

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MEMORANDUM #230 (2001-2002)

April 15, 2002

TO: SCHOOL BOARD

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SUBJECT: BOUNDARY CHANGES FOR ALPENGLOW, EAGLE RIVER,
HOMESTEAD, AND RAVENWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
(SECOND READING)

RECOMMENDATION:

It is the Superintendent's recommendation that the School Board approve on Second Reading the following attendance boundary for the 2002-2003 school year for Alpenglow, Eagle River, Homestead, and Ravenwood Elementary Schools as shown on Attachment A.

SUPERINTENDENT'S SCENARIO

ALPENGLOW

North Eagle River Road between Lee Street and Eagle River Loop; Eagle River Loop between Eagle River Road and North Montague Loop; North Montague Loop between Eagle River Loop and Sarichef; Sarichef between North Montague Loop and Eaglewood Loop.

East Eaglewood Loop between Middleton Loop and Wingham Circle; Wingham Circle and its southward extension to South Mitkof Loop, excluding all addresses on Wingham Circle (to include all South Mitkof Loop addresses); then east to Greenhouse; Greenhouse, and its southward extension, between Eagle River and Ravenwood Elementary southern boundary.

South Eagle River between the southward extension of Lee Street and the southward extension of Greenhouse.

West Lee Street, and its southward extension, between Eagle River Road and Eagle River.

EAGLE RIVER

- North Business Boulevard between the Old Glenn Highway and Heritage Place, including all addresses on Heritage Place and Heritage Court; Old Glenn Highway between Business Boulevard and North Eagle River Loop; North Eagle River Loop between Old Glenn Highway and the northern extension of Fireball Street.
- East Northern extension of Fireball Street from North Eagle River Loop to Katlian Drive; Katlian Drive from Fireball Street to Sanctuary Drive; Sanctuary Drive from Katlian Drive to Kantishna Drive; Kantishna Drive from Sanctuary Drive to Kahiltna Drive; Kahiltna Drive from Kantishna Drive to Chain of Rock Street; Chain of Rock Street from Kahiltna Drive to Eagle River Road; Eagle River Road between Chain of Rock Street and Lee Street; Lee Street and its southward extension to Eagle River.
- South Eagle River between the southern extension of Lee Street to Fort Richardson Military Reservation.
- West Eastern boundary of Fort Richardson Military Reservation.

HOMESTEAD

- North Chugach State Park, including all addresses in Wallace Brothers Mt. subdivision.
- East Chugach State Park to Meadow Creek; Meadow Creek from Chugach State Park to the northward extension of Crest View Lane; Crest View Lane between Meadow Creek and Eagle River Road.
- South Eagle River Road between Chain of Rock Street and Crest View Lane. In addition, all addresses on Hiland Road, Hiland Mountain, and in the Eagle Pointe subdivision.
- West Northern extension of Lugene Lane from Chugach State Park to North Eagle River Loop, including all addresses on Lugene Lane and Dee Lane; North Eagle River Loop between Lugene Lane and the northward extension of Fireball Street; northward extension of Fireball Street from North Eagle River Loop to Katlian Drive; Katlian Drive from Fireball Street to Sanctuary Drive; Sanctuary Drive from Katlian Drive to Kantishna Drive; Kantishna Drive from Sanctuary Drive to Kahiltna Drive; Kahiltna Drive from Kantishna Drive to Chain of Rock Street; Chain of Rock Street from Kahiltna Drive to Eagle River Road.

RAVENWOOD

- North Meadow Creek between the northern extension of Crest View Lane to Chugach State Park.

- East Chugach State Park.
- South Wingham Circle and its southward extension to South Mitkof Loop; then east to Greenhouse; then Greenhouse to Eagle River; Eagle River between Greenhouse and Chugach State Park.
- West Northward extension of Crest View Lane between Meadow Creek and Eagle River Road; Eagle River Road between (South) Eagle River Loop and Crest View Lane; Eagle River Loop between Eagle River Road and North Montague Loop; Andrianof Drive between North Montague Loop and Eaglewood Loop (including all addresses on side streets off Andrianof Drive); Eaglewood Loop between Middleton Loop and Wingham Circle; Wingham Circle and its southward extension to South Mitkof Loop; including all addresses on Wingham Circle (to exclude all South Mitkof Loop addresses); then east to Greenhouse; Greenhouse, and its southward extension, between Eagle River Road and Eagle River.

PERTINENT FACTS:

During the 1999-2000 school year, a space analysis committee studied the overcrowding at Alpenglow Elementary School. The group recommended that a boundary task force be formed to address the problem. During the 2000-2001 school year, a task force made up of principals and parent representatives from Alpenglow, Homestead, and Ravenwood met with representatives from the Transportation, Demographics, and Elementary Education Departments. The task force discussed various scenarios and the pros and cons of each. In the spring of 2001, it was determined by the School Board that the boundaries would not be changed at that time.

A task force comprised of school principals and PTA and Community Council representatives (Attachment B) from Alpenglow, Eagle River, Homestead, and Ravenwood Elementary Schools began meeting in the fall of 2001. Work sessions were held on November 1, 8, and 29, 2001, December 13, 2001, and January 17, 2002. Letters about the possible boundary change were sent to parents in the Alpenglow, Eagle River, Homestead, and Ravenwood attendance areas (Attachment C). The hearings were publicized in the Anchorage Daily News, the Alaska Star, and the school newsletters. Two public hearings were held on March 13 and March 19, 2002. Minutes of the work sessions and the two public hearings are found in Attachment D.

The committee followed the Superintendent’s expectation of developing a plan that would reduce the overcrowding at Alpenglow Elementary, balance the school enrollment and accommodate for projected growth.

The task force chose to present two scenarios and the current boundaries at the public hearings (Attachment E). The scenarios reduced the enrollment at Alpenglow School, and allowed for the anticipated growth in the area. Students from the Eaglewood area could walk to Ravenwood; families would not drive past Alpenglow to get to Ravenwood; students would be safely bused to Eagle River and Homestead Elementary Schools; and the enrollment at the under utilized schools would be increased.

During the public hearings, three proposals were introduced by members from the community. According to the proposers, the proposals would disrupt fewer families and would require no additional busing. The scenarios (Attachment F) were reviewed by the task force in meetings on March 19 and March 20, 2002. (Attachment G) These scenarios were considered, but the task force was concerned with the fact that at this time there is no road to Ravenwood from the Eagle Crossing area. Students would have to be driven past Alpenglow to get to Ravenwood School, resulting in increased traffic on Driftwood Bay.

It was strongly suggested during the public testimony and supported by the task force members that safety should be a top priority as a recommendation was developed.

After much discussion by the task force, consensus was reached in support of Scenario 1 as the best option to present to the Superintendent for the following reasons:

- Relieves overcrowding at Alpenglow and allows for growth in areas most likely to have an increase in enrollment;
- Keeps safety as a main focus; reduces auto traffic at Alpenglow;
- Addresses projected and declining growth in the affected attendance areas;
- Keeps neighborhoods together.

Superintendent's Note:

I very much appreciate the time and work of the task force as they took on the responsibility of developing a recommendation that addresses the guidelines that I set. I agree with most of the changes, except that I recommend that Parkview Terrace West remain at Alpenglow because they can currently walk to the school, and I do not support busing them to Eagle River at this time based on their close proximity to Alpenglow. This will allow the Eagle River Elementary School to house other district programs, such as preschool special education and/or gifted enrichment, and perhaps expand the open optional program there. There is also the possibility of new housing in north Eagle River, and the Eagle River Elementary School may be needed to house additional students in the future.

The recommendation of the task force is flexible and if future boundary changes are necessary, adjustments will be more easily accomplished because of the work the task force has done. We may need to look at these boundary issues again as new subdivisions are developed throughout the area. The Administration will also want to discuss with the community and staff, the possibility of converting Gruening Middle School into a 6-7-8 grade school, similar to Mirror Lake's very successful program.

With this recommended scenario, the anticipated membership for the 2002-2003 school year will be as follows: Alpenglow 472 / 87%; Eagle River 409 / 78%; Homestead 417 / 90%; and Ravenwood 411 / 92%.

There are other questions that have been asked, including the following:

• *Is there any new information on the road that will connect Eagle River Road with Eagle Crossing?*

According to an administrator in the Facilities Department who has been in contact with the subdivision builder, the road will probably be built prior to 2007. The earliest would be possibly the summer of 2003 or 2004.

• *What information is available regarding the Zone Exception policy? According to ASD Policy Manual, section 444.232 -*

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

1. Seniors as described in 444.221
2. Students enrolled on a continuing basis for a specific educational program
3. For extreme hardship related to a student's educational program or medical condition.
4. In order to utilize program space for underutilized or underenrolled schools.
5. Sixth graders in a K-6 school and fifth graders in a K-5 school.

Applications for exceptions will be filed with the school principal, but will only be approved after a full review by the appropriate Instruction Division Executive Director and the Assistant Superintendent.

(Section 444.232 - Revised March 9, 1998)

Transportation for children on zone exceptions is the responsibility of the parents. (See more about zone exceptions in ASD Policy Manual, section 444.2)

At Alpenglow this year there are 52 zone exceptions in and 75 zone exceptions out, according to the January 30, 2002 zone exception report. Thirty-one of the students attend Alpenglow from the Highland Ridge Road/Eagle Crossing area; 19 students have childcare in the Alpenglow attendance area (home care or Campfire). Of these nineteen, nine are children of Alpenglow staff members. There are two children who are at Alpenglow because of Special Education concerns. Mr. Huff, principal at Alpenglow, has not approved any new zone exceptions during the past two years.

•Is there a plan for a new school in the area?

During the 2002-03 school year, the school district will begin the site selection process north of Chugiak in the Thunderbird Falls/Eklutna area. It will be many years before a school is needed in the area, but the district wants to begin the process. There are no plans at this time for a new elementary school in the Eagle River area.

During the First Reading, additional information was requested by School Board members:

•Additional information regarding the road connecting Eagle River Road and Eagle Crossing:

On September 20, 2000, the Platting Board considered the approval of the Eagle Crossing Subdivision Phase Plan (as amended). Minutes from the meeting indicate that on the original submittal, the extension Eagle River Lane was to be built in 2001 and on their revised phase plan it is proposed for 2007. After much discussion and testimony, the Platting Board voted unanimously to approve the phasing plan as amended. Eagle River Lane is not to be constructed until the year 2007. The Developer cannot construct without going back to the platting board and requesting an amendment to the phasing plan.

•Is there a plan for a new school in the area?

Ray Amsden, ASD Facilities said that the site selection is scheduled to occur during the 2002-2003 school year. A past bond election approved funds for the acquisition. The location will be determined after research and study of growth patterns for the entire Chugiak/Eagle River area.

•Is Alpenglow really overcrowded?

Larry Huff, Principal of Alpenglow Elementary School, reported the following about the overcrowded conditions at Alpenglow. Scheduling anything school-wide is a huge task at best. All-school assemblies cannot be held. The MPR cannot be used for primary/intermediate assemblies because each group is too large. Orchestra/band have to be displaced frequently; other programs are impacted when there are special building-wide programs. The computer lab has been turned into a classroom and there is no more computer lab. The library has been greatly impacted. Music, PE, and Art classes meet six days a week to meet the needs of the students.

There are 243 new students at Alpenglow this year. This number includes 66 kindergarten students. There have been 69 withdrawals from Alpenglow so far this year.

The anticipated membership for the Superintendent's Scenario will be: Alpenglow 472 students/87%; Eagle River 409 students/78%; Homestead 417 students/ 90%; and Ravenwood 411 students/92%. (Attachment H)

•What is the anticipated number of housing units and estimated number of elementary students from the subdivisions?

The Demographics Department reviewed data regarding housing developments that have been planned in the Eagle River area for the next two to four years. The developer and location, the number of units, the anticipated number of students and the schools that would be impacted are shown in Attachment I.

•What are the minority and free/reduced lunch numbers and percentages for each group of students? How would the proposed boundary change affect the schools? Attachment J describes the ethnicity, the estimated number of children from low income families based on free and reduced lunches at Alpenglow, Eagle River, Homestead, and Ravenwood Elementary Schools for the 2000-2001 school year, and the projected free/reduced lunch information for the 2002-2003 school year.

On March 28, 2002 Alpenglow had 22 free/reduced lunches; Eagle River had 111; Homestead had 37; and Ravenwood had 23 free/reduced lunches. Of the 22 free/reduced lunches at Alpenglow, four were from Hiland; zero were from Eagle Pointe; one was from Eaglewood; and one was from Parkview Terrace West. Moving any of the proposed areas would have little impact on the sending or receiving schools.

•What is the number of zone exceptions for the current school year for each school over 100% capacity (EED)?

Attachment K lists 15 elementary schools in the Anchorage School District that are at or over 100% capacity this school year. The report also lists the reasons for the zone exceptions in and out of Alpenglow.

The School Board approved the Superintendent's Scenario (Attachment A) during the First Reading on April 1, 2002. The School Board also approved that students from the "Homestead 8" area be given the choice to remain at Homestead if they wish. Siblings and new students will attend Ravenwood.

CC/PM/PM/JG/mn

Attachments

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