

**Alexandria City Public Schools
Grandfathering Considerations
April 16, 2016**

The following memo provides some feedback as it relates to grandfathering considerations and potential impacts on grandfathering policy.

Grandfathering is a term that is referred to as the level/degree that a school district allows students (impacted from redistricting) to continue at the school they currently attend. Grandfathering is used to help further reduce the impact on students and families that are impacted by boundary line adjustments. Typically, grandfathering is designed to allow students who are nearing the end of their tenure in a particular building to remain at their current school, which lessens the impact on students who are at their final year or close to their final year at a school. There are some school districts that offer grandfathering to any student who was impacted, but this is not recommended as it prolongs the final plan implementation for an indefinite amount of time.

Grandfathering is inherently designed to help avoid a negative impact for students who are finishing up their schooling at a particular school while achieving the goals of redistricting. It is not typically intended to be open for all, due to the risk of prolonging issues that the redistricting is designed to solve.

Below are some pros/cons with allowing grandfathering for a limited time (i.e., 1-2 years for terminal grades, such as 4th Grade or 4th-5th Grades.):

Pro's (limited grandfathering):

- Grandfathering does not greatly impact the planned utilization of schools post-redistricting.
- Less chance for schools to continue to experience extensive overcrowding over time, and schools return to equitable utilization as soon as possible.
- Fewer students who have the ability to choose their school means fewer conditions where administrators need to track and manage students who are attending from out of boundary.
- Reduces any confusion about where neighborhoods are assigned to schools. For instance, if a community has children attending various schools, new parents may be confused about which school their community is actually assigned to.
- Most common approach from school districts across the U.S.
- This plan provides the best balance for efficient operation of buildings as soon as possible, while addressing the community's concerns about keeping the impact on students as minimal as possible.

Con's (limited grandfathering):

- More families and students will be impacted and forced to move to their newly assigned school, hence a larger contingent of parents who are unhappy with being redistricted.

Below are some pros/cons with allowing grandfathering for any/all students who are impacted:

Pros (open to all):

- Members of the public who are re-assigned to a new school are not impacted by the adjustments, hence a happier contingent of parents.
- Depending on the magnitude, the district could experience cost savings in transportation (if the district is not providing transportation to children who opt for grandfathering) as a result of parents transporting children from out of boundary.
 - This potential cost savings is typically minimal, but could be possible depending on the magnitude of total students impacted and the percentage of parents that opt for the grandfathering.

Con's (open to all):

- Further prolongs the overcrowding that exists in the schools today, with no clear end in sight (due to siblings).
- Potential angst from parents who are redistricted to a school that continues to experience overcrowding.
- It is possible that, as you appease parents who are impacted by offering across-the-board grandfathering, you could end up angering the other side who feels that the plan needs to be finalized more expeditiously.
- Management of grandfathered students and their assigned school will be an ongoing task for years to come, as opposed to having a clearly defined end to redistricting.
- Schools could end up being utilized differently than what is planned. Some could be underutilized while others overutilized due to parents' choices for their children.
- This plan addresses the public's concerns about being impacted, but results in a prolonged and lesser efficiency of building utilization over time.

Recommendations

For the reasons stated above, it is our recommendation that the district consider implementing a limited grandfathering policy, such as allowing either the terminal year or last two years of terminal grades to continue. Our recommendation is also to NOT allow siblings to be eligible for grandfathering with their older family members who are impacted.

Pursuing a limited grandfathering policy lessens the impact on families and children who are redistricted, while still allowing efficient operations of the schools within the district as soon as possible.

If the district is leaning toward an "open to all" policy for grandfathering, they should defer this decision until the magnitude of the 2016 redistricting is fully understood, along with the potential grandfathering implications resulting from it.