

FORUM FEEDBACK

Thursday, February 8, 2007 at Crossroads Park Elementary

Attendance – Approximately 300

Respondents: 35

30 parents, 5 unknown

Option A2	5
Option A3	0
Option F2	3
No Change	18
No preference or uncertain	1
Combinations	
A2 or A3	1
No change/A2	3
No change/A2 or A3	2
A2/A3 or no change	2

- I want no change; if I have to choose – A2
- If you do have to make a change, A2 or A3, but definitely not F2
- If I have to choose...
- Wait until school remodeling at Western Hills and Crestview are finished.

What revisions would you propose for any of the boundary options?

- I don't see the benefit of switching neighborhoods from Crestview to Crossroads and Crossroads to Crestview. Way too much impact on the schools.
- Any possible maps should have the Huntington Ridge/Country Club areas going to a school toward the west side of the school district – either Crossroads or Westridge.
- If at all possible, I believe children should attend a school based on the closest proximity to their home. I would think this would also save money on busing. I would heavily recommend no boundary change until Western Hills, Crestview remodel is complete.
- Grandfathering for all students who attend the schools along with their siblings. Transportation should be offered to those grandfathered – elementary and junior high.
- Move Jordan Creek kids to Western Hills only if Jordan Creek is the issue.
- Grandfathering for all.
- Close Western Hills and build a new school south of Jordan Creek to address the growing population south. This would give those neighborhoods a neighborhood school. Re-district Western Hills kids to all the surrounding schools since they are in the center of all the schools.
- We would like no change. We purchased our home and sent our kids to Crossroads and we do not want to change.
- Option A3 takes a neighborhood that currently walks to Jordan Creek out of Jordan Creek and a neighborhood on Grand, closer to Hillside, remains at Jordan Creek.
- None of the proposed options are likely to solve to problem (of cap outs) at hand. Too early to make it final; recommend considering the proposal for 2008-09 school year.
- I don't understand how this will impact my children who have satisfied the voluntary transfer for three years to allow them to attend Crestview. I would certainly hate to see my children separated from classmates. Therefore, grandfathering seems like the best approach.
- Why not move Jordan Creek excess to Western Hills? How easy that would be and the least amount of kids would be affected!

- Limit balance adjustments between Western Hills and Jordan Creek.
- If there is any change, all students should be grandfathered into their current school.
- If there is any change, all students should be grandfathered to their current school.
- It makes no sense to me that students that are living within walking distance to the school should have to be bused to a different school. I live three blocks from Crossroads and my children face being bused over a mile away.
- I think if all the parents are good with their school and their current situation, then it should not change. However, if one is inevitable, then I would choose A2. I have invested time and money to my current school.
- F2 and A3 – these plans would overcrowd Western Hills. I would not support a change that would knowingly overcrowd a school building.

Additional comments or questions:

- Voluntary transfers should not get to stay. Please offer grandfathering and to our junior high as well.
- Based on the two forums, it seems that this may be too much change too fast. My suggestion would be to adopt a plan by a certain date (maybe July 2007) but then implement the change for the following (08/09) school year. Also, I would hope that if there were no changes to boundaries, that there would be no changes to the voluntary transfer program.
- If the boundaries do change, I would heavily lean toward grandfathering, at least fifth graders going into sixth during fall 2007-08 school year. If the boundaries do change, I would support that “voluntary transfers” be returned to their assigned school by boundary. This will help prevent possible rioting.
- Jordan Creek students move to lesser populated school. Grandfather currently enrolled students and voluntary transfer encourage by providing free transportation or other incentives. Build another school/building for Jordan Creek and Western Hills. Provide counseling support for those affected.
- Grandfather kids and siblings.
- Allow full grandfathering.
- Wait to make any changes at least a year so families can have time to make adjustments to this change.
- Full grandfathering for all students and siblings.
- I am particularly opposed to moving kids to one school and then moving them again the next year (as in F2).
- Please leave the south of Ashworth area alone. We are within walking distance to our school. We have the bike path and tunnel under Ashworth for our kids to get to school. Who wants to cross 50th to get to school! Please consider grandfathering!
- Build a new school in Country Club.
- I recommend taking more time – no changes until 08-09 at the earliest. I also recommend more seriously studying how it could be possible to just adjust Jordan Creek/Western Hills and Westridge only. Or perhaps move special education students out of Jordan Creek to Western Hills.
- We bought our house so we could have our children go to Crossroads. Do not change that. Consider grandfathering for all. Build a new school where the impact is so great.
- If changes are made ALL kids that are currently at Crossroads should be grandfathered. Also consider closing Crestview and building a school in Clive vs. remodeling an old school that buses the kids from other places.
- FULL GRANDFATHERING
- Grandfathering will ease the pain due to any boundary changes. At a minimum grandfathering of 5th and 6th graders (current 4th and 5th) should be considered. Busing should not be offered to grandfathered students.

- Given the information so far, it is clear that the district is nowhere near making any logical decision. All proposed alternatives are not at all addressing the root cause of the issues. Instead we are merely shifting the problem from one area to the other. District should conduct more study and research before coming up with any further proposals (financial, psychological, growth). If for some reason, any of the proposed alternatives is approved, then please ensure that both 5th and 6th grade students (fall 2007 grade level) are grandfathered with present school (even the ones that are currently on voluntary transfer bases at the present school).
- Has anyone looked at the cost or impact on the transportation costs? We went through the whole school start time change last year to reduce costs. How does this impact bus routes?
- Transportation costs and number of students affected in each area would be helpful in making a decision.
- Why did we spend so much money to refurbish Clive School when the neighborhood is aging (not as many young families) and you certainly were aware of the changing school enrollments at that time? Why change kids to Western Hills and Crestview when they will have to change schools again for remodeling of the schools?
- Need to rework the boundary options so that the school (and all schools) is a bit more central to its boundaries. I understand the use of “natural barriers,” but it seems unnatural to move kids further away and put them on a bus. Need to pay more attention to the “proximity” criterion. Please consider a solution that would solve the overcrowding at Jordan Creek and the under utilization at Western Hills without major disruptions at the other schools. There should be full grandfathering for all grade levels and their siblings.
- I think we should consider grandfathering entire families.
- Please consider a plan that would solve the Western Hills and Jordan Creek problem without changing all school boundaries.

February 8 – Forum Comments/Questions

- Object to changes – parents were not included in the beginning of the process. Why did this happen after the Board election. Opposed to action; look at the emotional side. Proposal tears the community apart. Research findings: frequent moves during elementary years can create emotional distress. Mobility is harmful academically and emotionally. Concern with criteria. Don't move our kids out and move new students in to an already established neighborhood. Call for compassion. Request for grandfathering all children currently in Crossroads Park attendance area and all siblings.
- Request for enrollment projections – two to four years out. Best to move Jordan Creek students to Western Hills to resolve issues. Some options move too many students to get to the same solution. Don't disrupt the community. (*Response: Areas of potential enrollment growth have been reviewed with cities of Clive and West Des Moines*)
- Why not just use capacity at Western Hills to take in families from the south? (*A: inequity in class sizes occurs across the district*)
- Impact is the last item on the criteria list rather than the top. Only Western Hills and Jordan Creek have enrollment problems.
- Speaker identified as a parent without emotional ties to a school. Objects to plans to move students from Crossroads Park who live very close to the school. Needed facts from the source. Nothing of substance is on the web site. It is too early to make a decision. The process looks “sneaky.” Issue is not well known in the community or with parents.
- Common sense would indicate that those close to Crossroads Park would stay there; current plans move students five times farther to newly assigned school. Western Hills is over capacity in some options. Trading one problem for another. Western Hills neighborhood going through re-growth. Statistics are available at the Polk County Assessors web site. Tracks house sales; suggests younger families may move in. Make sure the solution is long term.
- Questions/clarification on Western Hills enrollment. (*Western Hills is currently a four section building, although most classes now have just two sections. With the planned remodeling, it will become a three section school.*)
- Speaker purchased a home close to Crossroads Park. Students in the district already experience a number of transitions – grades 6-7, 8-9 and 9-10. Streets are not “natural boundaries;” distance is a natural boundary.
- Neighborhood is changing; young families are moving in. Why move large numbers away from Crossroads Park to bring others in who live far away? Proposals are not fair.
- Don't want to move out of Crestview; like the early start time.
- Should have started the process in July.
- Why not take the established criteria, review solid and long-term solutions. Provide an opportunity to adjust to change. Disruption of parent groups and fundraising. Implement in fall 2008.
- Why draw lines so a child would walk farther to the bus stop than he/she now walks to school? The walk to Western Hills from my home is not safe.
- How is this in the best interest of anyone? Why displace an entire neighborhood?
- Do not feel that six meetings is enough time to evaluate the information. If the decision is not based on finances, why move now?
- Jordan Creek is so full; move special education programs to Western Hills where there is space.
- Crossroads Park would be split for junior high; not a good situation.

- When and who will do the “tweaking” between the next committee meeting and the Board meeting in March? (A: *The committee meeting on Feb. 20 will concentrate on processing the feedback from the forums and the on-line survey. Another meeting is scheduled for February 28, if needed. The committee recommendation will go to the Superintendency. They will make a recommendation to the Board. The Board plans to hold a public hearing in March prior to voting on boundaries.*)
- This is a “big picture” problem – how to make the change with the least disruption to our children.
- At the meeting held at Jordan Creek, parents were amenable to the “crowding” there. It’s not about boundaries; it’s about the school and how you feel. Concern with Option A3 and the increase in time to get from the Maffitt area to Westridge and Western Hills.
- Support grandfathering with siblings; do not split families.
- Speaker urged those present to vote in the Board election. Boundaries are a touchy subject and schools are worth the drive. Urge all present to speak to Board members. Comment about a gift to Valley High School for Prom. (Response: *The Board approves contracts with the facilities where the high school dances are held. The funds to pay for rental of the facilities come from Student Council for the Homecoming and Valentines dance and from the junior class for Prom.*) Stress on overpopulating of schools that won’t be remodeled until 2009. Concern with budget impact on traffic accommodations at Western Hills. Would like the district to take a census of students in 2010, 2011 and 2012. Concern expressed with the condition of the sidewalks at Crossroads Park and impact on a student in a wheelchair. Outrage that boundary changes are considered in light of other issues. (Response from principal: *Not aware of needed repairs. Steps were taken during the driveway/parking lot remodel to address ADA requirements.*) What rules will change related to voluntary transfers? Will current voluntary transfers be impacted? (A: *This is still under discussion; the committee will make a recommendation on voluntary transfers*). Don’t want to leave current school. Bonds and friendships are made and should be respected. The move to Clive to go to Crossroads Park is a solution searching for a problem. Criticism of each of the criteria. Propose grandfathering for all students currently in schools. Committee should conduct research on the psychological impact of changing schools.
- Proximity is important; concern with plans that move families living close to school. Timing should be deliberate. Implement in fall 2008. Consider changing the current options, adapt with suggestions received from parents and community. Previous practice for grandfathering included transportation. Should continue that practice; at least offer transportation for a fee.
- Students who live in the northwest part of the district have a 45 minute trip to their school. Speaker reported that personal experience shows students can succeed, even with changing schools. Schools and staff in the district are exceptional. A long bus ride is a problem for students.
- Boundary changes must make geographic sense. Families are leaving the district due to the distance from their assigned school. The enrollment disparity at the junior highs could be due to open enrollment students. Don’t repeat mistakes made in the past.
- Opposed to the long bus ride.
- Statement from a Crossroads Park student: “I am a fourth grader here at Crossroads Park and I’ve been here since kindergarten. I’ve made a lot of great friends. I am also in the Talented and Gifted Program and they only allow so many kids to be in that. If I have to change schools, will I be in it or not? I’m also in Cub Scouts and if I change schools will I have to change packs? I believe that the kids already in a school should stay where they are with transportation provided. Thank you.”
- What are the enrollment projections – is it going up or down? (A: *Enrollment is “flat” – minimal growth or losses from year to year.*)

- New apartment complexes and planned construction in the Ponderosa area could result in growth.
- Why is the boundary issue being addressed now? *(A: We are responding to changes in the district. We would like to minimize capouts.)*
- Concern with composition of the study committee. There should be more people on the committee who would be impacted by a boundary change. Concern with the conflicting messages from the committee on grandfathering and what the Superintendent has said. Grandfathering would make the changes gradual.
- What percentage of voluntary transfers are denied? *(A: do not have an accurate percentage to report; voluntary transfer status is granted based on available space in the classroom.)* What is the capacity at Clegg Park and how will all of the students at Western Hills fit into that building? *(A: The Clegg Park building is a two-section school. When Clive and Fairmeadows students moved to that school, some grades – kindergarten and first grade – were housed in other schools for the year of remodeling.)*
- Concern that Clive was remodeled when it is operating under capacity.
- Concern that students would be moved to Western Hills and moved again during the remodel.
- Why was the map changed in the southern Hillside boundary? *(A: The area questioned is a senior citizen mobile home park; no students live there.)*
- Why do the enrollment numbers not match on the data sheet? *(A: October 2 is the enrollment reporting date and was used as a base line. Current data – as of February 1 – used in the information presented at the forums. October data excludes students in special programs that are located at a single school.)* What data did the committee use? *(A: The committee has used the October 2 data and updated data as available at the time of each meeting.)* Explain how the enrollment numbers vary; an increased footprint leads to decreases in enrollment. *(A: Many students currently attending Fairmeadows do not live in that attendance area. The enrollment numbers presented in each option presume that all students return to their home school.)* Speaker submitted an extensive sheet of questions related to the data. Arrangements were made to meet with Kurt Subra to respond to the questions in greater detail.
- Committee members are working to represent all children. Decisions are made in the interest of the district. Committee needs more time to look at the information.
- Feel none of the plans meet the criteria. Is the timeline driving this rather than taking time to make a good decision? Maintain our neighborhood and school community. Objection to not offering all options on grandfathering as a survey question. Minimize the impact. Our children may recover, but they shouldn't even have to go through this.
- Clarification on the move to Clegg Park and how many students that building can accommodate. Suggest that the population of Western Hills not change until after construction project is completed.
- Among the three plans, some of them don't work. *(Response: Recent planning for the Western Hills remodel indicates that the school will be a three section building after construction is completed. This planning began within the last few weeks.)*
- Speaker asked the Board why the decision should be made now if there is not a problem today. Concern expressed that the fact sheet refers to a 2007-08 implementation. *(Response from Board president: The Board believes it is a good idea to study the boundary issue. No decision has been made. We are at the forum to listen to the feedback from those present.)*
- Concern that there is not enough information available now to make an informed decision on the boundary proposals.
- Can you explain the effect new boundaries will have on voluntary transfers who have been at a school for three or more years? I would request the committee consider allowing voluntary transfers if the school is not full and that preference be given to those families who have followed the policy rules up to now. *This question and comment submitted in writing during the forum.*