

BOARD APPROVED RECOMMENDATIONS



AIKEN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



January 23, 2018

THE PATH TO THE BOARD'S JANUARY 23 VOTE ON REZONING

Town Hall meetings were held in late winter/early spring of the 2016-17 school year to share vital information with the community related to an urgent need to address overcrowding in areas of the District and review emerging enrollment trends.

At that time, District leaders promised to return to the community with recommendations to address westward migration and school capacity issues in another series of Town Hall meetings to be held “between Halloween and Christmas”.

Following the spring meetings, the board approved the creation of the Enrollment Trends Workgroup, consisting of District administrators and a representative member from each of the community's five Area Advisory Councils. This group was charged to look at immediate and sustained ways to alleviate overcrowding in Aiken County Public Schools and address capacity issues. Following a recommendation by the workgroup, the board approved the support of outside professionals to develop a comprehensive demographic study of the District to shed further light on emerging population trends.

The Enrollment Trends Workgroup provided demography study consultants with the following three parameters to guide their work:

- Demographic and enrollment balance within defined geographic areas (within area boundaries)
- Demographic and enrollment balance to a limited degree across defined geographic areas
- Comprehensive demographic and enrollment balance across the entire school district

The results of the demography study were shared with board members in October. In addition, several updates were provided to the board related to administrative plans to alleviate overcrowding at Byrd Elementary utilizing existing funds. The board also approved a [series of recommendations](#) that would be shared with community stakeholders for their feedback and consideration during the second series of meetings.

Many of the administrative recommendations included attendance line shifts for current families. Administration and school board members are certainly sympathetic to the concerns of families and expressed very early in this process their desire to protect families from hardships and made clear a **grandfathering provision** to be utilized with all students impacted by attendance line shifts. The provision provides that current students who have already begun school in a school building may elect to stay where they are until the final grade (5th, 8th, 12th) in that building, though transportation is not provided to “grandfathered” students. Upon reaching the final grade in the school, the student follows the regular path (middle/high) to which he or she is properly zoned.

Siblings of students grandfathered to stay in a school they've already started will have the opportunity to request a transfer. Every effort will be made to honor transfers of younger siblings.

Following the receipt of public input during Town Hall meetings, and stakeholder comments and suggestions submitted online and via email, board members reconvened on the matter during a special called open-to-the-public work-study session held January 6. Based upon community feedback, a number of alternatives to the original series of recommendations were presented by District administration at the work-study session and released to the community.

After thoughtful consideration of administrative recommendations and community feedback, each recommendation was considered, deliberated and voted upon separately during the Tuesday, January 23 regularly scheduled school board meeting. The Aiken County School Board voted favorably on the following eight recommendations.

BOARD-APPROVED RECOMMENDATION 1

The board approved a change in grade configurations for Kennedy Middle School, Schofield Middle School and Aiken Middle School by establishing a 7th and 8th grade span at Kennedy Middle School, a 7th and 8th grade span at Schofield Middle School and reconstituting Aiken Middle School as a 6th grade intermediate school.

The intermediate school is a creative solution to remedy over and underutilization of middle schools in Area 1 (the Aiken Area) as well as demographic imbalance. The administration and board look forward to the anticipated academic and social benefits of an intermediate school for students.

Some of those benefits include:

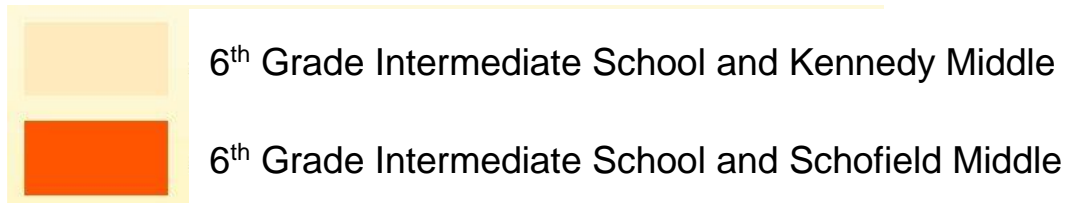
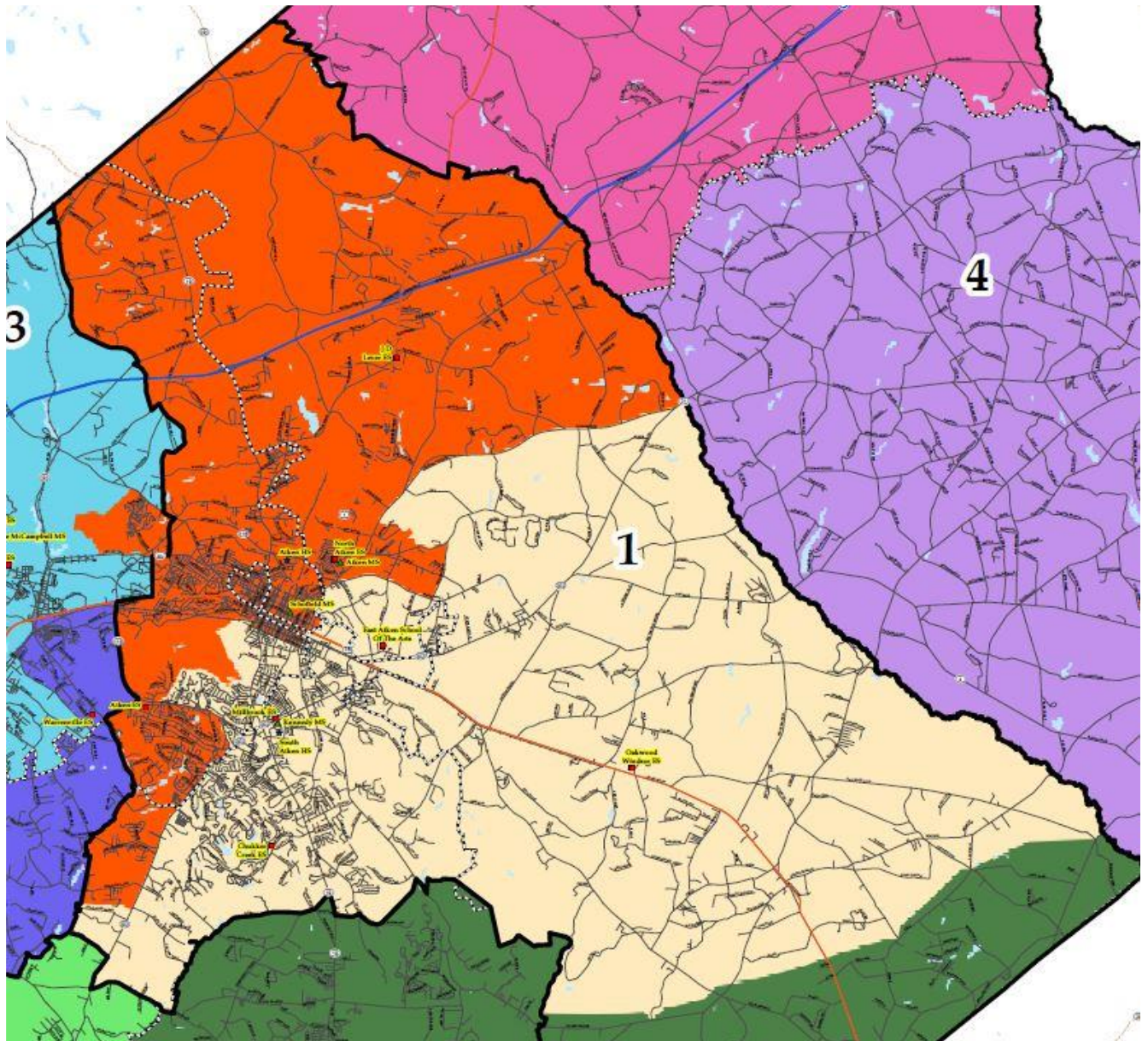
- Community-oriented philosophy for the transition between elementary and middle.
- Intellectual growth: transition from concrete to abstract thinking.
- Focus on building student confidence and teamwork.
- Social-emotional development and support.
- Age- and developmentally appropriate activities, including activities specifically designed for sixth graders who are not eligible to participate in middle school athletics.
- Elimination of social influence of older students.

With the involvement of community stakeholders throughout the planning and implementation of Aiken's Intermediate School, the 6th grade only school will welcome

students residing in the Aiken High and South Aiken High attendance areas (Map A) beginning in the 2019-20 school year.

MAP ATTACHMENT A

Area One Middle Schools – All students served in grades 7 and 8 by Schofield Middle and Kennedy Middle will attend the new 6th grade intermediate school.



BOARD-APPROVED RECOMMENDATION 2

Aiken's Board of Education unanimously approved the administrative recommendation to pursue a \$90 million bond through public referendum to finance the construction, renovation and expansion of six building projects. These projects include Midland Valley High School, Hammond Hill Elementary School, Belvedere Elementary School, Millbrook Elementary School, a new elementary school between Graniteville and North Augusta and a new middle school between Graniteville and North Augusta.

School administration proposed and the board approved a date of Tuesday, May 1, 2018, as the date of the public referendum vote.

The proposed **BALLOT QUESTION** will read as follows.

Shall the Board of Education of The Consolidated School District of Aiken County, South Carolina (the "School District") be empowered to issue, at one time or from time to time, general obligation bonds of the School District, in a principal amount of not exceeding \$90,000,000, the proceeds of which shall be used to finance the costs (including architectural, engineering, legal and related fees) of acquiring, constructing, improving, equipping, expanding, renovating, and repairing school facilities, including land acquisition, if necessary, within the School District, as follows:

Renovation and Expansion of existing facilities:

Midland Valley High School
Hammond Hill Elementary School
Belvedere Elementary School
Millbrook Elementary School

Constructing and equipping new facilities:

A new elementary school and a new middle school sharing a common campus site location and sharing the utilization of certain common facilities as may be practicable, to be located between Graniteville and North Augusta?

If the voter wishes to vote in favor of the question, fill in the oval next to "In favor of the question;" if the voter wishes to vote against the question, fill in the oval next to the words, "Opposed to the question."

In favor of the question /yes ☐

Opposed to the question /no ☐

FUNDING OPTIONS CONSIDERED

A number of funding options for needed renovations and new construction were discussed through a series of Town Hall Meetings held throughout the county over the last several months.

In South Carolina, schools and districts do not receive state or federal funding for capital improvements such as cyclic maintenance, improvements, additions, renovations, repairs and building construction. These improvements must be funded at the local District/community level.

Funding options discussed for current facility needs included the use of 8% funds, a voter-approved renewal of the One Cent Sales Tax, and a possible bond through referendum.

Funding through 8% funds, while possible, would push facility construction start dates to 2024 as funding is dedicated over the next seven years to work in conjunction with voter-approved One Cent Sales Tax projects. Once the revenues are generated utilizing 8% funds, construction on the projects would then take more than eight years to complete (8% funds generate approximately \$18 million per year; and approximately 40% is used for upkeep and repair to existing facilities and 60% for new construction). An estimated completion year for the six projects is 2032 or later.

Capital Improvements through One Cent Sales Tax funding would have also been possible, if voters supported a sales tax renewal. The current One Cent Sales Tax was voter approved in November of 2014, began on March 1, 2015 and will sunset on February 28, 2025. The tax does not automatically renew. Voters may have the option to renew the tax supporting new projects. Using a voter-approved renewal of the One Cent Sales Tax as the funding mechanism, the earliest possible date for construction to begin on these projects would be March 2025.

Due to the urgency of current facility expansion and new construction needs, the board elected to pursue a \$90 million bond referendum. If the community votes in support of a \$90 million bond through referendum, construction could begin for the six projects in 2019 with an estimated completion year of 2022.

The bond, if supported, would increase property taxes by an estimated \$20 per \$100,000 home (for 4% tax base).

BOARD-APPROVED RECOMMENDATION 3

The board approved students in Trolley Run Station area to be reassigned from the Byrd Elementary, Leavelle McCampbell Middle, and Midland Valley High attendance pattern to the Aiken Elementary, Schofield Middle and Aiken High attendance pattern. This shift in attendance lines for students in the Trolley Run Station neighborhood is intended to relieve overcrowding and allow for expected continued growth in the Graniteville/Area 3 zone.

The Trolley Run neighborhood is located in close proximity to Area 1 schools. The distance from Trolley Run Blvd. to Aiken High School is just 4.1 miles, several miles closer than Midland Valley High, the school that students in the neighborhood were previously zoned to attend. Midland Valley High is 8.3 miles away.

In addition, the Trolley Run neighborhood has a high rate of student transfer requests, with a number of students already attending a school outside of their attendance zone on special permission.

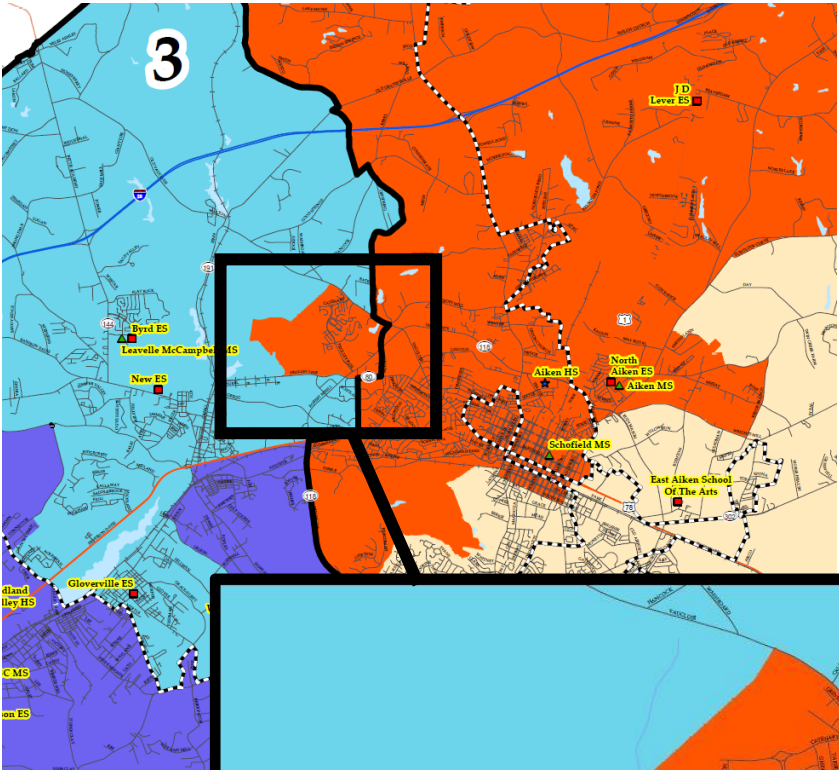
Currently in Trolley Run, 25 students attend Midland Valley High School and 14 attend school outside of zone (12 already attend Aiken High). Twenty-five students currently attend Leavelle McCampbell Middle School, inside their current zone, and three already attend their board-approved new in-zone school, Schofield Middle. Sixty-two students attend Byrd Elementary School from the Trolley Run neighborhood. An additional 20 students attend school outside of their current zone, with seven of those students already attending Aiken Elementary School.

During board discussion, Area 3 representative Mr. Wesley Hightower made a motion that families currently residing in the Trolley Run Station neighborhood would be permitted to extend the grandfathering provision to younger siblings of grandfathered students. Additionally he moved that students currently attending Byrd Elementary and Leavelle McCampbell Middle School be allowed to continue their previously designated attendance pattern through the 12th grade at Midland Valley High School. Grandfathered students from Trolley Run must provide their own transportation.

Hightower's motion passed and reassignment will begin next school year (2018-19).

MAP ATTACHMENT B

Trolley Run Station – All students currently assigned to Byrd Elementary, Leavelle McCampbell Middle, and Midland Valley High will be assigned to Aiken Elementary, Schofield Middle, and Aiken High.



Number of Current Students Impacted	
Elementary	62
Middle School	25
High School	25
TOTAL	112



BOARD-APPROVED RECOMMENDATION 4

A number of families residing near the Barnwell County line each year make the decision to transfer out of district and attend Williston area schools due to the closer proximity of Williston schools. A total of 11 students transferred to Williston area schools this year.

The board took action in an effort to retain these students, approving the attendance line for students living within that parcel of land to shift, with students attending New Ellenton STEAM Middle and Silver Bluff High. Students in the southern parcel of land along the Barnwell County line from the Oakwood Windsor Elementary, Aiken Middle, and Aiken High attendance pattern will continue to be zoned for Oakwood Windsor Elementary.

This change will begin with the 2018-19 school year, and includes a grandfathering provision for current attendees. Attendance areas are defined in Map Attachment C.

While some of the approved distances represent an increase in actual miles driven, travel times to the approved schools are expected to decrease on many routes due to much less traffic on these roadways.

Colbert Bridge Road to Silver Bluff High - 11.5 miles

Colbert Bridge Road to South Aiken High - 11 miles

Colbert Bridge Road to Aiken Middle - 12.2 miles

Colbert Bridge Road to Kennedy Middle - 10.1 miles

Colbert Bridge Road to New Ellenton Middle - 5.3 miles

Beck Road to Aiken Middle - 18.1 miles

Beck Road to Kennedy Middle - 18.5 miles

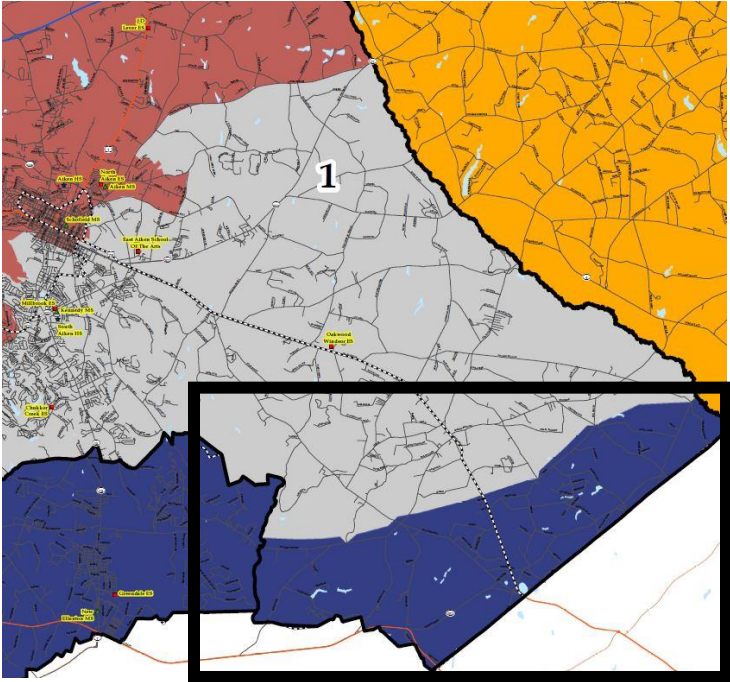
Beck Road to New Ellenton Middle - 17.7 miles

Beck Road to South Aiken High - 17.7 miles

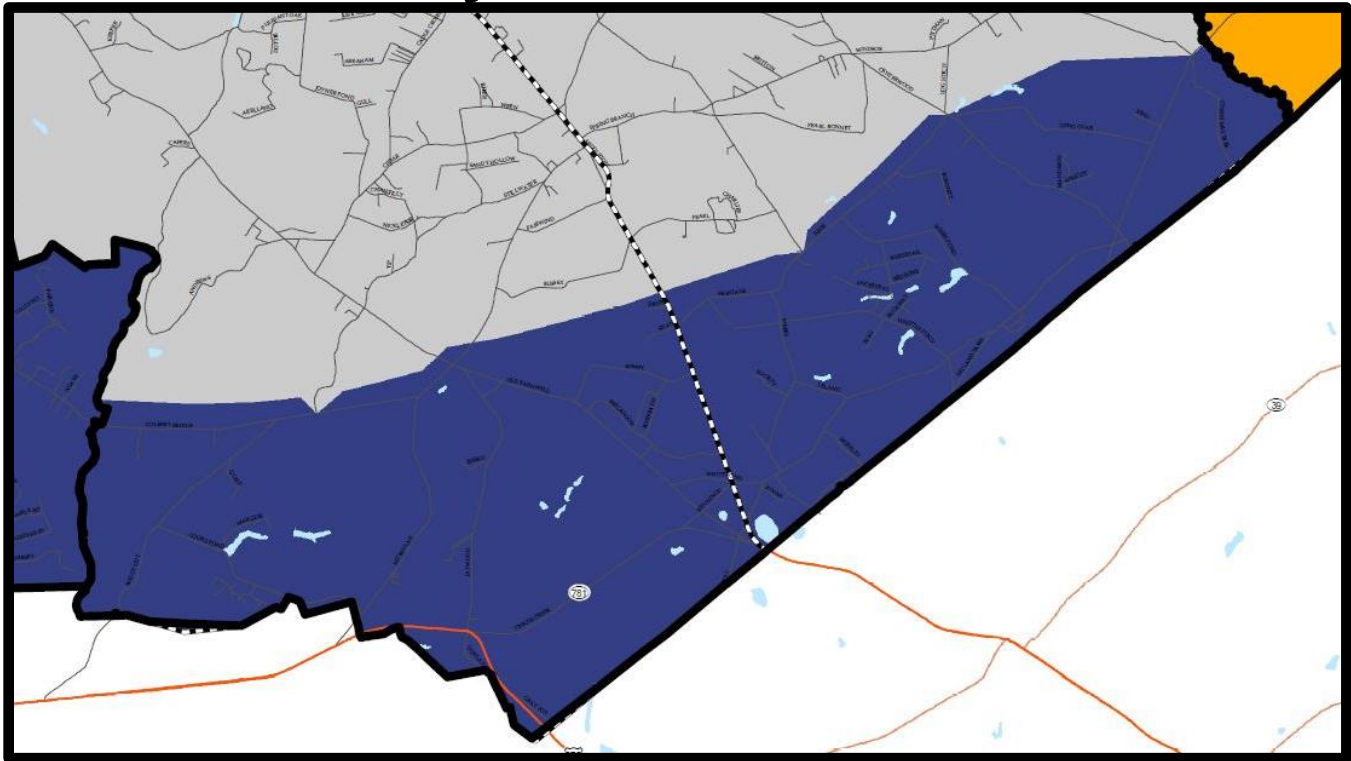
Beck Road to Silver Bluff High - 21.3 miles

MAP ATTACHMENT C

Barnwell County Line – Students in this area currently assigned to Oakwood Windsor Elementary, Aiken Middle, and either Aiken or South Aiken High will continue to attend Oakwood Windsor Elementary but would be assigned to New Ellenton Middle and Silver Bluff High.



Number of Current Students Impacted	
Middle School	34
High School	44
TOTAL	78

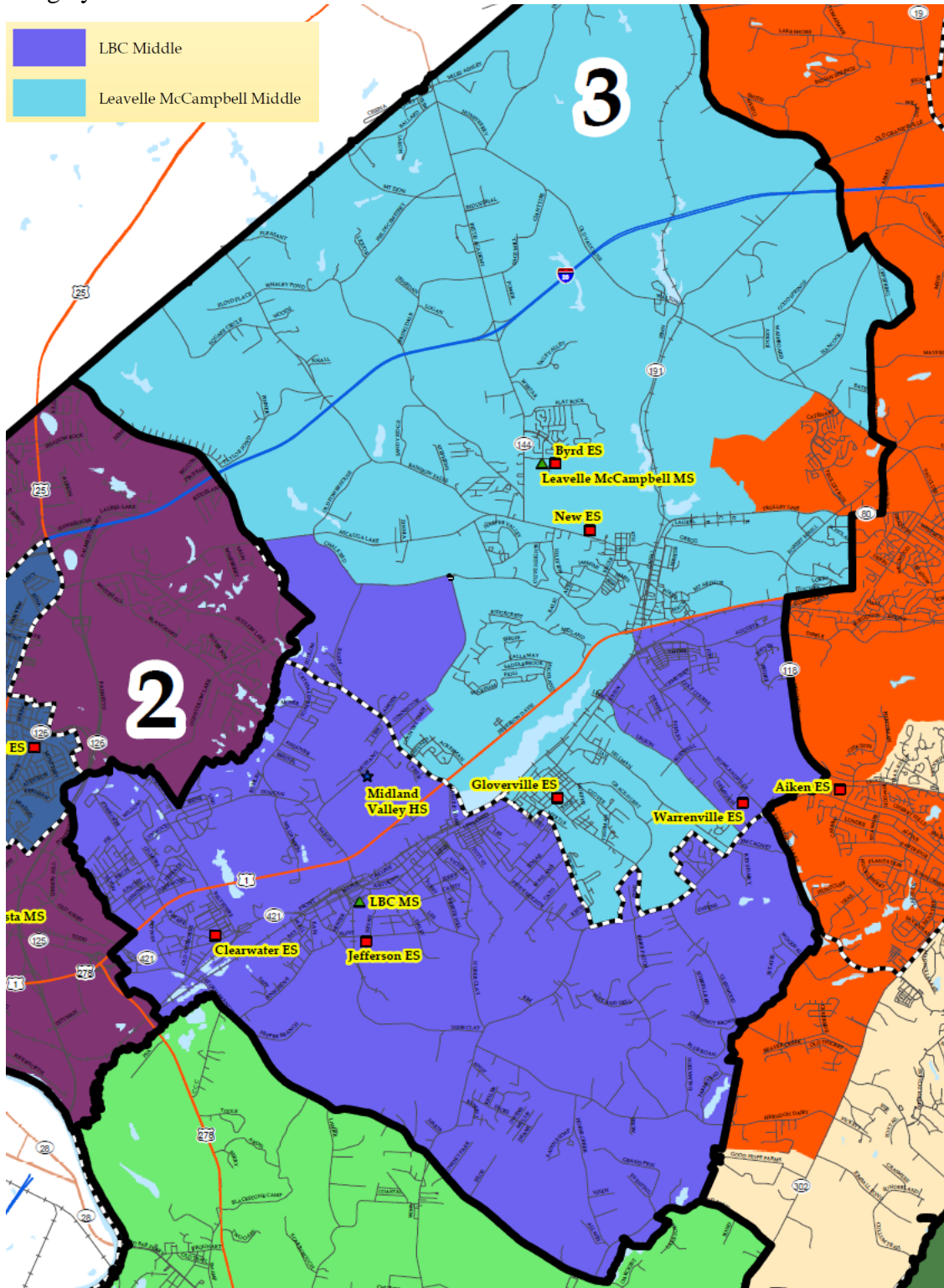


BOARD-APPROVED RECOMMENDATION 5

To provide additional space for growth at Leavelle McCampbell Middle, the board approved adjusting middle school attendance lines between Leavelle McCampbell Middle and Langley-Bath-Clearwater (LBC) Middle. Though Leavelle McCampbell was built above capacity, with capacity for 750 students and current enrollment at 650, home construction in the current middle school attendance zone is anticipated to exceed available space for students. This shift in attendance lines brings Leavelle McCampbell's enrollment down to 503 and increases LBC's from 556 to 698 (still under LBC's capacity of 795). This adjustment includes a grandfathering provision for current attendees and would begin with the 2018-19 school year. Attendance areas are defined in Map Attachment D.

MAP ATTACHMENT D

Area Three Middle Schools – All students zoned for Byrd Elementary, Gloverville Elementary, and the new Area Three Elementary School will attend Leavelle McCampbell. All students zoned for Clearwater Elementary, Jefferson Elementary, and Warrenville Elementary will attend Langley Bath Clearwater Middle



BOARD-APPROVED RECOMMENDATION 6

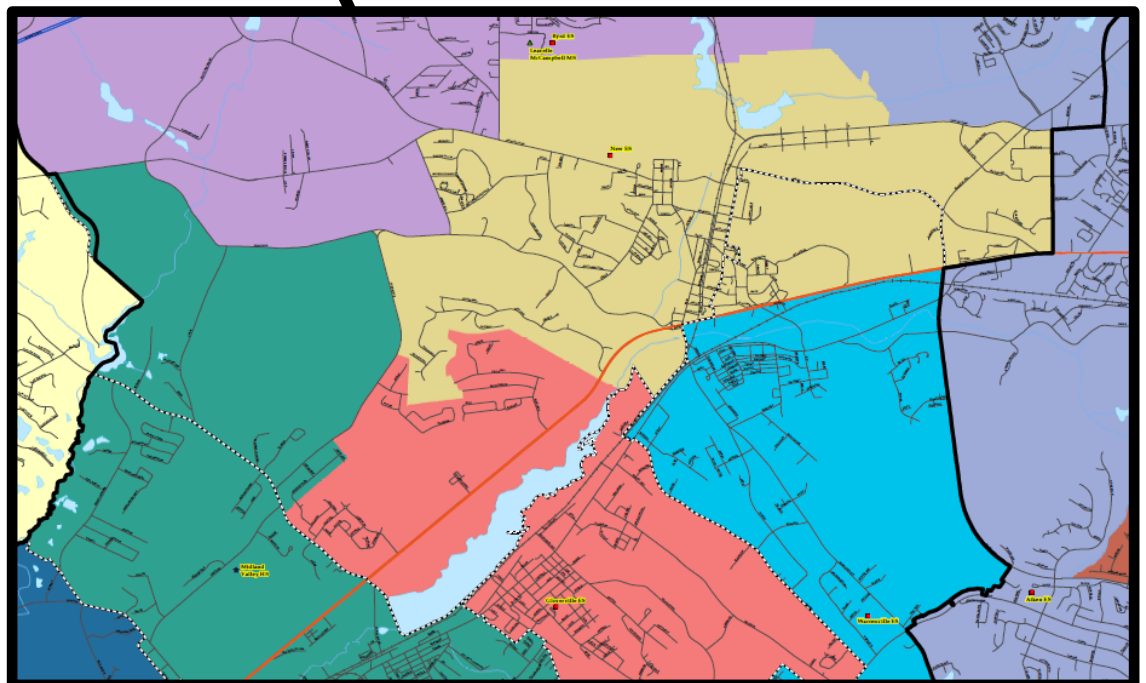
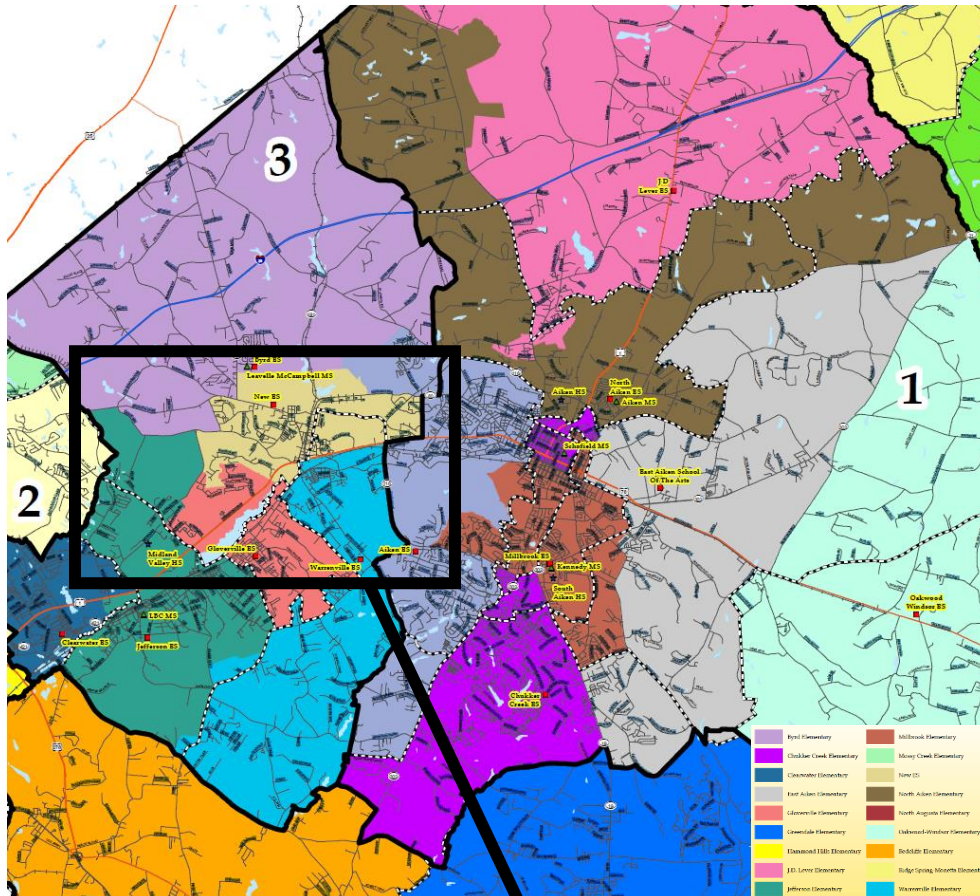
To provide additional space for growth at Byrd Elementary School (currently at 118% capacity), the board approved school administration's recommendation to adjust elementary school attendance lines between Byrd Elementary School, Warrentville Elementary School, Gloverville Elementary School, Jefferson Elementary School, Clearwater Elementary School and a new elementary school located on Ascauga Lake Rd.

This adjustment includes a grandfathering provision for current attendees and would begin with the 2018-19 school year for Jefferson Elementary School, Clearwater Elementary School and Gloverville Elementary School. Attendance line adjustments for Warrentville Elementary School will start when the new, repurposed elementary school opens in 2019-20.

Attendance areas are defined in Map Attachment E.

MAP ATTACHMENT E

Proposed Elementary School Boundaries – The new Area Three elementary school zone includes portions of the current Byrd and Warrenville zones. Gloverville gains a portion of Byrd's zone northwest of Langley Pond, and Jefferson gains a portion of Byrd's zone north of Sudlow Lake Road.



BOARD-APPROVED RECOMMENDATION 7

Public input and feedback has been encouraged and valued throughout attendance line shift discussions. A number of alternative maps and attendance shifts were developed and considered by the school board based on stakeholder suggestions and requests.

Prior to discussion of Recommendation 7, board members entertained and approved a motion to separate the recommendation of line adjustments for elementary and high school students into two parts (A and B).

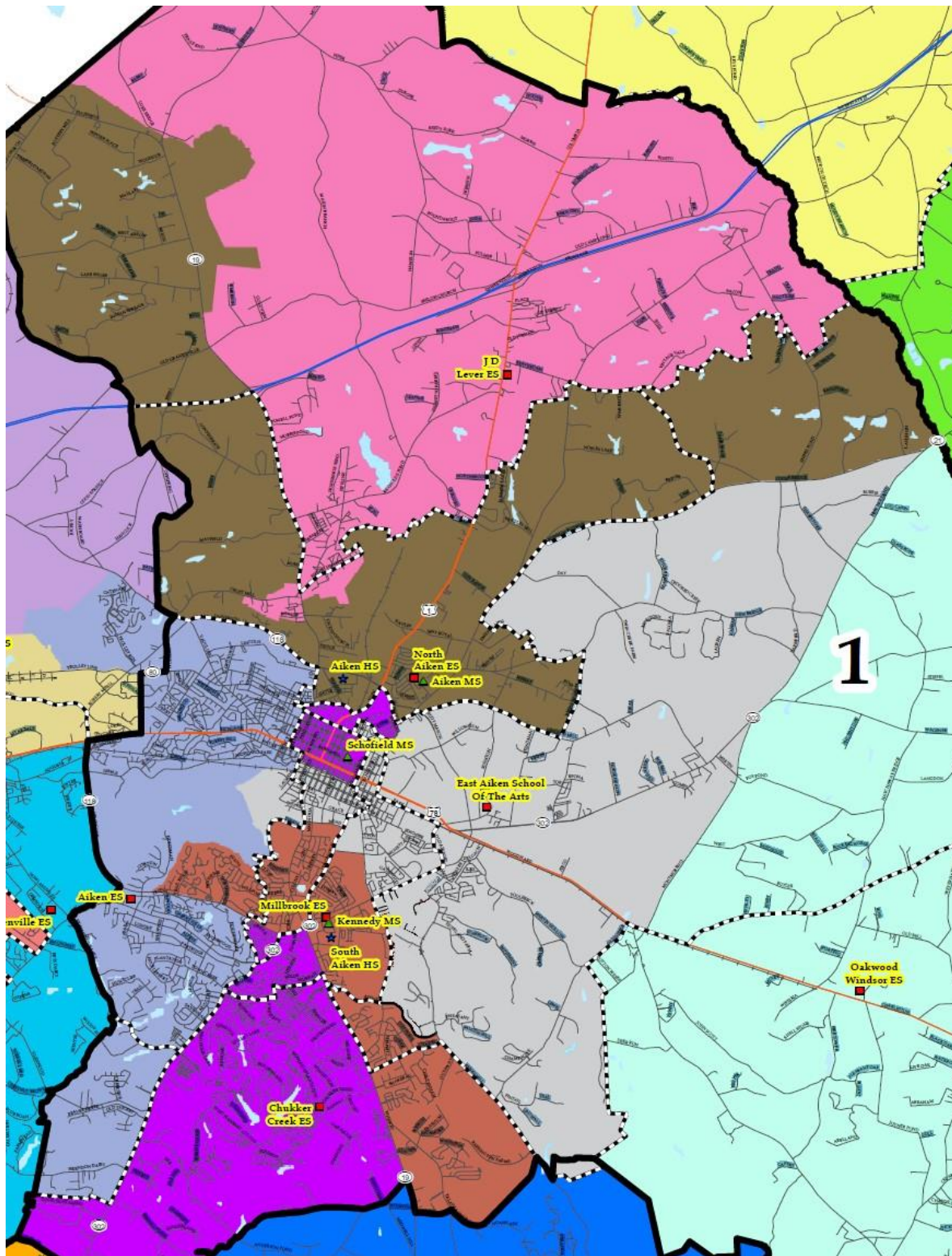
Recommendation A includes the attendance line shifts between J.D. Lever Elementary School, North Aiken Elementary School, Aiken Elementary School, Oakwood Windsor Elementary School, East Aiken School of the Arts, Chukker Creek Elementary School, and Millbrook Elementary School. Part B includes line shifts for Aiken High School and South Aiken High School.

After more than a half hour of discussion related to the elementary line shifts, board members voted affirmatively on both parts of the recommendation.

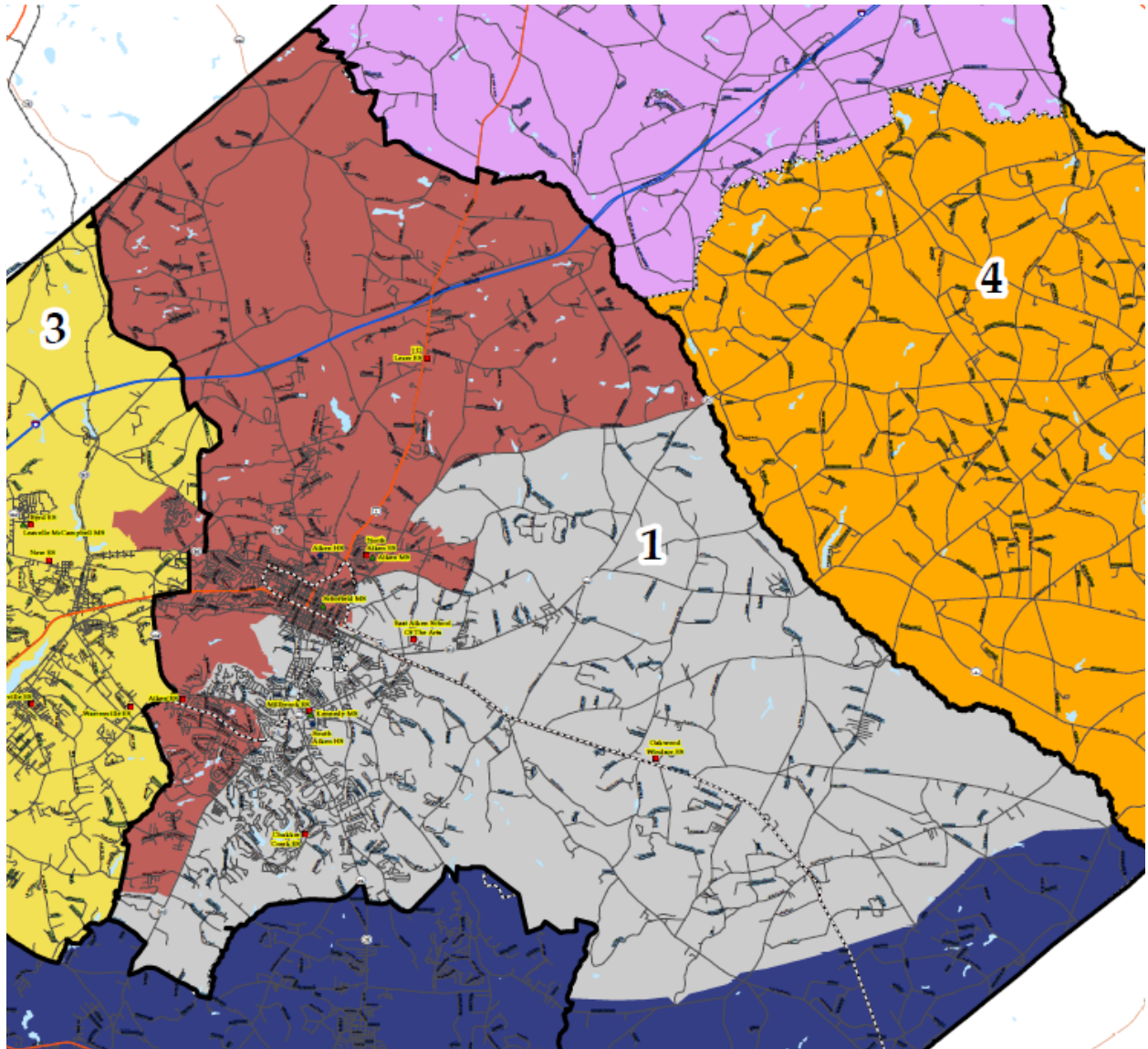
Adjustments include a grandfathering provision for current attendees and would begin with the 2018-19 school year. Attendance areas are defined in Map Attachments F (Elementary Schools) and G (High Schools).

MAP F ATTACHMENT FOR RECOMMENDATION # 7

Area 1 Elementary Schools



Area 1 High Schools



BOARD-APPROVED RECOMMENDATION 8

Demographers typically recommend a comprehensive review of school attendance zones, enrollment, and population trends across the entire school district at least every 10 years. Aiken County has not completed a comprehensive review of this kind in three decades.

With a shifting population and extensive growth in Aiken County, the school board has decided to comprehensively review attendance zones, enrollment and population trends across the entire school district every five years. The recommendation has been defined in Board Policy Draft JCA, which is attached. The “first reading” for this new policy was part of the January 23, 2018 school board meeting. An anticipated second and final reading is planned for the next regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, February 13.

POLICY CHANGE FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION CONSIDERATION (SUPPORTING RECOMMENDATION #8)

Policy

ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS TO SCHOOLS

Code **JCA** Issued **4/02**

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for assignment of students to schools.

The district will assign students to attend the schools that serve their legal places of residence as determined by the board of trustees for the current school year. The district administration and/or the area advisory councils may make special exceptions.

The district will permit eligible disabled students to attend school in another attendance area if facilities within the attendance areas where they reside do not house the appropriate special education programs.

Attendance Boundary Review

The board of trustees will review regularly school attendance areas for existing schools and projected attendance areas for new schools. This comprehensive review will occur, minimally, once every five (5) years. A targeted review may be initiated prior to the completion of a new or substantially renovated school. The review shall include analysis related to school attendance zones, enrollment, population trends, demographics, and program demand. Revisions to school attendance zones may be considered for several of the following reasons to include, but not limited to:

- Construction of a new school and/or the construction of additional capacity at an existing school;
- Closing or suspending operations of an existing school;
- Relieve overcrowded schools and fill less crowded, under-enrolled schools; and
- Vertical alignment and grade configurations of schools.

Adopted 9/9/75; Revised 4/23/02

Legal references:

- A. S. C. Code, 1976, as amended:
1. Section 59-19-90 (9) - Transfer and assignment authority.
 2. Section 59-63-470 - Transfer of pupils when enrollment of such pupils threatens to disturb peace.
 3. Section 59-63-32(b)(2) – Requirements to enroll child in public school; affidavit; penalties for providing false information.