

Population growth will help the district stay strong

Planning for growth, welcoming new students and families

While many school districts must cope with declining enrollments and school closings, District 16 will see steady growth in the next five years.

And, while news reports describe an explosion of new homes and neighborhoods in Blaine, only a portion of this growth will be within Spring Lake Park District 16 boundaries.

Much of the development is located in Anoka-Hennepin District 11 and some will also occur within Centennial District 12 boundaries.

Current and planned developments within District 16 boundaries will mean 1,844 new housing units and a projection of 410 new elementary students within the next few years.

These students are beginning to come from or will be coming from District 16 portions of The Lakes, TPC, Town Square, Egret Landing, Radisson Ponds, Rehbein Property, and The Sanctuary.

This information is based upon ongoing meetings and conversations with city of Blaine administrators and

city planners, and Excensus, Inc.

District officials believe that there may be even more students than the planned 410, but prefer to use the more conservative projections by demographers for financial planning.

As for the impact of additional students and families, the new (for 2005-06) configuration of our elementary schools according to Superintendent Don Helmstetter, “will greatly assist us in successfully controlling class size ranges and enrollment fluctuations—both

up and down—in the future.”

The near future could produce a “bottleneck” of students at the middle school, however, so that will be one of the topics to be looked at by the district-wide Facilities Utilization Task Force that begins its work in February.

“The growth will help our district stay strong,” added Helmstetter, “because it is steady and not unwieldy, but we will be closely monitoring it and making the necessary adjustments.”