



Frequently Asked Questions
Boundary Adjustment Information and Work Session
February 13, 2018

What research was used to draw the physical boundary lines?

The district reviewed enrollment capacity of our schools to determine which buildings were at or above capacity. Additionally, the district took the number of students in specific areas and their location to a particular school into consideration. Lastly, we made adjustments based upon specific building programming and concerns.

Is the district considering building more schools?

The school board agreed to create a Superintendent's Facility Task Force to support the building & design process. We believe we will likely be seeking a voter-approved bond referendum in the fall of 2019 to fund the building project(s). Once a funding source is identified, it takes a minimum of 24 months for the building process to be completed.

What are exceptions to attendance and open enrollment, and how will they impact the boundaries?

- Exception to Attendance - A parent or guardian may request an exception to attendance for a student(s) to attend a school other than their scheduled attendance area. An exception to attendance does not apply to District-Wide Option schools. (Policy 503.03)
- Open Enrollment – A parent or guardian from another district can open enroll into the Rochester Public School District. The School District follows the Enrollment Options Program established by Minnesota Statute 124D.03. (Policy 509)
- More information on these policies are at the back of this handout.

Explain the Jefferson Elementary enrollment numbers – I did not think they were over-enrolled?

Based on Jefferson's unique configuration that includes seven self-contained classrooms for students who qualify under autism spectrum disorder, the building's working capacity should be reduced by 150:



- *Seven full-size classrooms are capped at 42 total students*
- *if those classrooms were Kindergarten, they would hold 140 total students*
- *if those classrooms were Grade 1, they would hold 168 total students*
- *if those classrooms were Grades 2-3, they would hold 203 total students*
- *if those classrooms were Grades 4-5, they would hold 217 total students*

Adjusting for Jefferson's unique usage, the District's elementary school capacity is **8,000** – rather than 8,150.

Why are HS students excluded in the proposed boundary adjustments?

Current 9th – 11th graders will remain at their current high schools under this plan. The current enrollment at the three large high schools is within capacity. The district is also working with the Minnesota State High School League regarding eligibility for student athletes.

Why are current 4th and 7th graders excluded?

The transition for one year (5th grade at a new school, or 8th grade at a new school) would require two transitions in two years. To minimize multiple transitions within two years, the district believes this is in the best interest of students.

How many students are actually traveling farther as a result of this?

Transportation routes vary year over year based on the specific students attending each school. We will determine our 2018-2019 school bus routes in August.

Are we taking test scores or manipulating diversity by adjusting boundaries?

Test scores and diversity were not factors as we were adjusting boundaries.

Why are we planning to do this as early as this fall?

Growing enrollment challenges have been discussed in the public setting for the past two years. The school board long range planning committee has studied



alternatives to boundary changes and building, but has eliminated those alternatives for feasibility. Because we know our enrollment numbers are increasing, we proposed making these changes in the fall of 2018 to provide immediate impacts to our over-enrolled sites.

EXCEPTION TO ATTENDANCE

A parent or guardian may request an exception to attendance for a student(s) to attend another school other than their scheduled attendance area. An exception to attendance does not apply to District-Wide Option schools.

REASONS FOR AN EXCEPTION TO ATTENDANCE: *

Residential: If there is a change in residence during the current school year, a parent or guardian may request the student to complete the school year at the current school. A copy of the purchase agreement or rental lease contract must be attached to this form.

Legal: If there is a legal matter that may require a student to attend school outside of his or her attendance area school. A copy of the necessary documentation must be attached to this form.

Medical: If a medical reason exists which prevents the student from attendance at his or her attendance area school. A signed doctor's statement must be attached to this form.

Daycare: A parent or legal guardian may request that a child attend school in the school serving the area in which the daycare provider resides.

Each application is reviewed by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. Families will be notified when a decision is made.

*Exceptions to attendance may be impacted by different variables throughout the district. For questions and clarification regarding your specific situation, please call 507-328-4300.

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Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Edison Administration Building
615 Seventh St. SW
Rochester, MN 55902
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Exception to Attendance Renewals

Once an exception to attendance has been approved, a new exception form does not need to be submitted each year unless; the student attending a school on an exception is advancing to the next school building level, i.e. (from elementary to middle school, or from middle to high school).

If you will be filing an exception to attend at the next building level, the reason for the exception must meet criteria and fit board policy 503.03.

If you choose to discontinue your exception for the 2017-2018 school year, you will need to notify Registration & Records at 507-328-4231.

Conditions of an Exception to Attendance

1. An Exception to Attendance form documents reasons students attend a school outside of their neighborhood area school.
2. Exception to Attendance may be limited based on the academic welfare of the students, the building capacity and the current class sizes.
3. The student must maintain acceptable attendance and behavior or the exception may be rescinded and the student would return to the home attendance area school.
4. Transportation is not provided and is the responsibility of the student's family.

Reasons for Daycare Exceptions to Attendance

A parent/legal guardian may request that a child attend school in the school serving the area in which the daycare provider resides. This is granted provided the following conditions apply:

1. Transportation is provided by the District only if the address is within the attendance area of the receiving school and meets the distance requirements for transportation. A "Daycare transportation Request Card" must be completed in the transportation office.
2. The daycare provider must sign and provide contact information on the Exception to Attendance form.

Reasons for Residential Relocation Exceptions to Attendance

1. If there is a change in residence during the school year, a student may request to complete the school year at the current school. A copy of the purchase agreement or rental lease contract must be attached to the form.

Reasons for Legal Exceptions to Attendance

1. If there is a legal matter that may require a student to attend school outside of his or her attendance area school, an exception may be granted. A copy of the necessary documentation must be attached to the form.

Reasons for Medical Exceptions to Attendance

1. If a medical reason exists which prevents the student from attendance at his or her attendance



area school, an exception may be granted. A signed doctor's statement must be attached to the form.

Secondary School Level Extracurricular Eligibility

1. Exceptions to attendance will not be granted for athletic or activity participation reasons.
2. Any student who is changing schools on an Exception to Attendance will be ineligible to register and participate at any level of all MSHSL- sponsored athletic and fine arts activities for a period of one year.
3. Any student who participates in MSHSL- sponsored activities while on an Exception to Attendance and subsequently drops the exception in order to attend the school in his/her area of legal residence, will be considered a transfer student and ineligible for a period of time determined by MSHSL bylaws.

Section
500 - STUDENTS

Title
Exception to Attendance, Transfer, and Placement

Number
503.03

Status
Active

Cross References
[503.02 - Attendance Areas](#)

Adopted
February 7, 2006

Last Revised
December 12, 2017

Last Reviewed
November 21, 2017

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines under which a student may attend a school outside of their scheduled attendance area.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY



- A. Students in Independent School District #535 will attend the school located in the area in which their parent/legal guardian resides. This does not include District-wide options at the elementary and middle school levels.

- B. Exceptions to attendance will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Director of Elementary and Secondary Education (or designee). The primary factors in considering the request will be the academic welfare of the students and building capacity/class sizes. Exceptions to attendance will also be considered for child care purposes. Exceptions to Attendance will be made in compliance with the District Integration Plan.

III. PROCESS

A request for an Exception to Attendance form must be completed and returned to the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education. Exceptions to Attendance will be approved if they meet the established guidelines.

A. Guidelines for Exception to Attendance

1. Building capacity/class size will accommodate the request.
2. A student who moves to a different attendance area during the school year may request to complete the school year at the current school.
3. The student's parents/legal guardians remain legal residents of Independent School District #535 for the duration of his/her enrollment.
4. The student's family assumes the responsibility for transportation to and from school.
5. The student maintains acceptable attendance and behavior as determined by the building administrator.

B. Duration of Exception to Attendance

1. The exception privilege will remain in effect for one year unless rescinded by administrative action. It will automatically be terminated by enrollment in another public, non-public, or charter school.
2. Parents/legal guardians may request that a student who is attending a school on an Exception to Attendance be permitted to remain in that school until they have completed the highest level of education offered at that site.

C. Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) Activities

For the purpose of student eligibility, a student may only have one residence.

Transfer students will be eligible to participate at all levels of competition provided the student was in good standing and eligible on the official date of withdrawal from the last school attended and meets the conditions of the MSHSL Bylaws.

Students in grades (9-12) on an Exception to Attendance are subject the MSHSL transfer bylaw for sponsored athletic activities. Please contact the Activities Director about varsity eligibility prior to submitting this form.

Any student (grades 9-12) who changes their school after starting their 9th grade year with an Exception to Attendance will be ineligible to participate in athletic contest, at the varsity level, in all MSHSL sponsored athletics for a period of one calendar year. If there is a legal residence change, the student has the current academic school year to change schools.



Any student in (grades 9-12) who participates, at any level, in MSHSL sponsored athletics while on an Exception to Attendance and subsequently drops or has an exception revoked in order to attend the school in his/her area of legal residence, will be a transfer student and ineligible for a period of one calendar year per MSHSL Bylaw(s).

Students changing schools through Exception to Attendance, if approved, will mirror the MSHSL Bylaw for transfer students. Students affected by boundary adjustments from a Middle School to a corresponding High School will remain eligible. All other transfer students must meet the transfer requirements as set forth by the MSHSL Bylaws.

MSHSL Exception to Attendance for sponsored activities will be allowed only when the activity has been dropped at one school and it is available at the other two high schools. The District will decide on the school placement, depending on enrollment and availability of space in the MSHSL activity. The exception will be reevaluated at the end of the academic school year.

MSHSL Exception to Attendance will be granted to students grade 7-12 who have been a registered/rostered member of the team and in good standing. They must apply before the first day of school and remain at that school for the entire year.

D. Guidelines for Child Care Exceptions to Attendance

A parent/legal guardian may request that a child attend school in the school serving the area in which the childcare provider resides. This is granted provided the following conditions apply:

1. Building capacity/class size will accommodate the request.
2. The agreed-upon plan will continue for the entire year.
3. The request will be granted for a one-year period. Parents/legal guardians must reapply annually.
4. Transportation is provided by the District only if the daycare address is within the attendance area of the receiving school and meets the distance requirements for transportation.
5. The student maintains acceptable attendance and behavior as determined by the building administrator.
6. The exception will be terminated by enrollment in another public, non-public, or charter school.

Last Modified by Wendy E Edgar on December 12, 2017