



# WAKULLA COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

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## Important Message Regarding Crawfordville Elementary School Student Capacity

January 13<sup>th</sup> 2026

Crawfordville Elementary Parents and the Entire Wakulla County School Community,

Of the many current challenges that face Florida School Superintendents and School Boards, changes in student enrollment are certainly at the top of most district's list. In Wakulla County Schools, we are fortunate that our district-wide enrollment is not declining like in other districts, but it is not substantially growing either. The specific and unique problem that we are facing locally is with the recent changes to the County's Comprehensive Use Plan, and the housing developments in the Crawfordville corridor, we are seeing a disproportionate movement in population to the Crawfordville Elementary School (CES) zone. While there is capacity at our other schools, CES has now reached the point where more students are enrolled there than the stated capacity of the building. This places the Superintendent in the obligatory position to recommend an action to the Board to alleviate this issue. The School Board cannot control where houses are built, we are responsible for drawing boundaries which make most efficient use of taxpayer dollars which support the building of schools. The following outlines four potential strategies and my position on each of them. The intent is to share these widely, have a public forum to discuss them, and to recommend to Board in February a plan which gives everyone enough time to plan for implementation by the start of the next school year.

### Strategy 1: Revocation of Out of Zone Requests (Strongly Considering)

The simplest and most effective route to the immediate resolution of the issue is to utilize the language in the current WCSB School Board Policy on Out of Zone (OOZ) requests. In this policy it already states that these requests can be denied and revoked if the school is over capacity. CES was built to hold 699, and as of the writing of this memo the enrollment was 709 with 78 of these students being approved to be OOZ. Given that these students could immediately be reassigned to their zoned school where each have capacity, and transportation routes already exists for these home addresses, this is the primary strategy which is under consideration. However, given the need to place Pre-K at each elementary school, and the anticipation of additional growth, this strategy may not be enough in itself.

### Strategy 2: School Zone Boundary Changes (Strongly Considering)

It is simple math that as population density increases in the CES zone that the zone itself must shrink. Add that to the fact that Riversink Elementary, and Shaderville Elementary are already over 90% capacity with new housing developments approved within their zones as well, this means that the most logical adjustment is to move the Medart Elementary(MES) zone further north. MES is currently only at 76% capacity and can hold an additional 160 students. There is a potential to move the boundary all the way to the Courthouse to capture addresses south of Arran Rd/MLK Memorial Rd making that the dividing line. It is understood that some of these addresses are within 2 miles of CES, but again, given we have a school with capacity, we are obligated to assign students to it.

### **Strategy 3: Build Additional Classrooms at CES(not recommended)**

Once a district exhausts all capacity it is not uncommon to add portables or build an additional wing at a school, however, these come at extreme costs to the school district, and given our need to use these funds for other issues, I cannot in good conscience recommend this to the Board when empty seats exist at other schools. Also, each school is specifically designed for a certain capacity. To add additional seats puts a strain on everything both mechanically and operationally. It is easy to observe the parent pickup and parking situation, but what many fail to realize is that the cafeteria was also only built to accommodate so many. To continue to add students means some students will have to start eating lunch well before 11am and some well after 1pm. As a parent, I do not find this solution to be acceptable. Again, especially not when capacity exists elsewhere.

### **Strategy 4: New School Construction (not feasible)**

Wakulla County is designated as a “fiscally constrained county” due to the amount of taxable property values. Given the costs of modern school construction, we simply cannot build a new school with what we ask our taxpayers to support our schools via the 1.5 mils of Capital Outlay taxes. The State of Florida recognized this and created the “Special Facilities” fund which supports districts like ours to build schools. In fact, almost all of our schools were built using this support, and we are currently receiving this support for the renovation at WHS. To get on the funding list, we must apply and demonstrate a need as compared to other districts around the state. As aforementioned, given we have capacity at existing schools, I do not expect our application to be approved until our growth demonstrates that we can justify the need for a fifth elementary school.

### **Next Steps**

While this may be the first time some of you have been made aware of this issue, I assure you we have spoken about it at length and have thought through nearly every combination of outcomes for months. Along with the decision of which strategy, or combination thereof, comes with the need for an implementation timeline. It is not uncommon for School Boards to “grandfather” some students during these changes, and allowing some students to finish their time at CES before any policy change is permanent is certainly being considered as an option. Personally, I don’t mind sharing that my youngest son was one of the OOZ students until this current year. I did not move him back to our zoned school(MES) because CES was overcrowded, nor because of a preference of schools, but due to personal health reasons where providing him daily OOZ transportation was not feasible for our family, and we have been blessed to have him ride the bus this year with our outstanding transportation team. He was welcomed at MES, is thriving, and I don’t mind bragging on the Mustangs in that last year they were an A school (and our second highest performing elementary school). I can in very good conscious, and with personal experience, recommend these changes to the Board because I have experienced success in this very situation that some of our families may be faced with.

It should be noted that these decisions are not made by staff at CES, nor the potential receiving schools. District leadership has spoken with them about it, but the responsibility for the decision lies at our level. Thus, we will hold a public townhall following the January 20<sup>th</sup> Regular School Board Meeting at 7pm in the Auditorium at the District Office (old Crawfordville School). At this meeting I will reiterate the reality of our situation and explain these options again. I will stay as long as necessary to be available to answer any questions publicly so that all can hear.



Richard Myhre  
Superintendent of Schools