

# **Elementary School Proposed Attendance Area Changes**

## **Previous History**

Periodically, the Medford School District makes changes in the attendance area boundaries for some schools. This is in response to the impact of ever-changing shifts in where families with school-age children choose to live or when a new school has been added to the district. The district has made five such adjustments since the early 1980s and is proposing a sixth. The previous changes occurred in 1983 (opened larger replacement school at Howard and closed West Side), 1986 (high schools only), 1989, 1992, 1997 (added Abraham Lincoln), and 2004. The change in 2004 came on the heels of the highest enrollment in the district's history (13,076).

In 2004, in response to record-breaking enrollment, the district conducted an extensive study of facility capacities, enrollment, student transfer numbers, and anticipated housing trends. A citizen's committee heard extensive testimony and received input from the municipalities it serves. As a result of that lengthy process the committee recommended and the school board approved attendance area boundary changes that touched thirteen of its fourteen elementary schools, both middle schools, and, for the first time since the opening of South Medford High School, both high schools.

## **Restoring the Balance**

Since that time, however, the district has experienced a very different enrollment phenomenon, which has been measured by steady decreases in enrollment of 1%- 1½% annually. This has not occurred evenly across the district and, as the economy worsens, the disparity is most evident at the elementary level where students are spread across 14 schools. The city of Jacksonville has not seen the anticipated growth in family housing that was anticipated in 2004 and Jacksonville Elementary School has not been able to sustain its student enrollment even with increases in transfers from neighboring schools. Wilson Elementary, which relieved overcrowding at Howard in 2004, has grown and maintained a very high population, one that overloads its facility.

With the reopening of Jackson and Roosevelt Elementary Schools this past January, the district is now in the position to correct the growing imbalance in enrollment and provide relief to both Wilson and Jacksonville schools. The solution is narrow in scope and involves attendance areas that are too distant from elementary schools to allow children to walk to school. It honors two primary factors given substantial consideration by the district and previous boundary review committees. These are (1) balancing enrollments with building capacities and (2) encouraging neighborhood schools.

## **The Proposed Changes**

Below are descriptions of the proposed attendance area changes, a chronology of which schools served these areas under previous boundary alignments, and a brief summary of the rationale for the changes.

### **Adjustment #1: Wilson Elementary students to Howard Elementary School.**

- Current Wilson students residing west of Interstate 5 and north of Highway 62/238 will attend Howard Elementary School beginning in September 2010. Exception: student residing on Crews Road will continue at Wilson.
- Previous history: 1983 Howard; 1989 Howard; 1992 Howard; 1997 Howard; 2004 Wilson

**Rationale:** Wilson Elementary has been at maximum capacity for the past six years. As the number of students qualifying for free or reduced priced meals has increased, the cafeteria has become overcrowded at breakfast time. This change, when combined with the one below, would reduce the enrollment by about 96 students, providing relief at this site and potential space for a Head-Start program for neighborhood families. Howard has dropped in enrollment and has capacity to receive the students from its neighborhood. These students can now walk to their new elementary school, Howard. This shifts approximately 49 students to Howard.

### **Adjustment #2: Wilson Elementary students to Jackson Elementary School.**

- Current Wilson students residing west of Interstate 5 and on or south of Edwards Street will attend Jackson Elementary School beginning September 2010.
- Previous history: 1983 Jackson; 1989 Jackson (Edwards Street to Howard); 1992 Jackson (Edwards Street with Howard); 1997 Wilson; 2004 Wilson

**Rationale:** As mentioned above, this move will help relieve Wilson Elementary of overcrowding. While these students will be attending the elementary school closer to them, they will still be bussed for safety reasons. This change when combined with the one above will reduce Wilson's enrollment by about 96 students. When combined with the next adjustment, the net increase to Jackson will be about 6 students.

### **Adjustment #3: Jackson Elementary students to Oak Grove Elementary School.**

- Current Jackson students residing northwest of McAndrews Road will attend Oak Grove Elementary School beginning September 2010.
- Previous history: 1983 Jackson; 1989 Jackson; 1992 Jackson; 1997 Oak Grove; 2004 Jackson

**Rationale:** This has been a swing area between Jackson and Oak Grove. This area is isolated from both schools because it is bounded by four busy roads: McAndrews, Sage, Rosannley, and North Ross Lane. Because of this geography, the district has historically provided busses for these students to bring them safely to school. This change, when combined with the one below, decreases Oak Grove's enrollment by approximately 26 students.

#### **Adjustment #4: Oak Grove to Jacksonville Elementary School.**

- Current Oak Grove students residing north of Highway 238 (Rossanley Drive) will attend Jacksonville Elementary School beginning September 2010.
- 1983 Oak Grove; 1989 Jacksonville; 1992 Jacksonville; 1997 Jacksonville; 2004 Oak Grove

**Rationale:** This area was moved from Jacksonville to Oak Grove in 2004 in anticipation of growth in Jacksonville. The more recent development by the city of Medford in near Oak Grove Elementary School with upgrades to city roads and infrastructure will likely encouraged additional family housing within the Oak Grove attendance area. Jacksonville Elementary will receive approximately 67 students as well as those future students whose families will move into new housing as it is built in and behind the Hampton Place development. Jacksonville Elementary will need these current and future students as its resident enrollment continues to decrease.

#### **Grandfathering Conditions**

The district recognizes that changes like these impact individual students and families. To help with this the district will honor the request of the parent or guardian of any current fifth grade student directly affected by a change in elementary attendance area boundaries for that student to continue at the current elementary school for the 2010-2011 school year. If that student has younger siblings also attending that school, they may also continue attending the school for the 2010-2011 school year.

Parents who exercise this option will be responsible for transportation of their student(s). They must complete an *Elementary School Intra-District Transfer Request* form for each student and state the reason as “Grandfathering per change in attendance area boundary.” Such transfers will be approved, but may be revoked if the student does not maintain good behavior and satisfactory attendance (92% or better) at school. Grandfathering of elementary students ceases to be an option beginning in the 2011-2012 school year.

The intra-district transfer process as outlined in School Board Policy J.C and J.C-AR1 will remain available to any family who wishes to make such a request.

#### **Redistributing Resources**

Our most direct support for student learning is the classroom teacher. Our practice has been that the resources follow the student. If a minimal number of parents request grandfathering for the coming year, these attendance area changes will result in the movement of some teaching positions from Wilson and Oak Grove to Howard and Jacksonville. This reflects our commitment to equitable distribution of support for students. We are committed to success for every student and will work to the best of our ability to help students and families make this transition.