

Round 2 Modeling Rationale

Overview

This document explains rationale for determining which schools were considered and included as options to develop scenarios for potential school closures and boundary modifications by the PSD Facilities Steering Committee (the SC).

Primary Objective: Increase districtwide enrollment to an average of 400 students per school at the elementary level and 700 students at the middle school level.

To achieve enrollment objectives districtwide, some schools may fall below the target enrollment numbers, while most schools will have higher enrollment. The 400/700 enrollment numbers are considered the minimum optimal enrollment for financially healthy elementary and middle schools with comprehensive programming for students across the district. .

The district has historically been subsidizing schools with lower enrollments to ensure that students in those schools have the same access to specials and resources as students who are in schools with higher enrollment. This subsidy is called the Size Factor Adjustment. While the primary reason for the enrollment objectives is to create well-resourced learning environments for PSD students, reducing the amount of funding to subsidize smaller schools is an important financial consideration as the district faces lower overall enrollment.

Building utilization, which is a calculation based on the number of learning spaces in a building and the number of students who can comfortably be educated in that building, is an additional factor. For example, some elementary schools are designed to have four classes in each grade, while others are designed to have only three. This translates into 20 to 25 students per class in elementary school, or a total of 400 to 450 students in a three-track elementary school and 480 to 600 students in a four-track elementary school.

STEP 1: Initial Screening Criteria

Universal screening criteria: The steering committee used screening criteria to identify schools for further consideration. Mountain elementary schools (Redfeather, Livermore, Stove Prairie) were not considered in this evaluation due to their geographic isolation. Wellington schools were not considered due to their growing enrollment and current capacity to accommodate that enrollment.

Primary Objective	
Move toward districtwide average enrollments of 400/700 at elementary and middle schools respectively, now and based on 5 year projections *	
Initial Screening Criteria for Potential Closure	
Utilization	Below 70% enrollment or at or above 110% enrollment today. Current Enrollment (at/below/above 400ES/700MS)
Geography	Physical proximity to other schools and those school’s enrollments to identify potentially viable options. Geography also serves as an initial consideration for transportation concerns and & community continuity. Elementary schools were grouped based on three geographic areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● East of College Avenue (East)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South of Prospect and West of College (Southwest Elementaries or SW) and • North of Prospect and West of College Avenue (Northwest Elementaries or NW).
Exclusions		
	Utilization	Neighborhood schools with over 70% (NSC) enrollment were not considered for closure based on PSD Board guidelines.
	Geography	<p>Mountain Elementary Schools were not considered due to their geographic isolation, their role as community centers for rural communities, and long travel times.</p> <p>Wellington Schools given that their enrollment is growing, but they are expected to stay within their building capacity for several years.</p>

Screening Results by Geography for Elementary Schools

Using the initial screening criteria, the following schools were identified for further consideration:

- East: Timnath Elementary*, Bamford, Linton
- SW: Bauder, Beattie, Johnson, Lopez
- NW: Cache la Poudre, Irish, Putnam

*Timnath was the only overenrolled elementary in the district

Middle Schools

Using the initial screening criteria, the following schools were identified for further consideration:

- East: Preston, Boltz, Timnath MHS*
- SW: Blevins
- NW: Cache La Poudre, Lincoln

*Timnath Middle High School is projected for over-enrollment, with no bond in place for future school construction.

STEP 2: Evaluation Criteria

Each geographic area is unique in regard to the physical arrangement of schools in relation to each other, the number and distance between schools in the area, individual school and regional enrollment trends, and specialized services, curriculum, and programs.

Primary Criteria for Developing Options		
	Transportation & Geography	Distribution of boundaries to optimize for transportation (bussing, walking, biking)
	Feeder Continuity	Logical distribution of feeders, avoiding future split feeders to the extent possible
	Equity	Identifies and prioritizes positive long-term outcomes for at-risk and /or marginalized students including low income, non-white, unhoused, and special needs students. Solutions vary by geography.
	Programming	Maintain and minimize disruption to existing / established educational/curricular programs and special education programs.

		Expanding and/or maintaining access to diverse / in demand programming.
Additional Criteria (lower weight)		
	5 year Estimated Maintenance Costs	5+ year estimated maintenance needs (based on McKinstry data)
	Cost for A/C	Although A/C would generally not be a school-by-school expense, if the district were to consider including A/C as part of a ballot measure, buildings that were not housing students might not be considered for A/C installation.

Evaluation for East Elementaries

Evaluation for elementaries in the East was very limited by geography and enrollment trends in that area.

School	Considerations	Inclusion
All East of I25 Elementaries	Balance enrollment across Timnath, Bethke and Bamford to ease enrollment pressures at Timnath Elementary	Included in all scenarios
Bamford	Was not considered for closure due to geographic isolation, lack of space at closest school, and ability to help absorb enrollment as area East of I25 continues to see new development	Not included for consideration for closure.
Linton	Only school in the East to be considered for closure based on low building utilization and geographic proximity to nearby schools to absorb students. Receives Title 1 funding. Significant Emotional Disability (SED) program.	Included as an option for closure.
Harris	As a 100% choice dual language program that already serves students from the Linton neighborhood boundary, moving Harris to the Linton building was considered as a way to retain some neighborhood school function and as a way to expand access to dual language programming in the district. This option would require Harris to change educational models to accommodate a third track of students.	Included as an option to move to Linton.

Evaluation of SW Elementaries

Evaluation of solutions for SW elementaries was driven by the total number of schools in the area, their proximity to each other, and total enrollment capacity of the area. Programming, including specialized programs and facilities for integrated learning services was a factor in considering options as well.

Southwest elementaries are projected to have 2,208 students spread across seven schools in 2027, averaging 315 students per school. To achieve optimal enrollment and school budgets with 400 students, two schools need to be identified for closure.

Geographically when considering two elementary school closures in the SW, Beattie and Johnson were identified as being the better candidates for closure among the SW elementaries. The rationale included several factors including geographic proximity of schools to each other, enrollment at each school, the existence of specialized facilities for integrated learning services, and capacity of the schools to accept students displaced from nearby closures.

Bauder and Lopez both have higher enrollment and house substantial center-based integrated services programs. For these reasons Bauder and Lopez were not identified for closure. The Lopez building is also a four-track elementary that would be able to accommodate many of the students from Beattie.

School	Considerations	Inclusion
Bauder	Highest enrollment in the SW schools (near 400); Building can accommodate four tracks, or almost 600 students, which is why it shows as below 70% utilization; houses center-based autism integrated services program. Receives Title 1 funding in 2024-2025	Not included as an option for closure.
Beattie	Lowest building utilization and enrollment number in the SW schools and consistently under-enrolled for nearly 10 years, currently enough students for a small 2-Track; over 40% of neighborhood students choice out to a different school; open classroom / team teaching model.	Included as an option for closure.
Johnson	Second lowest building utilization and enrollment in the SW; Geographically close to Webber with an attendance area that is very compact and centrally-located. Students can easily be absorbed into the Lopez, Olander, and McGraw attendance areas.	Included as an option for closure.
Lopez	Large four-track school that could accommodate many of Beattie's students. Center-based ILS integrated services program and Leader in Me program.	Not included as an option for closure.

Evaluation for NW Elementaries

Options and solutions for elementaries in the NW were driven by the limited number of elementary schools, the geographic distribution of schools and by a high population of at-risk students. Two of the four schools receive Title 1 funding. Evaluation for the NW elementaries were focused on how to support the unique population and geography of the area. In addition, the northwest is home to a Dual Language school (Irish), further complicating potential options for consolidation.

School	Considerations	Inclusion
Cache La Poudre	Only elementary located in the Town of Laporte; geographically isolated; Significant Emotional Disability (SED) program and IB program.	Included as an option for closure.
Dunn	While not currently underutilized, there was recognition that only 180 students reside in the Dunn boundary, so utilization at this school is dependent on choice behavior and boundary adjustments. There is potential to increase Dunn's neighborhood boundary, while minimizing disruption to area student's school of attendance. Autism program and IB program.	Included as a receiving school with an increased neighborhood boundary.
Irish	Dual-language program with growing enrollment; challenges with current DL model that allows for students in the neighborhood to be enrolled in grades 3-5, past the ideal time a child should enter a DL school if they are not already bilingual; changes to the DL model by Irish becoming a 100% choice school or having open bussing with a	Included in scenarios as a 100% choice school or as having open bussing with either CLPE or

	nearby school located could address the current challenges; current building is located in the county and somewhat outside of urban fabric. Receives Title 1 funding.	Putnam.
Putnam	Lowest enrollment in the area. Receives Title 1 funding. Highest percent of enrollment of low income and non-white students. Located near downtown, city infrastructure, and a high density of student residences; ILS programs.	Included as an option for closure.

Evaluation for Middle Schools

Evaluation for middle schools was driven primarily by geography and enrollment trends. In addition to low enrollment projections at several middle schools, over enrollment is anticipated at Timnath Middle High School.

School	Considerations	Inclusion
Timnath	Projected to be over enrolled.	Included in options including feeder adjustments and making Timnath a HS only.
Preston	Under enrolled primarily due to sharing a boundary with Kinard and students moving to Timnath MHS. Significant Emotional Disability (SED) Program	Included as an option for closure.
Kinard	While not currently underutilized, Kinard is the only 100% choice middle school in the district. Integrated Learning Services (ILS) Program and the district's only middle school Core Knowledge Program.	Included option for moving to neighborhood boundary.
Boltz	Central location. Under enrolled. Houses the largest district Autism program, district Newcomer Program and the district Dual Language Program	Included as an option for closure.
Blevins	Lowest enrolled middle school in the town of Fort Collins. When evaluated in relation to Lincoln (only significant PHS middle school) and Webber (over 70% enrollment), no viable options were identified to increase enrollment. Significant Emotional Disability (SED) Program.	Included as an option for closure.
Cache La Poudre	Geographically isolated, similar to mountain schools with a very large geography for middle school including up to Cameron Pass, to Wyoming border, and to Buckhorn Canyon. Mountain elementaries feed into CLPMS. Serves as a community hub in the town of Laporte. Lowest enrolled middle school in the district and would fit into Lincoln MS. IB curriculum.	Included as an option for closure.
Lincoln	Lincoln is the only significant MS that feeds into Poudre High School. Lincoln was seen as a school that has capacity to absorb students from CLPMS and/or to the north if Wellington MS becomes	Not included as an option for closure in scenarios.

	over enrolled, but not seen as a good candidate for closure. Integrated Learning Services (ILS) Program and IB curriculum.	
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Schools with limited options:

- **Balance elementary enrollments on East** with consideration for neighborhood boundaries. Newer developments between Bethke and Bamford go to Bamford. The boundary modifications address the current over enrollment at Timnath Elementary.

- **Beattie & Johnson:** To achieve optimal enrollment and school budgets for the elementary schools in the southwest area of Fort Collins, two of the seven elementary schools in the SW area of Town need to close. Four elementaries in the SW are currently below 70% (NSC) capacity: Bauder, Beattie, Johnson, and Lopez. These four schools were considered based on their relative geography to each other, total current enrollment, current building utilization, specialized integrated services programs and facilities, at-risk student population (including low income, unhoused, non-white, and students with special needs), and educational programming. After carefully weighing all of the factors, Beattie and Johnson were identified as the best paired choice for closure. Beattie and Johnson are both in relatively close proximity to nearby schools, allowing nearby schools to absorb new students while not over-enrolling surrounding schools. In some instances walk /ride / roll routes can be maintained for some neighborhood students.

- **Blevins:** To achieve optimal enrollment and school budgets for middle schools west of College in Fort Collins, the area needs to close one of its three middle schools: Lincoln, Blevins, and Webber. Between the three schools, only Lincoln and Blevins are below the 70% (NSC) utilization threshold. In October 2023 Blevins enrollment was at 419 students, or 46% utilization and Lincoln was at 550 students, or 66% utilization.

Lincoln was determined to not be a good fit for closure given that it is the only major middle school that serves Poudre High School. Additionally, Lincoln is also best geographically situated to absorb students from Cache la Poudre Middle School in the event of a CLPM closure and is also geographically situated to accept students from the Wellington area in the event that Wellington becomes over enrolled in the future. Lincoln also uses the IB curriculum, providing IB program continuity.

With the limited number of middle school options on the west side of town, the committee was unable to identify alternatives that would increase Blevins’ enrollment even close to the minimum 700 students.

- **Linton:** Only school in the East to be considered for closure based on low building utilization and geographic proximity to nearby schools to absorb students. Receives Title 1 funding. Significant Emotional Disability (SED) program. As a 100% choice dual language program that already serves students from the Linton neighborhood boundary, moving Harris to the Linton building was considered as a way to retain some neighborhood school function and as a way to expand access to dual language programming in the district. This option would require Harris to change educational models to accommodate a third track of students.

Main Choices By School Groupings

<i>Timnath / Preston / Boltz / Bamford</i>		
	Move Bamford to Preston/Fossil Ridge feeder	Eases enrollment pressures at TMHS for many years, increases MS utilization at Preston.
	Move Bamford to Preston/Fossil feeder AND Close Boltz.	Same as above, plus optimizes MS utilization across Central and East. Creates large Middle Schools
	OR Timnath to HS only, return MS to Preston. Students east of I25 would go to THS and students west of I25 would go to FRHS. Adjust boundaries between Preston and Boltz to balance enrollment.	Extends capacity of Timnath HS building for a long time, does not require ballot measure for an addition or new building. Creates a split feeder with Preston students divided between Timnath and Fossil Ridge for high school attendance.
	OR Close Preston, make Kinard a neighborhood school fed by Bamford, Traut, Zach, and Bacon. Balance Kinard enrollment with Boltz.	
<i>Harris / Linton</i>		
	Close Linton	Increases enrollment in SE elementaries; High percent at-risk population.
	OR Move Harris to Linton, change DL model	Maintains a school function in the Linton building, but the Dual Language program would remain 100% choice. Students who live in the current Linton boundary would need to choice into the school. Requires changing Harris' DL model to accommodate another class per grade level (a third track).
<i>Polaris</i>		
	Polaris stays in current building.	Does not address the consistent waitlist at elementary school level, which is large enough to fill an extra class at all grades K-5.
	OR Polaris moves to Johnson	Expands access to Polaris; maintains a school function in the current Johnson area in the event of a Johnson

		Closure. Enables Irish to move into a more central location as a 100% choice DL school with potential to grow into a K8.
<i>Irish /Putnam</i>		
	<p>Irish and Putnam: Irish and Putnam both keep their current boundaries, but students in grades K-2 may choose to attend either school and will receive bussing. New students in grades 3-5 will automatically go to Putnam. Irish will be promoted as a Dual Language (DL) school with guaranteed bussing for Spanish-speaking students. Spanish-speakers will be allowed to enroll at Irish year-round. Putnam becomes a Core Knowledge school.</p>	<p>Avoids consolidating two highest poverty schools (Irish & Putnam) into one school. Provides a continued option for DL programming. Potential to address functional, marketing and admin challenges with a DL neighborhood school. Expands access to CK, which fits the educational needs of the Putnam population. may increase attraction and retention over time.</p> <p>The solution will take time and does not immediately address enrollment.</p>
	<p>OR Move Irish: Move Irish to Polaris building as a 100% Choice Dual Language school, with potential to grow into K8 in the future. Former Irish boundary is absorbed by CLPE and Putnam, with adjustments to Dunn and Tavelli boundaries to balance enrollments.</p>	<p>Enables Irish to move into a more central location as a 100% choice DL school with potential to grow into a K8.</p> <p>Likely increase in enrollment at Putnam, CLPE, Dunn, and Tavelli.</p> <p>Irish could also stay a 100% choice school in its current location if neither Putnam nor CLPE closed.</p>
	<p>OR Putnam: Close Putnam, move students to Irish, Tavelli (specifically students from Poudre Valley Mobile Home Park), and expand Dunn boundary to absorb some students including students from Hickory Village. Shift some Irish students to CLPE.</p> <p>Irish expands current boundary, stays Dual Language with open bussing to CLPE. New students in</p>	<p>Increases enrollment in NW elementaries.</p> <p>Open bussing considerations for the Irish DL program and CLPE would be important given the location of CLPE.</p> <p>Putnam students would be split across several schools (Irish, CLPE, Tavelli, Dunn).</p>

	Irish boundary grades 3-5 automatically go to CLPE.	
<i>Cache La Poudre Elementary & Middle Schools</i>		
	Close CLPE. Send Students to Irish, Putnam, and Tavelli Elementary Schools Close CLPM. Send students to Lincoln Middle School.	Increases enrollment in NW elementaries and Lincoln MS. In this instance Irish and Putnam both stay open with new boundaries to absorb CLPE. Open bussing between the two schools, particularly because students entering 3rd grade or above are not good candidates for a DL program unless they are already bilingual.
	OR CLPE stays and becomes a receiving school for changes to Irish and/or Putnam.	Maintains community school that serves rural areas with vast geography and serves as a community hub for the town of Laporte.

Round 2 Scenarios

Based on the rationale above there are four combinations or groups of options that can be considered as independent components for scenarios, with the exception of moving Polaris to Johnson and Irish to Polaris.

School Combination Groups

- **East of College:** Timnath MHS, Preston MS, Kinnard MS, Boltz MS + East of I-25 Elementaries
 1. Balance Enrollments for all East of I-25 Elementaries
 2. **AND** Bamford feeds to Preston + Close Boltz
 3. **OR** Close Preston, make Kinard NH boundary
 4. **OR** Move TMHS middle school students back to Preston
- **Central Elementaries:** Linton / Harris
 1. Close Linton
 2. **OR** Move Harris to Linton opening a third DL track (requires Harris to change their model)
 3. **OR** Keep Linton Open and monitor for future enrollment
- **Northwest:** CLPE, CLPM ,Irish, Putnam, Dunn, Polaris
 1. Close CLPEM, move students to Irish, Putnam, Dunn, Tavelli and Lincoln
 2. **OR** Move Polaris to Johnson (requires Johnson closure), move Irish to Polaris as 100% choice, expand Putnam and Dunn Boundary
 3. **OR** Close Putnam, move students to Dunn, Irish, CLPE and Tavelli
- **Southwest:** Blevins, Beattie, Johnson
 1. Close all three schools

2. **OR** Keep one or more open and monitor for future enrollment (at the board's discretion, noting that the Polaris / Irish move is dependent on a Johnson closure)

To show all of the primary combinations of options, four scenarios were needed. The full scenarios help to see and understand how combinations of schools work together, what boundaries and individual school enrollments look like, and if we are meeting the districtwide enrollment targets.

Scenarios were developed in a way that combines the primary possible combinations, with attention to dependencies ("if/then" logic) based on the combinations of options above.