

Redistricting FAQ

December 14, 2011

Q: Why has Arlington formed a Redistricting Committee?

A: The Redistricting Committee is charged by the School Committee to develop a new elementary school zoning map for School Committee approval by June of 2012, for implementation in the fall of 2013 (the 2013-2014 school year).

Q: Why are we redistricting now?

A: The student population of Arlington has risen over the last ten years, but this growth has not been evenly distributed across the town. When the new Thompson building was proposed and accepted by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA), Arlington stressed the need to create additional space for the district. The MSBA agreed that the district needed additional space, but would only concede to support a larger school if a town wide redistricting took place. The School Committee voted to redistrict and to have it fully implemented by the opening of the new Thompson building.

Q: When will the proposed redistricting happen?

A: The Redistricting Committee will present a proposal to the School Committee in June of 2012. Once accepted, the new plan will take effect in the fall of 2013. There will be an entire school year to work out all details of the change before redistricting actually occurs.

Q: What are the driving factors behind the initial drafts of the proposed redistricting?

A: There have been three main drivers to the proposed reallocation of students so far:

- 1) There must be 380 students in the Thompson school when it opens in the fall of 2013.
- 2) All schools must have enrollment that preserves single purpose rooms dedicated to art, music, computer lab and also science if the building was designed to have a science room.
- 3) Natural and man-made barriers to the easy movement of students between home and school must be considered.

Q: Will there be opportunities for parents and residents to participate in the process?

A: Each elementary school has a representative on the Redistricting Committee, who can hear your concerns and bring them back to the committee as a whole. Once a proposed plan is created, a public forum will be held at each elementary school, inviting all interested parents and residents an opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions before the final proposal is brought to the School Committee.

Q: Is not redistricting an option?

A: No. As part of our agreement with the MSBA, approved by both the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen, Arlington must redistrict. Some elementary schools are currently overcrowded. The School Committee has voted to redistrict as key to the best future for our growing district.

Q: Will the Bishop bus be discontinued?

A: Ideally, all students in Arlington would have a safe walk to school within a reasonable distance from their homes and a bus would not be required. However, the termination of busing is not a driving factor in the redistricting plans.