

Edison Elementary School Attendance Boundaries Public Input

AASD Board Of Education
Mon, Jan 27, 2025 6:00PM

Kay Eggert (Board President) 06:57

Okay, we will move to public input. Um, this is one of the ways that the board had can hear from community members. We also do receive correspondence through emails and all, but at our board meetings we do offer a chance for the public to share comments. I—we do have two people signed up tonight, and both of these individuals have spoken before, but I will just be very brief with my with my reminders that I want to share. Again, these are highlights from our board policy 187. Individuals may speak for up to three minutes. We will have a timer going so that you can keep track of the allotted time, and we will adhere to that—to the time limits, but please know that any comments exceeding that allotted time may be submitted to the board in writing. The board respectfully requests that speakers refrain from presenting comments that introduce complaints or concerns that are directed toward or identify individual staff members or individual students. As such personnel related and student related matters implicate a variety of rights that require careful attention, the district has established alternative procedures for addressing such concerns. If that would be the case, someone should—you know if you have that concern, contact the Office of the Superintendent to determine how to address the concern. And the speaker retains all liability for his or her comments and conduct, and so we will just ask that people are respectful and keep the remarks appropriate for tonight's meeting. In addition, Wisconsin open meetings law allows only brief discussion of topics that are not listed on the agenda; therefore, we may not be able to fully address comments that are shared tonight. With that Oliver Zornow has signed up to speak. Welcome, Oliver.

Oliver Zornow (Building For Kids) 09:13

Hello. My name is Oliver Zornow, and tonight I speak as a neighbor, taxpayer, and father of two students at Edison elementary. These are my views and do not necessarily reflect the views of any organizations with which I may be associated. Today, I had the honor of spending several hours in conversations about the status and direction of early childhood mental health indicators in our community. As representatives from throughout the community shared ideas about the opportunities and strategies, a common theme kept emerging. The theme was that the best that this group could do is put a band aid on the broader systems and culture that are contributing to the increased stress of parents, students, and educators. The power to make this change rests with bodies like this, the Board of Education for the Appleton Area School District. This body routinely confronts decisions that shape for decades, the outcomes of kids and families in the Fox Cities, a reality that I'm sure you all recognize.

Oliver Zornow (Building For Kids) 10:06

Tonight, I want to share with you once again, the incredible power that kids walking to school has. As a father of two children who have walked to school their entire academic career, I've seen this impact firsthand, but it's also backed up by research. Kids who walk to school have improved physical health, improved mental health, stronger sense of belonging, better academic outcomes, and more resilient independence. Parents of kids who walk to school have greater trust in their community, have less stress, and improved confidence in their parenting. Yet we seem to find our way to continue to make decisions that increase congested car drop off lines and decrease kids walking to school. These decisions are made through infrastructure we build and don't build, the placement and number of crossing guards, attendance areas, and the placement of schools within the community. Every one of these decisions is within the power of this board to impact directly or indirectly.

Oliver Zornow (Building For Kids) 11:03

Tonight, you will begin to rectify the attendance boundary situation within the historic central neighborhood, a neighborhood that has been split among four attendance boundaries for multiple decades. Please prioritize walkability and neighborhood integrity as you make these decisions tonight. After the decision, I believe it's important to reflect on why it took so long to address these concerns from school principals, from parents and families, and neighbors that have persisted for years. Walking to school might just be the most cost-effective intervention we have in addressing a host of barriers that are faced by students and educators. I wonder in how many conversations throughout this district, groups of people are wishing if there was only a way to increase the number of kids walking to schools. Thank you.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 11:49

Thank you. Christie Codner.

Christy Codner (Candidate For AASD BOE) 12:07

Good evening. My name is Christy Codner. I'm a concerned taxpayer in Appleton. I recently had the opportunity to attend the community listening session with the superintendent and assistant superintendent, and wanted to thank you for having that session. Really appreciate it. It was very informative.

Christy Codner (Candidate For AASD BOE) 12:27

During that session regarding the adjusted school boundaries, I had asked a question regarding the next steps in preparing a transition plan for supporting the Columbus students in that reassignment to the school that they'll be attending in the fall and how they would be collaborating with families and others in developing that plan. I was advised to—or referred to the district website to see that there is a—I was told there would be a transition plan available for me to view.

Christy Codner (Candidate For AASD BOE) 13:00

Upon reviewing the Appleton Area School District website inside was disappointed to have difficulty finding any detailed plan. Instead, I found statements of an intention without clear strategy or process for making the transition smooth for these students. I find that this plan does not provide detail about the stakeholders involved, any timelines, or how the district is assessing or if they have assessed it assessed the needs that these students and families and teachers will need to support them.

Christy Codner (Candidate For AASD BOE) 13:37

I was also the only person to be in attendance at the listening session last week, and I was really disappointed by this. I know that the district tried very hard to engage the public and made significant efforts for getting the information out about that meeting. I think when we make those types of efforts to engage the public and parents that when they don't attend, we should be asking why rather than assuming, perhaps, that they don't care. I wonder sometimes whether or not we consider the amount of adjustments it takes in someone's schedules to arrange to attend a meeting when they have children and have to arrange for child care or they have work schedules with inflexibility in being able to take time off or no time off available at all.

Christy Codner (Candidate For AASD BOE) 14:30

I know for myself on Thursday evening, I was tired from working all day. The only arrangements I had to make were for caring for my dog, and I thought, "I don't know if I want to come," and I did, because I wanted to hear what the parents had to say, and what I find in my job as a mental health counselor and from being a social worker, that many families need weeks in advance to arrange to attend the meeting, sometimes months. It also helps for them to know that perhaps they are part of the planning process, that they're informed at the start to

the finish, so that they know their opinions and input matters. Thank you. I hope you take that into consideration.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 15:13

Thank you. Okay, that concludes public input unless there's someone else that has walked in that also wants to participate. I think that is no. Okay, we are going to move on.

[Cut]

Kay Eggert (Board President) 55:55

Okay, then we will move to 10 D at Edison Elementary School attendance boundaries. Mr. Hartjes.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 56:04

So assistant superintendent, Dr Nan Bunnow will join me as we review the three options for the Edison elementary school attendance boundaries. And so, it's a culmination of approximately two months of discussions around the repurposing of Columbus and then how that impacts Edison attendance area. But while we're also looking at the attendance area for Edison, we wanted to see if we should do something around Franklin, an area that is South Wisconsin Avenue, and Dunlap, an area that is east of Richmond street. So that's what we will go through tonight, and ultimately, we'll come to the recommendation of administration, which is the third option.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 56:47

And so, we have a PowerPoint slides that will be brought up. And the first slide that you're going to see is simply a map of the attendance areas in our central district. And so, if I can get my clicker to work. There we go. All right, thank you. So, what we are looking at here is up on the screen this central area. So, it's Edison here, Columbus, and we are going to look at this Franklin area and this Dunlap area.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 57:35

So, we had seven criteria that we developed to make decisions around boundaries. And for each of these criteria, we've looked at whether the change the boundary that we're considering is a positive or if it's an area of concern. And so, in this first option—and again, this is no different than what we went through two weeks ago. So, we gave you kind of a quick run through, and again, we're just reviewing tonight. So, in this first option, we would simply be taking the entire Columbus area, and the Columbus area forms that T—as you can see up here, forms a T—and then we would add it to the Edison area. And the Edison area runs along the river to the south and the east and then along Wisconsin Avenue, and kind of jogs through the central part of the city. So, option one would simply be taking Columbus current boundaries and adding them to the Edison boundaries.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 58:37

And when we look at our criteria from a geometric proximity, no student will live farther than 1.5 miles from Edison, so the top left-hand corner of the Columbus attendance area is the farthest distance from Edison. That's just under 1.5 miles. For us, we transport students who are outside of two miles if across our district. And so, 1.5 miles is a reasonable amount of a distance for our students to be able to travel to and from school.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 59:12

From an enrollment capacity, Edison has space for approximately 140 students, so it's 140 students under its capacity, and there are 59 students that live in the Columbus attendance area, currently 79 students that attend Columbus. So, there's 20 students that are outside of the Columbus attendance area that currently attend Columbus. We don't know what their intention would be for next year. Obviously, some are fifth graders who'll

be moving on to sixth grade. And so, there's always, you know, some challenge with projecting, but we look at several different factors to project enrollment for next year. We do believe that the capacity at Edison can not only fit the Columbus students, but also the Franklin and Dunlap students we are considering.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 59:59

As far as feeder patterns, there would be no change as both Columbus and Edison feed into Kaleidoscope for middle school and then North High School. Neighborhood integrity, Columbus and Edison attendance areas are adjacent, and if we put the two together, it would make our sixth smallest attendance area out of our 16 elementary schools. So still very much a neighborhood elementary school, much smaller than most of our attendance areas.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 1:00:27

Can you clarify that metric? I—I mean we stated that a number of times, and it was not clear to me whether that was a geographic area or student enrollment.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:00:34

It is geographic area.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 1:00:36

Thank you.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:00:36

Yes. So, the neighborhood integrity, we believe is there. Growth and future development. There's no single-family housing that is planned in the attendance area. There are some apartments that are proposed in the central part of the city. We have not seen significant growth in enrollment based on the current apartments that have been built in the last few years. So, we're not concerned about growth and future development.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:01:03

And then demographics. So, Edison currently has 32% of their students are students of color, and when Columbus students would add to that, they would increase to 38%. That's, again, based on this year's numbers. We don't know how that projects next year, but that 38% is just right at our district average actually one percentage point below. So, it will bring Edison up to about our average in terms of students of color.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:01:30

Students that qualify free for free or reduced meals, would go from 49% up to 57%. Our district average is 47%, but that district average is skewed by our high school, which is much lower. Our elementaries—we have several elementary schools that are over 70% of students qualifying for free or reduced. So, 57% would again be one of our lower schools in terms of elementary level.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:01:57

And then our special ed population. So, we moved the students that had IEPs from Columbus to Edison this year, and that increased their percentage a little bit. We bring over the other 79 students without IEPs, obviously, that would bring down that percentage to about the district average next year. So, no significant increases anywhere that would concern us in terms of demographics.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:02:26

In terms of our concern areas for option one, the first one is geographic proximity, and this is really students living in the Columbus area west of Division Street would live closer to Dunlap than Edison. So, what I'm talking

about is really what was option four, where we said, let's consider this area right here, the top left-hand side of the Columbus T, going over to Dunlap. And that's simply because of proximity. It's just closer to Dunlap. But we have to consider the negative of that, which is we'd have more students crossing Richmond Street, which we decided last meeting, we just weren't interested in having more kids cross Richmond Street. And so that's why we have that under a concern. But the reality is, still those students will be at a school, Edison, that is no more than 1.5 miles away. So, we put that in as both a positive and a concern, just because there is a school technically that is closer than Edison.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:03:30

And then accessibility, Columbus students will live farther from Edison than they currently live from Columbus. So obviously Columbus is a very small, compact neighborhood, and students would be asked to walk bike or be transported a farther distance to Edison, but we currently do have students that live down in this area that attend Edison, that do have to cross Drew and Lawe and Mead to get to Edison, and so we know that there are crossing guards at two out of the three areas, and so we certainly will continue to work with Safe Routes to School and consider, how can we ensure that students can safely travel to and from school?

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:04:17

Now there are two notes underneath this. These are not concerns. Just put a note here. School of Choice in our district allows students to apply to attend an open elementary school. Again, all 16 of our elementary schools are open next year. And then the other note is just simply no regular education transportation is provided at Columbus, Dunlap, Edison, or Franklin, and so certainly when you're thinking about boundaries when you have to look at transportation, that can be a challenge. We don't—there is no bussing for regular education students in these areas. And then also, because of School of Choice, families can choose to attend any school that they want.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:04:56

In fact, we were looking at the students that live in this area here, and they certainly go across our district. And down here, was kind of interested in where do the middle school students that live in this area? 10 and so there are 10 middle school students that live in this area. One attends Wilson, four attend kaleidoscope, and then there are three and two that attend, Einstein and Madison. So even from an area like that, they're all over our district, and so we would think that they would attend the closest school, which is Wilson, but only one out of the 10 students that live in that attendance area attends Wilson. So anyway, again, School of Choice across our district is used significantly.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:05:54

Okay, so that is option one. Let's look at option two. Option two is very similar to option one, but now it adds in this area that is currently in the Franklin attendance area. And so, we have talked about this and the positives—many of the positives are very similar to option one, except when we think about Franklin—and you know, I think I'm going to go back several slides. Let me back up to that map of our central part of the district. When you look at currently, where this area of Franklin is much closer to Edison than it is to Franklin and students have to cross Wisconsin Avenue. So clearly at some time, Columbus and Edison did not have space for the students that were living here. And so now is a time where we believe that we can rectify this, and it makes a lot of sense because of how close that area is to Edison.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:06:53

So let me bring you back then to option two and the positives. So geographic proximity, certainly. Enrollment capacity—we're not concerned about capacity at Edison. Feeder patterns would not change. Again, that area would attend Kaleidoscope and North as it currently does, as part of Franklin. The neighborhood integrity—

Franklin students currently have to cross Wisconsin Avenue, which they would not have to do, and it does add a little piece to the historic central neighborhood. Growth and future development, demographics, and accessibility—we are not concerned about those at all. In fact, we approve—improve accessibility for students in option two.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:07:39

Concerns. The only one is not actually one of our seven criteria, but it's that we're looking at taking some enrollment away from Franklin. Now, Franklin's enrollment has been steady for three years, right around 270 students, and so at 270 students, we don't have concerns, but as we've talked about a lot over the last two months if that were to fall to 230, 220, we start to have some concerns. And it's really not about that total number, it's about the number of kids in each grade. Are you able to have two or more sections in each grade? So, we're certainly something that we are going to spend time on going forward is, how do we ensure that our central district schools that currently are 200 to maybe 275, 300 continue to have that level of enrollment? So that is our only negative, our only concern to option two.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:08:39

And then option three puts all of this together. So, it takes option one and two, and it adds the area here that is currently going to Dunlap. And so, the positives—accessibility. So, Dunlap students would not have to cross Richmond street. So, then we would not have students crossing Richmond Street. Neighborhood integrity—Dunlap students currently live across Richmond from all of their classmates, and so they would be on the east side of Richmond street where their classmates would be attending Edison. Also puts more into that historic central neighborhood, and it makes the boundaries for Edison very simple. It would be Wisconsin Avenue on the north, it would be Richmond on the west, and then it goes to College. And then obviously, the southern boundary goes through central part of the commercial district on College Avenue and wraps around the Lawrence campus. Enrollment capacity, again, minimal impact. Growth and future development, minimal impact. And then demographics, minimal impact.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:09:53

Do like the idea of when you look at where the students live in this area, obviously, in the southern part of this little rectangle. Sorry, Board President Eggert, can you turn around here? But this area is all commercial, so it makes sense that the students live in this area here, and you can see they can travel all the way across. Actually, don't have to go off of Packard, which becomes North Street as it goes right into Edison Elementary school.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:10:26

Concerns. Feeder patterns—it's not as much a concern as it is a change. So currently, that area that we're talking about attends Dunlap, Wilson, and West. Now, clearly, because of School of Choice, they don't necessarily attend those schools, but that is the attendance boundary. So, this would change from being Dunlap, Wilson, and West to it would go Edison, Kaleidoscope, and North, which brings us into this concern about geographic proximity. Edison, it is point two miles farther than Dunlap. So, when we look at this area here, if you're in this area, you're about less than a mile, it's .9 miles here, and it's .7 miles to Dunlap, which sits up here. Not a big change, not a big challenge. Again, that's a small district—distance compared to many of our elementary schools, but then, certainly, students are much farther from Kaleidoscope than Wilson and North than West. Again, school of choice, they certainly can go to Wilson and West if they would like. It is much closer. But this now would become assigned to the North cluster, as we call it.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:11:46

All right, I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Bunnow, and she's going to talk about how we solicited feedback and input on these three options.

Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 1:11:57

The first thing we did was develop a letter that reviewed the options, as well as talked about the different ways that feedback would be collected. And so, we used our [unclear] system, as well as the system that you're seeing images from, to figure out who are the elementary students in the red box and in the green box. And so even though they—students that are not necessarily attending Dunlap or Franklin, we still wanted to seek their opinion and let them know that this was being considered. So, a letter was sent out to all of those AASD elementary families via email so that they could be aware and knew about the opportunities to provide feedback.

Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 1:12:43

As we had hoped we were able to get—when we met two weeks ago, we were able to partner with the Appleton Historic Central Neighborhood to get this information out to the people that are in their network, the neighbors in their network. And so, the information was taken and sent out to their email list serve, which I was informed includes 212 neighbors. So, it was sent out to their to them via that list serve, as well as we provided them with 150 hard copies of the letter that they were going to do door drops to all the homes in those areas as well. So those were just some other ways that we could reach the families that may have future AASD students in them but are not connected with us yet. And finally, we issued a press release and did receive some media coverage regarding this opportunity.

Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 1:13:40

In the letter, we provided multiple opportunities, or multiple means, to provide us with their input. We provided an online survey that superintendent Hartjes will be talking about with the results. We also provided an opportunity for them to email us using Kayla's email address as well as provided her phone number so that it could be—their feedback could be provided in those ways. We also held the listening session last week on the 23rd and we also indicated that if individuals would have interest in feedback on this topic, that they could come to tonight's board meeting and speak during the public input.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 1:14:25

I did just want to point out that we did receive one email to the board email address, and that was shared to the board. So, if anybody's watching who may have submitted that email, we did receive it.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:14:37

So, we did have five individuals complete the survey, and those five—four out of the five, when asked the question, do you support adding the current Franklin attendance area, south of Wisconsin Avenue, four out of the five strongly supported, and one supported. And then we asked the question, do you support adding the current Dunlap attendance area, which is the east of Richmond? Three out of the five strongly supported, one supported, and one did not support. So overall, very strong support for both the Franklin addition and the Dunlap addition. We did ask a question, do you live in either of those attendance areas? None of the five live in the attendance areas. We didn't get any feedback from individuals living in those attendance areas, and that is all the information we have, so we'll open it up for questions.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 1:15:37

Just want to say thank you to, you know, district representatives as well as the central neighborhood neighbors who, you know, tried to get this information out and disseminated it. And I know it appeared in a lot of the news media as well. So, thank you for that. And I guess I just want to ask if you feel confident then that all of the stakeholders, you know, who are involved in this have had an opportunity to share their positions?

Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 1:16:11

I think we've done everything we possibly can to let people know about this possibility and to provide us their input.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 1:16:18

Thank you. And then I just want to refer to the letter that the Board did receive regarding a family that lived in the Spring Street and State Street area, which is that top part of the T, and I just—I just wanted some clarification just on what would happen if we go the route of option three, and those families still wanted to go to Dunlap, which was what they were suggesting. As it is, it is quite a bit closer just, you know, doing a drive by. And so, I guess I'm wondering if they would all have that opportunity to go to any of the schools in that area, meaning Dunlap Wilson and then West?

Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 1:17:13

With our School of Choice, yes, we would—and for the families in the Columbus area, as well as with the Franklin, we've already sent out notifications with updates, with timelines related to our School of Choice, but in every communication, we've also included that, if they're there now, they can stay through fifth grade, and if with this revision to the boundaries, if they're interested in going to school other than their neighbor, their new neighborhood school, they can apply for School of Choice.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 1:17:48

Just wanted to make that clear to anyone who might be listening. And then also, is there any impact if the family has a student who requires special education services?

Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 1:18:01

Certainly, when we—students are—with the School of Choice in the criteria, we first look to see if their IEP needs could be met at the school that they're requesting to go to, and if it can, then it's just part of the normal School of Choice. But we do have that step before we move it forward.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 1:18:23

Thank you. And then a question on transportation. If we move to put the red square into the into the Edison neighborhood would those students then receive or have the opportunity to be bused at middle school or high school?

[Someone speaks off microphone]

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:18:57

So, nobody would—nothing would change for any of these students for transportation. Regardless of whether they're in Franklin, Edison, Columbus, transportation wouldn't change for them.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 1:19:13

I guess I was thinking of the high school. So, they would, they would take public transportation then, so there's no school bussing provided. That's a question that's been asked of me. So, I just wanted to clarify it for the public anyone.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:19:27

All of our students and grades six through 12 are given access to Valley Transit, and there are what are called tripper routes that are accessed by students that drop off at all of our middle and high schools. So that's

primarily how students are getting around in the central part of the city even out to North High School, is to use Valley Transit.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 1:19:54

Thanks for clarifying that. I think there's some confusion in the community about how that works, so thank you.

Ed Ruffolo (Board Member) 1:20:06

So, the recommendation that's before us, I like a lot about it, because it improves safety for our students. They don't have to cross Richmond; they don't have to cross Wisconsin. That's a very large advantage, and it also improves walkability to our schools, and really take—incorporates both the historic central neighborhood and the city park district. So, I think option three is a great option. So, towards that end, I'll make a motion that we define the new Edison elementary school attendance boundaries to be the existing boundaries, the entire Columbus elementary school attendance area, the Franklin Elementary school attendance area that is south of Wisconsin, and the Dunlop elementary school attendance area that is east of Richmond.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 1:20:59

I'll second.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 1:21:03

I have a question. I'd like to go back to the School of Choice. Given that now we've moved to a special education services model it's cross categorical. So, if a student—in their assigned attendance area if a student has special needs, is what I'm trying to get at, is it different if you are a School of Choice, or if it's your attendance area, whether or not your needs can be met. Might not be stating my question well, but....

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:21:38

Amy Steiner is available. She can answer the question for you.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 1:21:41

Oh, great.

Amy Steiner (Executive Director of Special Education) 1:21:43

Yep, great question, Kay. So, when we look at cross categorical services for special education, all of our elementaries are set up to be able to provide services to meet students' needs. There are a few exceptions to those with very specialized severe programming, such as IDS or SCBD programs, that sort of thing. And then, depending on the staff that we currently have. An example I always use is Foster has two special education teachers currently to staff the students over at Foster. If we had a student that moved in that required more one on one support, perhaps had some physical disabilities and needed, you know, maybe a environment that was fully within the special education setting, that would really challenge us, and we would look at to see if there was a nearby elementary school that was already set up with the staffing, the resources, and the programming to best meet that student's needs. But typically, with School of Choice, we look at how many students that we currently have, what those workload capacities currently are at that elementary site, and then make a determination if there is space available for us to add.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 1:22:55

Thank you. I think the the—what I tried to get a sense of are the—is it much different if it's your school of your assigned attendance area versus a school of choice, because we're trying to provide special education services to meet the needs of the majority of all students—special education students—in at of all our school sites. I'm not stating it very well. I'm hoping you're understanding my question, because I think there was a concern—

people say, well, the back the, you know, the fallback is, I can always do school of choice, but that's not guaranteed. What if my child has special needs, and then I really can't get my school of choice? So, I was trying to get some assurance or some comments regarding that.

Amy Steiner (Executive Director of Special Education) 1:23:48

Yeah. So, we do have to take into consideration the students that are currently enrolled within that school site, that home school site. If a parent is trying to school of choice into a school that is not their home school, we have to take a look at who are the students that are currently there, what is our staffing, structure, and support, and do we have enough resources? It is not a guarantee, because we have to look at all those different factors to ensure that we can meet the needs of that student and what's written in their IEP.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 1:24:16

Okay, thank you.

James Bacon (Board Member) 1:24:19

I actually have a couple of follow up questions, I think, on that topic, just to make sure I'm following and I think to clarify some similar questions I've heard. So, one question would be, is, like, let's say, though, in that scenario, it was determined in year one that the student's needs could be met at their school of choice. Once they get in, they're able to stay there in that scenario; there's not risk of being moved because potentially a lot more kids in that zone move in that, you know, whose needs then take precedent and then push the kid back to their other school?

Amy Steiner (Executive Director of Special Education) 1:24:56

Correct. That is how we look at that.

James Bacon (Board Member) 1:24:58

Okay. And then same question—sure, well, similar question. What if, let's say, you know, students in a singular family have been opting into a school of choice, a younger sibling has needs, does that student scenario get treated any differently when reviewing that student's application compared to a student that has not had any family members attend that school, or doesn't currently have any attending that school?

Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 1:25:28

I can start by just talking—we have something called the sibling rule, that if you have a student that is a child, an older student that's already there, the sibling is grandfathered in to go to that school. It doesn't it—they still have to fill out the school of choice paperwork, but it's not an approval process. It's an automatic.

James Bacon (Board Member) 1:25:46

And that is regardless of potentially needing, like needing special services with the grandfathered-in student?

Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 1:25:54

Amy, do you want to take that one?

Amy Steiner (Executive Director of Special Education) 1:25:55

Yep. Again, for the most part, we'd be, we'd be okay with that, and moving forward with that. I think again, with those specialty programs, if a student has some pretty extensive services that they need, like our IDS population or our SCBD population, we'd work with that family to explain why that student requires certain programming and that it's only offered at this school. If we're talking about your general cross categorical type of servicing needs, we'd work with that.

James Bacon (Board Member) 1:26:25

Thank you. Because in your example with potentially having services only offered at a certain school, that could also happen with my home school in that scenario where I'm having that conversation, because maybe my home school doesn't support that in some rare exceptions, and we have to look elsewhere.

Amy Steiner (Executive Director of Special Education) 1:26:42

That's correct.

James Bacon (Board Member) 1:26:43

I think—and thank you. I'm really just trying to get at, I think, what some of the questions already were, where I think families that are feeling like, sure, this seems to make sense in like a theoretical world, but I can find myself worried I'm gonna get caught up in a familial situation that ends up kind of tearing our family apart in that way, in a way that I'm pulling one kid out of the school, or another kid can't go to a school, you know, because we made one choice that we thought made sense and we wouldn't have to worry about and now we do. So anyway, I appreciate the answers. Thanks.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 1:27:17

I have, I have a question or topic that's separate from this, which is going back to the walkability question in our central neighborhood schools. I'm really excited to hear that the district, you know, we are going to focus on strengthening and supporting central district schools, and sign me up for participating in that. And, you know, the question of walkability—right? So, the Safe Routes Partnership nonprofit organization, says that half a mile is best for younger elementary students and a mile is best for older elementary students. So, you know, my question is, do we currently even have any elementary schools that are all within a one-mile boundary?

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:28:18

I would guess that Franklin is a very much dense area. I'm fairly certain that's probably within a mile. Horizon's a very small attendance area. But most of ours are not. If you think about Badger, Jefferson, certainly Berry, McKinley, Houdini, Ferber, Huntley, Sandy Slope, none of those are within a mile. So, it's, I would say that it's uncommon for us to have that.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 1:29:00

And you know, the reason I'm asking this is not to say, like, to say there's something wrong with things, because none of our—almost none of our schools, are within one mile. It's just to say that as we're thinking—moving forward and continuing to think about, how do we keep our neighborhood schools strong, specifically in our Central City area, like we're going to have to think beyond the one-mile radius when it comes to, you know, safe and comfortable routes to school. So that's all.

James Bacon (Board Member) 1:29:35

I had a question actually. I [unclear] related to that, because in the criteria we were listing, we listed Mead, Lawe, and Drew, one of which does not currently have a crossing guard already, which sounds like, with the boundary changes, certainly would warrant it. We also have Oneida, I think. And I know that currently for Columbus, there was a crossing guard there. So just thought I'd bring up, you know, is it possible to continue to keep that? Are there other ways we could partner with the city? You know, maybe similar types of crossing or designing a crossing zones throughout this area? Maybe like the Winnebago crossing Richmond, where you can turn on the blinking lights, or have like more signified "This is an obvious pedestrian area" maybe through some of those areas. It would just be something else that I think could warrant a partnership or conversation being

initiated by us as something that we care about both, whether it's with the City of Appleton, Safe Routes To Schools, or any other partners in this space.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:30:50

We absolutely will. We have to. The city controls that. So, we are generally going to the city and making requests, and they're looking at data, how many students are crossing. And so, the last time when they reduce crossing guards, it was because they had some areas that were crossed by less than 10 kids. And so, they have to look at their finances as well. But we will certainly work with the city. We also—you know, we've talked a little bit about walking school busses, and how could that work? And could we have a district employee, a paraprofessional, that would, you know, serve as the leader of the walking school bus? Currently, we have some deans that do that. But I think we'll look at all of those options to see, you know, how best can we support students being able to get to and from school?

James Bacon (Board Member) 1:31:39

Yeah, I think that's a great point you just mentioned of, like, even going to the city and looking at and looking at data. It might be nice to even maybe look at the research or what happens, because that causes people to transit themselves to school in a variety of ways. Because I could see a lot of people walking, a lot of people biking. Some people might be enticed by meeting at Columbus to then—like, I walk my kid to Columbus, and then from there a walking school bus goes over. You know, we have resources, I think, both in the sense that we have a denser area in a lot of our central neighborhoods, and even resources like a property we own at various points with Morgan and Columbus and so forth. You know, and other neighborhoods nearby have things like the Welcome Center or other pieces, that it'd be interesting to get people's plans on, like, I'm only interested in driving no matter what, or I'm interested in these other ways and what would make me interested in these other ways? And maybe we could try to get more creative around how we're planning based on that community input and feedback. I think we have people's attention, hopefully maybe a little bit more with some of these changes at a time where we could try some, you know, at least ask questions, if nothing else, but maybe try some new things. So, yeah, thanks.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 1:32:47

I guess I—when I received the letter, when we received the letter from the community member too it really caused me to think about what that means for Columbus students who are in that T to go to Edison. And we were—we've been worried about Richmond, but, you know, they will, they will be crossing Lawe and Oneida and Drew and so I'm, I'm glad to hear that we're going to really work hard to get some crossing guards or some sort of a plan together to help them be able to navigate, to attempt to walk or to bike to school. So, thank you for that.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 1:33:30

The broadest question I have is just besides the discussion that we just had about special education, which I think was really good and very insightful, in what situations might somebody be denied their school of choice? And how often have we had to do that? How close are we to meeting any of those conditions? Because, from my perspective, school of choice program really is a really significant factor when these when these boundary discussions come up. So, I'd just like to understand that process a little bit more and kind of where we are in terms of allowing or disallowing people their school of choice.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 1:33:30

I'd wanted to dig in just a little bit more on the school of choice program. As you were kind of talking about the various boundaries and stuff, I had this crazy thought it was, like, why do we have school boundaries at all if

everybody has the option to go to school choice? So, I think the conversation around special education, I think, was illustrative to that. There still are reasons to have that those boundaries defined.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:33:57

Sure. So, it all comes down to capacity. And we're in a unique time in Appleton in that we just added an elementary school and added capacity at our middle schools and our high schools. And so why boundaries are needed is when a school gets to capacity, and so that's when you're only guaranteed enrollment at that school if you live in that attendance area. So as recent as two years ago, Houdini, Highlands, Huntley were all closed. Barry's been closed sometimes in the last five years. You think of others. So anyway, it has been relevant to us, and it could potentially become relevant again as Einstein is above capacity. Now it's just a little bit above capacity right now, but we're seeing trends where we're having too much school of choice to Einstein that we may have to do something around closing school of choice, and then again, you're only going to Einstein if you live in that boundary area.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:35:44

So, it—right now we're in a, like I said, a unique situation in that we do not have capacity challenges at our elementary schools and our middle schools. High Schools are a little bit different, because you just have a lot more flexibility at a high school in terms of how you schedule. You can have zero-hour classes before school. You can have ninth hour classes after the school day. You can do hybrid classes. You can do e-school classes. And so high school is a little bit easier for us to manage when you're over capacity. Elementary schools are very challenging to be at capacity or above.

Nan Bunnow (Assistant Superintendent - Elementary Level) 1:36:21

I can add that Superintendent—Assistant Superintendent Grace and I review all of the school choice if they come in within the guidelines by the first round, by the deadline in February. We've—because we haven't yet fully figured out that full time equivalent staffing for our elementary buildings, we have some flexibility, and, in general, we've accepted them. The issue comes after the deadline, because after we have established how many sections, and then we know how many students are in that class, we do need to see if there's seats available. So, like I said, we've generally been able to honor at the elementary level all the requests that come in by the deadline. But after that, we have to—and once we establish how many teachers we have at each grade level in a building, then we have to look at if there's space or not.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 1:37:15

Yeah, I guess you know one thing I worry a little bit about is this idea that potentially some schools might be getting abandoned for other schools. I'm not sure because of the way that the school of choice program is constructed, there's much we can do about that, other than make those schools more attractive for potential attendees, but I think it's something important to keep in mind.

James Bacon (Board Member) 1:37:38

I was actually going to ask a question if we had any data on that. Do we know what percentage of families or students, you know, I guess, opt into school choice? Would—all that like live within our district or anything like that?

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:37:51

We have those numbers. I don't have them now. We can get them to you. So, yeah, we absolutely know where they go from, where they go to, what districts from out of district, open enrollment into our district, we know that. That's a significant number for us. We have the highest difference of open enrollment into the district and

out of the district of any of the large districts across the state. Inside our district that internal school of choice, as you can see from all the information we've shared, students are going all over. So, we can certainly get that.

James Bacon (Board Member) 1:38:28

Yeah, that would be helpful. And I think it would even be helpful to see maybe, you know, by school or something, if it's not hard, but like, what percentage of students that attend that school live in the boundary versus, you know, maybe in-district open enroll and out-of-district open enroll. Yeah, per school I think would be interesting to see that.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 1:38:48

If we really could figure out the reason why that would be interesting. But it could be, you know, a parent's work schedule. It could be family, you know, it could—it's just that's harder to get.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:38:59

We did survey families that open enrolled out of our district twice over the last probably seven years, and it's a split between parents living or working at a school that's closer to them. They lived here in our district, or they lived in a different district, and then they moved districts but wanted to keep their kids there, and then it was like a third, a third, and a third was parents were either not happy in one district or they had a desire to attend, like, a charter school in another district or a particular program in another district. And certainly, we know that with our charter schools, we do receive a lot of open enrollment for that purpose. So, it's about a third, a third, and a third based on those reasons. The last time we did that probably three or four years ago, and you don't get a great response. So, you know, we have 1000 students that open enroll in—out of our district, about 1900 to 2000 that enroll in so. When we surveyed those 1000 students that leave our district, I want to say our response rate was like five to 10%. It wasn't great, but it did give us some idea of why they choose to leave.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 1:40:17

An optional question could be added to the school of choice application. Why are you wanting to switch schools?

James Bacon (Board Member) 1:40:29

The only thing I'll say about that though if it's on the application, I think people might be worried that's going to be a criteria, and you one might not get great data because of that, and/or it might cause people to think.

Greg Hartjes (Superintendent) 1:40:41

But we certainly could survey our in-district families to get that data, yeah, as a separate document. But we have not done that. We've looked at why are students choosing to open out of our district? We haven't looked internally.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 1:40:57

And I think it would be a great idea, especially as we are moving down this path of thinking more deeply about protecting our neighborhood schools.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 1:41:10

Okay, is there anything else on this topic? We do have a motion and a second on currently. Any other comments, the wise?

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 1:41:21

Can we just clarify for everybody since the benefit what the motion was and what we're voting on.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 1:41:26
Edward, did you make the motion?

Ed Ruffolo (Board Member) 1:41:33
I made motion is very much in line with what—sorry, I made the motion, very much in line with what is in the item for consideration, but I'll restate. It would be the current Edison elementary school boundaries, the entire Columbus, the Franklin Elementary school attendance that is south of Wisconsin, and then the Dunlap elementary school attendance area that is east of Richmond.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 1:42:02
Okay, any other clarification?

Nick Ross (Board Member) 1:42:05
So, to say it another way, option three.

Ed Ruffolo (Board Member) 1:42:09
Option three, yes.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 1:42:13
Roll call.

Unknown 1:42:16
Ed Ruffalo.

Ed Ruffolo (Board Member) 1:42:17
Aye

Unknown 1:42:18
Kay Eggert.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 1:42:19
Aye.

Unknown 1:42:21
Kris Sauter.

Kris Sauter (Board Member) 1:42:22
Aye.

Unknown 1:42:24
James Bacon.

James Bacon (Board Member) 1:42:25
Aye.

Unknown 1:42:26
Nick Ross.

Nick Ross (Board Member) 1:42:28
Aye.

Unknown 1:42:29
Pheng Thao.

Pheng Thao (Board Member) 1:42:30
Aye

Unknown 1:42:31
And Jason Kolpack.

Jason Kolpack (Board Member) 1:42:33
Aye.

Kay Eggert (Board President) 1:42:38
Okay, uh, takes us to the end of our business tonight.