

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ASD MEMORANDUM #233 (2000-2001)

March 19, 2001

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: BOUNDARY CHANGES FOR ALPENGLOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
(FIRST READING)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Administration's recommendation that the School Board approve on First Reading the recommendation that no changes be made to the current school boundaries except for a modification to include all addresses on Highland Ridge Road in the Alpenglow boundary, including the area east of Alpenglow, below the bluff (Eagle Crossing), from the Ravenwood attendance area to the Alpenglow attendance area (Attachment A).

PERTINENT FACTS:

During the 1999-2000 school year, a space analysis committee began studying the overcrowding at Alpenglow Elementary School. The Committee met on March 8, March 23, April 4, April 14, and May 11, 2000. On June 12, 2000, a report was given to the School Board, which stated that the study team had looked at enrollment and projections for Alpenglow and Ravenwood as well as other schools in the Eagle River area. Their task was to recommend a solution to the overcrowding at Alpenglow and under enrollment at Ravenwood.

After many hours of discussion, listening to the community, and a review of possible short and long-term solutions, the team agreed to recommend forming a Boundary Task Force during 2000-2001 to review scenarios for possible boundary changes.

In October 2000, a Task Force made up of school principals, PTA and Community Council representatives was formed (Attachment B). Representatives of the Transportation, Demographics and Elementary Education Departments served as a resource to the Task Force. Work sessions were held from October 2000 through February 2001. Minutes of those sessions are attached (Attachment C).

The school representatives discussed instructional programs and needs, space concerns, childcare, zone exceptions, construction trends, and enrollment projections during Task Force meetings. The Task Force discussed various scenarios and the pros and cons of each (Attachment D).

The Task Force selected three scenarios (Attachment E) to present for public input. The scenarios were chosen because boundary lines were straightened, possible overcrowding would be alleviated, there would be minimum change, enrollment could be closely monitored, some thought “wait & see” was the best option, children from Eaglewood area could walk to Ravenwood, additional buses would not be needed, Eagle Pointe would move to Homestead providing growth at Homestead, families would not drive past Alpenglow to get to Ravenwood, and students could walk to Alpenglow.

Letters were mailed to all parents in the Alpenglow, Homestead and Ravenwood attendance areas (Attachment F). An advertisement for the public hearing was published in the Anchorage Daily News and each school’s newsletter. The Alaska Star printed articles about the boundary discussions on November 23 and 30, 2000, and on February 22, 2001, (Attachment G). Parents and community members had the opportunity to share their thoughts and ask questions at the two public hearings. Minutes of the public hearings are attached (Attachment H).

The Task Force recommended that no boundary changes be made at this time for the following reasons:

- The principal at Alpenglow will carefully review the zone exception applications; the group suggested a more cautious way to approach the situation.
- Considering Eagle River growth and construction, it may be better to wait and look at this again in a few years; to change now would be premature.
- Parents did not want the Homestead boundary line changed just to have a straight line in the boundary.
- Many unknown factors are involved regarding construction and the effect of full day kindergarten.
- Parents who spoke at the public hearings supported this recommendation.

This was a difficult decision for the Task Force to reach and there were conflicting opinions during the lengthy discussions. Concern about the high enrollment at Alpenglow, along with the lack of a sense of urgency from the public hearings to change the boundaries, entered the discussion.

During an administrative review of the Task Force recommendation, it was determined that the area east of Alpenglow, below the bluff (Eagle Crossing), should be moved from the Ravenwood attendance area to Alpenglow. There are currently eight children

living in this area and they attend Alpenglow. The area is within walking distance to Alpenglow but more than 1.5 miles from Ravenwood.

The members of the Task Force have been advised of this modification to the recommendation.

CC/PM/JG/jb

Attachments

Prepared by: Patricia McRae, Executive Director, Elementary Education
Julie Ginder, Supervisor, Elementary Education

Approved by: Pat McDowell, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction