

# Farmington school district may redraw boundaries

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More residential development means Farmington Area Public Schools could potentially redraw school district boundary lines.

The new boundary changes may be in effect as early as the next school year.

Superintendent Jay Haugen shared a report during the Farmington School Board work session Monday, Oct. 9, inside city hall. District staff and teachers who represented the eight school buildings within the district filled the chamber.

"This is a brief introduction to the idea of how we should put some effort into a larger study of where our community is going, where it is growing, and what needs we are going to have in the future in our school district," Haugen said. "I really just want to get your thoughts and ideas about that and how quick to jump into this, and so I thought since it was a work session we could have a little conversation about it," Haugen told the board.

## Reasons for changes

In recent months, Haugen has explained how farmland will be turned into residential developments in Farmington and Lakeville and all that land falls within District 192.

"We have shared in conversations about how some schools' enrollment has become imbalanced and some have more students than others," Haugen said.

Describing District 192 as a big square with Farmington in the middle, Haugen said the district includes homes and land within Castle Rock, Empire and Eureka Township, along with property within Lakeville. Twenty-five percent of District 192 students live in Lakeville, Haugen said.

In Farmington, many new residential developments are on the horizon for the next year and beyond that will mean hundreds of new homes.

Board member Julie Singewald said the last boundary change meant community groups were pulled together, along with representation from administration, district finance and a handful of community members.

"I think if we are looking at significant boundary changes, they are the best advocates for sharing that message and by having teachers, it is important for us to look at it and if we start early we can start finding those people who could be interested in participating," Singewald. "We will find people who are interested in doing right by our district and taking that deep dive."

Board member Steve Corrado said building capacity scares him a little bit.

"I think we have to figure out the boundaries and part of that puzzle is fitting in the capacity for schools, and forecasting for that is going to be a crapshoot on numbers but we could get an idea of growth," Corrado said.

Haugen said architects who have worked on district construction projects have said the capacity has changed and even computer labs can be used as classrooms. Haugen

said since the city staff is currently working on the 2040 Comp Plan, this may be a good time to work together.

## Boundary timeline

After much discussion about many issues related to boundary changes and the process, the board agreed to move forward with a timeline that may mean boundary changes will be in effect next fall.

School Board member Kristin Goodreau asked if the timeline is too fast.

Farmington District Finance Director Jane Houska explained the last boundary changes timeline. She said the committee met in August 2013 and a formal proposal was brought back to the school board for approval in December.

"So, it is possible and it is not like it is super long because we also want to be careful about not be dragging it out too long, so there has to be a balance we find in the process," Houska said.

Waiting another year could disappoint some home-buyers whose boundary changes only a year later, Haugen said.

School Board Chair Jake Cordes verified the potential timeline. The board will vote on the scope and cost of a potential capacity study in November. Plans can be reviewed by the board in March or April. Then work will be done to communicate boundary changes in the spring before summer. The boundary changes could take effect perhaps as early as fall of 2018.

"Ultimately, this is good news that we are a healthy, growing community and it is the best place to be in for a school district," Haugen said in an interview. ""We welcome this and take our thoughts and planning because we have got to be lean and study a whole lot of things. We will have a lot of effort in the next several months."