

Position on School District #1 Enrollment Policy

Adopted 1978

Summary

The Missoula League of Women Voters supports enrollment policies which consider the following:

- a.) equal opportunities in education;
- b.) consideration of educational benefits as well as expenses;
- c.) neighborhood grouping; and
- d.) age grouping.

Background

1. In defining “educational opportunity for all children,” League members consider the quality of teaching most important, followed by the necessity for administrative support of good teaching. Opportunities for learning should be equally available for all students in terms of facilities and curricula.
2. If it can be shown that educational benefits are substantial, members feel the public is willing to bear reasonable costs—i.e., the cheapest school program is not automatically the best—or the worst.
3. Rather than a brief, narrow definition of “neighborhood school,” League members prefer to describe the concept as: children and parents should have a sense of belonging to their school. Fracturing of neighborhoods is counter-productive as educational policy and divisive of families and normal social groupings. Fracturing of neighborhoods destroys the sense of community that should be part of the school experience of children.
4. Without identifying specific locations or groupings of grades, members accept alternative grouping of grades.
 1. The Board of Trustees should formulate written policies to guide the administration in making decisions that have previously been made without this uniform direction. The League prefers flexibility within a written policy to the unpredictable quality of decision-making without any policy or guidelines.

Position

The Missoula League of Women Voters:

1. Supports equal educational opportunity in all schools for all children and believes that this should be the primary factor in formulating enrollment policy in School District #1.
2. Believes in solving the uneven enrollment problems, while giving careful consideration to educational benefits as well as expenses.
3. Believes that children from a geographically-defined neighborhood need to attend the same school. The school needs to be as close to the childrens' homes as possible or, if necessary, the children should be bussed as a group so the neighborhood groups will not be fractured.

4. Believes the rearrangement of enrollment by new grouping of grades is the most acceptable way of accommodating present and future needs.
5. Believes that the Board of Trustees of School District #1 should formulate and publish policies to apply uniformly on:
 - a. School attendance boundaries;
 - b. Bussing for equalization of class size;
 - c. Bussing for safety;
 - d. Prioritizing grades to be bused.