 798		38%	40%
	3088				3088			