A proposal that would temporarily redraw elementary school attendance zones to relieve classroom crowding for the 1992-93 academic year will be presented at Thursday’s East Baton Rouge Parish School Board meeting.

Because implementation of the proposal would change several district lines created under the 1981 desegregation court order, Associate Superintendent Grady Hazel said U.S. District Judge John Parker would have to approve the plan if it is accepted by the board.

Although the policy will be reviewed on Thursday, board attorney Bob Hammonds said policy prevents the board from voting on the proposal until its Feb. 20 meeting.

Hazel stressed that the proposal is not a “cure-all” to the system’s crowding problem, but said it was “a means of trying to provide more space.”

“This does not solve the problem, it just makes it somewhat better . . . ,” Hazel said.

“They’re not moving very far from where they’re currently going and it would be to a less-crowded site.”

Although the memo outlining the plan to board members calls the plan an “interim proposal,” Hazel said it could be used for some time if it is implemented.

“I guess we see it as a permanent change until the capital outlay program is decided upon, or if population shifts would cause us to have severe problems at the schools,” he said.

The six elements of the proposal are:

- Open Mohican Center to 143 regular education students who live in the area around the school. This would move students from Delmont, North Highlands, Brookstown and Winbourne.

- Reassign an area in the Delmont/North Highlands/Brookstown cluster to the adjacent Dalton attendance district, which would transfer students from Delmont and Brookstown. Also reassign an area of the Winbourne district adjacent to the Dalton district, which would transfer students to Dalton from Winbourne.

- Reassign an area of the Eden Park/Broadmoor/Audubon cluster to be adjacent Park district, which would transfer students from Eden Park to Park.

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- Reassign an area of the University Terrace district east of Gardere Lane to Wildwood, which would transfer students from University Terrace to Wildwood.
- Use four classrooms at the Christa McAuliffe Sherwood Center as a satellite kindergarten center for Audubon.
- Relocate five temporary buildings from Baker High School to Broadmoor, Brownfields, Howell Park, Jefferson Terrace and Melrose. Two classrooms at Baker would be subdivided to house students displaced from the temporary buildings.

Hazel and Facilities Planning Director Bob Hill, who created the proposal, acknowledged that several other schools will remain crowded, but said there was no easy solution for some areas because all of the schools in that vicinity also are crowded.

"There were no schools close to send the kids to," Hazel said.

Hill said all children affected by the plan would be closer to their homes under the proposal.

"It reduces the amount of time they would travel, and it also does not change the black-white ratios in the schools," Hill said.

Attorney Robert Williams, who represents the NAACP in the desegregation suit, said he was pleased to see that the board would be addressing the crowding issue.

"At least they're doing something," said Williams, who had not reviewed the plan in detail. "I'm not necessarily pleased with what they've done, but at least they're doing something."

In the past, board members have "buried their heads in the sand" and ignored the problem, he said.

"Now they're facing up to it, and I'm pleased," Williams said. "We've known that this day would come, and I'm glad they're doing something about it."

Board President Eva Legard, who also had only briefly reviewed the proposal, said the school system has to take steps to relieve the current level of crowding.

"We've got to do something, or else the kids will be sitting on top of each other," she said.

Superintendent Bernard Weiss said the proposal would be "helpful in addressing the overcrowding situation" at the schools.

"It will take pressure off of some schools and balance populations in others," Weiss said. "I don't really see it as a proposal that will cause a lot of concern overall."

Board member Robert Crawford said he liked the proposal.

"You need to relieve overcrowding, and you're not moving people across town, you're moving them down the street," Crawford said. "It will help kids getting moved as well as the kids in the overcrowded schools, so I have no problem with it."