

# Policy 0904.00 School Attendance Zones

## DEFINITIONS

- **Optimal Design Capacity:** is the capacity established by the West Ada School District at the time a school is being designed. This set capacity is then incorporated into the design by the architect prior to its construction. At the elementary level, the capacity is calculated by taking the number of regular education classes and multiplying this number by 25 students per classroom. Optimal design capacity allows the common areas of the school (gymnasium, cafeteria, library, etc.) to operate efficiently and effectively to educate students. At the secondary level, optimal design capacity is set to allow for teachers to have class preparation and planning time in his/her classroom rather than being required to travel between classes. Optimal design capacity allows for the efficient and effective educational use of common areas like gymnasiums, the cafeteria, library, and hallways. Optimal design capacities are the published capacities for each school in West Ada.
- **Program Capacity:** is the capacity a school has while accounting for special programs that are being used in what were originally classrooms designed for general education programs. These are usually, although not always, programs that include students from outside of the school's set attendance area. Examples include classrooms that serve self-contained gifted and talented students, preschool students, students in Positive Behavior Intervention (PBI) programs, and classrooms beyond the original design that are used for extended resource room students.
- **Emergency Capacity:** is the number of students who can attend an elementary or secondary school. At the elementary level this includes the maximum number of students that can be accommodated at each grade level with or without overcrowded classroom aides depending on the demands of the student enrollment numbers. Emergency capacity also includes utilizing temporary portable buildings to accommodate student enrollment overflow numbers. In other circumstances emergency capacity includes educating students in non-educational settings such as stages, gymnasiums, and other available spaces. At the secondary level, emergency capacity includes up to 100% classroom utilization, which means that all teachers travel between classrooms.

## RESIDENCY

All students in West Ada District schools will be assigned annually to the school that they attend under the authority of the Board of Trustees and by the direction of the Superintendent. Students shall be assigned to schools based on the residence of the parent(s)/legal guardian, as defined in Idaho law, within the school attendance areas that have been approved by the Board of Trustees. The residence of an emancipated student, per Idaho Code, shall be the primary residence of the student.

## PHASE-IN PROVISIONS

The Board of Trustees values and appreciates the role of stability in the success of our students and will consider recommendations to allow phase-in provisions for students to the extent allowable by available capacity and the criteria set forth below:

- Final Year. When school attendance areas are changed high school juniors and seniors may have the option to remain at their current school. Transportation to and from school will be the responsibility of the family. Younger siblings will attend the school in their new attendance area.
- In-district transfers. Students affected by a change of school attendance area may apply for an in-district transfer to stay at their current school (refer to policy 501.90).

## EXCEPTION

Nothing in this section shall prevent the Superintendent or designee from making individual student school assignments for the purpose of preserving the health, safety, or welfare of a student and/or school. The Superintendent may also present to the Board of Trustees for approval a plan for meeting class size reduction goals that involve non-boundary change solutions such as school enrollment caps and other alternative strategies.

## ATTENDANCE AREA CRITERIA AND CONSIDERATIONS

School enrollments and capacities (both optimal design capacity and program capacity) will be reviewed annually. School attendance areas will be adjusted when new school capacity is added either through the construction of a new school, when an addition increases capacity at an existing school, or the overcrowded condition at a school requires moving a large number of students to a less crowded school. All boundary recommendations and decisions will consider the following criteria:

- The creation or modification of school attendance areas shall not knowingly promote inequitable student assignments based on racial or ethnic groups, family income, religion, or disabilities.
- The capacity of each facility shall be considered to ensure optimal utilization of space while also planning for future enrollment increases.
- Emergency portables (portables; non-educational spaces that have been converted into classrooms) will generally not be considered available capacity when creating or adjusting attendance areas.

The Board of Trustees will consider but will not be limited to the following criteria while considering proposals to alter or create school attendance areas. The considerations are listed in rank order of their relative importance while making attendance area recommendations to and decisions by the Board of Trustees:

- **Optimal Design Capacity:** The overriding goal of altering school attendance areas is to reduce enrollment and relieve overcrowding. No other criteria holds greater weight while evaluating proposals to alter existing attendance areas or establishing an attendance area for a new school.

**Program Capacity:** In addition to balancing enrollment based on a school's optimum design capacity, special programs that are housed in existing schools will be considered before increasing a school's enrollment. Attendance area proposals will consider special programs as part of a school's general operations. As a general practice, these programs will not be moved in order to create more space in an existing school facility.

- **Safety.** Roads with heavy traffic and safety concerns created by open canals will be considered when establishing attendance areas. In particular, school attendance areas that cross busy roads should be avoided to prevent students from crossing these roads even when safety busing is provided.
- **Minimizing the Number of Students Moved.** Attendance area proposals should achieve reducing enrollment and reducing overcrowding while doing so by changing schools for the fewest students possible.
- **Feeder Schools.** Attendance area proposals should consider the percentage of students who will stay with their peers as they move from the elementary school to middle school to high school. The various capacity configuration of schools in West Ada does not allow for a system where 100% of all students from one school move up to the next school level stay together. Efforts should be made to keep as large a percentage of students with their peers together as possible as they transition from elementary, middle and high school.

- **Walk Zones.** An analysis of the cost of bus transportation will be provided to the Board of Trustees when students who are currently walking to a school are proposed to be bused to a different school. These costs should be minimized whenever possible. Relative driving distance between schools is not a part of this consideration.
- **Moving Students Multiple Times.** Using projected enrollment increases, attendance area changes should consider if proposed changes to an attendance area will be reversed or changed when future attendance areas are created in the future. Unless no other options exist to balance enrollment and reduce overcrowding, no set of students will be required to change schools due to the adoption of new attendance areas more than one time during elementary, middle, or high school.
- **Current Students and Future Enrollment.** Attendance area proposals should include an analysis of both current students and new students based on projections of increased enrollment created by subdivisions that have been approved for construction at the time the attendance area proposal is created.

## ATTENDANCE AREA DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Re-drawing attendance areas should be a public process that involves as many interested patrons as possible:

Administration presents to the Board of Trustees a proposal that includes the extent of the attendance area changes that will be included in the process of re-drawing existing attendance areas. Informational Meetings. The process should begin no later than the fall prior to the opening of a new school with meetings that inform the community of the overcrowding issues that will be resolved by redrawing existing attendance areas. At these meetings, interested patrons can volunteer to serve on the attendance area committee. The size of the committee should be limited to 15 people, including volunteers and district staff Permanent Attendance Area Committee. West Ada should maintain volunteers on a permanent attendance area committee. These members will meet periodically to review enrollment and capacity data and to analyze possible attendance area solutions. The members of the permanent attendance area committee are also members of the larger attendance area committee that is tasked creating an attendance area committee proposal to be presented to the Board of Trustees. City planners from the municipalities served by the West Ada School District will be invited to be part of the attendance area committee as ex officio members, not to determine the reconfiguration of school attendance areas but to facilitate the process of sharing planning goals between agencies. Public Hearings. (This is only applicable to a new school opening or when a large number of students move to relieve overcrowding. It does not apply to educational programs or to geographic areas where there is no development). Prior to being presented to the Board of Trustees, the proposed changes to existing attendance areas will

be presented to the public for comment at a minimum of three public hearings. The members of the attendance area committee will consider the testimony provided by patrons at the public hearings and make adjustments to the attendance area proposals, if feasible. Presentation to the Board of Trustees. The attendance area proposal will be presented to the Board of Trustees no later than the first regular meeting of the Board in February to go into effect the next school year.

---