

LONG RANGE PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE FLEXIBLE BOUNDARY PLAN
and IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

A. Flexible Boundary Plan.

The fixed boundaries that have been in place in District 96 for many years have, of late, contributed to problems of school overcrowding, class sizes that exceed the desirable range in a growing number of cases, and an inequitable distribution of large classes in certain schools. Our projections indicate that these conditions would worsen if left unattended, contributing to a deterioration of the overall quality of education in our elementary schools.

The Long Range Plan Steering Committee considered numerous options to address the issues that a fixed boundary system has created. It is recommending a flexible boundary plan that can be adjusted from year to year to respond to changing trends in the residency of students within the district. District 96 is in the fortunate position of having four, excellent elementary schools with motivated students, committed staff members, and involved parents.

A flexible boundary plan is one which redefines the boundary areas between Ames, Blythe Park, and Central Elementary Schools. The new boundary areas are based on current demographic patterns in the community. These “flexible” boundary areas or zones will serve as guidelines for the administration in assigning new students to a given school. A flexible boundary approach will give the district greater latitude in order to keep class sizes within the targeted guidelines, to maintain equity, and to optimize the use of existing school facilities. The flexible boundary approach (as opposed to setting, new, fixed boundaries) meets the criterion of providing a longer-term solution to the conditions that fixed boundaries have produced.

The attendance area for Hollywood School would remain the same due to geographic reasons (First Avenue and the Des Plaines River), safety concerns, and stable history of enrollment at the school.

The goals of a flexible boundary plan are:

- to maintain a district-wide focus on our mission and continual efforts to improve the quality of each school’s program.
- to lower class size throughout the district, with a priority to the primary grades (K-3).
- to achieve equity in class sizes and facility access throughout the district.
- to maintain the neighborhood school concept.
- to make optimum use of the school facilities throughout the district.
- to provide a plan that is workable for the future.
- to be financially responsible.

To achieve these goals, boundary areas for the Ames, Blythe Park, and Central School neighborhoods would be redrawn, to serve as guides in assigning students to a school for their K-5 experience.

B. Class Size Targets.

| <u>Grades</u> | <u>Target</u> |
|---------------|---------------------|
| Grades K – 3 | 20 students or less |
| Grades 4 – 5 | 20-23 students |
| Grades 6 – 8 | 24-26 students |

C. Guidelines for Implementing the Flexible Boundary Plan.

Keeping in mind, the goals of the “flexible” boundary plan, the following guidelines would be used in implementing the plan (taken in total):

- proximity to the neighborhood school, in relation to the school’s total population composition.
- date of registration.
- siblings.
Note #1: For 2002-03, siblings in grades 4 and 5 may voluntarily relocate to a new school if younger siblings (K-3) are reassigned.
Note #2: Going forward in assigning new students to a school, older siblings in the school will be a first priority.
- safety.
- voluntary transfer provision of the class size policy will continue. All existing cases, however, will be reviewed.

Note: Parents may seek voluntary transfers to access a kindergarten enrichment program or before/after school program enrollment. Kindergarten enrichment would be for one year only. Any voluntary transfer must not adversely affect class size in either the sending or receiving school and will be reviewed annually.
- once assigned to an elementary school, a student will remain in that school through the 5th grade (beginning in 2002-03).
- newly enrolled students will attend their neighborhood school if classroom space is available. If a class is full, the administration will assign the student to the next best school in terms of class size ratios, proximity to the school, and safety.
- if, after an initial enrollment period from within a flexible boundary area, space exists in a given class, a lottery will be conducted to fill the class. Access to the lottery would be open to individuals from the boundary lines in place during the 2001-02 school year. Through such a lottery process, it would be the parent’s choice to split siblings, should this be necessary.

- if, within a flexible boundary area, a class fills, the district will keep a waiting list for future access to their neighborhood school. Priority on the waiting list would be based on (in order):
 - a. siblings
 - b. proximity to the school (distance from property border to school border, with ties broken by lottery).
 - c. date of registration.