

# Buffer Zone and Open Enrollment Report 2022

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# Agenda

- Purpose and Overview
- Buffer Zone Assignments and Comparison
- Buffer Zone Grade Level Breakdown
- Buffer Zone Trends
- Class Size Overview 2022
- Open Enrollment Overview
- Open Enrollment Trends
- Discussion

# Purpose and Overview

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**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.”

**Buffer Zone and Open Enrollment Report:** “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.”

*School Committee Policy JC, JC-E*

# Buffer Zone Assignments and Comparison



School	First Choice	Second Choice	Total	SY21-22	Compare
Bishop	19	2	21	37 (1st), 6 (2nd)	-22
Brackett	35	3	38	30 (1st), 2 (2nd)	6
Dallin	12	0	12	12 (1st), 0 (2nd)	0
Hardy	5	2	7	27 (1st), 0 (2nd)	-20
Peirce	18	1	19	18 (1st), 9 (2nd)	-8
Stratton	12	4	16	28 (1st), 6 (2nd)	-18
Thompson	15	2	17	13 (1st), 0 (2nd)	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>165 (1st), 23 (2nd)</b> <b>188 Total</b>	<b>-58</b>

# Buffer Zone Grade Level Breakdown



KINDERGARTEN		1ST		2ND	
Bishop Elementary School	13	Bishop Elementary School	4	Bishop Elementary School	2
Brackett Elementary School	34	Brackett Elementary School	1	Brackett Elementary School	0
Dallin Elementary School	11	Dallin Elementary School	0	Dallin Elementary School	1
Hardy Elementary School	6	Hardy Elementary School	0	Hardy Elementary School	1
Peirce Elementary School	14	Peirce Elementary School	1	Peirce Elementary School	1
Stratton Elementary School	13	Stratton Elementary School	3	Stratton Elementary School	0
Thompson Elementary School	11	Thompson Elementary School	3	Thompson Elementary School	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>
3RD		4TH		5TH	
Bishop Elementary School	1	Bishop Elementary School	1	Bishop Elementary School	0
Brackett Elementary School	2	Brackett Elementary School	1	Brackett Elementary School	0
Dallin Elementary School	0	Dallin Elementary School	0	Dallin Elementary School	0
Hardy Elementary School	0	Hardy Elementary School	0	Hardy Elementary School	0
Peirce Elementary School	1	Peirce Elementary School	1	Peirce Elementary School	1
Stratton Elementary School	0	Stratton Elementary School	0	Stratton Elementary School	0
Thompson Elementary School	1	Thompson Elementary School	0	Thompson Elementary School	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>

# Buffer Zone Trends

- Despite stable K enrollments compared to last school year, **fewer new students entering the system who lived in buffer zones than in 2021-22**, and most schools saw fewer buffer zone assignments. Exceptions:
  - Brackett, which saw an increase of 6 assigned students this year,
  - Thompson with an increase of 4 assigned students, and
  - Dallin, which remained the same as last school year.
- **Efforts were made to swing away from the Stratton district in Spring 2022** due to anticipated space constraints, which is reflected in significantly fewer students being assigned to Stratton and only slightly fewer assigned to Peirce and steady enrollment at Dallin. Fewer students were also assigned to Bishop due to high initial enrollment in K-2 classes last spring.
- **Increase in enrollment in grades 1 and 2** compared to the past two years; this could signal some return of students to public schools after participation in private schooling during the pandemic.

# Class Size Overview and Comparison



	Kindergarten		1st Grade		2nd Grade		3rd Grade		4th Grade		5th Grade					
	Oct 2022	Oct 2021	Oct 2022	Oct 2021	Oct 2022	Oct 2021	Oct 2022	Oct 2021	Oct 2022	Oct 2021	Oct 2022	Oct 2021	TOTAL:	2022	2021	Diff.
Bishop	20.3	20.7	22.7	21.7	23.3	20.7	21.3	19.3	19.8	19.7	19.7	22.3	BIS	401	392	-9
Brackett	20.8	19.7	18.0	17.3	21.7	17.8	17.0	19.6	19.4	20.7	20.0	21.0	BRA	427	443	-16
Dallin	22.3	20.7	20.3	20.0	21.3	21.3	23.0	21.8	21.5	18.0	17.5	20.8	DAL	417	428	-11
Hardy	23.7	19.5	19.5	21.3	21.3	19.0	18.3	17.8	16.8	16.3	20.7	19.0	HAR	397	411	-14
Peirce	22.0	17.0	17.0	21.3	21.0	17.7	19.7	19.0	20.3	21.3	21.7	19.0	PEI	365	327	38
Stratton	16.7	20.8	21.0	17.3	24.3	21.3	21.5	19.0	17.3	24.7	18.3	22.3	STR	435	454	-19
Thompson	22.3	18.6	19.2	22.5	20.5	19.8	22.0	19.5	18.3	24.3	25.0	23.8	THO	503	508	-5
Average:	21.2	19.5	19.7	20.0	21.9	19.6	20.4	19.4	19.0	20.4	20.2	21.3		2945	2963	-18
Difference 21-22:	1.7		-3		2.3		1		-6		-1.1					

BLUE indicates DECREASE in ave class size of more than 1 student from 2021-22 to 2022-23;  
 YELLOW indicates INCREASE in ave class size of more than 1 student from 2021-22 to 2022-23;  
 WHITE indicates change <1

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School indicated is the RECEIVING school, where the student is currently enrolled.

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# Open Enrollment Trends



- Almost all Open Enrollment requests are coming from schools that share a buffer zone with the requested school.
  - Example: all but 1 of Brackett's open enrollment requests came from families with children attending Dallin or Bishop.
- The vast majority of Open Enrollment requests come from families whose personal circumstances change at some point during their student's elementary experience, and who are seeking to maintain connection with their child's school community.
- Some requests are made that reflect an understanding of the Open Enrollment policy as a "school choice" mechanism.
  - These requests sometimes are framed as motivated by a preference of school demographics, class size, or other factors.
  - The district emphasizes that Arlington has a neighborhood school model when we receive these requests and seeks to collaborate with the family to understand their needs and concerns.