



## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Superintendent Greg Baker

**FROM:** Steve Clarke, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, and Jay Jordan, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning

**RE:** Attendance Areas PreK-12 Standing Committee, Phase II Recommendation

**DATE:** Oct. 11, 2019

We are pleased to present the following document that provides information on the PreK-12 Attendance Area Standing Committee process, describes how we have structured our work to respond to the different challenges, explains our rationale, describes our recommendation and outlines some next steps.

The document is organized in five sections:

- I. History, Context and Alignment with The Bellingham Promise
- II. The Charge, Challenges, Membership and Process
- III. Summary of Work
- IV. Recommendation
- V. Next Steps

### **I. History, Context and Alignment with The Bellingham Promise**

Over the district's history, Bellingham Public Schools (BPS) has evolved in a number of ways, including its attendance areas (also known as school boundaries), population and the number of schools. As birth rates, residential patterns and demographics change, so do school boundaries. The Bellingham community continues to grow, and the district's voters have continued to pass bonds to support facility improvements and the construction of new schools.

Whenever we make decisions to build and open a new school (Wade King, Cordata), rebuild a school with more capacity (Happy Valley), close a school (Larrabee) or adjust school boundaries (Cordata, Squalicum and Bellingham), we issue a call for applications to form a committee that represents the community to help process these changes and seek community input.

In early 2018, the Attendance Area PreK-12 Standing Committee reconvened to examine data, maps, growth projections and enrollment districtwide to help determine how to best accommodate growth in the northern part of our city and balance enrollment.

The committee was charged with readjusting middle school boundaries, relieving capacity issues and considering new boundaries for three elementary schools that are to be rebuilt by fall 2022 (Alderwood, Sunnyland, and Parkview).

The following consideration factors from policy 3130 have guided the committee's work:

- Minimize disruption of student's established learning programs.
- Keep siblings in the same elementary, middle or high school, whenever possible.
- Provide overall balance of student enrollment related to facility size, taking into account future growth patterns.
- Provide a reasonably balanced socio-economic relationship in all schools.
- Provide the most efficient and feasible means for student transportation to and from school, including whether safe routes to school might exist, minimizing travel time and transportation costs.
- Keep neighborhoods together, whenever possible.
- Maintain feeder patterns so that elementary/middle/high school attendance areas coincide, and students stay with the same cohort as they progress through school levels, whenever possible.
- Follow natural boundaries and utilize existing physical boundaries such as major roadways to delineate boundaries, whenever possible.

Under The Bellingham Promise, "We, as a community, make a collective commitment to Bellingham's children." One strategy for accomplishing this is the "One Schoolhouse Approach," whereby we strive for excellence in all of our schools and an equitable distribution of resources and services across schools. To do this, ideally, enrollment is balanced across schools, and all schools are able to provide a wide range of course choices, schedules and programs. More balance of students from different economic backgrounds, as measured by low-income families, across schools is also important to ensure equity for students.

## **II. The Charge, Challenges, and Membership**

### ***The Charge***

The superintendent charged the committee to advise and recommend 1) revised middle school attendance due to Shuksan and Whatcom having higher enrollment than Fairhaven and Kulshan, 2) revised elementary school attendance areas by considering more even splits from elementary schools to middle schools 3) consider how to also align any boundary changes with the opening of three new elementary schools in 2021 and 2022 each of which will have increased capacity. The group has combined all three charges into one recommendation for the superintendent to consider.

The group is not responsible for looking at changes to schools or programs but might provide suggestions within the recommendations.

## *Challenges*

Over the last 20 years, the population of the Bellingham area has grown by 39% to 93,940 in 2015 and it is anticipated to grow by another 33% over the next 20 years ([Bellingham City's 2015 Comprehensive Plan](#)). We do not anticipate that student enrollment in the public schools will grow at that level as the population ages. However, much of the future population growth is anticipated in the north end of the school district in areas that feed Shuksan Middle School, Cordata Elementary and Squalicum High. According to the city of Bellingham, in the next few years several new housing areas will open around the Cordata and Alderwood elementary attendance areas. This emphasizes that as of the 2018 school year with Shuksan already over 700 students and two other middle schools below 600, that we need to adjust middle school attendance areas.

As described in the charge the focus of the attendance committee was to adjust these middle school boundaries for Shuksan Middle School which is absorbing all the growth in the north and align these new middle school boundaries with the three new elementary school replacements that will be able to hold approximately 450 students each. The committee also was asked to design a way to alleviate the overcrowding at Silver Beach elementary.

This growth in population in the north end poses a challenge for the committee. Shuksan does not share attendance boundaries with Fairhaven Middle School and only shares a small boundary around Sunnyland and Roosevelt with Kulshan Middle School. These two schools have room to absorb the growth from Shuksan. Whatcom Middle School is only 1.7 miles from Shuksan but cannot take in all the growth at Shuksan, because Whatcom is also over 700 students. One advantage is that Whatcom does share boundaries with Kulshan and Fairhaven. Another design challenge the committee wrestled with is adjusting attendance areas so two middle schools can absorb future growth in the north.

The challenge with the overcrowding at Silver Beach is that Northern Heights, the closest elementary school, does not have room to take in additional students. One portable was already added to Northern Heights during the 2017-18 school year. This means the committee needed to consider how the additional room at Parkview and Sunnyland could support the challenge with Silver Beach.

The Bellingham Promise and Policy 3130 also supports the work of the committee by challenging them to not only balance the number of students in each of our schools, but to also balance the student demographics across all of our schools by considering the percent of families who qualify for free and reduced meals at each school.

In short, one of our guiding principles was to consider equity across our schools. We knew the changes would impact many families and to accomplish our charge we would need to consider all four middle schools and the use of additional room at two of our future rebuilt elementary schools Sunnyland and Parkview. Along with the design challenge, we also knew there would be a challenge of communicating the purpose of the changes. Our design would ask some families to change schools where no overcrowding existed, and we knew that we would need to move

some families into a school that was considered already overcrowded. Both of these were a part of our design process to address our challenges.

### ***Committee Membership***

The committee membership was solicited through email invitations, website postings, and word of mouth. The membership was drawn from a wide range of stakeholder groups and was comprised of the following:

- Micah Smith, Principal, Alderwood Elementary School
- Melissa Hayes-Norskog, Parent, Alderwood Elementary School
- Matt Whitten, Principal, Birchwood Elementary School
- Rachel Smith, Teacher, Birchwood Elementary School
- April Barker, Parent, Birchwood Elementary School
- Ari Feeney, Principal, Carl Cozier Elementary School
- Aaron Darragh, Principal, Columbia Elementary School
- Kate Deslter, Parent, Columbia Elementary School
- Analisa Ficklin, Principal, Cordata Elementary School
- Sharece Steinkamp, Principal, Geneva Elementary School
- Emily O'Connor, Parent, Geneva Elementary School
- Pam Pottle, Principal, Northern Heights Elementary School
- Mylo Allen, Principal, Parkview Elementary School
- Carrie Glimm, Parent, Roosevelt Elementary School
- Tom Gresham, Principal, Roosevelt Elementary School
- Ken Putney, Parent, Silver Beach Elementary School
- Nicole Talley, Principal, Silver Beach Elementary
- Lynn Heimsoth, Principal, Sunnyland Elementary School
- Lillian Harris, Secretary, Sunnyland Elementary School
- Stephanie Horsfall, Teacher, Sunnyland Elementary School
- Eric Alexander, Parent, Wade King Elementary/Fairhaven Middle
- Miguel Boriss, Teacher, Fairhaven Middle School
- Steve Ruthford, Principal, Fairhaven Middle School
- Meagan Dawson, Principal, Kulshan Middle School
- Tommy Lingbloom, Teacher, Kulshan Middle School
- Amy Carder, Principal, Shuksan Middle School
- Dustin Heaton, Teacher, Shuksan Middle School
- Jeff Coulter, Principal, Whatcom Middle School
- Linda Miller, Principal, Bellingham High School
- Ben Goodwin, Teacher, Bellingham High School
- Katie Jones, Assistant Principal, Squalicum High School
- Mehar Singh, Student, Squalicum High School
- Jacqueline Brawley, Executive Director, Communications and Community Relations
- Mike Copland, Deputy Superintendent
- Kristi Dominguez, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, Early Childhood Education
- Isabel Meaker, Special Assistant to the Superintendent, Family Engagement
- Simone Sangster, Assistant Superintendent, Finance and Operations
- Rae Anne Thon, Director of Transportation
- Chris Behee, City of Bellingham

- Co-Chairs Steve Clarke Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning and Jay Jordan Executive Director of Teaching and Learning

This is a standing committee that has met numerous times over many years. The attendance committee working on the challenges with middle school enrollment and boundary revisions; overcrowding at Silver Beach and the opening of three elementary schools in 2021 and 2022 met as a whole on the following dates:

**2018-19 Meeting Minutes:**

- Sept. 13 Minutes Presentation
- Oct. 25 Minutes Presentation
- Nov. 29 Meeting Presentation
- Jan. 31 Minutes Presentation Key Notes
- Feb. 28 Minutes Presentation
- March 28 Minutes Presentation
- April 18 Minutes Presentation
- May 9 Minutes Presentation
- May 23 Preliminary Update Minutes Presentation
- June 17 Minutes
- Aug. 29 Minutes Presentation

**2017-18 Meeting Minutes:**

- Feb. 22 Minutes Current Development Presentation
- March 15 Minutes
- April 12 Minutes
- May 10 Minutes Middle School Scenarios
- June 7 Minutes Elementary School Scenarios

**III. Summary of Work**

The committee reflects a wide cross-section of local stakeholder groups including parents, principals, teachers, staff, students and city officials encompassing all geographic areas, most schools, and the community. The group brought expertise and inquisitiveness to the issues related to schooling in Bellingham and were dedicated to developing the best scenarios possible for our students and families.

***Overview***

The committee approached the work in three distinct steps: learning, creating, and evaluating.

***Learning***

The committee began its work on the middle school boundary adjustments in February 2018 starting with a charge from Superintendent Dr. Greg Baker to kick-off the work. He requested the committee take into consideration the rebuilding of three elementary Schools – Alderwood,

Parkview, and Sunnyland – as other boundary adjustments that need to be made based on their increased capacity after being rebuilt. The meeting in February 2018 also included a presentation by the city’s Senior Geographic Information System (GIS) Analyst, Chris Behee, highlighting growth patterns and anticipated building projects that would be impacting our schools’ future enrollment. Starting in March 2018 the committee began its work to develop possible scenarios that would include 11 scenarios being presented at the May 2018 meeting after a series of sub-committee meetings to help develop and refine the options. The committee worked hard to process many different middle school options. In June, and into the fall 2018, the committee began to work on the possible elementary boundaries and how they would interface with the middle school scenarios being developed.

During the 2018-19 school year, the committee gathered feedback from families, neighborhood groups and other facets of the community to better understand the unique needs and concerns each school community faced regarding potentially changing their boundary. This feedback helped the committee create, refine and ultimately eliminate options that were not in line with the goals, outcomes and feedback heard from various groups. For over a year the committee wrestled with numerous scenarios (over 15 in total) and ultimately narrowed down to two options for final review and feedback.

One of the important learnings during this process is that Shuksan Middle School shares only a small boundary with Kulshan Middle School. This is in the attendance areas of Sunnyland and Roosevelt. Shuksan does not share any boundary with Fairhaven Middle School. Whatcom, like Shuksan, is close to 700 students. During this learning phase, the committee realized that 1) we need two middle schools to absorb future growth in the north; 2) Shuksan and Whatcom are the largest middle schools we have, and 3) we need to design different boundaries to account for the lack of shared boundaries. Both Kulshan and Fairhaven have about 600 students, so the committee realized it is possible for our four middle schools to support our 2600 middle school student population, but we would need to shift students by redrawing the attendance areas. While engaging in this work, the committee used Policy 3130 when designing attendance area options to create a total number of students with better socio-economic balance.

During the learning phase the committee acknowledged the large disparity in student populations between our four middle schools. The difference between our three large high schools is 11.3% when comparing free and reduced meal percentages. As of December 2018, the difference between our middle schools is 30.2%. In short, the committee wanted to design attendance areas that improve this inequity.

To inform the committee we received presentations and reviewed data on the following topics:

- History and practices regarding attendance adjustments and changes.
- The district’s policy and consideration factors.
- Current enrollment at each school.
- Socio-economic characteristics of students in each school as measured by free and reduced meal status. This was supplemented by data on generalized home values throughout the city of Bellingham.
- Current and proposed housing developments in Bellingham and Whatcom County as received by the city and county. Not all of these have been permitted at this date; however, this provided information is indicative of the future development of housing.

- Current capacity at schools potentially affected by adjusting attendance areas.
- Status of current capital projects and planned future projects.
- Enrollment projections prepared by a demographer.

Throughout the process, committee members asked inquiry questions that dug deeper into the data and sometimes clarified issues by asking for new data.

### *Creating*

Starting in March 2018 the committee began creating possible middle school concepts to address the attendance area challenges. The start of this process led to 11 scenarios being presented at the May 2018 meeting.

Some comments from the committee in May show early concerns about the different options being created for new attendance areas: The concerns included:

- The size of a group of students that move from an elementary to a middle school. This is referred to as the size of an elementary split to middle school. The committee discussed what percent was supportive for students moving with a large enough cohort.
- The large number of families that appear to be impacted by middle school changes.
- The changes will need to include rebuilt elementary schools.
- The changes would create transportation challenges for families that do not drive and transportation challenges for extra-curricular activities.
- If we lower the free and reduced meal rate at some schools it can cause them to lose federal funding for higher poverty schools.
- The changes with middle school must work with the new elementary areas making this recommendation more complex.
- How will the committee know what is right for parents who are not represented on this committee?
- What impact does our current student transfer process have on the number of students in schools that are also overcrowded?

From May 2018 through June 2018 the committee wrestled with the concepts for middle level attendance areas and started working on how the rebuilds of Parkview and Sunnyland would each hold about 100-150 more students. It was also discussed at the June 2018 meeting that the committee engage in a public announcement about the committee's work and scope. This influenced the committee's public announcement on June 13.

Over our summer months a sub-committee was tasked with continuing development of our middle school concepts and to connect them with our elementary ideas. As they refined these options, they included feedback from our transportation office and our representative from the City of Bellingham. The September 2018 PowerPoint shows the draft options the committee developed. The committee considered these important questions as a part of analyzing the options presented in September.

- How do we explain and discuss distance in travel that accomplishes a hope we have for more equitable schools?

- How do we develop a plan, communicate ideas for shifting our boundaries, and gather feedback from the larger community?
- How do we develop options that will accommodate anticipated growth?
- What role does the committee play in helping schools with future family transitions to new schools?

As the committee continued to make adjustments in fall 2018 to the attendance area options the committee co-chairs and members of the committee started engaging with the community with visits to neighborhood meetings, one-on-one meetings with parents, and responses to individual emails. The feedback gathered was shared with the committee to support further refinements and creation of attendance area options with the goal of eventually narrowing the options to a few that also meet the charge for the attendance committee. (The dates for the engagement with families is covered in the next section.)

In November 2018 the following communication and feedback questions were asked as starting points for the committee to consider:

- What is important for hosting a school visit meeting at a particular school? How should invites be sent? Which schools first? What format helps people get information and dialogue about what they are hearing. Who is presenting?
- Do we need an online survey? Why or why not? If we do, what questions do we ask? How do we share our information?
- Community Locations: Are there places in our community we should hold a meeting about attendance areas other than a school? What is the format?

It is important to highlight that the committee during the creation phase moved between creating options and gathering feedback to inform the process.

Entering the new year in January 2019 the committee reviewed the nine scenarios remaining and showed a strong preference for three. After gathering feedback from the committee and our community it was decided to bring back a previous option that the committee had eliminated and modify a current option. The reason for bringing back a previous option is it allowed some neighborhoods to only encounter one move in our attendance area adjustments instead of two. Some options we created asked a neighborhood to change elementary and middle schools. During the committee process it was necessary to eliminate options as a process to move towards selecting one for a recommendation to the superintendent.

In April 2019, the committee continued to revise options, gather feedback from families who were reading our updated options on our district website, and narrowed the options for consideration to two. These two options became option 1 and option 2 which the committee would use to gather feedback from families at four community meetings and a districtwide survey.

At our May 23, 2019 meeting, after reviewing the feedback from the community meetings and the survey the committee voted to eliminate option 2 and continue to support and refine option 1 moving forward.

**Engagement:**

As the committee developed options for addressing the attendance area concerns and were applying the consideration of Policy 3130, they also had to engage in further research such as school capacity, program placement, anticipated growth from the City of Bellingham, the timeline for the development of rebuilt schools, and transportation.

The next step was obtaining input and feedback on the recommendations from families, community members, and school staff.

The following process and timelines were initiated to solicit feedback from the community:

<b>School/Community Meetings</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Numerous individual meetings with Steve and Jay (40+)	October 2018-May 2019
Silver Beach PTA and neighborhood meetings	Nov. 13, Feb. 25, March 14, March 26, May 13
Columbia PTA and neighborhood meetings	Dec. 11, Feb. 19, May 13, May 20
Parkview PTA Meeting	Jan. 8
Regency Park Neighborhood meeting	Jan. 30
Middle School meetings – Kulshan and Whatcom	May 14, May 16

During each of these meetings with members of the communities impacted by the attendance area work we would take time to explain the purpose of the committee, provide an overview of where the committee was in the process, provide examples of options the committee has developed and solicit feedback and input about those options while also answering questions.

**Decision-making the attendance area draft recommendation**

*(a) Feedback*

The Attendance Areas PreK-12 Standing Committee shared a draft proposal of attendance area adjustments with families on May 6, 2019. Information, a survey and a map of the proposed boundary adjustments were posted online and emailed to all families. The adjustments would impact some elementary and middle school families possibly beginning the 2020-21 school year. The survey remained open until noon on May 17. A total of four public meetings were held on May 13, May 14 and May 15. Parents/guardians and community members in attendance were given the opportunity to provide feedback. Feedback shared at the public meetings was generally consistent with the feedback below.

**Respondents:**

A total of 374 people took the survey. They could select all schools that they were affiliated with. The top responding schools are below:

- Whatcom Middle School – 166
- Silver Beach Elementary School – 166
- Columbia Elementary School – 87
- Squalicum High School – 72
- Bellingham High School – 32

- Shuksan Middle School – 30
- Northern Heights Elementary School – 29
- Kulshan Middle School – 21
- Roosevelt Elementary School – 17
- Wade King Elementary School – 14
- Fairhaven Middle School – 11
- All remaining schools had less than 10 responses.

Of the respondents, 86 percent reported that the proposed changes would impact their neighborhood. Almost 12 percent reported that the proposed changes would not impact their neighborhood and 2 percent were not sure.

**As you study the “option 1” map and read about the prospective changes to elementary and middle school boundaries, what do you think?**

- I like the proposed changes - 42 percent (158 responses)
- I neither like nor dislike the proposed changes - 20 percent (75 responses)
- I dislike the proposed changes - 38 percent (141 responses)

**Most common themes in comments:**

- Distance or commute difficult (not ideal for walking/biking)
- Changes are logical or make sense
- Transition for students and “grandfathering” (being allowed to remain at their school even after the boundary change)
- Supportive of equity work in the district
- For Tweed Twenty neighborhood only one school change, instead of two (elementary and middle)

**Representative comments:**

*“Along with a lot of other Columbia parents, I worry about safe walking and biking routes to Shuksan from our neighborhood.”*

*“It makes sense to mostly keep geographical areas consistent. Neighborhood groupings seem to mostly go to the middle schools together and for the most part, you are not taking groups and making them go to the farthest away MS location.”*

*“I love the idea of more diverse schools. But I do think it's nice to have kids go to school with kids from their neighborhood.”*

*“To be honest, I don't support any of the proposed changes since Tweed Twenty will have to move from Silver Beach, which is why I bought my home in this neighborhood. But this option at least keeps us at the same middle school, which is less disruptive than having to change both elementary and middle.”*

**As you study the “option 2” map and read about the prospective changes to elementary and middle school boundaries, what do you think?**

- I like the proposed changes - 37 percent (139 responses)

- I neither like or dislike the proposed changes - 14 percent (51 responses)
- I dislike the proposed changes - 49 percent (184 responses)

**Most common themes in comments:**

- Distance or commute too long (concerns about length of time on bus)
- Splits up neighborhood (Tweed Twenty - two school changes at elementary and middle)
- Keeps Columbia at Whatcom for walking/biking
- Bought home in this neighborhood to attend these schools

**Representative comments:**

*“Much safer walk/bike route for the kids to get to school. Less parent drop-off/pollution with this option. I feel this option would be the least disruptive of the two as a whole.”*

*“I think it makes a lot of sense to send kids from the Silver Beach area to Kulshan, but again not a big fan of the amount of time the kids would be on a school bus to Shuksan.”*

*“Kids will go to school near where they live. Kids who are already being bussed will continue to be bussed. It doesn’t make sense to bus kids that can walk to a nearby school. It’s why we moved here.”*

*“I feel strongly that this map should \*not\* be selected as it places an undue burden on the Tweed Twenty neighborhood to carry the weight of changing both elementary and middle schools to meet the district's objectives.”*

**What do you have questions about or want to learn more about?**

- Timeline – 32 percent (152 responses)
- Transportation to/from school – 31 percent (149 responses)
- My child’s prospective school – 16 percent (76 responses)
- The committee process – 13 percent (62 responses)
- Other – 8 percent (40 responses)

**Common “other” responses:**

- How does the “grandfather” process work?
- What are the priorities in the decision-making process?
- What was the research done to develop these proposals?
- Will high school boundaries be impacted or change?

**Other comments, wonders or questions:**

Most comments concerned the timeline for the boundary transition, what the process is for “grandfathering in,” questions about how the data supports these decisions, questions how this supports equity, some concerns about process transparency and words of thanks or praise for the committee work. Families also expressed concern about how these changes will cause disruption for their families.

**Representative comments:**

*“Thank you for all your thoughtfulness and deliberation. I know this is no easy undertaking and appreciate your openness, creativity, and sensitivity in this process.”*

*“Please share the decision as early and transparently as possible.”*

*“I’m concerned about how the kids will be cared for when they have to change schools. Is there a ‘blue slip’ process for kids that are currently at a school and wish to stay at that school? Especially middle school, where kids are only there for 3 years, it seems detrimental to force kids partway through middle school to change schools.”*

*“It would be nice to have a paragraph that explains the proposed changes. What was the reasoning behind the options?”*

**Narrative:**

There is a clear preference between Tweed Twenty and Columbia neighborhoods for each proposed scenario.

Option 1 is preferred by families in the Tweed Twenty neighborhood because it causes only one school change (Silver Beach to Northern Heights Elementary) instead of changing both elementary and middle school. Families also feel the distance to Shuksan Middle School (Option 2) is too far and would cause long transportation times. Option 1 has Tweed Twenty neighbors move elementary schools but remain at their current middle school. For Option 1, 69 percent of Silver Beach families selected “I like the proposed changes.” For Option 2, 86 percent of Silver Beach families selected, “I dislike the proposed changes.”

Option 2 is preferred by Columbia families as it keeps the neighborhood at Whatcom Middle School. Some Columbia neighbors feel the commute to Shuksan Middle School is unsafe, along busy roads, and would not be acceptable for walking or biking. Many noted they bought their homes in this neighborhood because it is walkable and bike friendly. For Option 1, 85 percent of Columbia families selected, “I dislike the proposed changes.” For Option 2, 87 percent of Columbia families selected, “I like the proposed changes.”

While most comments were concerning Tweed Twenty or Columbia neighborhoods being re-zoned for Shuksan Middle School, some families did comment on moving Regency Park Apartments to Fairhaven Middle School.

Both Option 1 and 2 propose moving Regency Park Apartments to Fairhaven. The Department of Family Engagement reached out to families at Regency Park Apartments who would be possibly making this attendance area change. Most expressed hesitation at the move due to not knowing the Fairhaven area or the distance. Families like the proximity of Kulshan. The quote below was from a Spanish-speaking parent living at Regency Park.

*“Mom said Fairhaven is really far away and if there is any problem, such as the student being sick, that makes it hard for them to go pick up the student. She prefers for her student to attend the neighborhood school because it would be complicated for her trying to get to Fairhaven. She says she doesn’t even know the way to Fairhaven Middle School. She just knows what is in the area where they live.”*

One other area of note is the proposed move of some Wade King families to Kulshan Middle School instead of Fairhaven. A total of 14 Wade King families responded to the survey and had mixed opinions on the proposed changes. Some families commented that Kulshan is closer and more convenient, while others expressed disappointment at the possible new boundaries.

### **Summary of Community Feedback Meetings: May 2019**

#### **Monday, May 13 – Columbia Elementary School**

- Prefer Option 2 as it keeps Columbia neighborhood attending Whatcom Middle School.
- Concerns about safe transportation (walking, biking, busing) to Shuksan Middle School.

#### **Monday, May 13 – Silver Beach Elementary school**

- Prefer Option 1 as it will cause less disruption to the neighborhood (one school change versus two).
- Concerns about transportation time/distance to Shuksan Middle School.

#### **Tuesday, May 14 – Whatcom Middle School**

- Mix of preference between Options 1 and 2.
- Questions and concerns about students traveling along Northwest and Squalicum Parkway to Shuksan.
- Questions about moving Carl Cozier students to Kulshan.
- Will Tweed Twenty neighborhood get a bus to Northern Heights?

#### **Thursday, May 16 – Kulshan Middle School**

- Like the more even split in elementary schools to middle schools.
- Like trying to balance socio-economic status at schools.

#### **Common wonders for all groups:**

- All neighborhoods had questions about “grandfathering in” to remain at their school.
- What is the timeline for changing?
- What data was used/researched? Are there other metrics that should be reviewed?
- Does this plan for or consider future growth?
- What transportation options are available for after-school programs?

#### *(b) Committee Evaluation*

The committee landed on eliminating option 2 and continuing to work with option 1. Overall, the committee believes option 1 produces the most opportunities to support future growth. The committee dedicated a meeting to identifying major themes in the feedback and discussing how these influenced their thinking on the draft recommendation. These are summarized above.

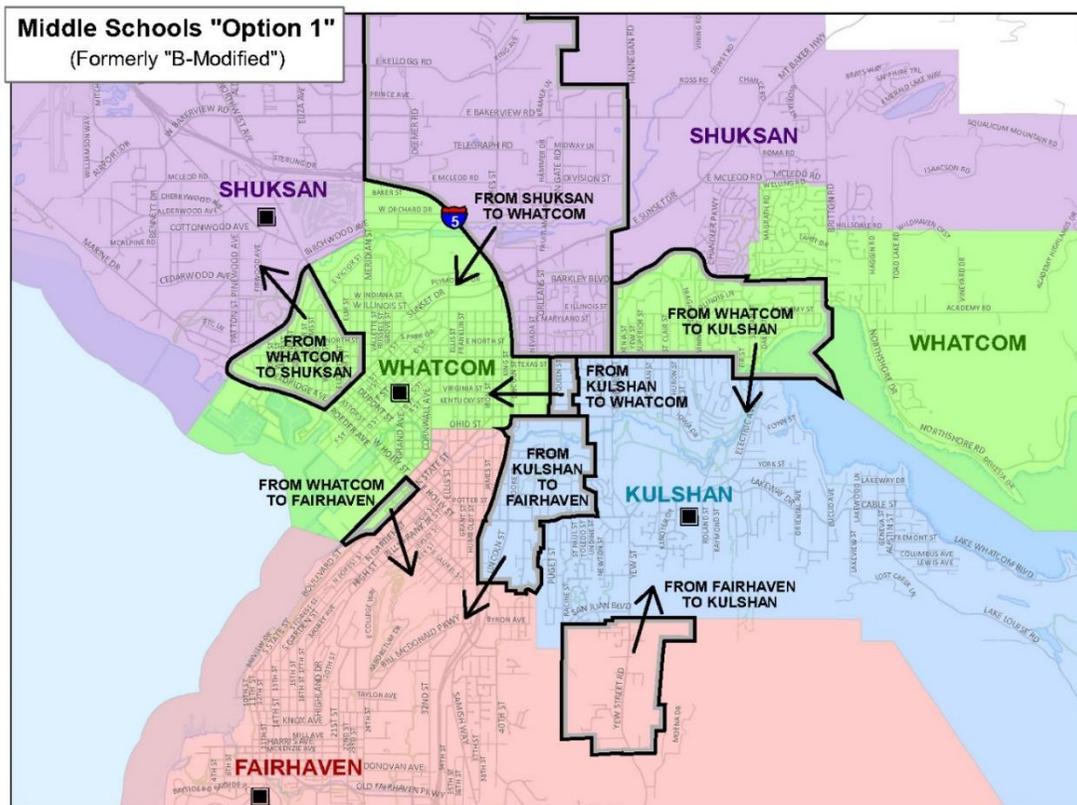
There were several issues during the process that were identified as out of the scope of the committee’s work. These include the creation of a process for welcoming students and families to a new school community and a desire to phase in some changes before 2021. The committee also wondered if Bellingham Public Schools enrollment continues to grow, would there be an interest to build a fifth middle school on the school district’s property in the King Mountain area? There are no formal plans for that property, and it is vacant land.

The committee made the recommendation presented below; however, the recommendation was accompanied by several suggestions that reflected the concerns discussed.

#### IV. Option 1 Middle School Recommendations

The committee is recommending the following to the superintendent:

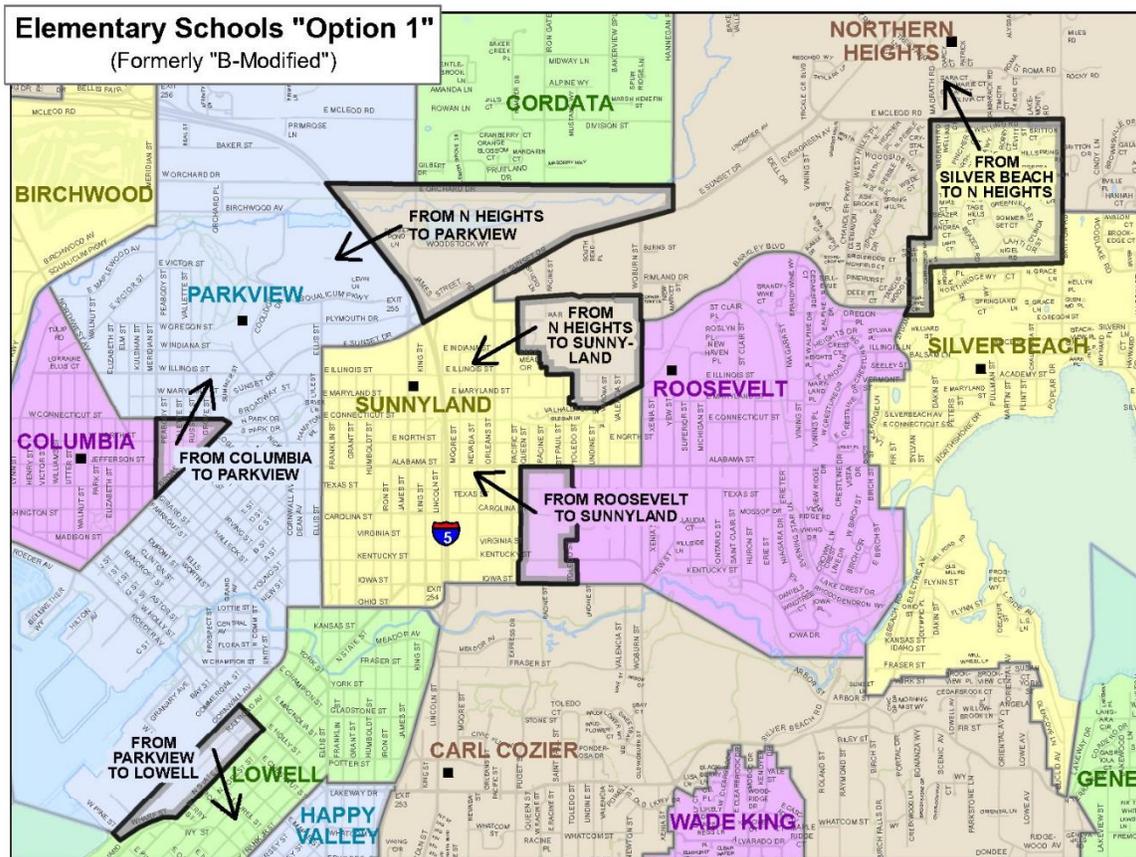
1. **Approve Option 1 Middle School Recommendation** for addressing the future enrollment needs for all four middle schools. In the middle school recommendation:
  - a. Columbia Elementary would attend Shuksan Middle School.
  - b. All of the students living in the revised Parkview and Sunnyland Elementary boundaries, along with eastern half of Cordata Elementary would attend Whatcom Middle School.
  - c. All of Roosevelt Elementary along with a larger portion of Silver Beach (area around the school) would attend Kulshan Middle School. As would the Yew Street area north of Wade King Elementary.
  - d. The neighborhood downtown west of State Street along with the western portion of Carl Cozier (Fraser St./Civic Field corridor) would attend Fairhaven Middle School.



Based on these middle school changes, the following enrollment and free/reduced meals percentages would be the outcome:

School	Current #'s	New #'s	Current F/R %	New F/R %
Fairhaven	605	649	21.7%	27.1%
Kulshan	589	660	35.1%	26.1%
Shuksan	708	636	49.9%	41.8%
Whatcom	691	650	19.7%	34.3%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2595</b>		<b>32.2%</b>

2. **Approve Option 1 Elementary Recommendation** as necessary adjustments based on expanded capacity for Alderwood, Parkview and Sunnyland after those schools are rebuilt. This option also addresses the overcrowding at Silver Beach, adjusting the northern boundary to reduce enrollment there. In the elementary recommendation:
  - a. Sunset Pond area as well as the eastern corner of the Columbia neighborhood would attend Parkview Elementary.
  - b. Barkley area west of Woburn (current Northern Heights area) along with the southwest corner of the Roosevelt boundary would attend Sunnyland Elementary.
  - c. Tweed Twenty neighborhood would attend Northern Heights Elementary.
  - d. The neighborhood downtown west of State Street would attend Lowell Elementary.



Based on these elementary changes, following would be the impact of Option 1 on enrollment and free and reduced meal percentages at the elementary schools. The chart also shows the percent of students from impacted elementary schools as they divide into middle schools. Our goal has been to not have any split less than 25% of the total student population.

<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Curr #</b>	<b>New #</b>	<b>Cur F/R%</b>	<b>New F/R%</b>	<b>FMS</b>	<b>KMS</b>	<b>SMS</b>	<b>WMS</b>
Carl Cozier	357	357	43.7%	43.3%	44%	56%	0%	0%
Columbia	265	246	16.2%	16.3%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Cordata	411	411	63.7%	63.7%	0%	0%	45%	55%
Lowell	298	321	22.5%	26.5%	100%	0%	0%	0%
Northern Heights	373	415	37.5%	23.6%	0%	0%	60%	40%
Parkview	353	384	29.7%	31.5%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Roosevelt	412	372	42.2%	37.9	0%	100%	0%	0%
Silver Beach	528	405	17.6%	18.3%	0%	44%	0%	56%
Sunnyland	291	377	37.8%	45.9%	0%	0%	0%	100%

3. **Using a phased timeline** for implementation of Option 1 based on the need to align boundary moves with the rebuilding of three elementary schools and the new boundaries associated with those new school zones. To move the neighborhoods impacted prior to these schools being rebuilt would adversely impact many families since the percent of students attending that new middle school would be below our 25% threshold. These areas exist primarily in the Northern Heights, Parkview and Sunnyland areas.

**Recommended timeline:**

***Fall 2021***

<b>Goal</b>	Adjust elementary lines with reopening of Parkview. Implement all middle school moves.
<b>Plan</b>	NH to PV; PV to Lowell/FMS/Sehome; Columbia Triangle to PV  All Middle School Moves;
<b>Transportation</b>	New middle school and Parkview Elem. bus routes start.

***Fall 2022***

<b>Goal</b>	Open Sunnyland and complete NH moves
<b>Plan</b>	NH to Sunnyland; Silver Beach to NH
<b>Transportation</b>	New Sunnyland and Northern Heights bus routes start.

**The committee makes this recommendation along with the following suggestions to be taken into consideration**

1. Consider equity when allowing transfers during the transitional years.
2. Continue to evaluate availability of transportation, including:
  - a. During the transitional years, identify any possible busing options for students (generally, transfers are not guaranteed transportation).
  - b. Determine appropriate walking and biking routes for students, working with our task force to develop routes and options.
3. Communicate that this is an on-going process regarding attendance area adjustments that will continue to evolve as we grow and update our schools. This could very likely continue to impact many families and schools across the district into the future.

**V. Next Steps**

These recommendations will be presented to Dr. Baker by October 2019 for his review and consideration. He may decide to accept the recommendations, do further outreach, and/ or make changes. The co-chairs, Jay Jordan and Steve Clarke, as well as the entire committee, are available for any clarifying or follow-up questions.

Thanks to the group for their work on behalf of Bellingham Public Schools.