

Policy 9001 Review (Year 2010)

for Billings Public Schools

**Prepared by
Planning & Development Committee
*Billings Public Schools***

April, 2011

Billings Public Schools
POLICY 9001 REVIEW:
Year 2010

PREFACE

Scope of this Document

This document consists of an executive summary, expanded review, and associated references describing demographic changes and trends relevant to facilities planning in Billings Public Schools (BPS). Topics covered range from population growth and age distribution to racial diversity, income levels, housing affordability, land use and population density, and school enrollment.

The document has been developed under the authority of the BPS Board of Trustees as part of district compliance with BPS Policy 9001. It is the first comprehensive effort at 9001 compliance since the policy went into effect in 2004. Policy 9001 requires that changing demographics “be reviewed by the board annually by September 30.”

School board policies 1) prescribe in general terms the organization and operation of the school system, and 2) constitute a guide for decision-making and the manner in which school district business should be conducted. Policy 9001 recognizes that an understanding of community demographics and student demographics (as indicated by enrollment data) are central to effective planning.

Additionally, as the first policy 9001 document, the document serves as the first step in compliance with BPS Policy 9002, which calls for development of a facilities master plan for the school district. A facilities master plan should specify the location, size, grade configuration, and attendance boundaries of district schools, along with design standards and a plan prioritizing capital improvements to address deferred maintenance and 21st century learning needs. For reliability, the plan should take into account detailed and in-depth demographic and enrollment analyses that accurately address short-term and long-term trends.

Every effort has been made to use the most current information for the content of this document. Some data are reviewed going back to the 1960s to illustrate both recent and long-term trends. Substantially updated information will become available with the results of the 2010 U.S. Census.

Development of This Document

This document was researched and written by the Billings Public Schools Planning & Development Committee. The committee's work took place through monthly meetings from December 2009 through October 2010. All meetings were open to the public.

The committee members were:

Kathy Aragon, Trustee	Krista Hertz
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Sandra Abraham	Lance King
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Detailed agendas and minutes of all committee meetings can be viewed on the forums on the Billings Public Schools website:

<http://bpsforums.invisionzone.com/index.php?showforum=54>.

Organization of This Document

For the busy reader, committee work and research are presented in very abbreviated fashion in a 1-page executive summary immediately following this preface. The expanded summary — also brief, at just 9 pages — is presented under the tab “Policy 9001 Review.” Information (full documents and/or excerpts) gathered by the committee and referenced in the expanded summary are presented in reference sections I-VI at the end of the document:

- Reference Section I – Population Demographics
- Reference Section II – Housing, Income, and Economic Conditions
- Reference Section III – Land Use/Population Density
- Reference IV - School Enrollment Trends
- Reference Section V – BPS Planning Policies
- Reference Section VI – Supplemental Report to Policy 9001 Review

The reference sections are numbered I-VI to correspond to appropriate sections of the expanded summary. Readers desiring an in-depth understanding of the topics are encouraged to read the documents presented in the reference sections as they appear in their entirety.

Use of This Document

This document is to be used by school board trustees, administrators, school district committees, school facility planners, city planners, and the general public to help inform conversations and decisions about local public school facilities and enrollment. The information presented is relevant to ensuring 1) that student enrollment projections are founded on solid demographics, 2) that district practices meet the needs of all students, and 3) that district actions and policies work in concert with broad community goals.

Also, the information presented herein is not intended to be used in isolation. Rather, for fully informed school facility planning, it should be used in conjunction with detailed enrollment projections and information on topics such as school attendance boundaries, school capacities, instructional methods, guidelines for 21st century learning, and city and neighborhood planning documents. School facility planning should be comprehensively integrated and aligned with city planning to ensure that school and city plans work in concert.

Document Updates

This document is to be updated annually by the school district in compliance with Policy 9001. Once the district has a facilities master plan in place, the annual updates can serve to 1) monitor the accuracy of master planning projections and assumptions, and 2) document demographic changes and trends that become apparent between facility master plan updates. The next update of the document should include consideration of the 2010 census data.

Executive Summary

The following key community demographic trends relevant to Billings Public Schools are noted in this report:

- Total K-12 enrollment in Billings Public Schools has been essentially flat for 40 years (1970 enrollment > 17,000; 2010 enrollment < 16,000)
- The population of Billings is growing but aging (1970 population 62,000 with median age 26 years, 2010 population <100K with median age 39 years. The aging trend is expected to continue throughout at least 2030. In total number, the under-19 population has been flat for 30 years.
- According to "Making Opportunity Affordable" (MOA) Montana's attainment of higher education is low in comparison to other states and it will be critical to increase participation in higher education in order to meet future work force demands and ensure opportunity and prosperity for future generations.
- Affordable housing (an attraction for families with children) is becoming less available overall. Average sales price for housing is lowest in Billings' southside, heights-east and downtown areas and average sales price is greatest in northwest Billings.
- Assuming the city of Billings household demographics are similar to county household demographics, less than a third of Billings households contain children under the age of 18.
- Homeless children are increasing in number and tend to be centered in lower income neighborhoods where shelters and low-cost motels are located. In 2009, 458 homeless children (the majority of which were elementary aged children) were enrolled in Billings Public Schools at some time during the school year. Homelessness has a negative effect on a child's academic performance and likelihood of graduation.
- Across the school district, there a wide disparity in the percent of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, as determined by income (Orchard Elementary > 80%; Arrowhead Elementary < 5%).
- Billings' geographic size has increased by nearly 300% since 1970, while population has increased by 52%, resulting in fewer residents per square mile.
- Student population density (a factor in student transportation costs and a consideration in school location) varies widely across Billings. The population as a whole, as well as the under age- 5 population, are most concentrated in older core neighborhoods. The under age 5 density (students per square mile) is more than 10 times greater in older core neighborhoods than in newer neighborhoods.

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REFERENCES

Ref. Section I – Population Demographics

- | Ref. No. | Description |
|----------|---|
| I-1 | Chapter 4.2: Population, <i>City of Billings 2008 Growth Policy Update</i> , p. 47-55 |
| I-2 | <i>Project 2030: Montana's Ageing Population</i> by George Haynes, Myles Watts and Douglas Young; Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, MSU-Bozeman |
| I-3 | City of Billings Census Tract Map, Yellowstone County GIS |
| I-4 | Table 2, Yellowstone County Change in Population By Census Tract 1970-2000 <i>City of Billings 2008 Growth Policy Update</i> p. 49 |
| I-5 | Chapter 4.2: Population Projections, <i>City of Billings 2008 Growth Policy Update</i> , p. 58 |
| I-6 | Table 3: Interim Projections: Ranking of States by Projected Percent of Population Age 65 and Older: 2000, 2010, and 2030," U.S. Census Bureau, April 2005 |
| I-7 | Table 9: Yellowstone County and Billings Racial Characteristics, <i>City of Billings 2008 Growth Policy Update</i> , p. 56 |
| I-8 | Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing in Billings, Montana, <i>Center for Applied Economic Research, MSU-Billings,, December 2007</i> |
| I-9 | Table 10: Yellowstone County and Billings Educational Attainment of 25 Years and Older, 1970-2000, <i>City of Billings 2008 Growth Policy Update, City of Billings, p. 57</i> |
| I-10 | Making Opportunity Affordable: Report on the Policy Framework for Two-Year Education in Montana, <i>Office of the Commissioner on Higher Education, May 2009, pp. 1-5</i> |

Ref. Section II –Income and Housing

- | Ref. No. | Description |
|----------|---|
| II-1 | Table 14: Billings Household Income with Benefits (2005), <i>Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing in Billings, Montana, Center for Applied Economic Research, MSU-Billings,, December 2007, p. 13</i> |
| II-2 | Chapter 4.3: Housing, <i>City of Billings 2008 Growth Policy Update</i> , p.59-67 |
| II-3 | Historic Percentage of Students Qualifying for Free and Reduced Meals, <i>Billings Public Schools</i> |
| II-4 | Table 10: 2005 Yellowstone County Household Characteristics, <i>Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing in Billings, Montana, Center for Applied Economic Research, MSU-Billings,, December 2007, p. 11</i> |
| II-5 | Table 12: Owner- Vs. Renter-Occupied Housing by Zip Code, <i>Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing in Billings, Montana, Center for Applied Economic Research, MSU-Billings,, December 2007, p. 12</i> |
| II-6 | Average Sales Price by Area of Town, Billings Association of Realtors, Office of Government Affairs |
| II-7 | City of Billings Substantial Amendment to the 2008-2009 Consolidated Plan, Housing Affordability Gap for Yellowstone County, <i>City of Billings, Community Development Division, p.14</i> |
| II-8 | Welcome Home Billings, Opening Doors to End Homelessness, <i>City of Billings, Mayor's Committee on Homelessness, Community Development Division</i>
http://ci.billings.mt.us/index.aspx?NID=1522 |
| II-9 | Historic Homeless Student Population: 2002-Current, <i>Billings Public Schools</i> |
| II-10 | Interview with Billings Public Schools Homeless Education Liaison about location of homeless students |

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Ref. Section III – Land Use/Development Density

<i>Ref. No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
III-1	Chapter 4.1: Land Use <i>City of Billings 2008 Growth Policy Update, p. 18-46</i>
III-2	Residential Construction Permits by Month, 2007-2010, <i>City of Billings</i>
III-3	After Long Recession, Home Building in Billings is on the Rise, <i>AllBusiness</i>
III-4	Housing Unit Density Per Square Mile: 2000 Census Tracts, <i>Yellowstone County GIS</i>
III-5	Under-Age-5 Population Density by Census Tract (2000), <i>City of Billings</i>
III-6	South Billings Blvd TIFD, including expansion; East Billings TIFD; North 27th St. TIFD including expansions, <i>Yellowstone County GIS</i>

Ref. Section IV – School Enrollment Trends

<i>Ref. No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
IV-1	BPS Historic Enrollments: 1969-2000, <i>Montana Office of Public Instruction</i>
IV-2	Chapter 4.5: Public Facilities and Services, School District and Facilities, <i>City of Billings 2008 Growth Policy Update, pp. 104-116</i>
IV-3	BPS Enrollment History by Geographical Area, 1996-2009, <i>Billings Public Schools</i>
IV-4	BPS Fall Enrollment Table, <i>prepared by BPS Office of Director of Elementary Education</i>

Ref. Section V – BPS Planning Policies

<i>Ref. No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
V-1	Policy 9001: Planning, <i>Billings Public Schools</i>
V-2	Policy 9002: Facilities Master Plan, <i>Billings Public Schools</i>

Ref. Section VI – Supplemental Report to Policy 9001 Review

<i>Ref. No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
VI-1	School Closures and Re-Openings, <i>Billings Public Schools</i>
VI-2	School Attendance Boundaries, <i>Billings Public Schools</i>
VI-3	Student Busing, <i>Billings Public Schools</i>
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POLICY 9001 REVIEW

Section I - Population Demographics

Historic Population and Age Distribution

Yellowstone County and the City of Billings are the most populated county and city in Montana. Both have grown in recent decades, are continuing to grow, and are experiencing a significant aging of the population. Between 1970 and 2007, the county population grew more than 60%, from 87,367 residents to almost 140,000 residents; city population grew about 65%, from 61,581 residents to 101,876 residents (Ref. I-1). During the same period, that median age in the county increased from 26.6 years to 36.9 years (Ref. I-1).

Since 1970, the under-age-19 population in Billings has remained flat. In 1970, the under-age-19 population was 24,415, which represented approximately 40% of the population; in 2000, that number remained steady at 24,220, representing less than 25% of the total population (Ref. I-1). In general, since 1970, older residents have increased and younger residents have decreased as a percent of the population (Ref. I-1).

According to *Project 2030: Montana's Ageing Population*, the percent of the Montana population aged 65 and older doubled between 1940 and 2000, for several reasons. First, people are living longer. Second, Baby Boomers, those born between 1946 and 1964, are nearing retirement age and will swell the ranks of the elderly in coming decades. Third, birth rates have declined. (Ref. I-2). Other reasons may also factor into Montana's aging population.

(For detailed Billings population data by census tract for both 1970-2000 and 1980-2000, refer to References I-3 and I-4).

Population Projections

The population of Yellowstone County is expected to grow at a rate of 1% per year through 2025 (Ref. I-5). The population will also continue to age. *Project 2030* projects the percent of Montanans aged 65 and older will double between 2000 and 2030 (after already doubling between 1940 and 2000) (Ref. I-2). By 2030, the U.S. Census Bureau expects Montana to have the nation's fifth highest percentage of 65-plus residents (Ref. I-6).

Racial Diversity

Racial diversity in Yellowstone County and Billings has increased gradually over the last 30 years. Between 1970 and 2000, the city's white population declined from 97.97% to 91.8% of the total city population; the county's white population declined from 98.17% to 95.15% of the total county population (Ref. I-7). Within the city, diversity is greatest in the Downtown and South Billings areas (Ref. I-10). The Heights most closely follows citywide ethnic averages.

Compared with citywide averages:

- Central Billings (Census Tracts 2 and 4) has a larger percent of residents reporting American Indian and Alaska Native backgrounds.
- South Billings (Tracts 3, 9.02 and 9.01) has a larger percent of residents reporting Hispanic, Native American and Alaska Native backgrounds.
- West Billings (Tracts 10,11, 17.02, 18.01 and 18.04) and Northwest Billings (Tracts 7.04, 6, 5, 12, 13, 18.02 and 18.01) have a higher percent of white residents.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Montana grade 4 public schools, student population in 2009 was approximately 83% white, 12% Native American, 3% Hispanic, 1% black, and 1% Asian/Pacific Islander (Ref 1-7).

Education

Educational Attainment. Since 1960, the median years of education completed among persons 25 years and older in Yellowstone County has increased. Between 1980 and 2000, the percent of age-25+ residents with four or more years of college increased from 21.93% to 28.5%. During the same period, the percent of age-25+ residents with a high school diploma or GED increased from 78.13% to 88.7% (Ref. I-9).

College Enrollment. Compared with other states, the current engagement of local citizens in higher education may be low. In 2007, just 7.7% of Montanans aged 18 to 64 were enrolled in college, compared to an 8.9% average for the 50 states (Ref. I-10, p. 1). Montana also has a lower percent of its college students enrolled at 2-year institutions (24% Montana vs. 45% national average for fall 2008) (Ref. I-10, p. 2). * According to College!Now, a two-year college initiative led by the Montana University System, the Montana economy will need more skilled workers, and two-year colleges can meet much of the demand.

In 2007, Montana also ranked last in the West and forty-fifth in the nation in the percent of 15- to 17-year olds taking at least one college course ((Ref. I-10, p. 5). *

**Disaggregated data were not available for Billings.*

Section II –Income and Housing Data

Median Household Income

In 2005, the median household income (all households) for Billings was \$40,526 (Ref. II-1). Of the total:

- 12% of households made less than \$10,000
- 33% made between \$10,000 and \$34,999
- 43% made between \$35,000 and \$99,999
- 10% made between \$100,000 and \$199,999

- 1% made \$200,000 or more

For every household making more than \$150,000, there were more than 6 households making less than \$15,000.

Between 2000 and 2006 (Ref II-2, p. 60):

- The median household income for Yellowstone County is estimated to have increased 18%, from \$35,360 to \$43,337.
- The median household income for the City of Billings is estimated to have increased 10%, from \$36,890 to \$40,923.

Low-Income Students as Indicated by BPS Free and Reduced Meals

The percent of Billings Public School students qualifying (due to low income) for free and reduced meals has steadily risen over the years. In 2010, qualifying students ranged from a high of over 80% of students at Orchard Elementary School to less than 5% qualifying at Arrowhead Elementary (Ref. II-3).

Household Makeup

In 2005, 28 percent of Yellowstone County's 40,500 households contained children under age 18 (Ref. II-4). Data for before and after 2005 could not be located for comparison. Due to the aging population, however, it would stand to reason that the percent of households with children has declined in recent decades and may continue to decline.

Rental vs. Owner-Occupied Housing (Ref. II-5)

In 2005, there were an estimated 40,526 occupied housing units in Billings. Of these, 25,842 (64%) were owner-occupied and 14,684 (36%) were renter-occupied. Approximately 7% of the total units (2,915 units) were mobile homes.

Also, it is estimated that in 2005, rental housing as a percent of total housing options was largest in zip code 59101 (central downtown area and south Billings) versus 59102 (north central to rims and west of North Elevation) and 59105 (Billings Heights). Rental units in this zip code accounted for an estimated 46% of the city's total rental units. In zip code 59105 owner-occupied dwellings outnumbered rental units nearly 2:1.

Housing Prices/Affordability Gap

The median price for a home in Billings has increased substantially in recent years, jumping 44% citywide from \$107,500 in 2000 to \$144,700 in 2006 (Ref. II-2, p. 60). The upward trend is also apparent in median prices for specific areas of town, which vary considerably:

Median Housing Price by Area

Year	Lowest Neighborhood Median Housing Price		Highest Neighborhood Median Housing Price	
	Location	Price	Location	Price
2007	South Billings	Just over \$100,000*	Northwest Billings	Just under \$250,000*
2010 (Jan 1- Sept. 7)	South Billings	\$123,327	Northwest Billings	\$258,576
* Ref. II-2, p. 62 ** Ref. II-6				

This increase in prices (at a rate outpacing income growth) signals a growing “housing affordability gap” — the difference between the price the average household can afford to pay for a home and the median price of housing on the market. In 2000, the median home cost \$27,586 less than the home affordable to a household median income. By 2006 the affordability gap increased and is projected to reach a substantial gap by 2020:

Housing Affordability Gap, Yellowstone County 2000, 2006, *2020 *(Projected)			
Year	Median Home Cost	Cost of Home Affordable to Household of Median Income	Housing Affordability Gap
2000	\$107,500	\$135,086	+\$27,586
2006	\$177,038	\$148,812	-\$28,226
2020 *	\$350,523	\$177,733	-\$172,790
*Ref. II-7, p. 14			

Homelessness Among Children and Youth

Families with children are one of Montana’s fastest growing homeless sub-populations (Ref. II-8). From 2002 to 2007, the number of homeless students enrolled in Billings Public Schools at some time during the school year more than quadrupled, from 107 students to 458 students (Ref. II-9).

In 2006-07, the majority of enrolled students were in elementary school (Ref II-8, p. 17):

- 42% grades K-3
- 21% grades 4-6
- 15% grades 7 and 8
- 22% grades 9-12

Forty-four percent (44%) were American Indian.

NOTE: *Homelessness* is defined as the lack of a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.

While all BPS schools have had homeless students at one time or another, the students tend to be concentrated in low-income areas of the community where homeless shelters and low-cost motels are located. Thus, at the elementary level, the highest homeless populations tend to be at schools including Orchard, Newman, McKinley, and Washington (Ref. II-10).

Section III - Land Use/Population Density

Current Land Use and Land Use Trends

Historically, land use in Billings has been dominated by agriculture and related uses (Ref. III-1, p. 18). Agriculture remains a dominant activity, but commercial and residential development have gained considerable ground. Development of land has been steady in recent years, last decade, keeping pace with overall population growth. As of 2008, 82% of the total acreage of the county was under private ownership.

Reflecting ongoing residential development, the City of Billings nearly tripled in gross area between 1970 (14.717 square miles) and the end of 2007 (40.398 square miles) (Ref. III-1, p. 20). The amount of subdivision activity in the city between 1988 and 2007 was consistent with the increase in the city's physical size and population, with nearly 2,000 new residential lots created between 2003 and 2007 alone (Ref. III-1, p. 23)

By early 2009, however, new home construction had nearly ground to a halt, with single-family building permits down 70% from 2007 levels (Ref. III-2). An uptick occurred in 2010 (Ref. III-3).

Population Densities and Housing Unit Densities

Housing densities, total population densities, and under-age-5 population densities in Billings tend to be highest in the older downtown area neighborhoods of the community and lowest in areas on the outer boundary (Ref. III-4):

- Based on the 2000 census, the highest housing densities occur in the center of the city, where numbers range from about 1900 to more than 2300 units per square mile.
- Moving out from the center, housing densities drop to between 700 and 1500 units per square mile.
- West of Shiloh Road in northwest Billings, the density drops to 183.9 units per square mile.
- Heights neighborhoods have housing densities ranging from just over 200 to just over 1400 units per square mile.

Overall, the city's population density (people per square mile) is about half what it was in 1970. Although population densities have decreased in the residential downtown older neighborhoods are still more densely populated than neighborhoods developed in the last 30 years. Information on residential zoning can be found in Reference III-1, page 24.

In 2000, the under-age-5 population densities ranged from 353.2 children per square mile in the vicinity of Washington School in central Billings to 27.4 children per square mile in far northwest Billings (Ref. III-5).

Residential housing density and under-age-5 population densities have a significant effect on children's travel to and from school and on transportation costs for the school district. Distance to school is the number one barrier to walking and biking to school

Active Tax Increment Finance Districts

The city currently has three active tax-increment finance districts (TIFDs) within its boundaries (Ref. III-6):

- South Billings Boulevard TIFD (in place through January 2024)
- East Billings TIFD (in place through November 2021)
- North 27TH Street TIFD (in place through January 2024)

All three districts are in older parts of the community and include plans for redevelopment and infill development, including expanded affordable housing.

Section IV – BPS Enrollment History

Enrollment in Total and by School

BPS K-12 student enrollment has been relatively flat for 40 years (Ref. IV-1). This is consistent with the aging of the population: while population has increased, the number of school-age children has not (Ref. IV-2). Total enrollment was more than 17,000 students in 1969; fewer than 16,000 students are served today (Ref. IV-1). These numbers are consistent with the 40 years of relatively unchanged numbers in the under-age-19 population for the City of Billings.

At individual schools, some enrollments have increased while others have declined (Ref. IV-1). The changes have been due to a number of factors, including, but not limited to:

- Demographic changes
- School attendance boundary changes
- School closings and openings
- Out-of-area enrollment changes
- Changes in program location (i.e. self-contained classrooms for special education or preschool)

Careful analysis is required to determine which factors are responsible for changes in individual school enrollment. Conclusions about the adequacy of space at any particular school should not be drawn for purposes of facilities planning without such in-depth analysis.

Enrollment variations over the years are also apparent by grade level (Ref. IV-1):

- K-6 enrollment ranged from a high of nearly 9,000 in 1969 to a low of 7,300 between 2002 and 2006; today it is approximately 8,000.
- Middle school enrollment ranged from a high of 4,600 in 1970 to a low of 2,200 in 1986; today it is approximately 2,400.
- High school enrollment ranged from a high of 6,100 in 1973 to a low of 3,400 in 1980; today it is approximately 5,200.

Changes in grade configuration and services have factored heavily into these variations. Kindergarten was offered beginning in 1975/1976 school year. Before 1986-1987, middle school enrollment numbers included ninth grade. Since 1986-1987, ninth grade has been counted as part of high school enrollment. Also, in 2007/2008 the district went from half-day to all-day kindergarten, which required more building space in some schools where morning and afternoon kindergarten space was shared.

Elementary Enrollments by Geographic Area

Between 1996 and 2009 (Ref. IV-3):

- Heights K-6 enrollment (Alkali Creek, Beartooth, Bench, Bitterroot, Eagle Cliffs, and Sandstone) increased from 2211 students to 2345 students. (During this time, Beartooth School was closed and reopened)
- Southside K-6 enrollment (Garfield, Newman, Orchard, Ponderosa) decreased from 1221 students to 1076 students (Garfield School was closed and Orchard Elementary School was enlarged and renovated)
- Downtown K-6 enrollment (Broadwater, Highland, McKinley, Poly Drive, Rimrock Rose, Park, Washington) decreased from 2169 students to 1891 students (Rimrock Elementary School was closed, Boulder Elementary was enlarged)
- West End K-6 enrollment (Arrowhead, Big Sky, Boulder, Burlington, Central Heights, Meadowlark, Miles Avenue) decreased from 2863 students to 2831 students

As for individual school enrollment, careful analysis is required to determine factors in addition to demographic change that may be responsible for enrollment changes by geographical area. It should also be noted that schools could be grouped into geographical areas in a variety of different ways to evaluate space availability and enrollment trends by geographic area.

Feeder District Enrollments

In Yellowstone County, public school enrollment has remained relatively stable over the last decade. For information on school enrollment trends in the county and city from 1996 forward, see Ref IV-2. These tables include information on enrollment trends of schools that feed into BPS high schools including Lockwood K-8, Blue Creek and other feeder schools.

Section V – BPS Planning Policies

Billings Public Schools Policies. See Reference Section V for BPS Planning Policy 9001 - Planning and Policy 9002 - Facilities Master Plan.

Section VI – Supplemental Report

Preface

This is a supplement to the document “Policy 9001 Review (2010)” prepared by the BPS Planning and Development Committee under the requirements of Policy 9001. The supplemental information is non-demographic information. Review of this information will allow a better understanding of enrollment and facility issues in the school district. School closures and re-openings, school attendance boundaries, student busing, special education program location, and classroom and school capacity calculations are all factors affecting school and classroom capacities. This information was included and discussed in the Planning and Development Committee meetings. As more information becomes available on these factors and other factors that affect facilities planning, they can be added to this report. The information is included to better inform the reader on issues that have affected facility capacity in the past and that should be considered in planning for the future.

School Closures and Re-openings

Reference Section VI-1 presents a history of school closures and re-openings in Billings Public Schools. School closures and re-openings have had an impact on district transportation costs as well as school enrollments.

School Attendance Boundaries

Reference Section VI-2 presents historical information on the location and revision of BPS school attendance boundaries. The location of attendance boundaries has a direct impact on student enrollment. A process of to update boundaries for school enrollment can be used to balance enrollments among district schools to handle enrollment dips and upswings in lieu of school closings, expansions, or new construction.

BPS does not have a policy to re-boundary and does not regularly review attendance boundaries for purposes of enrollment balancing. As a result, the current attendance boundaries for some schools are noncontiguous. Also, in some cases, students are bussed to schools other than the nearest school location.

Student Busing

Reference Section VI-3 shows school bus routes and busing miles per school year. School siting (location) and school attendance boundaries significantly affect the cost of busing by impacting the need for bus routes.

Special Education Information and Special Program Location

Reference Section VI-4 presents historical data on special education child counts and program locations for services including preschool.

Special education classrooms are generally located at a number of district schools, depending on the availability of room. For purposes of school enrollment projections and determinations of school crowding, care must be taken to differentiate between special education enrollment and enrollment generated within the school attendance boundaries.

Classroom Space Capacity Calculations by School

This section presents information on school capacity calculations for BPS elementary schools. As indicated, calculated capacities have varied considerably depending upon the rooms counted as classrooms and the selected load factor (number of students per classroom).

There is currently no consistent standard for calculating schools capacities for Billings Public Schools. Accurate capacity calculations must take into account classroom square footage as well as a count of common and dedicated specialty areas (e.g., gyms, libraries, lunch rooms, music rooms, computer labs). The Montana State K-12 Public Schools Facilities Condition Assessment also includes information that may be used to calculate capacities. A district wide facilities plan will take into consideration all factors in determining capacities as the district moves forward to achieve 21st century educational standards in all school buildings.