

NKSD votes to restrict transfers to certain schools

By Ken Park

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As the population of the North Kitsap School District grows, the harder it is becoming to accommodate new and transfer students. The district has recently voted to restrict student transfers to certain elementary and middle schools within the district in an attempt to stem overcrowding.

Ideally, school enrollment should be consistent from school to school, keeping some variances in mind, such as population growth and decline and the realities of building capabilities and capacity. Prior to the 2019-2020 school year, NKSD allowed for transfer requests for all schools within the district, which had created a challenge for some schools as they reached their capacity, prompting principals to begin denying transfer requests, citing a lack of space.

One way in which the district has addressed this issue is by purchasing portable classrooms to assist with overflow. But ahead of the 2020-2021 school year, the district is recommending closing off some of its most populated elementary and middle schools from accepting transfers, with some exceptions.

NKSD is recommending that the following schools no longer accept student transfers:

- Richard Gordon Elementary
- Hilder Pearson Elementary
- Vinland Elementary
- Poulsbo Elementary
- Poulsbo Middle School

By making this recommendation early the district hopes to save families time and frustration with the transfer application process and prevent the lengthy appeals process from playing out with disappointing outcomes for families.

Exceptions will be made for students looking to transfer who have siblings

that have already been accepted or already attend one of the listed schools. Students who wish to stay on the district's school feeder path to middle school and students whose parents or guardians are a full-time employee at the school.

"We did this last year with the board and the commitment was that we would re-study and we would submit restrictions on an annual basis and in advance of registration," Superintendent Dr. Laurynn Evans said.

Board member Rick Eckert noted that the district still needs to address the growth it has been experiencing — and will continue to experience — beyond transfer restrictions and the purchase of portable classrooms.

"That's almost all of our elementary schools at this point ... it just highlights the fact that our district has grown and we're outgrowing our schools, this is not a problem that is going to resolve itself or go away. It's a longterm plan and we need to figure out a solution to this," Eckert said.



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