

Elementary School Student Continuation Plan
Adopted January 23, 2006

Introduction

Superintendent Stu Silberman appointed the Student Continuation Task Force to develop a draft recommendation for the Board to consider in this area. The purpose of this committee is to reduce redistricting and set up a way so once students enroll in a school they finish at that school. To alleviate the need for redistricting and requiring students to change schools as they may have in the past due to growth, the general approach of the Task Force was to arrange elementary schools into groups and establish guidelines, so that when a school becomes overcrowded, students are assigned to an identified alternate school.

In the past, residence in an attendance area has determined where a student will enroll in a school, requiring the district to increase capacity by adding portables, or redistricting students to new schools by redrawing boundary lines. This proposal identifies primary and alternate schools for each neighborhood area. More often the primary school will logically be the nearest school; but whenever a school reaches its student optimal enrollment, its current students will stay and new enrollees will be transported to a reasonable alternate school. It may be possible with this new approach that attendance boundary lines will not be needed or rarely referred to in the future. In effect the current attendance area school usually becomes the primary school for a neighborhood, along with four alternate schools that also serve that neighborhood. Many related policies and procedures not directly mentioned in this report are expected to continue. For example, all state and federal mandates governing the best interests of students with special needs continue to be honored in the Elementary School Student Continuation Plan.

Prioritized Task Force / Project Goals

- In most cases students get to stay and finish in school where they start
- Minimize redistricting / boundary changes going to the school board
- Have draft plan quickly that if necessary may be refined later.
- Clearly address 2006 arrangements and 2008 with new schools
- Develop groups and / or primary and alternate school assignments
- All neighborhoods and gray areas are to be assigned somewhere
- Control transportation costs / impacts
- Address student mobility, providing more stability if possible
- Minimize out of area overall or broadly across county
- Enhance diversity of schools
- Simplify student / area assignment processes
- Provide framework of limited parental choice within local area
- Aid stability of staffing
- Minimize the need for portables
- Consider pros and cons of grouping and redistricting alternatives

Elementary School Groups and Neighborhood / Area Assignments

The Committee used the following guidelines for developing school groups:

- Design groups for all of Fayette County, although crowding may affect only some
- Areas in a group are contiguous and generally in proximity of each other
- Consider reasonable ways to control transportation costs
- Consider middle school feeder patterns when designing groups
- Consider SES and ethnicity when assigning schools to groups
- Each group should have available capacity
- All neighborhoods and gray areas are to be assigned to schools
- Anticipated (crowded) sending school(s) within each group
- Anticipated receiving school(s) within each group
- Chart specific school assignments for each neighborhood or area
- Create an overlapping group where free or reduced lunch students who move within the group area would be provided transportation to complete the school year at their current school.

The Task Force developed draft groups of schools shown in the first chart. This chart illustrates utilization of individual schools and the availability of space to relieve crowding in different parts of the community. It shows that in every part of Fayette County, there are some schools that do have space available within the optimal enrollment figure for the schools within the area. The second chart is based upon the groups on the first chart as a starting point, but it identifies and treats different neighborhoods in a more refined way, sensitive to their differing locations. The second chart assigns every neighborhood or area to one primary school and four alternate schools. In essence each neighborhood has its own “group” of five schools. Guidelines below written for a group apply to the five schools listed for each neighborhood. Those neighborhoods are identified by line number on the chart and on the map. Thus every neighborhood has five reasonably close schools in a group to serve their children. These neighborhood areas were identified so they can be treated equitably with respect to their locations, their distances from alternate schools, their current school assignments, appropriate future school assignments, and the variety of considerations within this project. School assignments for each area were identified based upon the current attendance area schools and the criteria below. The primary school assignment in 2006 is the attendance area school according to previously adopted maps. The primary school in future years may change according to charts 3 and 4 due to the new schools scheduled to open and previous board decisions. The map shows each neighborhood area with its number.

See attached charts and map

Optimal Enrollment

Calculation of capacity has long been an elusive effort and often a stumbling block with Fayette County Public Schools (FCPS). It is difficult to apply one set of physical standards to buildings constructed nearly 100 years apart in time. It has been debated whether the primary measure should be physical classroom based or teacher and program based. Staff and the Task Force recommend that the Board define, adopt and use of a

new policy for “optimal enrollment” based upon the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)’s physical capacity, but consistently adjusted for differences in older buildings and FCPS district programming for each school. The Task Force is not recommending details in this area, but it is using the staff recommended optimal enrollment figure as the capacity for developing the recommendations in this project. Principals and staff are currently reviewing capacity figures with this in mind. Once a figure is confirmed for each school, it should be used to judge overcrowding and not be changed arbitrarily.

It is also important to note that “smaller class size” has generally not been considered in past FCPS definitions of capacity and it has not been included as an adjustment here. It should also be noted that space provided through portables is not included in the optimal enrollment figures. Generally portables should be required less often with this proposal. Current policies for placement of new portables may need revision and may relate to both the need at a particular school and the need of the group of schools. For purposes of implementing this plan, schools that currently have portable classrooms should keep them in order to create additional space for students.

Proposal for Overall Registration, Criteria and Entry

Current students who move during the year are allowed to finish the current year in their current school. The overlapping group identified on the first chart is designed to reasonably provide transportation to low income students who move in the central part of Lexington and wish to remain at their current school. More discussion beyond the scope of this Task Force may be appropriate regarding transportation for low income students to finish the year at other schools, particularly Breckinridge. However, this report focuses more upon the questions of which students return the next year and may stay in the building until they finish at their current school, and how new students may enter during a current year or pre-enroll for the following year.

The Board has already made some significant commitments to grandfathering and related priorities among students who may enter a school. In the priorities below, this plan honors those commitments recorded in the Appendix. For various particular reasons, the Board has also made some decisions which had the secondary consequence of restricting some students’ potential continuity in a school. These are noted in detail in the Appendix and referred to briefly in the Conclusion.

All current students will be surveyed in the spring regarding intent to remain in their schools. Current students who have not moved are expected to return and allowed to remain subject to guidelines and priorities below. Once the school has updated information, students stay unless notified otherwise.

Registration for new students will occur only during the following three periods, all to be date/time stamped:

1. Registration between February 15 and March 1 for the next school year.
2. Registration between March 15 and April 15 for the next school year.
3. Registration after May 15, continuing into and through the actual school year.

Two rounds of early decisions on entry will be made for each of the first two groups of applications, based upon space and priorities. If the number of applications from within the primary / attendance area does not exceed the optimal enrollment all primary / attendance area applications will be accepted and enrolled. If applications from within the primary / attendance area exceed the space available for new students during one of these periods, similar applications will be grouped according to the criteria below and requests in each group will be accepted until the school is full. Priority within any group will be based upon the earliest applications being accepted first. Waiting lists will be established for those primary area students not enrolled as ordered by criteria and the order in which the applications were received.

The third round of registrants will be admitted as space is available based solely on the date and time the application was received. Students registering at their primary school or attendance area school will be accepted up to the maximum for current teaching staff at each grade totaling near 100% of the optimal enrollment figure. Students requesting out of area placement at another school will be admitted up to 90% of the optimal enrollment figure. Each year a waiting list will be created and maintained for those not allowed in, so they may be offered attendance at the primary school when/if space becomes available. If an attendance area student is turned away from their primary school in one year and they attend another public school, they may request attendance the following year and receive higher priority consideration as noted below.

Prioritized Criteria for enrolling students / approving new entries

Round One and Round Two for Primary / Attendance Area Students:

- All current students who have not moved may continue in the same school through the highest grade in that school, unless closure or relocation of the school occurs.
- All students affected by previous Board decisions
- New primary area siblings going to same school at same time as a sibling already in the school.
- Students of current and new employees on site or campus may attend as long as the parent remains an on site or on campus employee.

- Primary area students who attended another FCPS and were on the previous year's waiting list (even if they rejected a mid-year entry into the primary school.)
- Students within walking distance (defined as a one mile radius from the school front door) and in the primary area.
- New primary area siblings of students not currently enrolled in the school, but enrolling for next year.
- New primary area students that help SES diversity balance.
- New primary area students that help Ethnic diversity balance
- All other primary area students

At the End of Round Two

If all primary area students requesting enrollment are admitted in rounds one and two, then at the end of round two, consider students applying, via the Out of Area process, to attend alternate schools that serve their neighborhood (within their group) up to no more than 90% optimal enrollment with the following priority (transportation not provided):

- Current students moving outside the primary area, and still within the group.
- New siblings outside primary area going to same school at same time as a current older sibling
- Students within walking distance and not in primary area so no transportation is needed
- Group area students seeking to leave other overcrowded school in the group.
- New group area students that help SES diversity balance.
- New group area students that help Ethnic diversity balance
- New group area students with other approved out of area reason
- All other students residing in the group area

If all group area students requesting enrollment are admitted by the end of round two, then consider non group area students up to no more than 90% optimal enrollment with the following priority:

- Current students moving outside the primary and group area
- New siblings going to same school at same time as an older sibling
- New outside group area students that help SES diversity balance.
- New outside group area students that help Ethnic diversity balance
- New outside group area students with other approved out of area reason

During the third registration period and into the school year

Eligible new students are admitted or wait listed in the order applications are received. This includes the following groups of students (not necessarily in priority order):

- Specific out of area students per Board authorized commitments
- Primary area students
- NCLB students

During the third registration period and into the school year, other new students may request admittance and they will be considered in the order applications are received. If space is available while staying under 90% of optimal enrollment after considering anticipated NCLB and additional new primary area students, they may be admitted. Usually such admittance will only occur on or about day four. If space is available during the year, new students within the group may be admitted at the approval of the director, provided no additional staff is required and OOA criteria is met.

There will be two coordinated waiting lists: one for the current year and one for the upcoming year. If primary area students are placed upon a current year waiting list due to lack of space and space becomes available during the year, they will be contacted before any other students are allowed entry and they will be given the opportunity to

change schools at their discretion. Parents may decide to finish the current year at the other public school, they may still remain on the other waiting list for next year, to go back to the primary school at the beginning of the following year and receive preference as noted above.

Schools considerably under optimal enrollment in an area expected to grow and receive students during the year might be slightly overstaffed in the first week of school, so that students could be added without impacting staffing later in the year.

Critical Steps in the (Phase Three) Registration Process at Full Schools:

1. Generally, if a school is under capacity but has room to add a teacher or an aide, it should do so. The policy of adding staff member after 15 days of continued higher attendance was discussed. Generally, we should continue to follow the staffing allocation policy per grade level.
2. Smaller class size, SBDM decisions and Title 1 initiatives that may require additional teachers may affect the availability of seats during the year, but it should not be the reason a school is considered over capacity overall or students are not accepted before the year starts. The effect of such programs or decisions (if any) on the availability of space for more students in each grade will be resolved administratively by May 15.
3. Create and make available in May a determination of which schools do or do not have space for students. For each school establish the limit of the number of total students per grade, if such a limit will be necessary in the upcoming year. Determine the number of available spaces anticipated per grade. Update this periodically, particularly immediately before and after the new school year starts.
4. If the primary school for a neighborhood is overcrowded to the point where students must go elsewhere, one alternate school in each grouping will be designated by IAKSS as the receiving school to be provided with FCPS transportation. This will be identified when needed, based upon distance and available capacity for more students preferably for more than one year, and after consideration of public input.
5. Principal and school registrar/attendance clerk keep records of enrollment and available spaces per grade. They will notify their school director and IAK pupil personnel office when full enrollment is reached in any grade and before a student will not be allowed to enroll. The parent or guardian of the next student attempting to enroll will be asked to contact the Department of Pupil Personnel for consistent explanation of options available at that time.
6. If there is not space at the primary school, parents may choose, via an Out of Area Placement, an alternate school in the group if capacity is available at the other school; but they must provide their own transportation. Under this circumstance students may be accepted at an alternate school beyond the normal 90% limit.
7. If the grade level is at capacity, the student is offered placement, with transportation, to another school in the group with capacity at that grade level; and the student is placed on one or both waiting lists for the primary school if the parent so desires.

Conclusions

The Task Force finds that this proposal is a viable alternative to meet the original charge set forth by the Superintendent and Board of Education. The Task Force considers the continuity for students the most valuable aspect of this program. This plan gives more flexibility to address crowding problems without redistricting any students from their current schools. Communication will be of great importance with this plan in order for all employees and parents to understand this proposed system. Staff should immediately begin communicating and training school-based staff to prepare for February 2006 enrollment changes. As always, the Board of Education should monitor this program, and evaluate its effectiveness as they continue to serve the best interests of the children of Fayette County.

Appendix

List of Members

Alice Nelson, Chair
Katherine Bentler
Jack Hayes
Jeanine Hench
Bob Joice
John Kiser
Schuronda Morton
Julie Partington
Becky Sagan
Lisa Stone
Gary Wiseman

Meeting Dates

October 5, 2005
October 10, 2005
October 17, 2005
October 18, 2005
October 24, 2005
October 26, 2005
October 27, 2005
November 14, 2005
January 5, 2006 for Public Comment
January 12, 2006 for Public Comment
January 17, 2006

Previous Board Decisions / Commitments:

(As with priorities in the body of the report, the following commitments assume that the family does not move / change their residence. During each of the first two registration periods, these commitments receive highest priority for available seats. During the third period all are considered in date stamp order and seats may no longer be available.)

- Through the 2009-10 school year, siblings of students “grandfathered” to remain at Veterans Park Elementary (VPE) may enter VPE provided another sibling is already attending and will remain concurrently in VPE. (This includes students residing in mapped areas redistricted effective in the summer 2005: neighborhood 94 and part of 95)
- All valid 2005-06 students at Athens Elementary may attend Athens Chilesburg Elementary (ACE) in fall 2006.
- Through the 2010-11 school year, siblings of students “grandfathered” to remain at Athens and then attend ACE may enter ACE provided another sibling is already attending and will remain concurrently in ACE. (This includes students

- residing in mapped areas redistricted effective in the fall 2005: Neighborhoods 51, 52 and 56 and parts of 46, 53 and 57)
- Children of residents in Stuart Hall / Chilesburg (parts of neighborhoods 51 and 52) on September 1, 2005 may enroll in ACE as attendance area residents.
 - Students in the Todds Road Corridor (neighborhood 42) may apply through Out of Area provisions for fall 2006 and / or fall 2007 entry into ACE and receive priority for entry if seats are available after admitting attendance area students and those in provisions above. Within this group from the Todds Road Corridor, those currently in public schools have highest priority, and all students accepting placement at ACE must move to Liberty when Liberty opens.
 - The parts of the Todds Road area not placed into ACE (Neighborhood 42) were placed into Liberty with the highest level of priority for placement in the new Liberty school when it opens.

Previous Board Commitments potentially contrary to the continuation idea:

(These students may not be able to finish at the current school due to the following specifically approved reasons)

- Out of area /former magnet students at Rosa Parks, due to completion of adopted redistricting;
- Students affected by other approved redistricting scheduled in 2007;
- Approved program changes like ESL locations;
- Continuation after leaving a magnet program or special program such as preschool;
- Todds Road Out of Area students to be admitted to Athens Chilesburg to leave when Liberty opens in 2008;
- Affected areas when new schools open, like the J R Ewan vicinity changing to Ashland and not attending Liberty. (See list of neighborhoods changing primary schools due to new school openings and note those not to attend the new school.)