



Quality Middle Schools and K-8 Feeder Patterns FAQ

1. What is the purpose of the Quality Middle School/ K-8 Feeder Pattern project?

To develop and implement a plan to ensure quality middle school options for all students, and to address the growing population of middle school students over the next 3-5 years. Through a new “virtual K-8” student assignment system, SFUSD plans to expand language pathways and other programs, to meet the academic and social needs of all middle school students.

2. What criteria did the staff use to create the latest draft of feeder patterns presented to the Board of Education at a Committee of the Whole on February 1, 2011?

The staff developed a recommendation for the Board of Education to review that was based on the Student Assignment Redesign policy adopted by the Board in March 2010. Student assignment feeder patterns will be based on a balance of the following criteria:

- proximity;
- neighborhood and school demographics (with the goal of maximizing racial and other forms of diversity);
- where students live now and where enrollment changes are expected in the future;
- availability and capacity of facilities;
- traffic patterns;
- location of programs (for example, pre-K, special education, and language programs);
- coherence of pre-K to kindergarten and elementary to middle school pathways.

3. What other factors affect the design of a K-8 feeder pattern?

Staff had to address a number of factors in applying these criteria, including:

- The Board’s Multilingual/ Multicultural policy and the Lau plan for English Language Learners which calls for a phase in of **dual language programs in middle schools** over the next five years. As committed to in the Lau plan, the District will expand from three to seven languages and from six to twelve middle schools. There has been significant planning work by the District’s English Learner Support Services division to design language pathways that will allow students in both immersion and the new biliteracy programs to continue to build their language skills in middle school. In most cases, building viable language pathways requires at least 66 students per target language. To the extent possible elementary schools with biliteracy and immersion programs were assigned to the closest Middle School that either has a current program that will be expanded or a new program that will be created in the future.
- There is a mismatch between where middle school students live and the location of middle **school spaces; the size of current enrollment** varies greatly across schools. The current draft feeder pattern reflects an effort to prioritize proximity but this was not always possible when balancing the number of seats located close to where students live. In developing language pathway assignments the proposal



- focused on moving whole schools vs. moving students in language pathways to one school and general education students to another.
- In order to meet the Board of Education's goal to reduce racial isolation staff also analyzed feeder patterns for their affect on **academic diversity** in relation to language pathways and proximity. Our current student assignment system is driven by choice and that has resulted in great inequities for students. District leadership is committed to making all middle schools high quality options for parents and K-8 feeder patterns will support this critical effort.
- The District is moving toward **more inclusion of students with disabilities** in general education classes. This requires that the number of general education and language pathway seats be balanced at each school so that each school can remain an option for students with disabilities enrolled in a general education program. More analysis will be done over the next few months to further analyze and address how well the proposed feeder patterns will support both the goals of dual language and inclusion.

4. Next steps for deciding feeder patterns?

The decision to move to middle school feeder patterns is already part of the Board of Education's Student placement policy; however, the timing of when and how to implement the feeder pattern and the what the actual feeder pattern will be is all still under discussion. It is important to note that the current staff recommendation under consideration is a phased in approach. Staff suggests using a finalized feeder pattern as one of the tie-breakers in the middle school choice process for school year 2012-2013. The Board plans to vote on a plan in May after reviewing the staff's plan for building high quality middle schools which will be informed by parent, school and community input.

5. How can I share my feedback?

District staff is working in partnership with the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and Parents for Public Schools (PPS) to hold community feedback sessions over the next few months. The PAC and PPS will write and present a report to the Board based on the feedback. Scheduled meetings will be posted on the District's website and distributed to schools. You may also contact PAC or PPS for more information about scheduled meetings. You may email your feedback to qualitymiddleschools@sfusd.edu.