



# Shrewsbury Public Schools

Patrick C. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

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To: School Committee

Subj: ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS REDISTRICTING PROJECT: RECOMMENDED OPTIONS

## **Background**

We are very pleased that the new Major Howard W. Beal Elementary School will open on time [and under budget] this coming August 2021. It has a design capacity of 790 students for grades kindergarten through grade 4. The school size anticipates future enrollment growth in the K-4 student population and provides space for those projected students in the coming years.

This project also plans for intentionally drawing down and shifting the enrollment at existing elementary schools all of whom are far above their design capacities. These decreased enrollments at Coolidge, Floral, Paton, and Spring will allow current core classrooms to be re-purposed for dedicated space for Music, Art, Special Education, and English Language Learner spaces so we achieve a parity of space across all elementary schools.

Further, the construction of the new Beal School, this enrollment drawdown, and the decision to permanently change our grade configuration for all elementary schools to a K-4 model will finally allow us enough space to provide full-day kindergarten to all students.

All of these goals necessarily require the design of new elementary school attendance zones for each school.

## **Process**

The elementary redistricting process began in January 2020 with a kickoff meeting of our committee. Our consulting partner, AppGeo, was awarded a contract in February 2020 for services after a competitive procurement process. While our work began in earnest in March, it was disrupted and delayed by Covid-19.

During the spring and summer we provided AppGeo with a series of data inputs they required in order to devise mapping scenarios with a multitude of data points. We picked up process in the fall with a series of meetings to discuss initial options. Regular updates were provided to the School Committee on our progress and we held two Community Forums via the Zoom platform.

Community members have provided input via dedicated email address and also to their school representative on the Redistricting Committee.

We know it is critically important to have a decision made in February 2021 so that we can continue with refined planning at the school level and also communicate the details to our parent community. We typically

open up school bus registration in early April each year, so parents need to know their child's school assignment prior to this in order to make that decision.

### **Information Resources**

This process inherently comes with the requirement of creating and analyzing an enormous amount of data. Our consultant partner, AppGeo, has done an excellent job of assisting us in this endeavor and creating digital maps so everyone can visualize clearly the various data components and different scenario maps.

Early in the process, we created a **webpage dedicated to this process** and you can find that [here](#). The website summarizes the process, provides links to videos of the Community Forums, and a “storyboard” that provides the five scenarios we presented most recently to the community at large. Parents who want a short summary of the process and be able to zoom into a scenario to **see their specific street in each scenario** can click [here](#).

Finally, if you wish to view a map of each neighborhood “component” and **how many current students are in that neighborhood by grade level**, you can click [here](#).

### **Recommended Options**

The full Redistricting Committee fully supports sending two options for your consideration. We believe these two options best match the collective intent of the Guiding Principles fulfilling them individually to varied degrees of success. We are labeling these two as Scenario 18 and Scenario 19 with the “19” signifying it is the 19<sup>th</sup> iteration of scenarios the committee evaluated as part of this process. Scenario 19 is essentially Scenario 18 with adjustments made based upon community input that could be tolerated while remaining within the context of the Guiding Principles.

Scenario 16 is also presented but is not one that received majority support of the committee. This option was developed to drive as much socio-economic parity as possible across all elementary schools. Socio-economic classification of students was derived by using their eligibility for free/reduced lunch as a proxy indicator. This information is routinely used as a broad indicator in educational research as it is readily and universally available to all school districts. However its use as an indicator has some limitations as it is a binary measurement [eligible v. not eligible] looking only at a household's income. It ignores any stratification of household income and also does not take into other factors like assets [including home values], debt load, or parent educational attainment.

There was consensus on the committee to show this map in order to convey the importance of this topic, the amount of time investment we made discussing it, and to demonstrate due diligence in exploring possible options that emphasized it. However, the outcome of better balancing free/reduced eligible students comes at the cost of not fulfilling other Guiding Principles. Scenario 16 has the greatest number of students making a school change, does not fulfill the goal of creating neighborhood schools, and will cause greater transportation costs and longer bus rides [or parent transportation] for students.

### **Remaining Decision-making Timeline**

As we near the end of this process, we want to reiterate the key upcoming dates leading up to your vote on the new elementary zones.

January 20, 2021: Redistricting Committee Recommendation

January 27, 201: School Committee Hearing on Recommended Scenarios

February 10, 2021: Superintendent's Recommendation and School Committee Vote