

Fellow Woodbury residents,

We are writing to inform you that on January 21st at the District 833 School Board meeting, the Board will be voting to approve Option 2 for the Attendance Boundary change. **As a result, 5 neighborhood groups will now be forced to attend Valley Crossing Elementary School (directly affecting Dancing Waters, Powers Lake, Brighton's Landing, and Grand Reserve-Gables residents.)**

This is extremely concerning to us and should also be concerning to you. Here is why:

1. The "Forced 5" neighborhood groups are not being treated equitably!

- These 5 neighborhood groups (out of 124 total) in District 833 will be FORCED into an alternative curriculum delivery model that has been a Choice program for the past 19 years.
- All other 119 neighborhoods in the district are assigned to a Traditional District 833 elementary school.
- Why should the approx. 317 students in these 5 groups be treated differently than the remaining 7,700 District students?

2. Valley Crossing is different than All other elementary schools in the District.

- Valley Crossing has previously been operated as a "choice" school based on an alternative programming and delivery style (called "Responsive Classroom"); it does not work well for all students.
- There are striking differences in curriculum delivery, organization, and architecture:
 - The school is divided into 3 "neighborhoods" (A, B, and C) with students from all ages Kindergarten through 5th Grade, and students stay in the same neighborhood for all years at Valley Crossing.
 - Within a neighborhood, students are grouped into multi-age levels (K-1st grade, 2nd-3rd grades, and 4th-5th grades.)
 - Kids keep the same team teachers for two years.
 - The building is open with very few walls, desks, or chairs and can be noisy and chaotic.
 - A social curriculum is emphasized vs. the academic curriculum emphasis of traditional elementary schools.
- This different programming, organization, and architecture can work for some students, but it does not work for others.
- These 5 neighborhoods will be forced into this non-traditional format – different than all other 14 district elem. schools.

3. Valley Crossing will NOT be a neighborhood school like all other 14 elementary schools in District 833!

- The Forced 5 neighborhood children (the only children from the attendance boundary) will be the minority – at only 40% of the student population (by far the lowest % in the District.)
- They are being removed from traditional schools and forced into Valley Crossing with 3 other distinct student groups:
 1. Open enrolled children from outside of the District (North St. Paul, Maplewood, and Stillwater.)
 2. Open enrolled students from other areas in the District.
 3. Gateway program students (who will have little to no interaction with the other students in the school.)

4. Your Re-Sale/Property Values could be negatively affected!

- Families looking to move to or within Woodbury may forgo looking at homes in the "Forced Five" neighborhoods so their children can attend a traditional school with kids from their neighborhood.
- This could potentially increase Days on Market (time it takes to sell your home) as well as decrease property values.

5. The District spent over \$12 million for this school but cares more about needs of kids from other Districts!

- The forced 5 neighborhoods are not given a choice in elementary schools.
- Our Superintendent and his team are ensuring that CHOICE students from Districts 622 and 834 can continue to enroll at Valley Crossing and will cater to the needs of those students before those of our five neighborhoods (who pay taxes here!)

6. Non-objective Task Force recommendation:

- The recommended "Option 2" least effectively meets the established Evaluation Criteria for solving the overcrowding issue.
- Worse yet, it appears that a non-objective and an unspecified agenda is driving the recommendation.

Action Requested!

- 1. Contact all School Board members ASAP & urge them to vote "NO" to Option 2 on Jan 21st**
- 2. Attend the School Board meeting on January 21st - we need our voice heard loud and clear!**

The meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. at the District Service Center in Cottage Grove (7362 East Point Douglas Rd. S.)

More information can be found at www.sowashco.org/attendance-boundaries.

Contact info for School Board members can be found on back of this page or at: www.sowashco.org/about-833/school-board/school-board-members.

The table below contains the contact info for the School Board and District Staff.

Note that only the first 7 are School Board members with voting rights. These 7 will make the final decision regarding the attendance boundaries.

Name	Voting Member of School Board	Role	Email	Phone
Ron Kath	Yes	School Board Chair	rkath@sowashco.org	651-260-3358
Tracy Brunnette	Yes	School Board Vice-Chair	tbrunnet@sowashco.org	651-321-8449
Katie Schwartz	Yes	School Board Clerk	kschwart5@sowashco.org	651-347-7656
Sharon Van Leer	Yes	School Board Treasurer	svanleer@sowashco.org	651-846-9621
Kathleen McElwee-Stevens	Yes	School Board Director	kmcelwee@sowashco.org	651-459-5411
Michelle Witte	Yes	School Board Director	mwitte@sowashco.org	651-402-3184
Joe Slavin	Yes	School Board Director	jslavin@sowashco.org	651-895-7708
Keith Jacobus	No	Superintendent	kjacobus@sowashco.org	651-425-6201
Julie Nielsen	No	Assistant Superintendent	jnielsen@sowashco.org	651-425-6203
Michael Johnson	No	Assistant Superintendent	mjohnson8@sowashco.org	651-425-6208

Differences Between Valley Crossing Alternative Programming vs. All Other ISD #833 Elementary Schools

Alternative Programming (Responsive Classroom Approach) to be Used at Valley Crossing Elementary	Traditional District 833 Model Used at All Other 14 Elementary Schools
Social curriculum emphasized	Academic curriculum emphasized
No walls, open architecture, can be loud and noisy	Traditional classroom with walls
School divided into 3 Neighborhoods (A, B, and C) with students from Kindergarten through Grade 5; each student stays in same neighborhood for all years at Valley Crossing	School divided into 6 levels – Kindergarten through 5 th grade. Different classmates each year
Students use “self-directed” learning	Traditional learning
Students divided into multi-age groups: K-1, 2-3, 4-5	Students grouped with other children of same age
Few desks and chairs; lots of time on floor	Typical desk/chair environment
Inconsistent curriculum delivery among neighborhoods	Teaching within grades across classrooms the same
Same teacher(s) every two years and within neighborhood for entire time in school	Different teacher every year
Unique approach to rules and discipline	Traditional discipline