



## Statement about Redrawing Attendance Boundaries Burlington Area School District

On Monday, September 21, representatives from the Attendance Boundary Committee, Adam Lang and Carrie Douglas, presented a proposal to the Burlington Area School District School Board. The School Board will decide, as early as its October 12 board meeting, the new boundaries (to be implemented in the 2021-2022 school year).

Starting in the fall of 2021, the District will fulfill its goal to reduce the number of school transitions with the new grade configuration (preK-5, 6-8, 9-12) and reduce crowding in some schools by distributing K-5 students across five elementary schools. Redrawing the boundaries is part of the referendum approved by the community in November 2018.

The process to redraw the district boundaries started in Fall 2019. The District hired MDROffers Consulting to analyze enrollment, community demographic trends, and housing growth opportunities. They subdivided the Burlington area into 69 neighborhoods.

In February of 2020, a committee was formed from applicants representing parents and staff. Drew Howick, from Howick Associates, designed the five meetings and facilitated each session. The volunteer committee used MDROffers' community data and their diverse experiences and perspectives to evaluate various options. To be fully transparent, all committee meeting notes have been posted to the district website.

The current district boundary map was created in 2011 when Dover Elementary closed. The question of redrawing boundaries in Burlington presented unique challenges. For one, three of the elementary schools are in relatively close proximity to each other. Also, many students do not currently attend their assigned school, which essentially makes the current boundaries inconsistent.

One of the goals of redrawing the boundaries was to help balance socio-economic diversity and equity within each school. Right now, Waller Elementary tends to have the greatest number of students that are economically disadvantaged, have a disability or are an English Learner (see chart 2018-2019 data from DPI Report Card).

	<b>Waller</b>	<b>Cooper</b>	<b>Winkler</b>	<b>Lyons</b>
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>	53.9%	30.0%	29%	21.2%
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	20.2%	15.9%	19.1%	9.1%
<b>English Learners</b>	14%	0.2%	0%	1.5%

## Evaluation Criteria

The committee evaluated five options to determine if the option met or did not meet the following criteria:

- 1. Projected Enrollment and Building Utilization:** Attendance boundaries should be created to anticipate the projected enrollment and the program / current capacity of the building. This factor considers building utilization, student enrollment, staffing needs, and the educational program(s).
- 2. Minimize Impact on Students:** When possible, minimize the number of existing students impacted by the attendance area change - both now and in anticipation of future enrollment changes. Consideration should be given that not only can too many students be affected by a potential boundary change, but also moving a small number of students from one particular school could have a negative impact as well.
- 3. Fiscal Responsibility:** When possible, boundaries should be planned to maximize district resources in a fiscally responsible manner. This criterion should consider building improvements, staffing requirements, educational program needs, and other operational costs.

The committee used a dashboard (see sample below) to evaluate each option based on the three evaluation criteria.

OPTION A
Evaluation Dashboard  
Elementary School Attendance Area Adjustment Option

### 1. Projected Enrollment and Building Utilization

*Attendance areas should be created to anticipate the projected enrollment and the program capacity of the buildings. This factor considers building utilization, student enrollment, staffing needs, and the educational program(s).*

The following table is intended to assist in evaluating the attendance area option against this criterion:

Elementary School	Resident Enrollment		Sep. 2021 Building Capacity <sup>1,3</sup>	Anticipated 2020s Enrollment Trend
	April 2020 (4K-4) <sup>1</sup>	Projected Sept 2021 (4K-5) <sup>1,2</sup>		
Cooper	265	273-285	300	→
Dyer	N/A	232-274	300	→
Lyons Center	83	142-143	150	↘
Waller	454	282-299	300	→
Winkler	122	127-139	150	↗
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>1,098</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>→</b>

<sup>1</sup> Excludes students in Montessori program and at 4K community partner sites  
<sup>2</sup> Range reflects whether current flexibility in school student attends continues – bold number suggests that all students attend their newly assigned school  
<sup>3</sup> Based on capacity study by Plunkett Raysich Architects  
<sup>4</sup> Based on housing growth and demographic change assessment by MDRoffers

CRITERION MET? YES NO DK

MY NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Minimize Impact on Students

*When possible, minimize the number of existing students impacted by the attendance area change—both now and in anticipation of future enrollment changes. Consideration should be given that not only can too many students be affected by a potential boundary change, but also moving a small number of students from one particular school could have a negative impact as well. In addition:*

- Attendance boundary decisions should allow for ease of access to schools for families with limited resources so that all families have opportunities to engage at high levels with their respective school communities.
- When possible, boundaries should be structured to assign a neighborhood to one elementary school's attendance area.
- Ideally, each elementary school should have one contiguous attendance area. Attendance areas ought to be easy to understand and share.

The following information is intended to assist in evaluating the attendance area option against this criterion:

- 309 to 426 elementary school students would change attendance areas if adjustment were to occur today
  - 232 to 274 would change to Dyer
  - 77 to 152 would change to another elementary school
- 36 of 69 neighborhoods would change attendance areas (20 of these would be to Dyer; 7 to Waller; 6 to Cooper; 2 to Lyons Center, 1 to Winkler)

CRITERION MET? YES NO DK

MY NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Fiscal Responsibility

*When possible, attendance areas should be planned to maximize district resources in a fiscally responsible manner. This criterion should consider building improvements, staffing requirements, educational program needs, and other operational costs including transportation.*

*Consider distance, district transportation time, and routing to ensure an efficient system of student transportation. Efforts should be made to maximize the number of students within school walking zones and minimize the number of students who need to cross major roads or other barriers such as railroad tracks, which maximizes the safety and security of our students.*

The following information is intended to assist in evaluating the attendance area option against this criterion:

- 68% of elementary school students would attend the elementary school closest to their neighborhood (up from 63% today)
- No non-Montessori students within a projected walking zone to one elementary school would be bussed to a second elementary school

CRITERION MET? YES NO DK

MY NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared: 6/5/20

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### Impact on Students - Chart to Compare Five Options

	Today	Option A	Option B	Option C	<b>Option D</b>	Option E
Number of students who will change schools	--	309-426 students	239-314 students	307-408 students	<b>237-302 students</b>	215-290 students
% of students changing to Dyer	--	64-75%	80-90%	70-75%	<b>80-90%</b>	90-98%
Percent at geographically closest school	63%	68%	61%	57%	<b>61%</b>	65%
Neighborhoods changing attendance area (out of 69 neighborhoods)	--	36	26	40	<b>26</b>	28

### School Capacity Compared to Enrollment

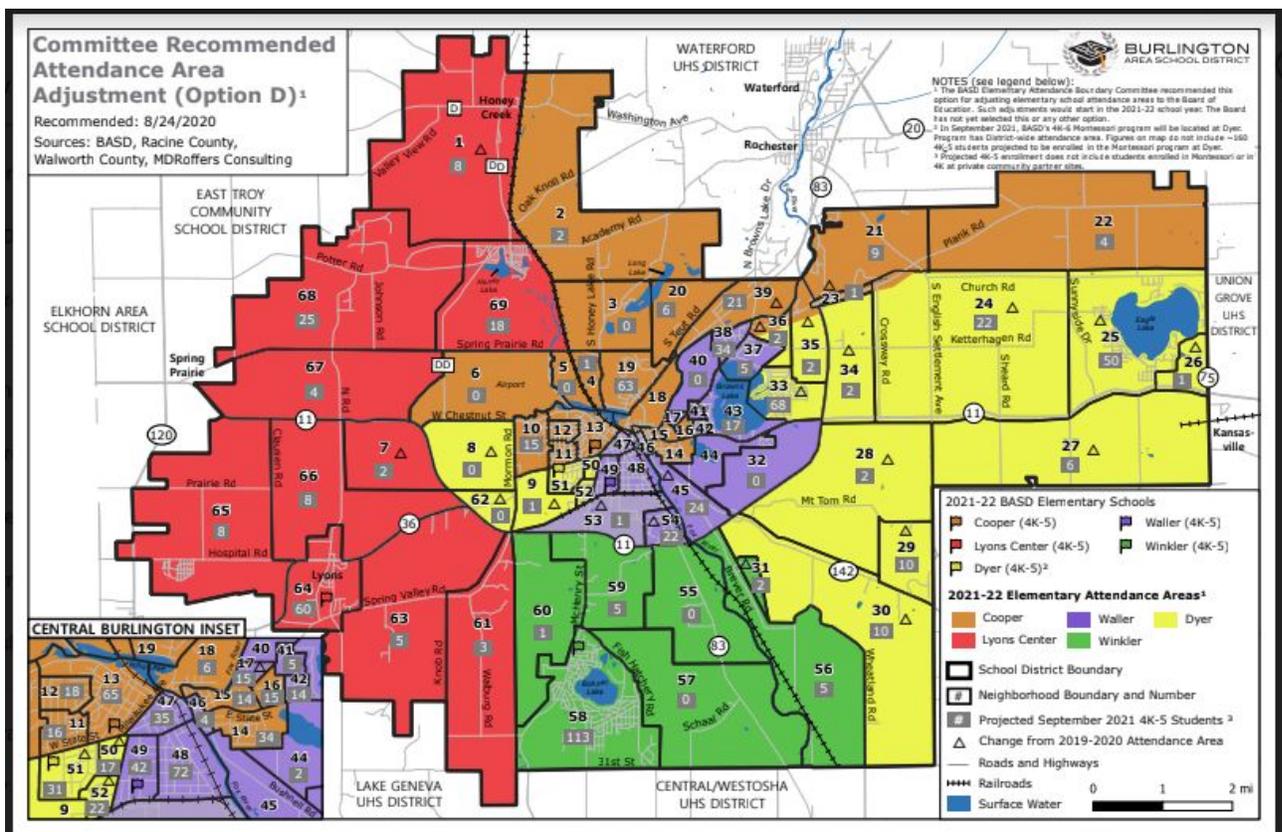
School	Capacity (after renovations - Fall 2021)	Current Grade Levels	2019-2020 Enrollment	Fall 2021 Grade Levels	Anticipated Fall 2021 Enrollment with Option D
Cooper	300 students	4K-4	307 traditional, 113 Montessori	4K-5	295-299 students
Lyons Center	150 students	5K-4	89 students	4K-5	142-143 students
Waller	300 students	4K-4	496 students	4K-5	293-299 students
Winkler	150 students	4K-4	140 students	4K-5	127-148 students
Dyer	300 traditional 200 Montessori	Grades 5-6	418 traditional, 23 Montessori	Grades 4K-5, Montessori	210-242 traditional, 200 Montessori
Karcher	700+ students	Grades 7-8	444 students	Grades 6-8	656-728 students
K-8 totals	2100 capacity		2030		1923-2059

## Proposal: Option D

**Projected Enrollment and Building Utilization:** This option efficiently uses all five elementary school buildings in an equitable distribution. It allows for potential enrollment growth at Winkler (projected housing development south of HWY 11 Bypass).

**Minimize Impact on Students:** The majority of students changing schools will attend Dyer (210-242) with a small cohort of 27-60 students changing to another district school. Of the 69 neighborhoods, 26 neighborhoods will change attendance areas (fewest among the five options). This boundary map is logical and reunifies the Eagle Lake area at one school.

**Fiscal Responsibility:** This option promotes transportation efficiency. Dyer Elementary School is closest to the bypass and students from the farthest out (Eagle Lake) can use the bypass to get to school. The boundary accounts for students along Plank Road being unified in one school. There are safe and logical walking zones with students not crossing busy streets. The majority of students are at their closest school geographically.



## In-District Transfers

When the school board has been asked about in-district transfers, the consensus has been that a new attendance boundary is a “clean slate” and new school assignments will be honored over transfer requests. Permitting in-district transfers would defeat the purpose of redrawing boundaries to fill Dyer Elementary, redistribute students in an equitable manner, and balance student enrollment across five schools. Further, it resolves the issue the district has faced with significant numbers of students not attending their assigned school which has compromised the

purpose of boundaries in the past. Families may re-apply for an in-district transfer, but should be prepared that only rare exceptions will be granted.

### **Summary**

Redrawing the district boundaries is new and exciting for the Burlington area community. It also means change. The culture and climate for each elementary school will be transformed by having fewer students (or in some cases more students), a change in building staff, and significant renovations to school buildings.

The district is excited to open the new Karcher Middle School for grades 6-8 and to expand from four to five elementary schools. The new grade configuration fulfills the goal of reducing the number of school transitions which ultimately will build stronger relationships and a stronger community.