

School Board Approves Phase-In Realignment for 2016-2017 School Year

The Chambersburg School Board of Directors approved a recommendation by the district's Realignment Committee at its Wednesday, March 23 meeting to develop a one time zone adjustment during a phase-in approach that will impact three district elementary zones in the 2016-2017 school year.

"Proposed changes to the zones during Phase 1 call for the modification of three school zones. Those are Falling Spring, New Franklin, and Buchanan – which will be a minor modification," said Mrs. Tamera Stouffer, director of support services, during her presentation to the school board.

"There are several key reasons for these changes. In February the school board approved opening of the new Marion Elementary School without the addition of new staff. This allows the District the opportunity to establish attendance zones in which the student populations are in line with the building capacities" explained Mrs. Stouffer.

"Also, the large child care center on Stanley Avenue currently zoned for the Falling Spring school will be moved to the New Franklin zone. The existing Falling Spring zone has roughly 100 students living in the zone for which the building does not have the capacity to serve. As a result, these students attend a building other than their school of residency. We anticipate a reduction of school buses that serve this daycare by two. This will reduce safety concerns," said Mrs. Stouffer.

The Realignment Committee's mission is to ensure that all students receive access to the best educational opportunities by maximizing the capacity of existing resources and embracing the diversity of our student population. At the heart of this is the need to balance demographic factors, class sizes, and to minimize oversubscription.

With the approved phase-in approach, in the 2016-2017 school year the Falling Spring zone will have 266 students compared to the current 368 students. The Marion zone will have 220 students and the New Franklin zone will have 191.

There will also be minor changes to the Buchanan Elementary School boundaries to zone both the east and west sides of Coldbrook Avenue to Buchanan.

"Marion Elementary can hold additional students which is something for us to keep in mind in the future. Right now the status of the state budget for this year and next make it very challenging for us to plan any further ahead than 2016-2017 school year," noted Mrs. Stouffer.

The Realignment Committee will reconvene in September 2016. Meanwhile, work on implementing the phase-in plan will proceed so that bus routes and student school assignments are well established before the beginning of the next school year, according to Mrs. Stouffer.