

FORUM FEEDBACK (Superintendency)

Monday, March 5, 2007 at Fairmeadows

- Support for A5 and full grandfathering
- Speaker lives in the Cody/Western Hills Drive area and student could walk to Western Hills. However, no space is available at WH so pay for transportation to Crossroads Park. Ask to move from Crossroads Park to Western Hills.
- Concern – fewer people are at this forum because fewer families are impacted. Want broad grandfathering. Looking for data on long term impact. Again, demographic study requested. This is significant for those affected. Don't care about option, just care about grandfathering.
- Grandfathering is major issue. How many students would be impacted. Ten fifth/sixth graders in neighborhood. Why move older students for just one year?
- Advocate for grandfathering. Make this a priority in the implementation process. Review of committee vote on grandfathering; change since community forum feedback.
- Attended all forums. Looking for research on boundary studies; found article on changing boundaries in large urban school districts (Omaha) and WDMCS fits that description. Diversity has been left out of the study. How will boundaries impact the diversity of the schools? Committee was not diverse; should have had minorities. No outreach, no information presented in Spanish or other languages. Must take advantage of our diversity; issues were not addressed. Should have been broader recruitment of the committee. Takes one year to redraw boundaries and determine diversity. Decision is being rushed and we need to stop. (*Response: Minority enrollments have been quantified for some of the options.*)
- Advocate grandfathering for all children. National Guard members children should be grandfathered and given priority.
- Grandfathering – what is the impact on middle school? (*Answer: Eventually the enrollments will be in better balance. Numbers will be posted on the district web site*) Preferential treatment for voluntary transfers and open enrollments; why should they get to stay at their current school?
- Favor grandfathering and keep voluntary transfers (more than three years) at current school. Looking forward to more students at Western Hills; three sections per grade is ideal. Western Hills is a good school.
- Socio-economic situation of our student population is changing. Our student demographics will be different in the future. Resources are required to handle this.
- Comments on Option A5 as it relates to the northwest section of the district. Does not address problem of student open enrolling out from Crestview; current 98 OE out to Waukee and Urbandale. In speaker's neighborhood with seven families, only two attend Crestview and all others OE out – due to proximity and all day kindergarten. OE students should be given no priority as in Waukee where they are assigned to one school. Struggle with the committee's criteria; does not apply to Crestview area. Stability of classes questionable by allowing voluntary transfers and open enrollments. This should not be allowed. Schools in the district are competing with each other for students. Artificial class size balance because of "fill-in" with cap outs; this will change when cap outs are called back. Ask for delay until all elementary schools are taken care of. Not enough people on the committee were present for the vote. Questions on process. District doesn't do enough to keep out and keep students here. Request: spend enough time; understand issues at all schools; address changes for each school and the overall health of the district.
- Concern with number of committee members and attendance at meetings. Did we maintain a log of attendance? High percentage of members did not vote. How can something so critical have such a low attendance? Question dedication of committee members. Vote is not validated. Question leadership of process. (*A: Informal attendance was taken at most*

meetings. Data provided on votes for maps) Purpose of the committee was to affect change; A5 changes little. Has due diligence been done?

- Are we to make comprehensive changes? The committee thought so; that was the objective prior to the forums. Two maps emerged after that (A4 was prepared before the forums by two committee members). A5 was prepared two years ago, not worked on by the committee. Do your homework. A5 only touches small areas. Cannot support A5. Create schools that look like the district. Cannot support not doing homework for all students. No reason to rush; delay so questions can be answered.
- Prefer comprehensive change. Concern with number of students that left the district for kindergarten. Economic impact is too high. Response at a meeting that open enrollment out was a “wash” – but that is not so. The 152 net loss in open enrollment is equivalent of the savings realized by the time change. When district-developed maps (A5 and A6) were put forth, hope was lost for Crestview. No student gain for Crestview. Some people (in the CV attendance area) believe in the district, but it’s a constant sell and we shouldn’t have to sell.
- What percent of e-mail addresses does the district hold? (A: *At Crossroads Park it is less than half of the families*) We must communicate to our families who speak Spanish and Bosnian. Have dropped the ball with communication in other languages. Is the district scrapping the other maps? (A: *All will be considered*). Suggest moving the March 12 meeting to Valley to accommodate the hundreds of people who will be present. Committee was staff-weighted. Be better prepared for the March 12 meeting. Haven’t seen any information on the impact of increased student population at Western Hills and the resulting increase in drop-off time at the school. (would be more than 13 minutes with projected number of students). Delay the boundary adjustments. Consider the best interests of children.
- Concern with declining enrollment at Crestview. Large numbers of open enroll out students impact the school and families. What has been done to stop the exodus. Parents were told the district would provide support. OE out has an economic impact. Remodel would spend money on a declining school. Maps do not help Crestview; enrollment continues to decline. How can the district make up for the lost money?
- Crossroad Park parent supports A5. comments – concern with Crestview issue, timing of decision and committee make up. Better way to run process that reflects in the end result. Discussion of grandfathering – it appears from the committee discussion that it would end in junior high. Ask that it go through junior high. Request demographic study. Need more information on internal demographics. Want long term, stable solution. Open enrollment should be studied in depth. Why are people leaving? Call from Crestview to look at a school in that area. Need the courage to make more investments or set overall tax rates to support the quality of the schools.
- If school were closer in the northwest area, open enrollment outs would come back. Need for a school to be built there.
- Set down time table – don’t use Clive city development information. Message that A5 sends is “not now” to northwest area of district.
- Committee make-up – disproportionate number of staff. Analysis of survey responses – out of balance. More staff want to make change, so committee recommendation reflects that. Grandfather all students – clear community response about that. Why were parents not informed? Didn’t know about the study and the community is interested. Why are we realigning when allowing open enrollment and voluntary transfers? Send neighborhood students to their schools. Only school over capacity is Jordan Creek? (A: *Cap outs at other schools in various grade levels.*) Why do the plans impact so many schools? Why change at all? Dismal dissemination of information, bordering on subterfuge.
- Have children at Fairmeadows and Jordan Creek. Student currently in special education program at Jordan creek but has to stay at Level 2 to be at Jordan Creek. Currently at Level 1 ½ and may not be able to stay. What special services are provided at other schools? That

might attract others. What will we do for students who are moving? Transition plans will be important.

- Have students at Crestview and Jordan Creek. It is a good experience to be part of more than one school. Grandfathering and voluntary transfers must be considered. If allow grandfathering, Jordan Creek will not see relief. It will take too long to solve the problem. Students have switched schools and it doesn't take long for them to adjust. Please take the area west of the interstate into consideration. It is a five mile trip to the school. The families there feel overlooked.
- Not impacted by maps. Grandfathering is important for all who would like to use it and for siblings also. Keep special needs students where they are.
- Against grandfathering. Perpetuates the bleeding of enrollment and doesn't solve the problem.
- Why a short term implementation to address a long term problem?
- Not huge difference if sixth graders are kept at their current school for one more year. OK to send younger students to a new school.
- How many voted for no change on the surveys? (*A: information not available at the forum, speaker to send an e-mail with the request*)
- Welcome to Fairmeadows! Impact is not the same for all schools. Concern with communication. Need long term transition process, many events should be plan. Request posting of the utilization chart, currently not posted on the web site. Consider ESL programs and equalizing diversity.
- Want to know numbers of parents who voted at the last committee meeting. Comments on committee make-up and loss of objectivity with so many staff representatives. Question on timing of the A5 map – when did administration see it? (*A: when it was presented to the committee*). The “have a seat, keep a seat” or “live there, go there” will this be imposed all across the district? Grandfathering should be based on how long a family has lived in a neighborhood, not how long the student has attended that school. How can I explain to my child that he can't go to a school he loves? People got “spineless” with the recommendation of A5. At least 80-85% of families impacted live in apartments. A demographer should have been hired. The committee was misdirected and misrepresented. Question on cap-outs from Jordan Creek and if the numbers who would leave allow for the cap-outs to return (*A: yes*)
- Forum comments are reflective of the internet survey responses. Approximately 50 percent of the responses were from two schools (CRP and JC). Small feedback when the total population is considered. What should we be doing to get it right? The committee should stand by the original maps. Have you done what you need to do? Don't want to hand bad work from the committee.
- Can we put this off a year? We've been led to believe that we would step back.
- Feels that only 10% of the neighborhood knows about this. Analysis has not been done for making the right decision. Not allowed to ask questions. Comments on transportation costs and diversity. Do the analysis. Take the time to do the analysis to feel comfortable with the information. Hold off so the community can be part of the decision.
- Forum feedback: grandfathering is very important, boundary changes should have minimal impact, timing is important and there is too little time between these important meetings, A4/A5/A6 reflect an attempt to respond to the community comments at the forums.