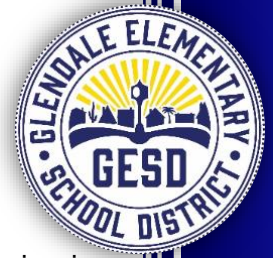


GLENDALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT No. 40

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Glendale Elementary School District (GESD) is committed to transparency and engaging in a community conversation. Throughout this process, the District will implement comprehensive staff and community communication to ensure accurate, timely and reliable information for all stakeholders.

At this time, the GESD Governing Board approved the timeline for proposed planning but has not taken any further action. Currently, all information shared is the summary of proposed plans. Information and updates about proposed changes can be found on the GESD website at gesd40.org/boundaryupdates.

Why are proposed school closures, boundary changes and/or repurposing of schools being considered?

The Glendale Elementary School District is dedicated to supporting the social, emotional and academic needs of our students, employees and community. Although GESD has been strategic in its efforts to attract and retain families for sustainable enrollment, there continues to be declining enrollment for the next decade. The District annually works with demographers to identify current and historic demographics, economic development and district enrollment numbers to project future enrollment trends to help ensure financial solvency. GESD recognizes the pandemic has created uncertainty however, declining enrollment began in 2016-2017 and is projected to continue for the next decade. Please [click on the demographic study](#) conducted by a third party.

The following factors have been identified:

- Below average birth rates that began during the recession
- Lack of affordable family housing and residential development within the GESD boundaries
- Increased competition from K-8 charter schools and alternative education providers

What are the key goals of the proposed changes under consideration?

1. Ensure financial solvency by providing the community with a multi-year process of reorganizing boundaries and repurposing schools by June 2021 and avoid a state takeover
2. Provide a plan for academic alignment to address the achievement gap by providing a multi-year process of the implementation of rigorous teaching and learning systems by June 2021.
3. Build a process for ensuring and implementing a System of Care for the students, community, and staff throughout the district by June 2021.

What is the timeline for this process?

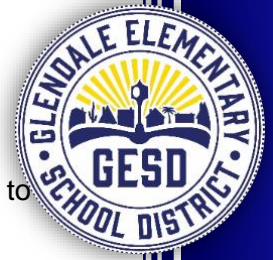
February 25, 2021	Public Hearing for Boundary Changes/School Closures/Repurposing and regular Board meeting
March 11, 2021	Regular Governing Board Meeting with possible action taken on Boundary Changes/School Closure/Repurposing

Public meetings will be held at 5:30 p.m. in the GESD Governing Board Room located at 7301 N. 58th Avenue, Glendale, AZ 85301.

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School Facilities Board (SFB) must be notified and GESD must receive approval from SFB to proceed to close

What are the enrollment trends from previous years?

The findings in the demographic and enrollment analysis prepared by Applied Economics raise particularly troubling facts about GESD's enrollment trajectory. In the 1995/96 school year, the total enrollment for GESD was 10,424 and the District was operating 13 school sites (see list below). Now, in the 2020/21 school year, GESD's enrollment is less than it was in 1995/96 with a total enrollment of 10,326 and the District is operating 17 school sites and one Arizona Online Instruction (AOI) - Glendale Elementary Online Learning (GEO Learning). Enrollment in nine of GESD's 17 school site attendance areas is projected to decline by 10 percent or more by 2024/25.

1995-1996 School Sites

1. Isaac E. Imes
2. Harold W. Smith
3. Melvin E. Sine
4. William C. Jack
5. Don Mensendick
6. Glenn F. Burton
7. Glendale American
8. Horizon
9. BiCentennial North
10. Landmark
11. Challenger
12. BiCentennial South
13. Discovery

How is GESD committing to fiscal stewardship?

Over the past several years, GESD has looked into several strategies to alleviate the constraints of inadequate funding. One way GESD did this was by taking the lead entering into a lawsuit with the State of Arizona to address capital funding deficiencies. GESD is actively involved in the legislative process advocating for additional funding. As proposed plans for school closures, reorganizing boundaries and/or repurposing schools are being considered, it is important to communicate how the State of Arizona responds to school districts classified as financially high-risk by the auditor general.

According to Arizona Revised Statutes, if the Arizona State Board of Education determines that a school district is insolvent or has grossly mismanaged its finances, the state board is authorized to appoint a receiver or fiscal crisis team for that school district to take control of all administrative, financial, and operational responsibilities. In short, if GESD grossly mismanages its finances the district may be taken over by the state. To avoid a state takeover in GESD and achieve operational efficiencies, the proposed plans for school closures, boundary changes and/or repurposing schools will help fulfill long term sustainability.

What actions were taken when looking into the proposed changes?

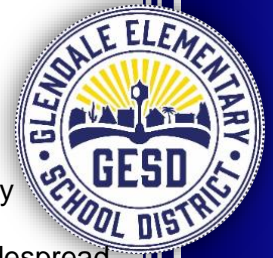
GESD has taken significant steps including ongoing discussions related to declining enrollment as far back as December 2016 in a public presentation during a GESD Governing Board meeting. Here is a timeline of more recent events:

- February 2019 - Governing Board held a Study Session addressing declining student enrollment, staff ratios and other potential areas of expenses to address budget shortfalls.

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- August and September 2019 - Governing Board discussed optimizing efficiencies by conducting cost analysis of facilities, programs and staffing models.
- May 2020 - Governing Board reviewed an updated demographic study outlining widespread losses that have occurred over the past several years.
- September 2020 - Governing Board went to Executive Session with legal counsel regarding the sale or lease of district land.
- October 8, 2020 - Governing Board met to propose the next steps.
- November 12, 2020 - Governing Board Study Session held to present enrollment data and current attendance areas.
- December 10, 2020 - Governing Board Study Session held to present an overview of the current situation, instructional model scenarios, staffing model scenarios, boundary change scenarios and facility usage scenarios.
- January 28, 2021 - Governing Board Study Session held to present an overview of current enrollment and budget impact, instructional model scenarios, staffing model scenarios, boundary change scenarios and facility usage scenarios.

What is the proposal for Phase I in the 2021-2022 school year?

The proposal for Phase I in the 2021-2022 school year calls for the proposed closure of Isaac E. Imes Elementary School. Students would be reassigned to Glenn F. Burton Elementary School, Glendale Landmark and Harold W. Smith Elementary School.

There is also a proposed closure of Melvin E. Sine Elementary School and students would be reassigned to Glenn F. Burton and Horizon.

Proposed boundary changes include Glendale American, Glendale Landmark, Horizon and Glenn F. Burton. Students would be reassigned based on the new proposed boundary grid. Desert Spirit and Harold W. Smith would assume additional students.

Also, Sunset Vista will no longer have students east of Grand Avenue.

What is the proposal for Phase II in the 2022-2023 school year?

In Phase II, there is a proposed closure of Coyote Ridge, Desert Garden and Bicentennial North in the 2022-2023 school year. Coyote Ridge students would be reassigned to Discovery and the Coyote Ridge facility is repurposed into a "System of Care Center" offering health screenings, community support and professional development resources.

With the proposed closure of Desert Garden, students would be reassigned to Challenger or Mensendick and reconfigure those schools to K-8 models.

The Desert Garden building would be repurposed into a preschool facility.

With the proposed closure of Bicentennial North, students are reassigned to Bicentennial South or Don Mensendick. Bicentennial South is reconfigured to a K-8 model.

Also in the 2022-2023 school year, proposed boundary changes would reassign students based on the proposed boundary grid. William C. Jack would be reconfigured to a K-8 model and Don Mensendick would also be reconfigured into a K-8 model.

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Why propose K-8 school configuration models?

As part of the planning under consideration, there are proposed transitions of GESD school sites into K-8 structures. GESD leadership researched the effectiveness of K-8 school models. Research on the positive and negative effects of K-8 configurations has shown that for the most part, there are many more positive effects.

Some of the positive effects found in the research are:

- There is higher academic achievement specifically in reading and mathematics due to a continuous vertical articulation of grade levels.
- There is a greater sense of school community with siblings going to the same school and students are in familiar cohorts throughout K-8 instead of regrouping with new schools in middle and junior high schools.
- A positive social environment for the intermediate grade levels.
- Teacher collaboration is increased both horizontally and vertically.

Why are there proposed site repurposings and system of care community development?

The GESD Governing Board will be considering proposed changes and the possibility of the closure and/or repurposing of five schools. If a school is to be repurposed, this means that although the campus will no longer be operating as a school site, the facility may be reimagined into a community-oriented service facility such as a center for preschool or specialized programming and professional development. We understand that GESD faces a substantial challenge in determining how best to shape and transform proposed repurposed sites into valued community assets that should, in turn, help to strengthen the communities. Considering repurposing a site into a community hub could provide GESD the opportunity to implement a strategic System of Care for all GESD students, staff and community.

What is the GESD System of Care Framework?

A system of care is a spectrum of effective, community-based services and supports for children and youth with or at risk for mental health or other challenges and their families, that is organized into a coordinated network, builds meaningful partnerships with families and youth, and addresses their cultural and linguistic needs, in order to help them to function better at home, in school, in the community, and throughout life. (Source: Beth A. Stroul, M.Ed. Robert M. Friedman, Ph.D.)

Where does the proposal place this GESD System of Care Center Facility and why?

The GESD System of Care Center facility would be located at Coyote Ridge. The reasons for this include the facility location, space, campus layout and is on a major street with public transportation accessibility.

Where does the proposal place the Preschool Facility and why?

Currently, tuition-based Preschool occurs throughout GESD, but a centralized location will allow for efficiencies in physical and staff resources. In the 2022-2023 school year, the proposal calls for the Preschool Facility to be located at Desert Garden because of the facility's location, space, campus layout and organization.

This rationale would support Wraparound Services including one location for GESD Preschool Partnership with Head Start, pre-k workshops, Child Find screenings, First Things First classes for parents and children. Preschool-Kindergarten transition meetings could occur in a centralized location and it would create a centralized location for district wide Kindergarten registration.

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How will these proposed changes impact GEO Learning?

GEO Learning will continue in GESD with possible programmatic changes.

What would happen in the event the Board decides to release staff members?

The Governing Board will follow policies GCQA Professional Staff Reduction in Force and GDQA Support Staff Reduction in Force.

GCQA Professional Staff Reduction in Force

The criteria used in formulating the following guidelines and recommendations shall include, but shall not be limited to:

- Qualifications and certification of staff members to accomplish the District's educational program, including certification requirements for specialty categories and designation as appropriately certified.
- Overall teaching experience, academic training and ability
- Past contributions to the educational program of the District
- Teacher tenure and seniority shall not be considerations in retention determinations.
- Personnel to be released shall be notified as soon as practical.

GDQA Support Staff Reduction in Force

The criteria used in formulating the following guidelines and recommendations shall include, but shall not be limited to:

- Normal attrition due to terminations will be relied upon as the first means of reducing the staff.
- Qualifications of staff members to accomplish the District's program
- Overall experience, training and ability Past contributions to the program of the District
- All other factors being equal, length of service in the District

Criteria for selection of staff members to be released will be applied separately to employees within specialty categories. Personnel to be released shall be notified as soon as practical.

When can we expect to see how much money will be saved from closing or repurposing schools? The community and all stakeholders deserve to see a detailed cost benefit analysis of closing schools.

The Governing Board held a Study Session in February 2019 addressing declining student enrollment, staff ratios and other potential areas of expenses to address budget shortfalls. It was presented that the cost savings of proposed closing or/and repurposing of schools would be an average of \$2.9 million dollars.

What is the district's long term plan to attract students in the future? How has the district involved all employees and community members in these discussions?

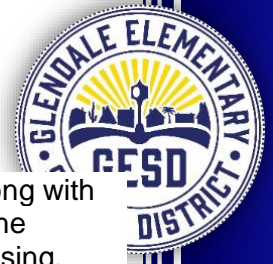
The District continues it's public awareness and community outreach. However, the District projects a \$17.2 million budget deficit by fiscal year 2022 due to declining enrollment caused by below average birth rates, a lack of affordable family housing and an increased competition from alternative education providers.

The District initiated a full rebrand in the 2017-2018 school year that continues to be implemented. Input from all stakeholders was garnered through surveys, Superintendent advisory committees,

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district and school coffee talks and local community/business partnership presentations along with the launch of Innovative Schools. As part of the rebranding and public awareness efforts, the District placed weekly articles in The Glendale Star, shared broadcast and billboard advertising, developed digital social media ads and printed mailers, delivered door hangers to new subdivisions and also advertised in local movie theatres.

What are the plans for the schools set to be closed and not repurposed?

The proposed plans for schools set to be closed and the plans for repurposing are outlined in the following presentations:

[February 11, 2021 Governing Board Study Session Presentation](#)

[JANUARY 28, 2021 GOVERNING BOARD STUDY SESSION PRESENTATION](#)

Currently plans for repurposing Bicentennial North, Isaac E. Imes and Melvin E. Sine have not been identified. Our partnership with Head Start and Isaac E. Imes and Melvin E. Sine will remain.

When a committee was formed to investigate the boundary changes and the school closures, who was part of the committee? Were parents, teachers, staff, outside community stakeholders from the affected communities invited to participate?

The Governing Board provided direction to the District to study proposed school closures that would shift attendance boundaries. At the request of the Board, it was decided that the process would include presentations during study sessions and proposals to ensure financial solvency by providing the community with a multi-year process of reorganizing boundaries and repurposing schools by June 2021.

Was a third party asked to review the committee's findings to see if they were the most viable?

GESD utilized Applied Economics to provide demographic and enrollment analysis. Applied Economics identified current and historic demographics and trends in economic development and enrollment to anticipate and create District-level and school-level enrollment projections by grade through 2028-2029.

How was the City of Glendale/Council members being notified about the possible closures?

The District continues to share updates to all community stakeholders which includes city officials through media publications. In addition, GESD has made all efforts to notify residents affected by the proposed changes per statutory requirements.

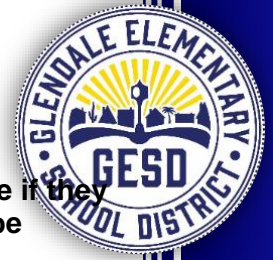
On page 20 of the Dec. 10th presentation, it states there was a grand total of 2,046 GEO students. However, on page 10 of the Jan. 28th presentation, it states there were only 830 GEO students. What happened to the 1,216 students?

While approximately 2,000 students are enrolled in GEO, GESD is receiving funding for approximately 830 students.

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Due to the historic nature of Imes and Sine, was the city of Glendale contacted to see if they could help with any costs and/or renovations? If not, could one of these campuses be somehow proposed as a museum/landmark/historical building?

We understand that GESD faces a substantial challenge in determining how best to shape and transform proposed repurposed sites into valued community assets that should, in turn, help to strengthen the communities. At the request of the GESD Governing Board, the current proposals for Phase I and Phase II consider repurposing sites into a System of Care Center and Preschool Facility. Repurposing for Bicentennial North, Isaac E. Imes or Melvin E. Sine has not yet occurred.

Bicentennial North is a proposed closure. Would it be repurposed for any reason? If not, is it somehow protected from outside usage (charter school) since it's on the same campus as Bici South.

There has been no discussion about leasing or selling Bicentennial North. The configuration for a K-8 would best be implemented at Bicentennial South because of the classroom learning environments available on that campus.

Of the money received from the 2018 bonds/overrides, could any of it be used towards school closure? Was any of this bond money used to pay for additional PPE and/of COVID reasons.

Funds from a bond must be used to make capital improvements to existing facilities, such as school building renovations. The use of monies from the 2018 bond for additional PPE supplies such as masks, disinfecting wipes, sprays, gloves, etc. does not fall under the category of approved uses of that funding.

Hypothetical: if we closed the five campuses and went to 100% traditional learning (aka: brick and mortar), would the schools that are still open be able to handle the capacity?

Based on the projections presented at the [Feb. 11 Governing Board Study Session](#), the schools would be able to absorb the additional student enrollment. However, should capacity be a concern, GESD could add classrooms to accommodate the additional growth.

If we close all five schools, will any early-retirement incentives be offered to staff to help offset a potential RIF?

Because the current and projected revenue is not sufficient, operational changes must be made to ensure financial solvency. Any additional costs such as early-retirement incentives would cause an increased budget deficit.

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