

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM #218 (2005-2006)

April 10, 2006

TO: SCHOOL BOARD
FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
SUBJECT: MIDDLE SCHOOL BOUNDARY CHANGES (FIRST READING)

ASD Goal: *Ensure public accountability through effective communication with students, staff, parents, community and government at all levels.*

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading the following middle school attendance boundaries for the 2007-2008 school year for the Anchorage and Eagle River areas as shown in Scenario 1 on Attachment A.

CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE

- North Northern boundary of Anchorage School District (Includes all students residing on Elmendorf Air Force Base, but not Fort Richardson Army Post).
- East Reeve Boulevard from Post Road to E. 3rd Avenue, (including all addresses on Reeve Boulevard); E. 3rd Avenue between Reeve Boulevard and Sitka Street; Sitka Street between E. 3rd Avenue and E. 5th Avenue; E. 5th Avenue between Sitka Street and Airport Heights Road; Airport Heights Road from E. 5th Avenue to Penland Parkway; Penland Parkway between Airport Heights Road and Bragaw Street; Bragaw Street between Penland Parkway and DeBarr Road.
- South Chester Creek from Knik Arm to Arctic Blvd; Arctic Blvd from Chester Creek to Northern Lights Blvd; Northern Lights Blvd from Arctic Blvd to C Street; C Street from Northern Lights Blvd to 36th Ave; 36th Ave from C Street to Old Seward Hwy; Old Seward/Seward Hwy from 36th Ave to Chester Creek; Chester Creek from Seward Hwy to the southern extension of Sitka Street; Sitka Street from Chester Creek to E. 15th Avenue; E. 15th Avenue/DeBarr Road between Sitka Street and Bragaw Street.
- West Knik Arm from Chester Creek to the northern boundary of the Anchorage School District.

CLARK MIDDLE SCHOOL

- North Elmendorf Air Force Base (EAFB) from Reeve Boulevard to Pine Street; Pine Street from EAFB to the Glenn Highway; Glenn Highway from Pine Street to Fort Richardson Military Reservation.
- East Turpin Road between Glenn Highway and DeBarr Road.
- South East Northern Lights Boulevard between Bragaw Street and Collie Hill Way; Collie Hill Way between E. Northern Lights Boulevard and the extension of Prosperity Drive (including all addresses on Collie Hill Way); Prosperity Drive from Collie Hill Way to Baxter Road (including all addresses on Prosperity Drive); Baxter Road/Beaver Place between Prosperity Drive and DeBarr Road (including all addresses on Beaver Place); DeBarr Road between Beaver Place and Turpin Road.
- West Reeve Boulevard from Post Road to E. 3rd Avenue, (excluding all addresses on Reeve Boulevard); E. 3rd Avenue between Reeve Boulevard and Sitka Street; Sitka Street between E. 3rd Avenue and E. 5th Avenue; E. 5th Avenue between Sitka Street and Airport Heights Road; Airport Heights Road from E. 5th Avenue to Penland Parkway; Penland Parkway between Airport Heights Road and Bragaw Street; Bragaw Street between Penland Parkway and DeBarr Road. DeBarr Road from Bragaw St to Valarian St; All addresses on Valarian Street from DeBarr Road to E. 16th Avenue; The southern extension of Valarian Street from E. 16th Avenue to E. Northern Lights Blvd. (**NOTE:** addresses greater than 3601 E. 18th Avenue, 3601 E. 19th Avenue, 3601 Alexander Avenue, and 3591 E. 20th Avenue attend Russian Jack; see page 59 of the taxi atlas for details).

GOLDENVIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL

- North Dimond Boulevard from Minnesota to Ange Street; Ange Street from Dimond Boulevard to W. 88th Avenue, (excluding both sides of Ange and W. 88th); W. 88th Avenue from Ange Street to Arctic Boulevard; Arctic Boulevard between W. 88th Avenue and W. 92nd Avenue, excluding both sides of Arctic Boulevard; W. 92nd Avenue between Arctic Boulevard and Dallas Street, excluding both sides of W. 92nd Avenue. Arctic Boulevard, from W. 92nd to W. O'Malley Road; Arctic/C Street from O'Malley Road to Hamilton Drive; Timberlane Drive from Klatt Road to Huffman Road (including all residents with addresses on Timberlane Drive, Giroux Circle, Cedar Park Circle, and Maywood Circle); Huffman Road between Timberlane Drive to Lake Otis Parkway; Lake Otis Parkway from Huffman Road to Klatt Road; Klatt Road from Lake Otis Parkway to Cange Street; Cange Street from Klatt Road to O'Malley Road; O'Malley Road from Cange Street to Bragaw Street/Elmore Road; Bragaw Street/ Elmore Road from O'Malley Road to Klatt Road; the extension of Klatt Road from Bragaw Street/Elmore Road to Birch Road;

Birch Road, from Klatt Road to Downey Finch Road; Downey Finch, from Birch Road to the intersection of Rockridge Drive and Alatna Avenue (including all residents with addresses on Downey Finch and excluding all residents with addresses on Rockridge Road). From the intersection of Rockridge Road and Alatna Avenue to Hillside Drive; Hillside Drive north to the westward extension of Soldotna Drive; the extensions of Soldotna Drive, from Hillside Drive to Chugach State Park (excluding Snowline Circle and Trails End Road and including Soldotna Drive).

East Chugach State Park.

South Turnagain Arm and New Seward Highway to Bird Creek.

West Minnesota Drive from Dimond Boulevard to W. O'Malley Road; from the intersection of Minnesota Drive/W. O'Malley Road to Southport Parkway (including Lafayette Circle, Concord Hill Court, and Discovery Heights Circle); and Southport Parkway and its extension to Turnagain Arm.

C Street between W. 76th Avenue to Timberlane Drive; Timberlane Drive from C Street to Turnagain Arm (excludes all addresses on Timberlane Drive, Giroux Circle, Cedar Park Circle, and Maywood Circle).

GRUENING MIDDLE SCHOOL

North Glenn Highway from Eagle River to Meadow Creek; Meadow Creek from Glenn Highway to Chugach State Park. All students residing on Fort Richardson Army Post are included.

East Chugach State Park.

South Chugach State Park.

West Fort Richardson Military Reservation.

HANSHEW MIDDLE SCHOOL

North E. 76th Avenue from C Street to Seward Highway; Seward Highway from E. 76th to E. 68th Avenue; E. 68th Avenue from Seward Hwy to Lake Otis Parkway; Lake Otis Pkwy from E. 68th Ave to E. 64th Ave; E. 64th Ave from Lake Otis Pkwy to Far North Bicentennial Park.

East Far North Bicentennial Park and Chugach State Park.

South Huffman Road from Timberlane Drive to Lake Otis Parkway; Lake Otis Parkway from Huffman Road to Klatt Road; Klatt Road from Lake Otis Parkway to Cange Street; Cange Street from Klatt Road to O'Malley

Road; O'Malley Road from Cange Street to Bragaw Street/Elmore Road; Bragaw Street/ Elmore Road from O'Malley Road to Klatt Road; the extension of Klatt Road. from Bragaw Street/Elmore Road to Birch Road; Birch Road from Klatt Road to Downey Finch Road; Downey Finch, from Birch Road to the intersection of Rockridge Drive and Alatna Avenue (excluding all residents with addresses on Downey Finch and including all residents with addresses on Rockridge Road). From the intersection of Rockridge Road and Alatna Avenue to Hillside Drive; Hillside Drive north to the westward extension of Soldotna Drive; the extensions of Soldotna Drive, from Hillside Drive to Chugach State Park (including Snowline Circle and Trails End Road and excluding Soldotna Drive).

West

C Street from E.76th Avenue to Dimond Boulevard; Dimond Boulevard from C Street to Ange Street; Ange Street from Dimond Boulevard to W. 88th Avenue, (including both sides of Ange and W. 88th; West 88th Avenue from Ange Street to Arctic Boulevard; Arctic Boulevard between W. 88th Avenue and W. 92nd Avenue, including both sides of Arctic Boulevard; W. 92nd Avenue between Arctic Boulevard and Dallas Street, including both sides of W. 92nd Avenue.

Arctic Boulevard, from W. 92nd to W. O'Malley Road; Arctic/C Street from O'Malley Road to Hamilton Drive; Timberlane Drive from Klatt Road to Huffman Road (excluding all residents with addresses on Timberlane Drive, Giroux Circle, Cedar Park Circle, and Maywood Circle).

MEARS MIDDLE SCHOOL

North

International Airport Road and its western extension from Knik Arm to Minnesota Bypass.

East

Minnesota Bypass between International Airport Road and the extension of W. 76th Avenue; W. 76th Avenue from Minnesota, to C Street; C Street between W. 76th Avenue and Dimond Blvd; Dimond Blvd from C Street to Minnesota Bypass; Minnesota Drive, from Dimond Blvd to W. O'Malley Road; from the intersection of Minnesota Drive/W. O'Malley Road to Southport Parkway (excluding Lafayette Circle, Concord Hill Court, and Discovery Heights Circle); and Southport Parkway and its extension to Turnagain Arm.

South

Turnagain Arm.

West

Turnagain Arm.

MIRROR LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL

- North Knik River Bridge on the Glenn Highway.
- East Chugach State Park.
- South Glenn Highway from Eagle River to Meadow Creek; Meadow Creek from Glenn Highway to Chugach State Park.
- West Fort Richardson Military Reservation and Knik Arm.

MULDOON MIDDLE SCHOOL

- North Glenn Highway from Turpin Road to Fort Richardson Military Reservation.
- West Turpin Road between Glenn Highway and DeBarr Road; DeBarr Road from Turpin Street to Beaver Place/Baxter Road; Baxter Road/Beaver Place from DeBarr Road to Colgate Drive (excluding all residents on Beaver Place between DeBarr Road and Prosperity Drive); Colgate Drive from Baxter Road to Chester Creek, eastern lot line of Anchorage Baptist Temple from Chester Creek to E. Northern Lights Boulevard, E. Northern Lights Boulevard from eastern lot line of Anchorage Baptist Temple to Patterson Street; Patterson Street from E. Northern Lights Boulevard to Baxter Terrace Court; Baxter Terrace Court and its southward extension to Chelsea Way, including all residents addressing on the designated street.
- South Tudor Road from the extension of Chelsea Way to Fort Richardson Military Reservation.
- East Fort Richardson Military Reservation.

ROMIG MIDDLE SCHOOL

- North Chester Creek from Knik Arm to new Arctic Boulevard.
- East Arctic Boulevard from Chester Creek to W. 36th Avenue; W. 36th from Arctic Boulevard to Seward Highway; Seward Highway from Arctic Boulevard to E. 76th Avenue.
- South International Airport Road and its westward extension from Knik Arm to Minnesota Bypass; Minnesota Bypass between International Airport Road to the extension of W. 76th Avenue; W. 76th Avenue from Minnesota Bypass to New Seward Highway.
- West Knik Arm.

WENDLER MIDDLE SCHOOL

North Chester Creek between New Seward Highway and the extension of Sitka Street; Sitka Street from Chester Creek to E. 15th Avenue; E. 15th Avenue between Sitka Street and Bragaw Street; Bragaw Street between E. 15th Avenue and E. Northern Lights Boulevard; E. Northern Lights Boulevard between Bragaw Street and Collie Hill Way; Collie Hill Way between E. Northern Lights Boulevard and the extension of Prosperity Drive (excluding all addresses on Collie Hill Way); Prosperity Drive from Collie Hill Way to Baxter Road (excluding all addresses on Prosperity Drive); Baxter Road/Beaver Place between Prosperity Drive and DeBarr Road (excluding all addresses on Beaver Place); DeBarr Road between Beaver Place and Beaver Place /Baxter Road from DeBarr Road to Colgate Drive (excluding all residents on Beaver Place between DeBarr Road and Prosperity Drive); Colgate Drive from Baxter Road to Chester Creek, (excluding all residents addressing on Colgate Drive), eastern lot line of Anchorage Baptist Temple from Chester Creek to E. Northern Lights Boulevard, E. Northern Lights Boulevard from eastern lot line of Anchorage Baptist Temple to Patterson Street.

East Patterson St from E. Northern Lights Blvd to Baxter Terrace Court; Baxter Terrace Court from Patterson St to the logical northward extension of Chelsea Way, excluding all residents addressing on Baxter Terrace Court; Chelsea Way from Baxter Terrace Court to Tudor Road.

South E. 68th Avenue from Seward Hwy to Lake Otis Parkway; Lake Otis Pkwy from E. 68th Ave to E. 64th Ave; E. 64th Ave from Lake Otis Pkwy to Far North Bicentennial Park.

West Seward Highway from Chester Creek to E. 68th Avenue.

PERTINENT FACTS:

The Middle School Boundary Task Force was comprised of school principals, parents and students from nine middle schools. Also serving on the task force was a representative from the Minority Education Concerns Advisory Committee and a representative from the Military Youth Education Support Services. The Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, the ASD Demographer, and representatives from Elementary Education, Transportation, Special Education, and Communications also attended all of the task force meetings. (Attachment B) The task force began meeting on January 24, 2006. Four work sessions were held through March 7, 2006.

The task force met on January 24, January 31, February 7 and March 7, 2006. During these meetings, task force members reviewed current and projected enrollment, school capacity, neighborhood and feeder-school boundaries, transportation and demographic information. Minutes of the task force meetings are in Attachment C.

The task force followed the Superintendent's direction to ensure that the boundary change recommendations would accommodate enrollment for the new Muldoon area middle school, reduce overcrowding in northeast Anchorage middle schools and attempt to balance enrollment at other Anchorage middle schools, while providing for projected growth across Anchorage. The task force was also asked to determine the feasibility of adding sixth graders to the existing middle schools.

Public meeting notices were sent to the homes of all families with students in grades K-12. A letter regarding the upcoming boundary changes and the dates of the public hearings was sent to all middle school parents. The ASD Website was also used to advertise the three public hearings that were held on February 22 at Gruening Middle School, February 28 at Mears Middle School, and March 2 at Wendler Middle School.

The task force presented four scenarios for the Anchorage and Eagle River Areas at the public hearings on February 22, 28 and March 2, 2006 (Attachment D). Attachment E includes the comments and testimony received during the public hearings.

During the public hearings and via the District Website, parents, students and community members were encouraged to testify regarding their preferences and/or concerns with the four scenarios. The majority of comments centered on the need to reduce overcrowding across the District, concerns about transitions for students and families, the proximity of neighborhoods to schools, zone exemptions (see policy below), transportation and the desire to maintain peer groups in middle school through high school.

School Board Policy 444.24 states:

"When the School Board changes attendance boundaries, no zone exemptions for the affected schools will be allowed for one school year, with the following exceptions:

1. Students in the final grade of elementary, middle, and high school.
2. Students enrolled on a continuing basis in a specific educational program that is not offered at the new attendance area school.
3. For extreme hardship related to a student's educational program, medical condition, or the family's personal situation.
4. In order to utilize program space for an under-utilized or under-enrolled schools."

After the final public hearing, the task force met on March 7, 2006, to discuss the suggestions and comments heard at the public hearings and to make a final recommendation to the Superintendent. After lengthy debate the task force decided to recommend Scenario 1 without modifications.

Scenario 1:

- Allows for the greatest number of schools to align with their high school boundaries;
- Provides the best enrollment balance across all middle schools;
- Allows Lake Otis Elementary and Huffman Elementary students to attend one middle school rather than be divided between two middle schools;
- Allows for growth at Goldenview Middle School and the new Muldoon area middle school;
- Allows Scenic Park Elementary to align with one middle school and one high school boundary (currently students are divided between East and Bartlett);
- Allows for Scenic Park Elementary and Susitna Elementary to reduce their current enrollment. By removing sixth graders, this would reduce both schools' enrollments without having to redraw elementary boundaries, use additional portables or build additional space onto these schools;
- Balances enrollment between Mirror Lake Middle School and Gruening Middle School;
- Reduces the current safety problem caused by students walking along Eagle River Loop Road to access Mirror Lake Middle School bus stops.

The task force also discussed concerns about Scenario 1 which:

- Estimates that students living in the northern most area of the Klatt boundary (Dimond Estates) will have a bus ride of 21-34 minutes;
- Requires Oceanview Elementary students to attend two middle schools (Changes from an elementary/middle school alignment to a middle school/high school alignment);
- Precludes Ptarmigan Elementary School from being included within the new Muldoon area middle school boundary;
- Leaves Eagle River Elementary School with a very small number of sixth graders;
- Causes staffing disruptions for two years at Gruening Middle School as a result of the recommendation to move Ft. Richardson students during the 2006/2007 school year and then change the Mirror Lake Middle School and Gruening Middle School boundary during the 2007/2008 school year.

All four scenarios made the same recommendation for the new boundary for the Muldoon area middle school. The recommended boundary:

- Provides socio-economic and ethnic diversity;
- Provides a contiguous boundary;
- Allows for enrollment balancing across the District as a result of reductions in enrollment at Wendler;
- Allows for two elementary schools to balance their enrollment (Scenic Park and Susitna);
- Best considers the impact the loss of sixth graders would have on enrollment numbers in elementary schools.

The Middle School Boundary Task Force worked diligently to try to develop scenarios that would reduce enrollment at all middle schools to an optimum level. Their work clearly underscores the reality that Mears and Hanshew will not be able to be reduced as far as necessary until another middle school is built in South Anchorage.

SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTES:

After careful review of all of the minutes, emails, maps, and personally driving through many of the affected areas, I am going to recommend Scenario 1 to the School Board. I believe that this scenario does the best job of balancing enrollments as much as possible, and as important to me, better aligns the middle and high school boundaries where possible. It is obvious that we must have another middle school in southwest Anchorage to provide relief to Mears Middle School and Hanshew Middle School in the future.

I carefully considered the placement of Ptarmigan, Nunaka Valley, and Baxter at the new middle school in Muldoon, as did the Task Force, but I concur with their recommendation to include Scenic Park and Susitna in the new school's boundary due to the reasons cited by the Task Force. I cannot in good conscience reduce the sixth grade enrollment at these schools when there are overcrowded elementary schools in another part of northeast Anchorage.

The Task Force suggested that we move the Fort Richardson students to Gruening in the fall of 2006, but after careful consideration of the impact on Gruening to have two years of boundary changes impact the school, I am recommending that all middle school changes occur for the fall of the 2007-2008 school year. This will also allow the Transportation Department to plan for additional and different bus routes for the middle schools.

In addition, we will work with the principals and staff at all of the middle schools to assure smooth transitions to the new schools.

Finally, I want to commend the parents, students, and principals on the Task Force, as well as the administrative staff who worked tirelessly on this very complex task. I truly appreciate their efforts and the seriousness with which they undertook this very difficult task.

CC/JC/LV

Attachment

Prepared by: Carol Comeau, Superintendent
Leslie Vandergaw, Executive Director, Middle School Education

Approved by: Carol Comeau, Superintendent