

TO: Arlington School Committee
FROM: Dr. Elizabeth Homan, Superintendent
RE: Buffer Zone Report 2021
DATE: 10/14/2021

This report summarizes buffer zone assignments in the Arlington Public Schools for the 2021-22 school year. According to school committee policy JC and JC-E: The School Committee establishes certain "Buffer zones," addresses on or near certain elementary school district boundaries, as areas from which new students in that elementary school district may be assigned to either one of the immediate elementary school districts."

This report meets the requirements of this policy: "Each year, by the second meeting in October, the Superintendent will report to the School Committee on the implementation of this policy and its effectiveness. A key focus will be on class size equity and how the policy is impacting and working towards improving it. The report will include but not be limited to a description of buffer use, open enrollment and their effectiveness."

Buffer Zone Assignments 2021 Summary:

Overall, APS had 170 families who enrolled in APS in 2021 whose residence is situated in a buffer zone. Of these families, 153 received their first choice assignment and 17 received their second-choice assignment. Summaries of buffer zone assignments by school and grade level are provided below:

Buffer Zone Choice Assignments By School:

<i>School</i>	First Choice	Second Choice	Total
Bishop	34	2	36
Brackett	33	3	36
Dallin	12		12
Hardy	22		22
Peirce	16	5	21
Stratton	26	7	33
Thompson	10		10
Total	153	16	170

The process through which students were assigned to schools took into account the families' requested/preferred first choice school, whether or not any siblings already attended the preferred school; whether or not students had IEPs that could be best serviced at the preferred school; and the average class size for the student's grade level at each school in the buffer zone. These layered factors played a role in determining the final assignment for each student. When the

family's first choice was not granted, it was most often because the average section size at that grade level in the preferred school significantly exceeded the average class size at the same grade level at the second choice school. This approach to buffer zone assignment required a revision of current reports to accurately reflect the total number of students at each grade level at each school along with a calculation of the average class size at each grade level. This resulted in the enrollment report the School Committee receives at each meeting as a component of the Superintendent's Update.

The Buffer Zone and Open Enrollment process is an effective strategy for balancing class sizes and maintaining equitable class sizes and services across the district. The buffer zone assignment process this year took into account areas of the district where space was limited, and also allowed for assignment of students into classes that were smaller on average and had space to accommodate additional students. Additional information about zone assignments disaggregated by grade level and school are provided below.

Buffer Zone Assignments by Grade Level and School:

KINDERGARTEN		1ST	
Bishop Elementary School	19	Bishop Elementary School	6
Brackett Elementary School	25	Brackett Elementary School	3
Dallin Elementary School	8	Dallin Elementary School	2
Hardy Elementary School	13	Hardy Elementary School	3
Peirce Elementary School	15	Peirce Elementary School	1
Stratton Elementary School	20	Stratton Elementary School	5
Thompson Elementary School	8	Thompson Elementary School	0
Total	108	Total	20
2ND		3RD	
Bishop Elementary School	2	Bishop Elementary School	2
Brackett Elementary School	3	Brackett Elementary School	2
Hardy Elementary School	1	Hardy Elementary School	1
Peirce Elementary School	1	Peirce Elementary School	0
Stratton Elementary School	4	Stratton Elementary School	1
Thompson Elementary School	2	Thompson Elementary School	0
Total	13	Total	6
4TH		5TH	
Bishop Elementary School	5	Bishop Elementary School	2
Brackett Elementary School	1	Brackett Elementary School	2
Dallin Elementary School	1	Dallin Elementary School	1
Hardy Elementary School	3	Hardy Elementary School	1
Peirce Elementary School	2	Peirce Elementary School	2
Stratton Elementary School	2	Stratton Elementary School	1
Thompson Elementary School	0	Thompson Elementary School	0
Total	14	Total	9