

# **Snoqualmie Valley Public Schools Elementary Attendance Boundary Review Frequently Asked Questions**

*(updated 4-1-10)*

**1. Where will my child go to school next year?**

By state law, only the local School Board can set or change school attendance area boundaries. No one can answer this question with any authority until the School Board finally takes formal action on new attendance boundaries, slated for mid-April.

**2. Why are elementary school attendance boundary changes necessary?**

The Snoqualmie Valley School District continues to experience significant enrollment growth in some parts of the district while other areas are experiencing declining enrollment. The District continues to enjoy an excellent reputation, and as a result, has grown by about 1,400 new students in the last nine years. Current enrollment projections show growth continuing, although at a slightly lower rate, over the next five years. In fast growing school districts, boundary adjustments are necessary from time to time to alleviate overcrowding at schools where enrollment exceeds capacity.

**3. Can we leave the current school boundaries intact for another year or two?**

No. Projected enrollment at Cascade View Elementary School (CVES) and Snoqualmie Elementary School (SES) will be well over their capacities next year.

**4. When will the decision on attendance boundaries be made?**

Options are currently being developed and honed by an Elementary School Boundary Study Committee. This will be followed by opportunities for public input (surveys, public meetings, etc.) in the March timeframe. The Elementary Attendance Boundary Study Committee is scheduled to make a recommendation to the School Board in mid-April. A final decision on next fall's attendance boundaries is expected from the School Board later in April.

**5. When will the changes take effect?**

Boundary changes approved by the School Board this spring will begin with the 2010-2011 school year, starting in August 2010.

**6. Why are parents not represented on the Boundary Study Committee?**

Parents who served on a previous Boundary Review Committee during the last elementary boundary change process in 2007 made it clear that the experience was very uncomfortable for them. They received many direct complaints from other parents unhappy with the process. Given the high level of emotion that a boundary process can elicit, the district did not feel comfortable asking volunteers to take on difficult work that puts them in the public eye in a way that can be quite negative.

**7. Will parents have input into the boundary review process?**

Yes. The committee is studying building capacities, enrollment trends, demographic information and other relevant information. Then, online surveys will be available at steps along the way for the committee to gather feedback on decision making criteria, and options under consideration. Public meetings will also be held to seek input from all concerned. The process has been designed to allow everyone to have input into the final recommendation. The School Board will make the final decision on the boundaries after evaluating the recommendations provided by the boundary study committee.

**8. What criteria will guide the decision on the boundary change?**

Many factors are taken into consideration when developing attendance areas. The committee will evaluate the following criteria (from Board Policy 3130) in developing their recommendation to the School Board:

- A. Disruption of students' established learning programs
- B. Established neighborhood groupings
- C. Placement of siblings
- D. Class loads and available space
- E. Transportation routes with attendance areas
- F. Diverse student populations
- G. Maintaining relationship with a middle school and/or high school attendance area
- H. Fiscal responsibility

**9. Will my child have to change schools?**

District Policy 3131 addresses the school transfer policy in more detail. No changes are anticipated in Policy 3131. Some families may choose to apply for intra-district transfers to a school other than their "new" home school using the procedures in the policy. If requests are approved, families are responsible for providing their own transportation in this situation.

**10. Will my child's school be changed again in a couple of years?**

The School Board and Boundary Study Committee will employ forward-thinking in this process, as much as possible. Efforts will be made to minimize disruption of students' established learning programs. However, the district is growing and adjustments in attendance boundaries could very well be necessary again sometime in the future.

**11. Has the Snoqualmie Valley School District made a guarantee or promise that certain neighborhoods will always attend specific schools?**

No. Given growth in our district, City and County land use issues, the need to efficiently use available capacity, and the possible need for new schools in the future, the District is unable to make such promises. SVSD does not make any attendance area guarantees and is not responsible for promises made by others. Information from developers, realtors, or title companies may or may not be current.

**12. If my child has significant, specific learning issues can he/she remain in the current school placement if my neighborhood is moved to another school?**

This will be determined by program availability. Some exceptions may be made on an individual basis.

**13. Why would students from one city or community need to be bused to a school in another part of the district?**

Because of the need to fully utilize available capacity in all schools before building new schools, and to ensure equitable programs across the district, it is sometimes necessary to transport students to schools in other parts of the District. Steps are taken to ensure students have access to the programs they need, regardless of what school they attend. The district is responsible for serving and educating all children no matter what school they attend. If a neighborhood school is at or beyond its capacity, it is in the best interest of children to enroll them in a school with space and programs available to meet their needs.

**14. How many elementary students live within the one-mile radius of CVES?**

Next fall there will be about 900 students in grades K-5 that live within a one mile radius of Cascade View, and this number is expected to grow. Unfortunately, Cascade View Elementary cannot accommodate them all and still maintain acceptable class sizes. Coupled with the fact that three other elementary schools in our district have extra space (due to

declining enrollments), a re-alignment of boundaries at this time will be able to accommodate all elementary students in our district, and help maintain comparable classroom sizes and opportunities for students.

**15. Why isn't there another elementary school on Snoqualmie Ridge to accommodate all the growth?**

The Snoqualmie Valley School District presented a bond on three separate occasions to voters in 2007 and 2008 that included building another elementary school. Voters narrowly rejected the proposal each time. That was during a time when enrollment was growing at 6-7%, and at that rate, all of our elementary schools were nearing capacity. Now, we are looking at other ways to accommodate growth.

The downturn in the economy over the past two years has had a ripple effect on the district's planning which has led to the current boundary study solution. Here are some of the facts that have evolved since those bond attempts.

- Enrollment growth has slowed to about 1% in our district.
- Although the Ridge is still growing, other elementary schools now have fewer students under the current boundaries – and classroom space is available.
- Our state is facing an unprecedented financial crisis and continues to cut funding to K-12 education. With depleted resources and uncertainties about future funding, the district must be extremely cautious about opening new schools – since new schools require ongoing operating costs from the district's general fund, in addition to the funds for building/construction.
- Even in this tough economy, our community generously supported the last two school elections -- the recent 2010 levies, and a 2009 bond to upgrade existing facilities and add classrooms at the high school.

**16. Is a new elementary school on Snoqualmie Ridge currently part of the district's long-term facilities plan?**

It is on the list of future considerations, but not part of the current recommendation before the School Board that focuses on expanding Mount Si High School. Student enrollment is carefully monitored and re-assessed each year against school capacities. If warranted by enrollment growth, another elementary school could be included in a future proposition. At this time, however, demographic data reveals that an attendance boundary review and re-alignment can accommodate all elementary students for the next 3-5 years. *(More information about the district's long-term facilities planning is on the website.)*

**17. Why are Options B, D, and E no longer being considered?**

Option B was set aside by the committee because it is almost identical to option A, except it did not move Moon Valley (very small group of students) from SES to NBE, and it did move The Uplands (another very small group) from NBE to OES. Those small neighborhoods have little impact on the overall enrollment picture. After reviewing the data, comments submitted, and phone calls received, option A, which moves Moon Valley to NBE from SES, and leaves The Uplands at NBE was added to the short list of options and option B was eliminated for consideration.

Option D was set aside by the committee because it is almost identical to option C, except it did not move Moon Valley (very small group of students) from SES to NBE, and it did move The Uplands (another very small group) from NBE to OES. Those small neighborhoods have little impact on the overall enrollment picture. After reviewing the data, comments submitted, and phone calls received, option C, which moves Moon Valley to NBE from SES,

and leaves The Uplands at NBE was added to the short list of options, and option D was eliminated for consideration.

Option E was set aside by the committee after reviewing the data, feedback, and board criteria. In summary, Option E moved neighborhood K-North, along with the Silent Creek neighborhood to SES from CVES. Option E impacted/disrupted more children than any other option (473 students). Option E also has the highest enrollment projection for SES by year four of any of the options considered, and would very likely put SES over capacity and necessitate another boundary adjustment sooner than other options considered. Finally, the Silent Creek neighborhood included in Option E is completely within the current walk zone of CVES and not serviced by school transportation. Moving the Silent Creek neighborhood would require adding at least one bus to service this area and increase transportation costs.