

# Gloucester Public Schools

*Our mission is for all students to be successful, engaged, lifelong learners*

**Richard Safier, Ed.D.**  
**Superintendent of Schools**

2 Blackburn Drive  
Gloucester, MA 01930

Phone: (978) 281-9800 / Fax: (978) 281-9899

Email: [rsafier@gloucester.k12.ma.us](mailto:rsafier@gloucester.k12.ma.us)

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Dear Parent/Guardian of an Incoming Kindergartener,

In the interest of maintaining timely communication regarding the East Gloucester enrollment issue, we are sending you this update on our latest thinking. What follows is an outline of a working proposal. Nothing is set in stone. The School Committee will be meeting Wednesday night, June 3, at City Hall, at 7:00. The public will have an opportunity to speak and/or respond to our presentation.

For those of you who were not at the School Committee meeting Wednesday night, we want you to be aware of what did and what did not take place. First, the School Committee was informed about the details of the situation due to the suddenness of the issue arising. Second, parents/guardians in attendance had an opportunity to voice their concerns about the matter. And, third, the School Committee did not and had no intention of making any decisions during that meeting. If I may speak for them, the committee wants to move quickly to find a solution due to the concern that parents and guardians have over this issue.

Before discussing our current thinking, I want to provide a summary of how and when this enrollment situation first arose. On May 14, 43 students were registered. Two of those students' families indicated the desire to "choice" out of East Gloucester, leaving the net total at 41.

Within a week, on May 22 the number of students registered was 58, again, with two students' families asking for school choice, leaving a net total of 56. As of the writing of this letter, we have 60 students registered, minus the two "choice" students leaving a net total of 58.

The number of district-wide births in 2009-10 (reviewed last fall), showed 257 students potentially eligible for enrollment next year. 257 is the second lowest in 10 years. This number did not present any cause for concern. When we look at the last 10 years of enrollment at East Gloucester, we see the following:

|      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |      |           |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------|
| 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016      |
| 34   | 47   | 40   | 49   | 43   | 46   | 39   | 34   | 41   | 42   | <b>60</b> |

Please bear in mind that the years 2012 through 2015 *included* students who enrolled at East Gloucester through school choice.

So, with this sudden and unexpected spike in Kindergarten registration, and having notified the School Committee and parents/guardians Wednesday night, we are now moving toward making recommendations for next year.

There are a number of options being considered and we will describe elements of those options Wednesday night. Those options include:

- Moving the Language-Based Classroom from East Gloucester;
- Placement of a modular classroom at East Gloucester;
- Redistricting possibilities of the following areas:
  - Bass Ave. (127A), Sayward, Parker with East Main St. running through the middle
  - Hartz St. area
  - Harrison St. area
  - Starknaught, Old County, Rockport Rd., and
  - Burnham Field area—Main St to Prospect, Pleasant St., Maplewood, up to Cleveland.

As we continue to look at each of those options, our thinking is moving toward a redistricting of the Burnham Field area (currently a part of the East Gloucester catchment area). This redistricting would provide us with a short-term resolution and enable the district to plan for the future as well.

Some of the elements that are part of our thinking include the following:

- Based upon our data, students in the affected area who have older siblings at East Gloucester would be able to enroll at East Gloucester as well. *If you already have a child in East Gloucester (next year), the incoming Kindergartener will attend East Gloucester.*
- The relatively close proximity of that section of the catchment area to Beeman and to Veterans;
- The number of students affected in the redistricted area would, based upon current numbers, create a balanced enrollment at more than one school;
- Redistricting the Burnham Field area would enable us to preserve reasonable class sizes at East Gloucester;
- There are already-existing bus stops along with bus routes that routinely travel through the streets in that area;
- No students would have to walk more than 1 or 2 blocks to a bus stop; walking on busy streets could be avoided; i.e., it would be safe for those who walk to school (unlike some other areas under consideration);

- For those students' families in the affected area, we could still provide school choice (Plum Cove and West Parish), although in that circumstance, parents/guardians would be required to transport their child; and,

Again, I am writing to you to keep parents up-to-date with our latest thinking, and we are still working on this issue. If you would like to respond to this letter, please email me at [rsafier@gloucester.k12.ma.us](mailto:rsafier@gloucester.k12.ma.us) or call 978 281-9800.

Respectfully,

Richard Safier