



USD 497 News Release

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Boundary Advisory Committee Reviews Boundary Concepts

Working toward the goal of bringing the school board an update by March 27, the Lawrence Board of Education's Boundary Advisory Committee met March 8. The group reviewed and provided feedback about two boundary change concepts. The changes accommodate the potential closures of Broken Arrow and Pinckney Elementary Schools by redistributing students to neighboring schools. The committee's evaluation included considering school enrollment and class sizes, safety, walkability, and the impact of changes on the racial/ethnic and socioeconomic balance of affected schools.

The first concept reviewed shifted the boundaries of all elementary schools, except New York. The changes would move 666 or 20.7% of K-4 elementary students out of nine schools (Broken Arrow, Cordley, Deerfield, Hillcrest, Pinckney, Prairie Park, Quail Run, Schwegler, and Sunflower) into ten schools. With the boundary changes in Concept 1, Deerfield would have 5% less racial/ethnic diversity than its current student body, and Hillcrest would have 5% more racial/ethnic diversity. The percentage of students qualifying for free- or reduced-price lunches would decrease by more than 10% at Prairie Park and increase by more than 10% at Deerfield. New York and Woodlawn would remain below 75% capacity.

Among committee members' feedback about Concept 1 were concerns with many students being redistributed to Deerfield and Schwegler; leaving Langston Hughes, Sunset Hill, and Woodlawn with the capacity to receive more students and getting too close to capacity at Cordley. Other concerns were students crossing major streets to get to their new schools; issues with the alignment of bus routes with late versus early-start schools; and the significant amount of student movement across elementary schools.

Concept 2 was more popular with the committee. Members cited better building utilization and socioeconomic balance. They liked that Woodlawn gained students and that the boundary changes affected fewer students. Concept 2 would shift 443 or 13.8% of elementary students K-4 out of four schools (Broken Arrow, Cordley, Deerfield, and Pinckney) and into nine schools. With its changes, Deerfield would have 5% less racial/ethnic diversity. No school's socioeconomic balance would increase or decrease by 10%. New York's and Quail Run's boundaries would stay the same, and New York and Woodlawn remain below 75% of capacity. The committee shared concerns with the alignment of bus routes with late versus early-start schools and a desire to increase Quail Run's enrollment and decrease Sunflower's.

RSP & Associates will incorporate the committee's feedback into a new concept for review on March 22, from 5:30-7:00 p.m. at the district's Facilities and Operations Office, 711 E. 23rd St. Meeting materials are available at www.usd497.org/Boundaries.