

**Connect with us**

RPS205.com  
Facebook.com/RPS205  
Twitter.com/RPS205  
Youtube.com/RPS205Communications  
Instagram.com/RPS205

**For Immediate Release:** July 14, 2015

**Contact:** Cathy Bayer  
815-489-7211 or 815-378-2079  
[cathy.bayer@rps205.com](mailto:cathy.bayer@rps205.com)

## **School Board OKs New Elementary Attendance Zones**

ROCKFORD – The Rockford School Board tonight approved a new elementary student attendance plan that redraws attendance boundaries to align with a board-approved 10-year facilities plan. The School Board also agreed on a way to implement these changes; the first three years of the five-year implementation plan were approved tonight. The board will evaluate the plan's final two years after further recommendations come from Facilities Oversight Committee in the next six months.

Independent demographer Robert Schwarz of RSP and Associates developed the plan, which was first presented June 16 to the Facilities Oversight Committee. New elementary zones were drawn because of natural population shifts and changes under the [10-year facilities plan](#), which includes the potential construction of two new schools, 13 additions and closure of eight schools. The plan redraws the 26 existing elementary attendance zone boundaries into 21 zones.

The Facilities Plan Oversight Committee will issue a full report and recommendation on how the facilities plan will be accomplished within the allocated budget. The 10-year facilities plan replaces Nelson and Kishwaukee elementary schools with one new school, and replaces White Swan, Cherry Valley and Thompson elementary schools with a second new school.

The first three years of the five-year implementation plan are not affected by potential new school construction. If new schools are not built and instead, additions are built onto existing schools, zones might shift for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 school years.

**What's new tonight:** The School Board agreed on a way to implement these changes: Students will not be grandfathered into this plan. Students will move to the school in their new attendance zone according to the [five-year transition timeline](#). Kindergarten students and elementary students who are new to the district will be assigned to the new zoned school, based on seat availability.

**What's next:** The new zones will be implemented in a staggered fashion over the next three years; full timelines will be available at registration for the 2015-16 school year. At that time, parents will learn which zone they live in and what changes to expect in the coming years, including elementary school upgrades. ([View maps of the zones at rps205.com.](#)) Zones for the middle and high schools will remain the same. The final two years of the implementation plan will be considered within the next six months.

**Transfer options:** District administrators will keep families together, where possible. If a kindergarten student has an older sibling who attends school outside the new neighborhood zone school, the parent may request to transfer the older student to the new attendance zone school, based on seat availability. Transfers will only be granted based on seat availability.

Rockford Public Schools offer a rich and varied curriculum to its 28,000 students. It is one of the largest school districts in Illinois and the second-largest employer in the Rockford region. RPS 205 embraces five big initiatives – Readiness Rocks – designed to create a district that prepares all of its students for a bright future: College and Career Readiness, Seven Periods to Success, 21st Century Learning Environments, Preschool for All and College for All.



**Background:** Elementary student assignment plans were last updated for the 2011-12 school year. The assignment plan then moved from a modified choice plan to attendance based on geographic zones so students attend a school closest to their home. The new zones also take into account students who walk to school, bus routes, and enrollment in specialized programs.

RSP and Associates, which specializes in school planning, was hired in December 2014, the month after the School Board approved the construction timeline for the district's 10-year facilities plan. It's common for school districts to hire such firms when redrawing attendance zones and for long-term planning.

For more information and answers to FAQs, visit the [Achieving Better Schools](#) website.

###