

WESTERN DUBUQUE COUNTY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board of Education Minutes

Public Hearing Session

February 3, 2011 – 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order:

Board President Bob McCabe called the meeting to order with a moment of silence at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium at the Cascade High School.

Roll Call:

Present were Bob McCabe, Jeanne Coppola, Mark Knuth, Gary McAndrew, Barb Weber and Superintendent Jeff Corkery.

Discussion of School Attendance Boundary Line Configurations and Elementary Grade Configurations:

President McCabe opened the meeting attended by approximately 100 people by stating that there were no formal rules or regulations for schools when undertaking attendance boundary line and grade configuration studies; but, the Board wanted to seek input on the this issue by having this public hearing. He also noted that the options being reviewed were the result of a study done by Key Concepts on January 13th. A large number of options were presented to the Board at this meeting and they have been reduced to a manageable level and the Board is seeking public input before any decisions are made.

Superintendent Corkery then provided the audience a PowerPoint presentation on the boundary line and grade configurations. The following information was shown.

Why are we changing District Boundaries and Building Alignments?

- Efficiency and programming
 - Most districts our size have one high school, one middle school, and one elementary.
 - WDCSD has 2 high schools, 2 middle schools, and 6 elementary.
 - We need to consolidate resources if we are to offer programs and workable class sizes.
 - Better alignment with nonpublic schools and transportation
- We can provide uniform class size and more support for staff
- Dyersville Elementary
- Financial Constraints
 - State growth projected at “0”
 - Federal dollars Frozen
 - Federal Stimulus Dollars expended

Guiding Principles:

- Create contiguous boundaries that minimize gerrymandering.
- Boundaries should be planned to maximize district resources in a fiscally responsible manner (educational program, staffing, transportation, etc.).
- Where possible, attendance boundaries should be created to anticipate the projected enrollment and the program capacity of each building.
- To the extent possible, minimize school boundary adjustments, thereby ensuring that said boundaries remain stable over a minimal five-year period.

- Ensure that a cost-effective range of program delivery, responding to pupil needs, is achieved through the optimum distribution of school enrollment.
- 2-section elementary buildings, if possible.
- To the extent possible, give due consideration to the Catholic School Community in which the school boundaries do substantially match Catholic Parish boundaries.
- Think global – the District over self!

Points for Consideration:

- Dyersville is the largest community with an elementary building.
- Peosta is the fastest growing community in the District.
- Overall the District has grown by 400 students over the past 10 years.
- With Dyersville elementary opening, Farley and Epworth elementary centers become the two smallest attendance centers on the Highway 20 corridor.
 - Over 31% of the students in Epworth live outside a 10 mile radius of Epworth.
 - 60% of all children in Farley elementary come from Dyersville and Earlville area.
- Enrollment on the Highway 151 corridor is declining. Cascade and Bernard elementary enrollment trends have gone from an average of 42 to 34 per grade.
- Combination classrooms, while saving the District money, are becoming much more difficult to maintain due to increased curriculum requirements.
- The majority of the elementary centers cannot sustain a 2-section elementary within their current boundary lines and current configuration.

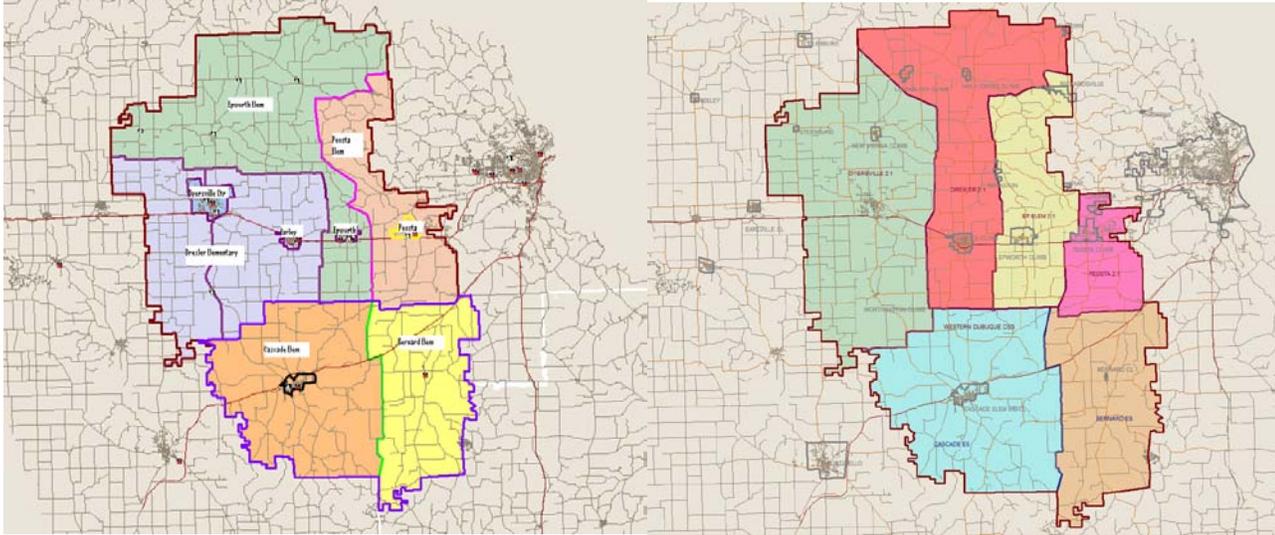
Rationale for all 5th and 6th graders in same center at DMS & Cascade Elementary

- Offer full programming
 - 5th Grade Band
 - 6th Grade Choir
 - TAG programs
 - Special Education
- Use rooms at PE & EE for intended use (no space available)
 - Art Room
 - Music Rooms – better facility at both DMS and CE
 - Special Education
 - PreK
- Uniform Class Size
 - Increased ability to meet individual student needs (as kids get older, the ability gap widens). You would be able to group similar kids together rather than just having 1 or 2 kids at a level.
 - Teaming opportunities to teach science and social studies
 - Opportunities for students to develop peer relationships prior to puberty

Each school can focus more clearly on the educational and social needs of children in just those few grades. Everything, from curriculum and instruction to building facility design and usage, can be geared specifically to the primary or intermediate age and grade levels.

The Base Boundary Map as shown is the primary basis for discussion concerning attendance areas. Other boundary options would have the Worthington area included with Cascade and the western boundary line for the Bernard area moved to just east of Cascade.

Current Boundaries and Base Plan Proposal



Grade Configurations – Option 1

| School | PreK | Kdgn | 1 st Grade | 2 nd Grade | 3 rd Grade | 4 th Grade | 5 th Grade |
|------------|------|------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Dyersville | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | To Farley |
| Farley | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Epworth | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | To Farley |
| Peosta | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | To Farley |

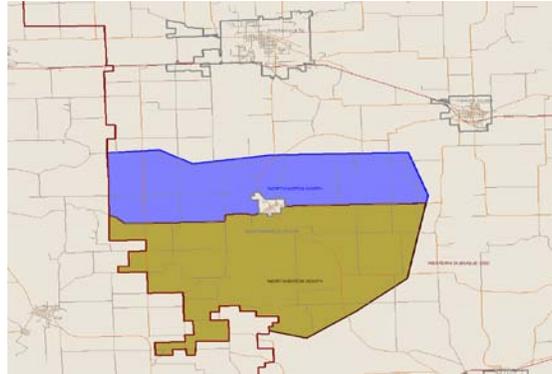
Grade Configurations – Option 2

| School | PreK | Kdgn | 1 st Grade | 2 nd Grade | 3 rd Grade | 4 th Grade | 5 th Grade |
|------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Dyersville | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | To Farley |
| Farley | To Epworth | To Epworth | To Epworth | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Epworth | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | To Farley | To Farley | To Farley |
| Peosta | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | To Farley |

President McCabe then announced that after the public hearing is opened the Board would first listen to any comments concerning options 1 and 2 for the highway 20 schools and then move on to the Worthington, Cascade and Bernard considerations.

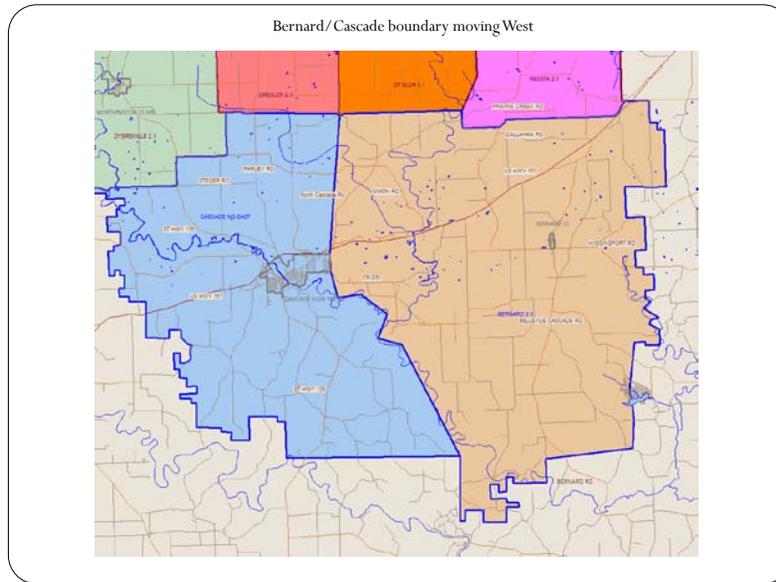
Motion by Weber, second by Coppola to open the public hearing on the proposed options. Motion passed 5-0. President McCabe then asked if there were any people in attendance that would like to speak that were in favor of Option 2 for the highway 20 schools. Hearing none, Mr. McCabe announced that the apparent consensus of the School Board is that Option 2 would be withdrawn from consideration and he will recommend to the School Board that Option 1 be approved.

Superintendent Corkery then reviewed the boundary options for the Worthington area students. The students living in the three areas shown below (City of Worthington and areas North and South of Worthington) currently attend schools at Dyersville, Farley or Epworth. The proposal would have these students attend schools at Bernard or Cascade. The District could select any one or all of the areas to attend the Bernard and Cascade schools. Currently 39 students live in these areas – Blue 9, Green 10 and City 20.



Mr. Corkery informed the Board that he had received a letter from the Mayor of Worthington citing the town's preference for the status quo and opposition to a plan that would send Worthington area students to the Cascade or Bernard schools. Larry Smock from Worthington then spoke and submitted a petition with 48 names entitled 'Petition in Opposition of Sending the Students of the Worthington Community to Cascade/Bernard for School'. In addition, he submitted a document detailing reasons why the petitioners and others were opposed to the proposal. Reasons cited were – Daycare Issues, Parochial School Options, Catholic Communities Restructuring, Non-School Related Activities, Parent Teacher Organization, Busing and Splitting of the Community. Several other people also spoke in opposition to the proposal citing busing issues, connections with the Dyersville community and that they moved to the area with the assumption that they would be attending schools in Dyersville, Farley or Epworth. Board President McCabe asked for a show of hands of people in attendance that favored a boundary plan that would send the Worthington area students to Cascade or Bernard. Absent any show of hands, President McCabe announced that he would recommend that the option to send the Worthington area students to the Cascade and Bernard attendance centers be removed from consideration.

Superintendent Corkery then presented the following options for the Cascade and Bernard schools. Base Plan and Option 2 would use the same boundary line as currently exist. Options 2 and 3 would move the Bernard attendance boundary line to just east of Cascade.



| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Base Plan | PreK | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Bernard | 18 | 15 | 11 | 8 | 11 | 11 | 15 | 20 |
| Teachers | 1 | 1 | .5 | .5 | .5 | .5 | 1 | 1 |
| Cascade | 20 | 25 | 24 | 23 | 28 | 21 | 30 | 49 |
| Teachers | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Option1 | PreK | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Bernard | 18 | 15 | | | 39 | 32 | | |
| Teachers | 1 | 1 | | | 2 | 2 | | |
| Cascade | 20 | 25 | 35 | 31 | | | 45 | 69 |
| Teachers | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | | 2 | 3 |
| Option 2 Move Boundary Line - | PreK | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Bernard | 19 | 19 | 14 | 13 | 16 | 16 | | |
| Teachers | 1 | 1 | 1 | .75 | .75 | 1 | | |
| Cascade | 19 | 21 | 21 | 18 | 23 | 16 | 45 | 69 |
| Teachers | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Option 3 Move Boundary Line | PreK | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| Bernard | 19 | 19 | 14 | | | | | |
| Teachers | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | |
| Cascade | 19 | 21 | 21 | 31 | 39 | 32 | 45 | 69 |
| Teachers | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |

Superintendent Corkery asked that speakers who address the Board consider the following questions when addressing the options that have been presented.

- What are the best case scenarios to eliminate or reduce combination classes?
- What are the best case scenarios to balance class size?
- What is the best case scenario for the **long term** that area parents and District stakeholders can find reasonable acceptance with?

Greg Staner, Mayor of Cascade addressed the Board about the City of Cascade and its growth. He noted that the City of Cascade was a growing and active community with a bright future. He was not in favor of Options 1 and 2 and felt that Option 3 was the best alternative.

The following individuals also spoke concerning the Cascade/Bernard attendance center options and the Worthington boundary line. Mary Ann Booker, Kim Bergfeld, Douglas Clemens, Jodi Dolphin, Dawn Davis, Laura Foust, Gary Gansen, Jim and Shawna Jesenovec, Rich Knepper, Josey Noonan, Laura Noonan, Lori Miller, Kris Haan and Stacey Takes.

Summary comments from the speakers are as follows:

- Consultant's report did not include the option of Cascade 1st and 2nd grade going to Bernard. (It was noted that the report does include the option)
- Transportation costs need to be available for the various options
- Two section grades are a better option than very small single sections or combined grades
- We appreciate the School Board listening to our concerns
- The Board responded well to the concerns presented at the Farley/Epworth meeting
- How will open enrollment requests and waivers be administered
- Bernard enrollment is growing, strong and active PTO
- Option 1 has students moving too often from town to town in their early years. One move is enough.
- Option 2 is a better choice
- Option 3 would mark the end of Bernard Elementary
- Students from the same family attending multiple schools causes many day to day issues with school delays, errands, sick kids, day care etc
- Attending Aquin Elementary would have to be considered
- The number of teachers needed is the same regardless of the option
- Waiver requests will increase if boundary line is changed
- How can Bernard be efficiently staffed under option 3?
- How many paraprofessionals will be needed with the various options?
- Is the Base Plan an option for consideration?
- What time will kids get on and off the bus?
- Option 1 should not be considered
- PreK-4 needed at both Cascade and Bernard
- Option 3 is not economical nor practical
- Keep the Base Plan
- Combined grades at Bernard is not sustainable
- Solution should include both schools
- Don't make any big changes – wait until registration is complete and review after a year

Superintendent Corkery thanked the audience for their comments and reiterated that the District is listening and that no decisions have been made. He announced that a workshop session is scheduled for February 7th for the Board to review the options and the input received from the meetings. A decision should be ready for the regular monthly meeting on February 14th. Board President McCabe noted that Board members on a monthly basis visit the schools and observe many academic and physical environment situations. He is concerned that many of the schools are using art rooms, computer labs, media areas and other rooms for unattended purposes due to the current grade configurations at the schools. The proposed options would allow these rooms to be used as intended.

Motion by Weber, second by McAndrew to close the public hearing. Motion passed 5-0.

Adjournment: Motion by Coppola, second by Weber to adjourn. Motion passed 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m. on February 3, 2011.

David A. Wegmann
Board Secretary

Robert McCabe
President, Board of Education