



NEWTON
COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Planning for the Future

Newton Community
School District
Board of Education
November 2023

Purpose of Report:

Provide the BOE with information which will
guide the Boundary Process framework
(Guiding Principles and Boundary Criteria).



RSP & Associates

RSP Quick Facts:

Founded in 2003

Professional educational planning firm

Expertise in multiple disciplines (GIS, Planning, Facilitation)

Over 20 years of planning experience

Over 80 years of education experience

Over 20 years of GIS experience

Projection accuracy of 97% or greater

RSP Clients:

RSP was started with the desire and commitment to assist school districts in long-range planning.

RSP has served over **130** clients in:

Arkansas

Colorado

Iowa

Illinois

Kansas

Minnesota

Missouri

Nebraska

North Dakota

Oklahoma

South Dakota

Tennessee

Wisconsin

RSP Planning Team:

Robert Schwarz, CEO

Military, County, City, and School District Planner

University of Kansas – Master of Urban Planning (MUP)

American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP)

Accredited Learning Facility Planner (CEFP)

Ginna Wallace, Planner

University of Kansas – Master of Urban Planning (MUP)

American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP)

RSP Recent Projects:

Ankeny Community School District

- Enrollment Analysis, 2022/23
- Boundary Analysis, 2022/23

Bondurant-Farrar Community School District

- Enrollment Analysis, 2021/22

Carlisle Community School District

- Enrollment Analysis, 2022/23

Goals of Presentation

- ☐ Receive Boundary Process
- ☐ Confirm Boundary Guiding Principles
- ☐ Discuss Process Starting Point
- ☐ Prioritize Boundary Criteria

Boundary Process

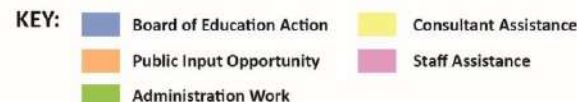
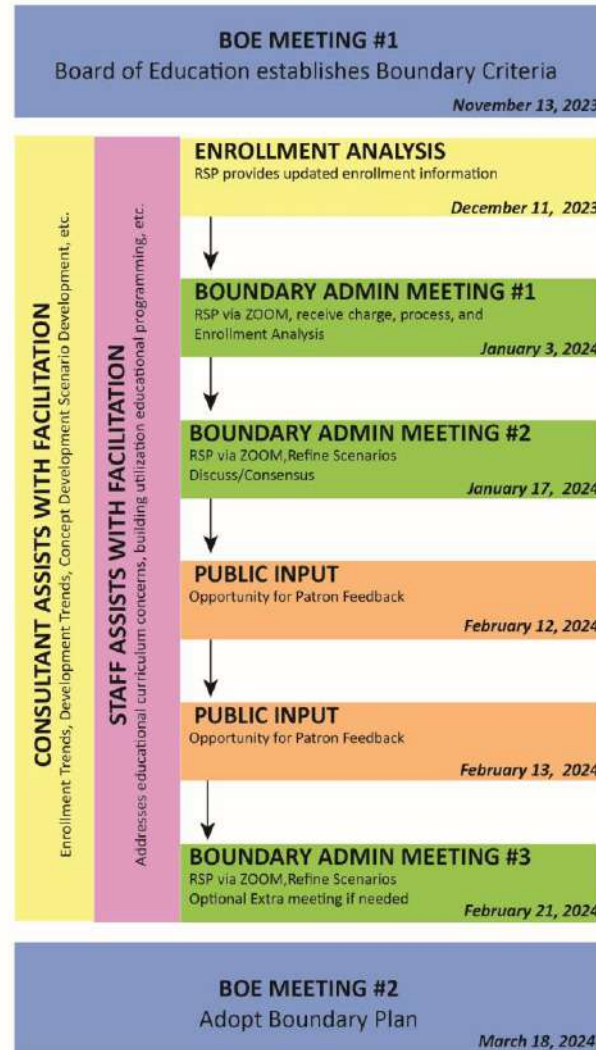
3 Administrative Meetings

2 Opportunities for Public Input

2 Board of Education Meetings

Main Takeaway: The process begins this winter after RSP has updated the Enrollment Analysis with 2023/24 student data.

2023/24 COMPREHENSIVE BOUNDARY PROCESS



2015/16 Boundary Process – Guiding Principles

The following are the guiding principles utilized in the 2015/16 Boundary Process:

- The boundary should reflect providing better educational opportunities at each school for there to be an equitable student experience at each school
- The grade configuration should be Kdg to 4th, 5th to 8th, and 9th to 12th
 - Berg ES (Kdg – 3rd) becomes part of Berg MS (7th- 8th) to become Berg MS (5th – 8th)
 - District Office moves from Emerson Hough to a facility near transportation center
- The following four schools will function as elementary schools
 - Emerson Hough
 - Aurora Heights
 - Thomas Jefferson
 - Woodrow Wilson
- Target enrollment for each school to be at about 275 students (+/- 10%)
- New elementary attendance areas begin in the 2016/17 school year
- Students outside of Newton City limits should be grouped to one elementary
- Could create flexible / transition areas with high transition residential areas to help balance enrollment
- Grandfathering/Transfers/Student Options are determined by Administration – could happen if space allowed

2023/24 Guiding Principles (RSP Modified)

RSP **Draft** of Guiding Principles:

The following are to be considered:

- The boundary adjustment plan reflects a two-to-three-year transition plan to allow for facility renovation
- The boundary adjustment plan should reflect providing better educational opportunities at each school for there to be an equitable student experience at each school
- The end grade configuration should be: PK to 1st, 2 to 4th, 5 to 8th, and 9 to 12th
- Elementary inventory is reduced to two core facilities by 2025/26
 - Thomas Jefferson Elementary renovated as PK-1 Elementary School serving the entire district
 - Emerson Hough Elementary renovated as 2-4 Elementary School serving the entire district
 - Aurora Heights and Woodrow Wilson potentially offline
- Attendance boundaries are modified over the next two to four years to allow for building renovations
- Building renovations and boundary transition plan contingent on bonding capability and timing of projects
- Boundaries could be modified to create flexible/transition areas with high transition residential areas to help balance enrollment
- Grandfathering/Transfers/Student Options are determined by Administration – could happen if space allowed

Current Elementary Boundary Map



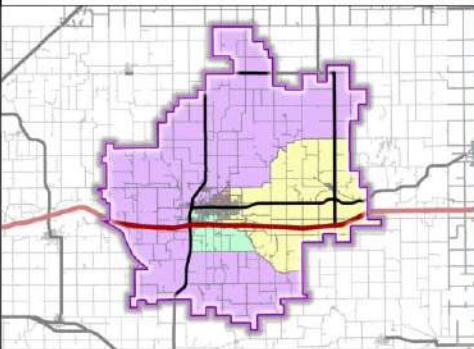
Newton Community School District

- District Boundary
 - Elementary School
 - Middle School
 - High School
 - District Office
 - Parks
 - Recreation
- School List:
1. Aurora Heights
 2. Emerson Hough Elementary
 3. Thomas Jefferson Elementary
 4. Woodrow Wilson Elementary
 5. Berg Middle School
 6. Newton High School
 7. WEST Academy

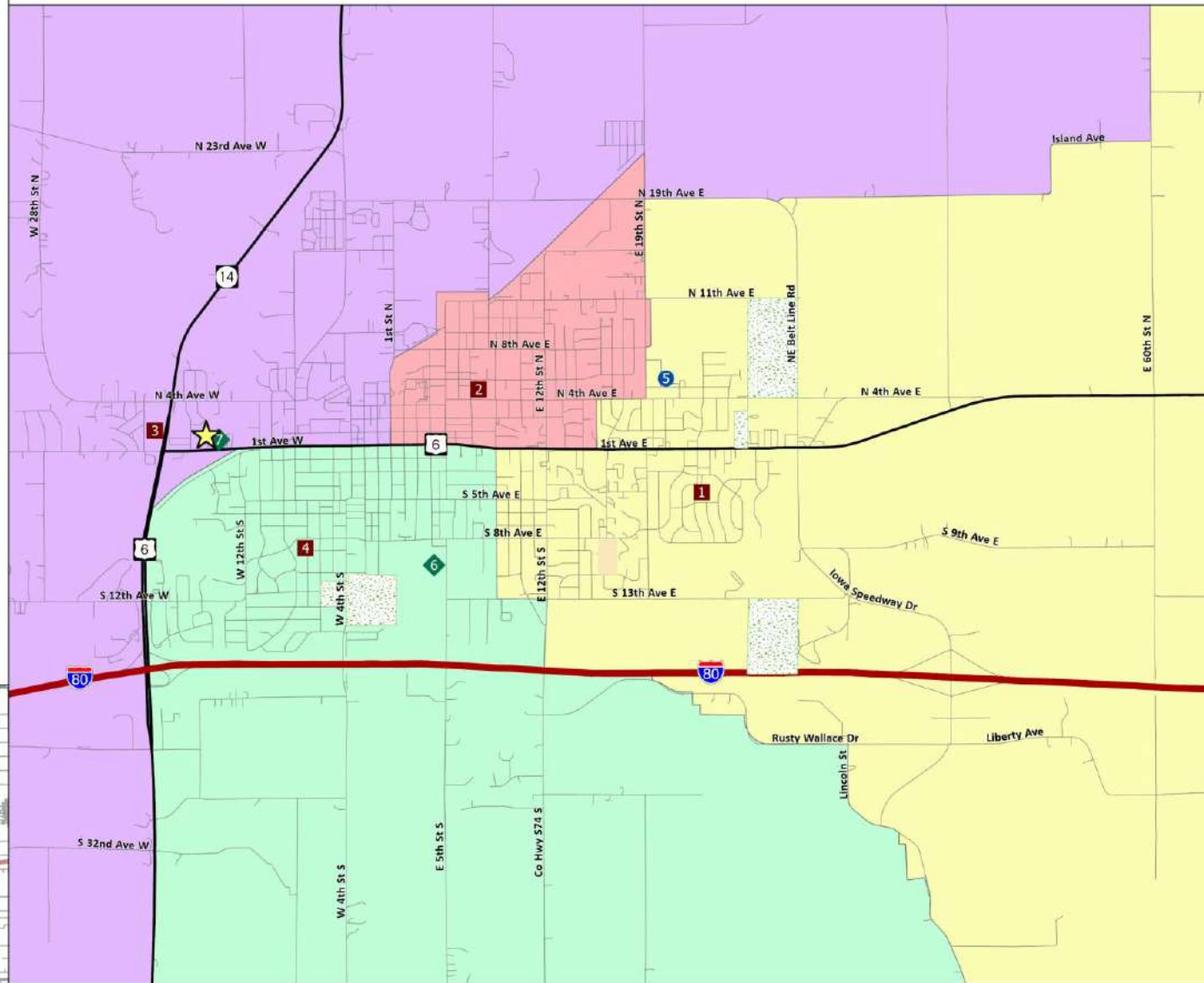
Elementary School Attendance Areas

- Aurora Heights Elementary School**
- Emerson Hough Elementary School**
- Thomas Jefferson Elementary School**
- Woodrow Wilson Elementary School**

Map data provided by Newton Community Schools, Jasper County, and ESRI. Map created November 2023 by RSP & Associates.



Elementary School Attendance Areas



Transition Starting Point

OPTION 1:

- 2024/25:
 - Emerson Hough closed for renovation (current attendance boundary adjusted to surrounding schools)
- 2025/26:
 - Thomas Jefferson closed for renovation (current boundary adjusted to surrounding schools)
 - Emerson Hough re-opens and serves PK-4th with Aurora Heights and Woodrow Wilson
- 2026/27:
 - Thomas Jefferson closed for renovation (current boundary adjusted to surrounding schools)
 - Emerson Hough, Aurora Heights, and Woodrow Wilson adjusted boundaries to serve PK-4th
- 2027/28
 - Thomas Jefferson re-opens as PK to 1st grade elementary school
 - Emerson Hough transitions to 2nd to 4th grade elementary school
 - Students begin attending grade center (no attendance boundaries)
 - Aurora Heights and Woodrow Wilson are repurposed

OPTION 2:

- 2024/25:
 - Thomas Jefferson closed for renovation (current attendance boundary adjusted to surrounding schools)
- 2025/26:
 - Thomas Jefferson closed for renovation (current attendance boundary adjusted to surrounding schools)
- 2026/27:
 - Thomas Jefferson re-opens as PK-1 elementary school
 - Emerson Hough closed for renovation (2nd to 4th grade boundary adjusted to surrounding schools)
- 2027/28:
 - Emerson Hough re-opens as 2nd to 4th grade elementary school
 - Students begin attending grade centers (no attendance boundaries)
 - Aurora Heights and Woodrow Wilson are repurposed

Boundary Criteria

The following are always to be considered:

- Exceptional education must take place at each facility in every option.
- The goal is to focus on Board of Education goals and priorities, and provide for the educational need of each student

Boundary Criteria establishes the methodology to analyze boundary concepts – all 10 criteria are important:



Boundary Natural Features

All portions of the boundary are physically adjacent, no disconnected islands within the boundary.



Demographic Considerations

Boundaries that seek some level of balanced socioeconomic indicators.



Duration of Boundaries

Boundaries that anticipate future changes in enrollment and seek to make the boundary last as long as possible using forecasted data.



Feeder System Considerations

Boundaries that attempt to keep entire elementary schools together as they move to a middle school.



Fiscal Considerations (Capital Costs)

Ensure boundary changes minimize the need for additional construction projects until overall enrollment growth dictates.



Fiscal Considerations (Operational Cost)

Boundaries that are planned to maximize district resources.



Neighborhoods Intact

Boundaries that ensure neighborhoods are maintained in a school's attendance area.



Projected Enrollment/Building Utilization

Boundaries that focus on balancing enrollment, so each building is utilized efficiently while not projected to exceed functional capacity for several years.



Students Impacted by Boundary Change

Boundaries that minimize the number of current students that have to change schools.

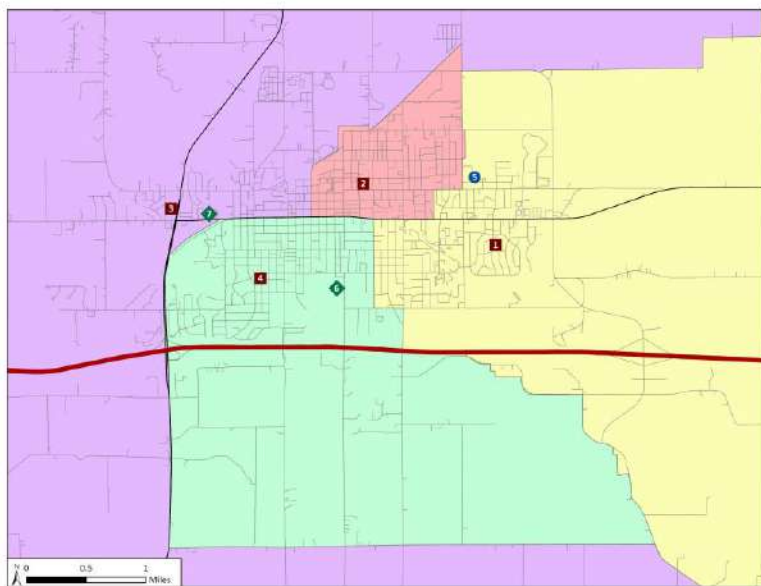


Transportation Considerations

Boundaries that consider transportation logistics including bus route efficiency and length of time students spend on bus.

Goal – attendance areas follow natural features that make visual sense in the community

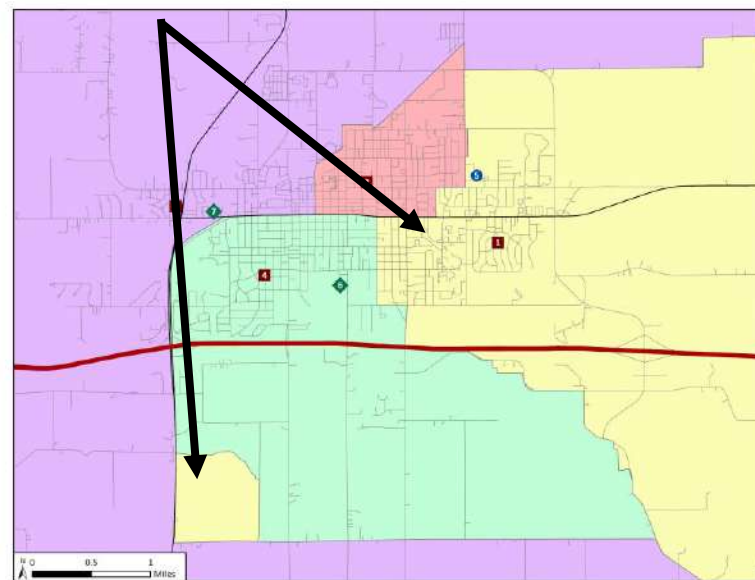
- When it is possible, contiguous attendance areas should be maintained
- Compact grouping of planning areas should be maintained
- All areas of the district should be assigned to an elementary attendance area



Contiguous

An attendance area is not split creating compact contiguous attendance areas.

Currently the district has contiguous Elementary Boundaries.



Not Contiguous

An attendance area is split to create islands that results in noncontiguous attendance areas

VISUAL ONLY: does NOT reflect a proposed boundary option

Goal – demographic diversity should be balanced among our schools

- Demographic diversity could be examined to minimize overloading any school with any one variable
- These variables could *potentially* include census household salary average, home values, ethnicity, housing products, and programming needs

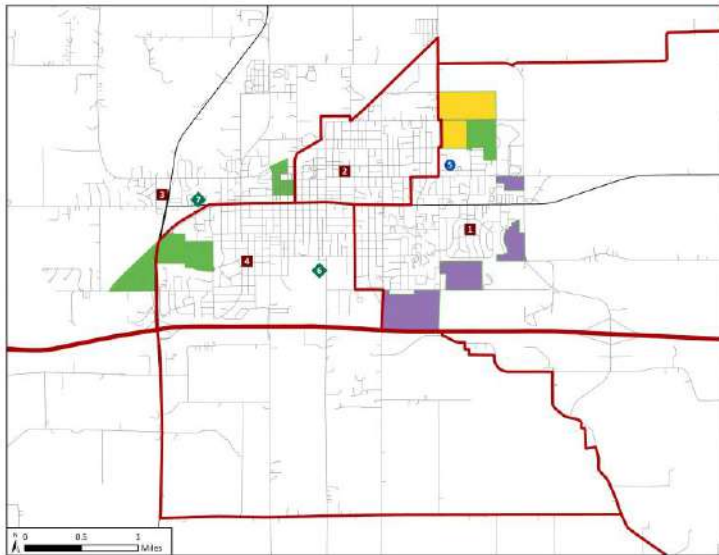
2023/24 Student Data by Race/Ethnicity	Asian	Black/African American	Hispanic	Multi-Racial	Native American	Pacific Islander	White
Aurora Heights Elementary School	1	6	15	12		1	225
Emerson Hough Elementary School	3	14	27	15	3	2	141
Thomas Jefferson Elementary School	3	8	29	23		2	296
Woodrow Wilson Elementary School	1	4	11	20			222
Total	8	32	82	70	3	5	884

Source: Newton Community School District - 2023/24 student data

Analysis tables can provide context to the current diversity of students

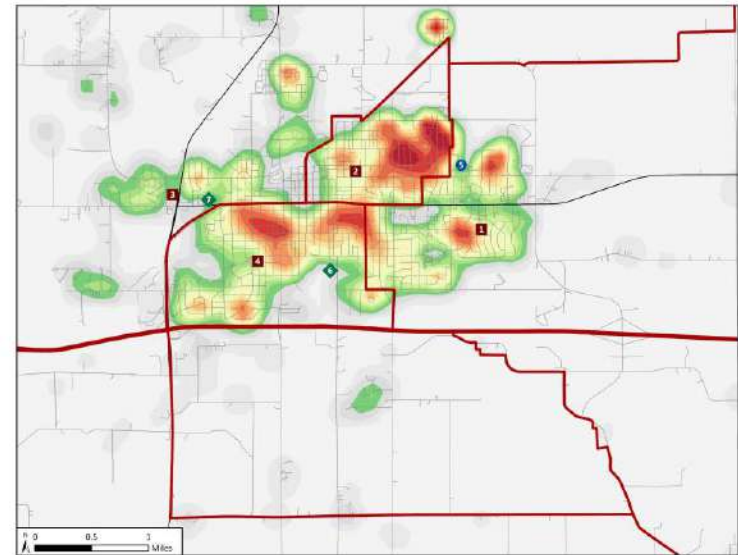
Goal – attendance areas remain the same for as long as possible

- This factor addresses the ability of an attendance area to accommodate the anticipated enrollment for a projected period of time
- Where possible, attendance areas should be stabilized to limit the number of future boundary changes
- Boundaries should be planned to last for a significant period of time (utilize potential growth)



Other variables to consider for the duration of boundaries are residential growth areas within boundaries to account for future student growth.

- **Green Areas: Current Growth**
- **Yellow Areas: 5-Year Growth**
- **Purple Areas: 10-Year Growth**



Understanding where students currently live can help understand how long the boundaries can be sustainable.

- **Red: highest current student density**
- **Green: low current student density**
- **Gray: no current student density**

VISUAL ONLY: does NOT reflect a proposed boundary option

NOTE: The blue line is the current elementary boundary.

Goal – for no additional expenses on brick and mortar projects

- Consider the impacts on capital costs
- Ensure boundary changes minimize the need and/or effectively eliminates the need for additional construction projects
- Factors to include:
 - New facility construction
 - Building additions and/or remodeling
 - Mobile classrooms/demountable wall relocations
 - Other capital costs



VISUAL ONLY: does NOT reflect a proposed boundary option

Goal – for no additional expenses on staffing for each school

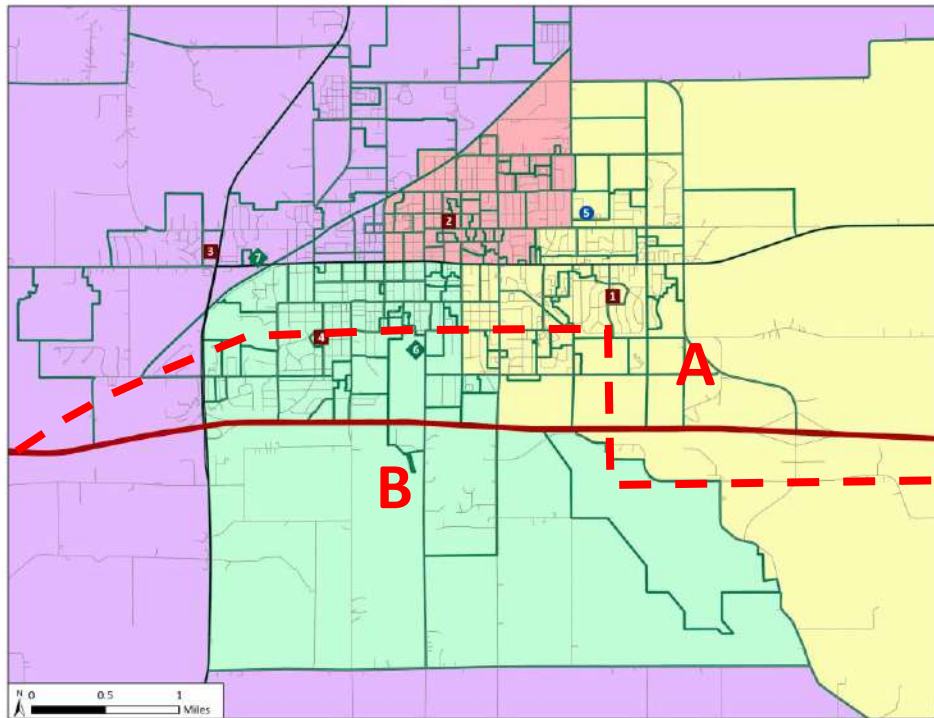
- Where possible, boundaries should be planned to maximize district resources in a fiscally responsible manner and take advantage of economics of scale
- Ensure boundary changes minimize the need for more staffing to ensure class size follows district policy
- Factors to include:
 - Staffing requirements
 - Educational program needs
 - Other operational costs



VISUAL ONLY: does NOT reflect a proposed boundary option

Goal – each planning area (subdivision) attend the same schools

- Where possible, neighborhoods should not be split between two schools
 - A neighborhood is defined as the smallest division of a planning area that can be subdivided by a natural line of demarcation, such as a stream or major traffic way
- There should be logical limits to define a neighborhood



Green lines represent a complete neighborhood (planning area)

*Splitting a planning area would be represented as the **dashed Red line labeled A and B** resulting in that planning area attending two different schools*

Projected Enrollment

EXAMPLE

Goal – balanced, logical enrollment that works within the confines of school capacities

- Considers building utilization, student enrollment, staffing needs and the educational program(s)
- Where possible, attendance boundaries should be created to anticipate the projected enrollment and the program/current capacity of the building

2022/23 Enrollment Analysis:	Grades	Capacity	Enrollment by Reside				Utilization Percentage			
			2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Aurora Heights Elementary	K-4	357	322	325	324	319	90%	91%	91%	89%
Emerson Hough Elementary	K-4	357	229	215	221	225	64%	60%	62%	63%
Thomas Jefferson Elementary	PK-4	501	276	281	274	273	55%	56%	55%	54%
Woodrow Wilson Elementary	K-4	357	276	299	287	294	77%	84%	80%	82%
TOTAL	PK-4	1,572	1,103	1,120	1,106	1,111	70%	71%	70%	71%

Source: RSP & Associates, LLC - November 2022

Efficient building utilization should attempt to maximize student population without exceeding capacity.

The projection tables is based on student reside:

- **Green Shading:** Below 75% utilization
- **Orange shading:** Above 100% utilization

Note: Tables use updated building capacities from FRK Architects

RSP's 2022/23 Enrollment Analysis was 98.2% accurate at PK-4 enrollment (19 students off)

Goal – minimize how many students are impacted by the new attendance areas

- SIBC determines the number of students that will be impacted by a boundary change
- Where possible, minimize the number of existing students impacted by a boundary change

Students Impacted Analysis:	Aurora Heights	Emerson Hough	Thomas Jefferson	Woodrow Wilson
Aurora Heights Elementary		25		
Emerson Hough Elementary				
Thomas Jefferson Elementary		75		60
Woodrow Wilson Elementary				
TOTAL	0	100	0	60

Source: RSP & Associates, LLC - March 2019

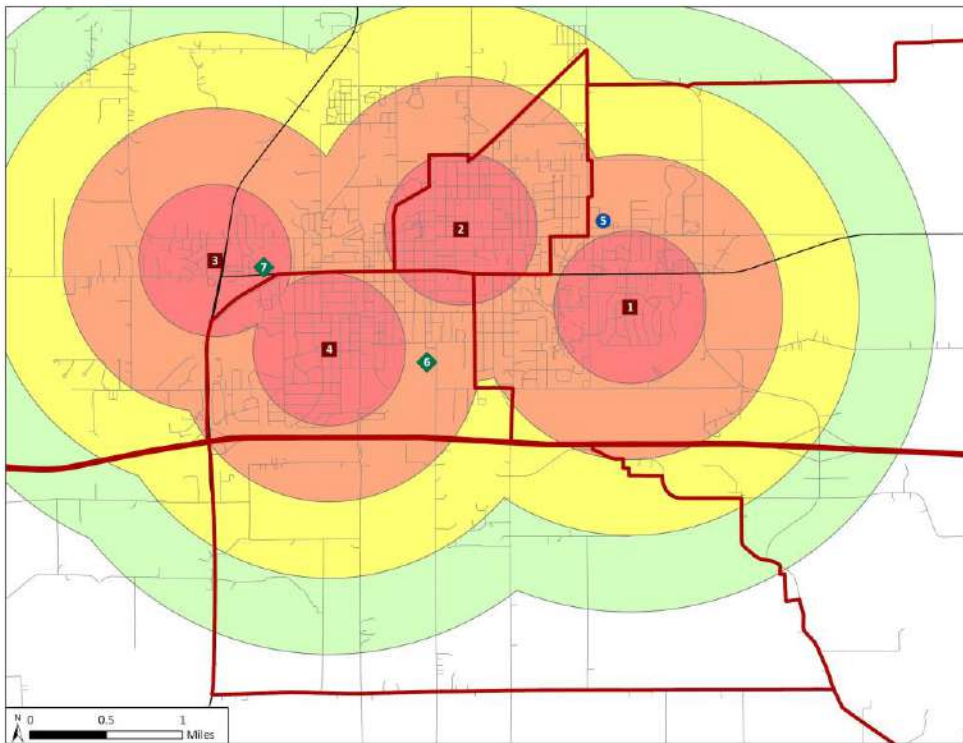
Reading left to right indicates an impact on students from their current boundary to the concept boundary.

For example: There 25 students currently reside in Aurora Heights that would now reside in Emerson Hough in this concept.

Consideration should be given the number of students affected by a potential boundary change, specifically how many students from one particular school could be affected.

Goal – attendance areas do not require additional bussing expenses and does not result in unreasonable time for a student on a bus

- Proximity to school is an indicator of travel time, need to account for actual travel times
- While students may not necessarily attend the closest school; distance, transportation time, and routing should be considered, and minimized where possible, in formulating attendance boundaries



Colored rings indicate proximity to each school:

- **Red:** within .5 miles
- **Orange:** within 1 mile
- **Yellow:** within 1.5 miles
- **Green:** within 2 miles

Rings may overlap creating spaces between schools that are equidistant from different schools.

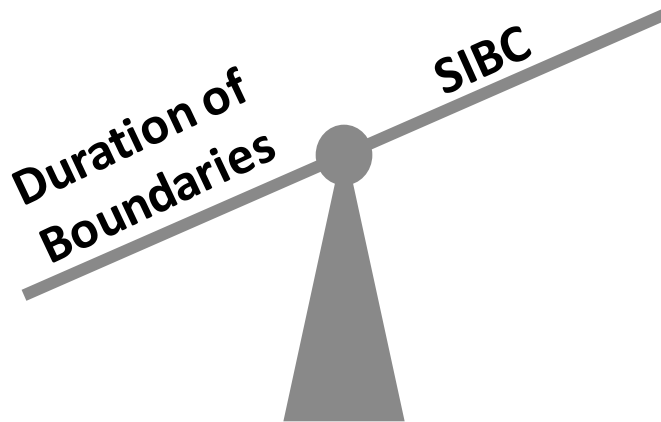
NOTE: The red line is the current elementary boundary.

VISUAL ONLY: does Not reflect a proposed boundary option

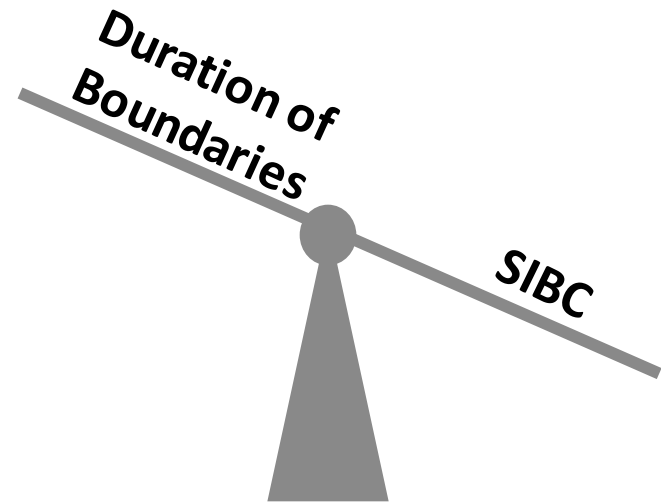
Contradicting Boundary Criteria

- In some cases, the Boundary Criteria may contradict one another
- A solution that may enhance one of the boundary criteria may work against a different one

For example: Duration of Boundaries vs Students Impacted in Boundary Change



Creating a boundary that impacts the least amount of students possible may not be as durable or long-lasting



Creating a long-lasting boundary that is as durable as possible may impact many students

This is why establishing a **PRIORITIZED LIST OF BOUNDARY CRITERIA** is important. In cases of contradictory criteria, a prioritized list will help the recommendation meet board objectives.

Activity – Boundary Criteria Prioritization

Select the top 3 most important boundary criteria during the transition period:

1. Boundary Natural Features
2. Demographic Considerations
3. Duration of Boundaries
4. Fiscal Capital Considerations
5. Fiscal Operational Considerations
6. Neighborhoods Intact
7. Projected Enrollment/Capacity Considerations
8. Students Impacted by Boundary Change
9. Transportation Considerations

IMPORTANT:

Boundary Criteria are typically the driver in a boundary process, but depending how the questions at the bottom of the page are answered, the solution may be about timing and available building capacity.

Additional Questions:

1. During the transition do the other buildings maintain the current K-4 grade configuration?
2. Is it preferred to just move students to other schools while the building temporarily going offline is renovated?
3. Is there a preferred number of students who are broken between the other buildings being used during the transition (Equal between the three or is there a smallest number)?
4. Where will the TJ PK be located when that building goes offline?

Next Steps

1. RSP completes 2023/24 enrollment analysis
2. Admin Boundary meetings begin in January 2024
3. Public input is held in February
4. Plan comes back to Board of Education for final adoption in March 2024

2023/24 COMPREHENSIVE BOUNDARY PROCESS

