

Question and answers concerning the Rutland Boundary/Grade reconfiguration

1. *Why are you thinking of this change now?*

Although population growth has occurred in Rutland over the past few years, it has been primarily in the Glenwood district. While growth has occurred on one side of town, the Naquag district has seen a steady decline in student enrollment over the past few years. Naquag currently has 323 students, including ½ day K students, which is over 50 students less than projected. Census data collected last year shows that this decrease will continue this year as Naquag graduates 63 students from grade 5 which is in sharp contrast to only 25 students projected to enroll in K in the fall. On the other side of town, Glenwood will have approximately 80 students entering K next year. In order to deal with this discrepancy, we must redistrict the boundary line for Naquag and Glenwood **or** reconfigure the grade levels of each school so that all students would attend Naquag for grades K-2 and Glenwood for grades 3-5. We believe that the best solution is to separate the grade levels and have one K-2 and one 3-5 for the town.

2. *Could the District redraw the boundary lines for the two schools?*

Yes, the District could redraw the lines and move families and neighborhoods from the Glenwood side of town to Naquag. However, this is a short-term solution. One configuration could be to take the neighborhoods of Vista, Brunelle and Richards out of the Glenwood district and have them attend Naquag. This would add approximately 65 students to Naquag's student population, bringing their K-5 enrollment to about 340 students. Glenwood's enrollment would drop to approximately 450 students.

3. *Why is redistricting considered short-term?*

No one could have predicted the fall of the housing market and the eventual collapse of the financial/banking system in our country. Moving a few neighborhoods from Glenwood to Naquag is considered a temporary fix since we do not know when the housing market will rebound. Balancing by boundary causes an unstable situation since we do not know what neighborhoods will have to be moved to solve the next pupil population issue. The original boundary line was not only based on the projection that many more developments would be built over the past 5 years, but also their locations. It is possible to take neighborhoods from Glenwood and reassign them to Naquag. However, as we have learned, projections may be inaccurate and we may once again face the need to redistrict. This is a situation we are attempting to avoid.

4. *How will busing work?*

Students in grades K through 5 will all take the same buses. For example, a first and fourth grade student both take the same bus from Nancy Drive. The first grade student is dropped off first at Naquag and then the fourth grader is dropped off at Glenwood approximately 10 minutes later. In terms of bus time, we are currently working on a bus schedule to assess times and routes.

5. *What happens if my child is a walker?*

Students who live within the walking area will walk to Naquag as they have always done. Since Naquag has sidewalks and is in the center of town, more students who attend Naquag would be walkers. We are also looking at the possibility of a walking monitor that would meet students along Main St. and bring them to Naquag.

6. *What are the educational benefits/drawbacks of K-2 and 3-5 configurations?*

Benefits from K-2 and 3-5 configurations include: ability to balance class size in terms of student need for placement; students will be in 'grade-alike' grouping which permits more focused professional development for teaching teams; choices for class placement are broader and students have more opportunities to meet other students. This configuration also permits the community to focus the school culture around the needs of primary aged children. Some issues with this configuration include the number of transitions students make during their school

careers, the logistics of having another school for parents to transport to or visit, and older students cannot serve as mentors to primary age children.

7. *How will this alter the budget? What savings will be recognized?*

The budget for the coming school year looks to be even more challenging than the budget for the current year. The transition to this model will allow for a minimum reduction of 2 teachers due to the fact that class size will be able to be more evenly distributed among a larger number of teachers per grade level. There would also be the possibility of decreasing the number of buses by one bus.

8. *What will happen with full-day kindergarten?*

Since Naquag and Glenwood each currently house a full-day kindergarten class, the K- 2 facility at Naquag would provide two full-day K classes as well as half-day kindergarten classes.

9. *What will happen to the District-Wide Special Education programs?*

The plan would be for Naquag to house a K-2 Developmental program as well as the two District-Wide NECC programs. Glenwood would keep the 3-5 District-Wide Transition program and would also have the District-Wide 3-5 Developmental program. These programs are all currently housed in the two schools; however some would be moved based upon grade span configurations.

10. *How many students will be enrolled at each grade level, and what implications does this have for staffing?*

Student enrollment for 2010-2011 will range from approximately 115 students in K to 150 in grade 5. By increasing the number of students at each grade level, there is the possibility of reducing the number of teachers between both buildings by two (through attrition) for the coming school year. Class size average would range from twenty in the K-2, to twenty-three in grades 3-5.

11. *Will the configuration increase or decrease parent involvement?*

We hope that parent involvement remains strong in both schools as they move forward. The feeling of both principals is that parental involvement will be welcomed and supported by each school and staff.

12. *Will the design of each school suit the needs of the particular grade span?*

Currently, Naquag is being underutilized because of the decreasing student population. Glenwood has a steady enrollment with some space for growth. If Naquag becomes K-2, there will be few modifications needed to make the building and classes ready for that particular age span throughout the school. Glenwood is appropriately sized for students in grades 3-5 in all three pods. The two kindergarten classrooms could be used as the 3-5 District-Wide developmental classroom space or spaces for instructional support provided by Speech, Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy Services.

13. *Will reconfiguration provide socioeconomic balance?*

There have been concerns regarding the socioeconomic balance of the two schools since Glenwood opened a little over three years ago. Presently Naquag has the greatest number of students who receive free and reduced lunch in the District at 11%; Glenwood is at 7% which is the District average. Reconfiguration will more closely align both schools with the District average.

14. *Does research support one model over another?*

There is minimal research on grade configuration that is conclusive in terms of the best grade span arrangement. Most districts have a variety of configurations that reflect the unique qualities of schools and towns. The quality of teaching/instruction, leadership, high expectations, and staff development all play a much larger role in student achievement than the grade span of the school a student attends.