

Minutes of the  
Flexible Boundary Committee Meeting  
4 March 2010  
L.J. Hauser Jr. High School

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. The following individuals were in attendance:

Committee members

Jennifer Leimberer, Board of Education Member (Chair)  
Mary T. Stimming, Board of Education Member  
Jim Raffensburger, Ames representative  
Karen Magee, Blythe Park representative  
Greg Nessinger, Central representative  
Trish Smithing, Hollywood representative

Participating Members of the Public

Kelly Krupske, Hollywood  
Art Perry, Hollywood

2. Public Comment/Statement

There were no Public Comments or statements.

3. Review and Approve 11 February 2010 Minutes

The Minutes of the 11 February 2010 Meeting were approved with no amendments.

4. Review and Approve 18 February 2010 Minutes

The Minutes of the 18 February 2010 Meeting were approved with the following amendments:

p. 4, Top of page, insert “beginning in 2008-09” and “in the spring” to the sentence beginning “He noted.” Also, strike the phrase, “each year.” Sentence now to read:

He noted that *beginning in 2008-09* Kindergarten planning surveys are distributed to existing District 96 families and to local area pre-schools *in the spring* in an effort to gain a “glimpse” into Kindergarten enrollment for the following year.

p. 8, After paragraph ending “Administrators . . . small amount of time,” insert new paragraph reading:

*Discussion transpired regarding how enrollment is handled in unique circumstances where a family suddenly increases in size due to adoption or through marriage, but already has students enrolled in the District. Supt. Lamberson remarked that every effort is made to keep siblings together within the constraints of the Flexible Boundary Plan. If all sections are full at the grade level the adopted sibling is attempting to enter at the registered sibling’s school, then the parents will be presented with the option of enrolling the siblings at separate schools (each with capacity under the policy) or moving the registered sibling to a school with capacity to accept both that child and the newly adopted sibling(s).*

5. Discussion of 18 February 2010 Meeting

Group expressed appreciation for administrators' willingness to share their time and insights last week. Their comments will be taken into consideration as Committee continues its work.

Topics from 18 February that garnered most notice:

- Dr. Lamberson's explanation of Board interpretation of Flexible Boundary Policy with respect to inclusion of Hollywood
- Description of lottery process for Kindergarten registration and lingering influence of Kindergarten Enrichment program on this
- The "adoption/Brady Bunch" example—i.e., effects of policy on a family that adopts, through marriage or other, school-age children.

Other comments and observations:

- A term to replace "displaced" is "assigned."
- Are "attendance areas" the same as "neighborhoods"?
- Policy is not responsive to the needs of families.
- Separating assignment of children from needs of families is unacceptable.
- Why do Hollywood students get sent to Blythe, but central Riverside families resistant to going to Hollywood?
- Families in central Riverside less affected by policy than families at peripheries of District.

6. Draft Policies and Models: For Discussion Only

Committee members presented draft versions of revised policies and implementation plans concerning class size and student assignment for the purpose of focusing group discussion.

- A. Mary Stimming drafted a revised Class Size Policy, Student Assignment Policy and Guidelines to Implementation that collectively attempt to incorporate the recommendations the Committee has reached tentative agreement on thus far:

Class Size Policy

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To maintain and to foster the goals of our educational mission, District 96 recommends a class size ranging between 20-23 students for Grades K-5 and 24-26 students for Grades 6-8.

The Administration will develop and implement plans to achieve this recommended class size.

The design of these plans will balance the community's desire for a neighborhood school model (attendance at the school closest to one's residence) and an equitable distribution of students across the district. To be fiscally responsible, the assignment of students to the four elementary schools will be conducted to maximize facility usage.

## Student Assignment Policy

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There exist boundaries defining the attendance areas for A.F. Ames Elementary School, Blythe Park Elementary School, Central Elementary School and Hollywood Elementary School. The boundary lines of L.J. Hauser Junior High School are contiguous with the lines of District 96.

Student assignment is predicated upon valid residency and completed registration.

Once assigned to an elementary school, a student may remain in that school through the 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

It is desired that all students residing within the attendance area of an elementary school will attend that school. In the lexicon of District 96, this school is known as the student's "neighborhood school."

When a student enrolls in the district, he/she will be assigned to his/her neighborhood school if space per the Class Size Policy is available.

If, however, space at the student's grade level is not available at the neighborhood school, the following priorities will determine the school to which the child will be assigned:

1. Legal siblings and children sharing married custodial parents or guardians will be assigned to the same elementary school. An automatic override of the class size range is granted to permit legal siblings and children sharing married custodial parents or guardians to attend the same elementary school. There shall be no exceptions to this principle for administrative reasons. A parent or guardian may request that his/her children be assigned to separate schools, but this request may only be granted if doing so does not violate the class size policy at the second school.
2. Next most proximate elementary school.

The functioning of this Policy will be evaluated annually according to the following criteria: equity of class size throughout the district, number of students enrolled in neighborhood schools, number of students enrolled outside

neighborhood schools. This evaluation will be presented to the District 96 Board of Education at its January meeting.

Recommendations to Administrators (not policy)

- Centralize new student/Kindergarten assignment under one administrator.
- Permit parents to indicate First/Second Choice of schools on Registration Forms and degree of family flexibility.
- Make registration for district, not a school.
- Hold one central Kindergarten registration, not four at separate grade schools.
- Write implementation procedures that include room for later registrations.
- Build future grade pattern enrollment into Kindergarten section planning.

B. Ms. Stimming proceeded to outline an alternate student assignment model. For the sake of conversation, this was referred to as the “**Fixed Attendance Model**”:

- Expand Blythe to 2 sections K-5 (through addition or rehab).
- Reduce Ames attendance area and enlarge Blythe attendance area accordingly.
- Acknowledge fixed attendance areas throughout district.
- Assign all students to school in their attendance area.
- Class size set by policy and utilize tools at administrators’ disposal to ensure that numbers do not exceed established class size.

Pros: No uncertainty, Set class sizes, No separation of siblings, Attend most proximate school

Cons: Some classes will be smaller than others

to ?s: Requires capital investment in Blythe, willingness to adjust classroom models if necessary maintain class size (e.g., multiage).

Bottom line: Ends uncertainty about school assignment and stops using student assignment as only means of maintaining class size.

C. Jennifer Leimberer presented a model for student assignment that operates within the constraints of the current policy, but minimizes the uncertainty involved and scope of those displaced. For the sake of conversation, this was referred to as the “**Section Model**”:

- After receiving Kindergarten registration numbers in March, add XX% to account for historic pattern of number of registrations received between March and September.
- Take this number and divide by 20 to determine the number of K sections that will be needed in the fall.
- Allocate that number of sections across the district.
- Have one administrator (or the 4 principals together) assign students based on:
  - Sibling already in the school
  - Proximity to the school as determined by distance to residence.

Pros: Reduces uncertainty by narrowing school assignment options to two.

Cons: Saves space in Kindergarten classes for hypothetical incoming students.

?s: If late registrant moves in further from School X than a student who lives closer to School X, but was assigned to School Y, then family of first registered student will be upset.

Bottom line: students will be assigned either to closest school or next closest school (Ames/Blythe, Blythe/Central, Central/Hollywood)

- D. Jim Raffensperger presented a variation on the “Section Model.” For the sake of conversation, this was referred to as the “**Zone Model**”:
- After receiving Kindergarten registration numbers in March, add XX% to account for historic pattern of number of registrations received between March and September.
  - Take this number and divide by 20 to determine the number of K sections that will be needed in the fall.
  - Allocate that number of sections across the district.
  - Have one administrator (or the 4 principals together) assign students based on:
    - Sibling already in the school
    - Proximity to the school as determined by distance to residence
  - Proximity exists within Hard Boundary and Soft Boundary.
  - The Hard Boundary sets an attendance area around a school that never changes.
  - The Soft Boundary sets an attendance zone that is shared between two schools.
  - Students will therefore be assigned either to closest school or next closest school (Ames/Blythe, Blythe/Central, Central/Hollywood)

Pros: Reduces uncertainty by narrowing school assignment options to two.

Cons: Creates a zone of uncertainty around each school that affects only some residents, but not others.

Bottom line: students within Hard Boundary will be assigned to school in their attendance area; students in Soft Boundary area will be assigned to 1 of 2 schools determined in advance.

## 7. Consensus Principles

- Siblings assigned to same school unless parent requests otherwise, regardless of impact on class size policy.
- Weight proximity in making student assignments.
- Allow parents to indicate 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choices in Kindergarten registration materials.
- One administrator, or 4 elementary principals together, makes student/school assignments.

## 8. Next Meeting and Tasks

The next meeting of the Flexible Boundary Committee will be on 11 March 2010 at Hauser.

Future tasks:

- Analyze models presented tonight.
- Comment on sample policies submitted by Mary Stimming.
- Submit other models or sample policies for consideration.
- Move towards final recommendations.

## 9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

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Mary T. Stimming, Recorder  
Chair

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Jennifer M. Leimberer, Committee