

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the School Board approve a comprehensive redistricting study to be conducted in early 2015 for implementation beginning in the 2016-2017 school year.

Redistricting Background

In its June 2014 report to the School Board, the Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LRPAC) recommended that the School Board conduct a comprehensive redistricting study in the spring of 2015. Adopted changes to school districts would be implemented for the 2016-2017 school year which would allow adequate time for schools, parents, and communities to plan for and adjust to the changes.

Staff recently updated its five year student enrollment projections based upon September 30, 2014 enrollments. As the board has been made aware, student enrollments this year exceeded our projections by about 120 students. September 30, 2014 enrollment was 13,321 students which is an increase of 247, or 1.9 percent, from September 2013. If preschool students are included in the enrollment, it increases to 13,606 students.

The five year projections indicate that enrollment will continue to increase during this time period. In 2020, we are projecting 14,066 students, an increase of 744 students, or 5.6 percent. At the present time, 10 of our 26 schools are over-crowded. In five years the enrollment projections suggest that 14, or 54 percent, of our schools will be over-crowded.

Our capital improvement program (CIP) has one capacity enhancement project underway at Agnor-Hurt Elementary School. This project will increase that school's capacity by about 140 students (this increase in capacity is reflected in the total for Agnor-Hurt in the attached spreadsheet). If funded ultimately in the CIP, there are capacity enhancement projects proposed for Woodbrook Elementary School (to address needs in several "urban ring" schools) and at Western High School associated with the environmental studies academy.

The attached spreadsheet showing school capacities and enrollments indicates that in the aggregate we have sufficient capacity to address our current and five year projected enrollments. That said, there are substantive differences in utilization levels between schools. For example, the projected utilization at Monticello HS is 86.2 percent while Albemarle HS is projected at 114 percent. Walton MS is projected at 65.8 percent as compared to Jouett MS at 101.2 percent. Murray ES is projected to be 82.3 percent while Stoney Point is projected to be at 128.4 percent.

The data in this chart support the LRPAC recommendation for a comprehensive redistricting study. While it is extremely unlikely that study recommendations will impact every school, it would be helpful to the process to have all schools available for consideration.

Study Objectives

Staff recommends that the study be conducted with the following objectives:

1. Address current and projected overcrowding
2. Address current and projected under-utilization
3. Consider potential reductions in numbers of students subject to split feeders
4. Consider creating more balanced demographics between schools

Redistricting Process and Timeline

To implement this redistricting project, staff is recommending that the following process and timeline be adopted by the School Board:

1. School Board decides on scope of the study and approves objectives. (November 2014)
2. Superintendent appoints an oversight committee (OC) comprised of 2 members from each magisterial district, a member of the Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee selected by other members, and a member of the Equity and Diversity Committee.. (December 2014)
3. OC works with staff to develop 3 unique scenarios to achieve the study's objectives (January 2015)
4. Community meetings are held to share scenarios and to gain community feedback. A website is created for the same purpose that allows public comment. (February 2015)
5. OC and staff study community feedback for themes and develop 2 scenarios that achieve the objectives while reflecting community themes. (March 2015)
6. New scenarios are again shared online and at community meetings to gain further feedback. (April 2015)
7. OC and staff again study feedback for themes and develop a plan to recommend to the Superintendent. (May 2015)
8. The Superintendent makes recommendations to the School Board. (May 2015)
9. School Board holds public hearing and makes final decisions on changes to existing attendance areas. (June 2015)