

Board's decision to redraw boundaries for elementary schools has families upset about impact on students

While the attendance boundaries have been drawn and set for the 2018-19 school year for Grafton's elementary school students, the debate over the consolidation process is still lingering for parents.

The school district had to reassign students to schools because a \$39.9 million referendum approved by voters in April that calls for the demolition of Grafton Elementary School and the expansion of Woodview and Kennedy.

The School Board on Sept. 25 made its decision between two plans and chose the option that divides the district along Highway 60 and First Avenue. Students who live north of Highway 60 and west of First Avenue will attend Woodview Elementary School and the remaining students living south of Highway 60 will attend Kennedy Elementary School.

According to Supt. Jeff Nelson, 95 students who are not attending Grafton Elementary School will be affected by the plan.

"The first option moved the least amount of students while the second option (approved by the Board of Education) caused a greater amount of students to be disrupted and moved from one school to another," Sarah McCraw, parent of two Kennedy Elementary School students, wrote in a letter to Ozaukee Press.

Another concern parents have is the attendance map does not include grandfathering current students at their respective schools.

"It was quite clear when we voted that this was going to preclude grandfathering," Board President Terry Ziegler said.

McCraw said she and other parents want to work with Nelson and the board to address the issue of grandfathering students at their current schools.

"Our School Board has the opportunity to minimize the short-term damage while still maintaining long-term benefits they believe will happen by providing options for families during these transition years," McCraw said. "We implore them to consider the future decisions they make very carefully and we look forward to working with the board on coming to a resolution that is effective for all sides."

Among the affected students is Kennedy Elementary School Principal Craig Gunderson's child, who will relocate to Woodview Elementary School. Some of the district's teachers, whose children attend the school they work in, may also be affected next school year.

Elementary teachers must decide where they want to work next year by November. The board will finalize the staffing assignments in January.

In May, it was decided that elementary school principals Gunderson and Woodview's Michael McMahon will remain at their schools, but Grafton Elementary School Principal Karen Noel will not retain her position.

"We do not want the Grafton School Board to go back to their drawing board and start over," McCraw said.

"We are not asking these elected officials who did a lot of research and looked far into the future for the best possible option for our village to erase the months of hard work they put in to considering these two mapping options. That was a hard decision that did not come lightly for the board and we appreciate all the work they have done for their constituents thus far."

Attendance plan continues to rankle parents

Written by JOE POIRIER

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