

April 17, 2017

A Message from Superintendent Greg Baker

Dear Alderwood, Cordata, Parkview and Northern Heights Families,

Last month, our [Attendance Areas PreK-12 Standing Committee](#) emailed you an update about some of the attendance area adjustments being considered to better balance enrollment at Cordata Elementary School by moving some students to Alderwood, Parkview and Northern Heights. This will relieve some enrollment pressure at Cordata Elementary School due to northside growth.

I'm thankful to this dedicated group for the thoughtful [recommendation](#) they recently submitted to me for adjusting Cordata Elementary School's attendance areas. The committee explored many options and used our policy criteria to land on a recommendation that takes a first step at addressing northside growth among our elementary schools.

I especially appreciate the time they took to engage with families who are affected, to listen to their feedback at the input meeting and review the survey data, and to meet again as a committee to give it careful consideration.

Thank you to those families who took the survey to provide your feedback. Our receiving schools of Alderwood, Parkview and Northern Heights have been very gracious in preparing to welcome new students in August, approximately 15 to Alderwood, 25 to Parkview and 28 to Northern Heights. During the input process, I heard some parent concerns about potential impacts to space and class size, and wanted to address those here. Our staffing for class sizes is driven by a formula based on where students attend a particular school, so when students move from one school to another, staffing resources follow them as warranted. Therefore, we do not anticipate that these moves will affect class size, especially because the students coming from Cordata will be spread throughout grade levels at their new schools. Both Alderwood and Northern Heights have existing classroom space; Parkview's principal is closely monitoring the numbers by grade level to consider the following options as needed: utilizing an existing portable, converting spaces within the school for instructional use or determining the feasibility of adding a second portable.

I have accepted this committee's recommendation for updated attendance areas and have communicated this decision with the affected families at Cordata. Our [online maps](#) have been updated to reflect this change, effective for the 2017-18 school year.

We also received some questions about why some of our other elementary schools weren't included in this adjustment. In looking at which schools could best receive students who currently attend Cordata, the committee carefully considered proximity for busing and available space. We are beginning a process later this month with a [Facilities Planning Task Force](#) to plan for our next bond and this will likely include rebuilding or renovating some of our older elementary schools that could accommodate more growth in the future. These schools include Alderwood, Carl Cozier, Columbia, Parkview, Sunnyland and Roosevelt, and perhaps a 15th

elementary school in north Bellingham on our King Mountain property. In addition, the [Attendance Areas PreK-12 Standing Committee](#) will continue to meet later this spring and into next school year to use this information to recommend future PreK-12 attendance area updates to address districtwide demographics, inequities, transportation issues and phasing, and future growth.

I thank you in advance for providing a warm welcome to our students and families who are transitioning into our Alderwood, Parkview and Northern Heights school communities.

In appreciation,

Greg Baker