

**Attendance Area Review Committee**  
**Report on Recommendation for Middle and High School Attendance Area Changes**  
**January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020**

**Executive Summary**

In fall, 2019, the Attendance Area Review Committee (AARC), a group Superintendent Shay Mikalson charged with recommending new elementary attendance areas for fall, 2019, began the second phase of their work. This task was to recommend new middle and high school attendance areas in anticipation of the 2021 opening of a new 1500-student high school in southeast Bend. During the process, the committee reviewed existing attendance areas and proposed adjustments in order to both populate the new school and balance enrollment across all middle and high schools in Bend and surrounding areas.

The committee, composed of 15 community members and 11 school/department staff members, convened for the first time in early October and met regularly throughout the fall and early winter. To allow for broad committee participation, the group subdivided into three teams, with each team responsible for creating new middle and high school attendance areas. By late fall, teams shared their maps with the entire AARC and received committee members' feedback. In January, the AARC spent two meetings processing public feedback and shaping the attendance area changes that are the subject of this report.

Public input was critical to the AARC's process. The committee hosted public feedback sessions at all Bend-area middle schools and Three Rivers K-8 in early December. These meetings had a combined attendance of approximately 100. Additionally, 280 individuals responded to an online survey open at the same time. AARC members reviewed summary data and findings, as well as the individual comments of all respondents.

The proposed middle and high school attendance area changes, included in Appendix A of this report, were adopted with broad consensus by the AARC: not a single member opposed the recommended maps.

## **Introduction**

In May, 2017, voters in Bend-La Pine Schools once again demonstrated their support of our growing school district by passing a bond that included construction of both a new elementary school and a new high school to meet both current and anticipated future overcrowding caused by decades of continued enrollment growth.

In the fall of 2019, two years before the opening of the new high school in southeast Bend, all three large neighborhood high schools were above or near capacity. In addition, two middle schools were at or near capacity, so there was a need to better balance enrollment across the middle schools, as well.

Each time a new school opens, student attendance areas are reviewed and redrawn. And as the district experiences growth, the district also reviews attendance areas to help keep school sizes balanced. This has happened often in Bend-La Pine Schools over the last two decades.

After the passage of the 2017 construction bond, in order to populate the new schools and to balance enrollment across the district, the superintendent charged district staff to create a broad-based attendance area review committee. This group would be responsible for proposing new elementary attendance areas by January, 2019, to go into effect in Fall, 2019; and new middle and high school attendance areas by spring, 2020, to go into effect in fall, 2021.

## **Process Overview**

District leaders began the process by establishing the Attendance Area Review Committee (AARC). In addition to a press release from the district, schools distributed information in newsletters and other communication. 29 staff and 54 community members applied. Ultimately, the team selected 15 community members, representing 10 different elementary school areas; and 11 staff, representing 9 different schools/departments.

Working with the school board's guidance and gathering public input in the fall of 2018, the AARC established five priorities to guide decision making. The first and most important was to balance enrollment across all neighborhood schools. The other four were as follows:

- Safe biking and walking routes to schools;
- Natural, geographic, physical, and traffic considerations related to car and bus travel;
- Socio-economic balance and demographic equity, including race; and
- Family connections to neighborhood schools.

### *Middle and High School Process: 2019-20*

In order to maximize involvement of all committee members, the AARC divided into three workgroups. Each workgroup studied common data that included enrollment projections,

building capacity needs, target enrollment, traffic patterns, student walking zones, socio-economic and race/ethnicity data, and historical attendance area lines. The groups were then charged with independently creating their own maps of new attendance areas.

At the start and/or end of meetings, the group came together to ask questions or to share data. Of particular interest were insights gained from other attendance area change processes. Current committee members who had served on previous teams shared insights and helped the committee find data that had been useful in the past.

Workgroups met multiple times throughout October and November, then shared their maps with the entire AARC for feedback and questions. In December, committee members shared the draft maps in public meetings held at every Bend-area middle school and Three Rivers K-8. The public was also invited to provide feedback on the maps in an online survey. After these public meetings, both a small representative subcommittee and the entire AARC met in January to review all the feedback and to further revise the preferred draft map.

*On Tuesday, January 21st, 2020 the committee reached consensus on a final recommendation, with no committee member expressing an objection to the proposed map.*

## **Communication and Public Participation**

Among the core values of Bend-La Pine Schools are operating with transparency and including staff, students, families, and the community at large in decision-making processes. The current attendance area review process has been no exception.

The first step of the district's communication outreach was the solicitation for applicants to the AARC. As noted earlier in this report, the district received a large number of applications from both community members (54) and staff (29). Committee facilitators chose participants from a wide variety of attendance areas, with a wealth of both professional skills and personal interests in the process.

The AARC hosted forums during the first week of December at all Bend-area middle schools and Three Rivers K-8. At these forums, team members provided information about their proposed maps, answered questions, and solicited community feedback. Approximately 100 individuals attended the forums, and 280 individuals completed the second online survey. Both a summary of the overall results and a spreadsheet with all comments from participants were shared with the AARC in December, prior to their early January meeting.

In summary, including both online and live feedback, the AARC had the opportunity to receive information from between 100-380 individuals (the range is large because the district did not track whether individuals provided feedback more than once).

## Attendance Area Recommendation

The AARC's recommended attendance areas for middle and high schools, beginning in fall, 2021, are included in Appendix A to this report. The recommended changes alter boundaries for 203 middle school students and 741 high school students. (Note: While more than 741 incoming high school students live in impacted neighborhoods, the new high school will open with only grades 9 and 10. So students currently in grades 9 and 10 will NOT be affected by the changes.)

The committee recognizes these changes may present challenges to students, families, and staffs. However, the recommendation allows the district to balance enrollment across middle and high schools, forestalling the need for construction of additional schools for as long as possible and providing opportunities for more equitable programming across our schools.

## Continuing Challenges

Perhaps the largest challenge the AARC faced reflects the district's outstanding schools: with 280 online surveys completed, most families expressed interest in staying at their current schools. While respondents welcomed an additional high school to address overcrowding, they were happy with the schools their students currently attend.

The committee faced other challenges, as well. While the AARC worked diligently to create a map that reflects its priorities, the committee also acknowledges that not every individual's goals for the process were achieved. In summarizing the results of the December online survey, we identified several themes:

- **Minimize disruptions:** Responders wanted the committee to select the option that creates disruption for the fewest families. This was mentioned across the board.
- **Focus on commuting safety/efficiency, especially concerning major roadways:** Some specific areas of concern were traffic on Brookwood and Reed Market, potentially long commutes to Bend High and/or Summit, crossing Hwy 20 in NE Bend to go to Mountain View, and crossing 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to get to Bend High or Pilot Butte.
- **Don't ask families who recently switched boundaries to switch again.**
- **Keep neighborhoods together.**

In order to address concerns about minimizing disruptions, the AARC struggled to also meet the goal of avoiding changing boundaries for those who have switched schools in the past. This was particularly true for some families in the Brookwood area.

## Transitions

Because balancing enrollment across schools, particularly across high schools, is such a high priority for the district, district leaders made decisions in advance of committee work

about Area Change Requests (ACRs) for students impacted by attendance area changes. These are included in the Frequently Asked Questions, linked below:

[Secondary boundary changes-FAQ's](#)

## **Conclusion**

In closing, AARC facilitators once again thank the 26 committee members for their active and thoughtful participation in the process and present this recommendation to the superintendent for his consideration. He is encouraged to contact any committee member for additional information or clarification.

## **Community Members**

Tom Bahrman, High Lakes Elementary School/Summit High School  
Adam Bowles, W. E. Miller Elementary School/Summit High School  
Clint Burleigh, Bear Creek Elementary School/Bend Senior High School  
Julie Flannery, Silver Rail Elementary School/Bend Senior High School  
Shannon Hinderberger, Elk Meadow Elementary School/Summit High School  
Jeanette King, R. E. Jewell Elementary School/Bend Senior High School  
Mike Larraneta, Buckingham Elementary School/Mountain View High School  
Tasha McFarland, Lava Ridge Elementary School/Mountain View High School  
Ryan McHugh, Lava Ridge Elementary School/Mountain View High School  
Christy McLeod, Silver Rail Elementary School/Bend Senior High School  
Mel Oberst, Pine Ridge Elementary School/Summit High School  
Andrea Shockey, Lava Ridge Elementary School/Mountain View High School  
Mel Soares, Pine Ridge Elementary School/Summit High School  
Jen Souza, High Lakes Elementary School/Summit High School  
Bev Timm, Ponderosa Elementary School/Mountain View High School  
*The schools listed for each community member reflect both the elementary and high school attendance areas where they now reside.*

## **District Staff**

Joshua Boehme, Sky View Middle School staff/Bend Senior High School  
Morgan Davis, Bend Senior High School staff  
Jay Etnier, Summit High School staff  
Frank Hanson, Elk Meadow Elementary School staff/Summit High School  
Susie Heydon, Mountain View High School staff  
Kristin Killoran, Cascade Middle School/Mountain View High School  
Kinsey Martin, Education Center staff/Bend Senior High School  
Dana Pedersen, Ensworth Elementary School staff/Mountain View High School  
Megan Silvey, La Pine Elementary School staff/Bend Senior High School  
Steven Wetherald, Bend Senior High School staff  
*For staff who do not work at a high school, the high schools indicated after the slash are the high school attendance areas where they now reside.*

