

*"A place where learning has no limits and together we work for the success of all."*

January 13, 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you may be aware, Harrisonburg City Schools is experiencing significant enrollment growth. Since 2008, when we opened Skyline Middle and Smithland Elementary Schools, we have gained over 1,600 students, and the enrollment projections by The University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service show Harrisonburg City Schools gaining approximately 800 students over the next five years. According to the Weldon Cooper Center, Harrisonburg City is the second fastest growing city in Virginia (after Falls Church, VA).

To help alleviate some of our overcrowding conditions, we are opening two new schools in August 2017: Bluestone Elementary School and Elon W. Rhodes Early Learning Center. In addition, fifth grades will be returning to the elementary schools. On December 6, 2016, the Harrisonburg City School Board adopted new attendance zones (redistricting) that will go into effect for the 2017-2018 school year. You can learn which school your child will be attending for the 2017-2018 school year by visiting our website ([www.harrisonburg.k12.va.us](http://www.harrisonburg.k12.va.us)) and looking at the Announcements section on the main page. If you need further clarification after visiting our website, you may email us at [buildingproject@harrisonburg.k12.va.us](mailto:buildingproject@harrisonburg.k12.va.us) or call me or Craig Mackail at (540) 434-9916.

In addition, we have scheduled the following parent information meetings. You may attend any of the locations that are listed if you want to learn more or have questions:

**(All meetings will start at 7:00 p.m.)**

- |                           |             |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| • Keister Elementary      | February 8  |
| • Smithland Elementary    | February 9  |
| • Spotswood Elementary    | February 14 |
| • Stone Spring Elementary | February 15 |
| • Waterman Elementary     | February 22 |
| • Thomas Harrison Middle  | February 23 |
| • Skyline Middle          | February 27 |

I would like to address some topics related to the new attendance zones that I have been asked about on numerous occasions:

1. **My child is currently in the dual language program but has been redistricted to another school. Can he/she continue in his/her current school as a dual language student?** Yes, except students who are currently in the Keister dual language program and are zoned to continue at Keister. Those students will be invited to attend the Bluestone dual language program. Please note that we are planning a kindergarten dual language program to begin at Keister for the 2017-18 school year.

2. **I have a rising kindergarten student and an older child in the elementary dual language program. Will my younger child be able to attend the same school as my older dual language student?** Yes
3. **Will transportation be provided for dual language students who will attend schools outside their new redistricted schools?** Yes
4. **I have a rising 5<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade student who would like to graduate from his/her current school. Will that be possible and will transportation be provided?** We will try to accommodate these requests on an individual basis.
5. **How should I communicate my school preference for my dual language or rising 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade student?** We will survey parents March 1-10.
6. **What if I have a unique circumstance that I would like the superintendent to consider as it relates to the school I want my child to attend?** Beginning in April, we will have a waiver form available on our website and at all school buildings. Please note that the Virginia Department of Education has clear class size requirements that we must adhere to and this will be a key factor when I make a decision on a waiver request.

I recognize that new attendance zones mean that many children will be attending new schools next year. Our school system is committed to a belief that regardless of the school your child attends, he/she will be welcomed by caring adults and offered an exciting learning experience. As always, if your child is having any adjustment concerns or you have any questions about your child's instructional program, please communicate that to your child's teacher and/or principal.

I hope your child(ren) have great success in our school system. If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,



Scott R. Kizner, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools