

# Southwest Area Boundary Study Committee

Meeting # 3 Notes

October 14, 2015

## Committee and School System Attendees

### **PTA/Parent Representatives**

Nazish Khan – Arbutus ES  
Krista Wallman – Arbutus ES  
Kelvin Carney – Catonsville ES  
Samantha Lewandowski – Catonsville ES  
Romaine Smoot – Edmondson Heights ES  
Corinne Loudon – Halethorpe ES  
James Kitchel – Hillcrest ES  
Donna Knutson – Hillcrest ES  
Obi Linton – Johnnycake ES  
Jeff Sanford – Johnnycake ES  
Gina Anderson – Lansdowne ES  
Jane Allen – Relay ES  
Shaunta Chapple – Relay ES  
Tadd Russo – Westchester ES  
Allison White – Westchester ES  
Christopher Burk – Westowne ES  
Kecia Johnson – Westowne ES  
Christine Hinegartner – Woodbridge  
Keith Grayson - Woodbridge

### **Teacher/Staff Representatives**

Lori O'Donnell – Arbutus ES  
Paula Doll – Catonsville ES  
Whitney Plunkett – Edmondson Heights ES  
Danielle Gemmell – Halethorpe ES  
Cara Detwiler – Johnnycake ES  
Nicola Styer – Lansdowne ES  
Patricia Wilding – Relay ES  
Kim Noppenberger – Westchester ES  
Lisa Musacchio - Westowne

**Principal Representatives**

Brent Grabill – Arbutus ES  
Linda Miller – Catonsville ES  
Juliet McDivitt – Edmondson Heights ES  
Jill Carter – Halethorpe ES  
Doug Elmendorf – Hillcrest ES  
Bre-Anne Fortkamp – Johnnycake ES  
Stephen Price – Lansdowne ES  
Lisa Dingle – Relay ES  
Phil Byers – Westchester  
Scott Palmer – Westowne  
Lori Phelps – Woodbridge ES

**System Representatives**

Matt Cropper – Cropper GIS, Consultant to BCPS  
Heidi Miller – Co-Chair  
Monique Wheatley-Phillip – Co-Chair  
Kara Calder – Executive Director, Strategic Planning and Research  
Paul Taylor – Coordinator of Strategic Planning  
Chris Brocato – Planning Analyst  
Pam Carter – Planning Consultant  
Candace Logan-Washington – Organizational Effectiveness  
Lynn Morningstar – Transportation

**Other Attendees from the Community**

Allison Dietz – Hillcrest – OCNA  
Adrienne Vedeloff  
Danielle Goodwin  
Felicia Minkey – Westowne  
Brandy Campbell  
Kevin Bass – Westowne  
Jason Berlin – Westowne  
Carey Berlin – Westowne  
Tracey Bowden – Catonsville Times  
Stacey Kowalski – Westowne – Academy Heights  
Cathy Engers – Office of Councilman Quirk  
Sarah Fonedlier – Westowne  
Katie Resner  
Yvette Gould

### **Other Attendees from the Community (continued)**

Richard Mix  
Raminti Glenze  
China Williams – Westowne  
Oleg Brewer – Westowne – AICP  
Jim Silver  
Danielle Remesch  
Heather Norris – The Catonsville Times  
Stacie Lauer – Westowne – Academy Heights  
Matthew McKnight – Westowne – Academy Heights  
Diana Bell – Westowne – Academy Heights  
Danette Zaghari-Mask  
George L. Winkfield  
Donna Johnson

Materials provided for members of the Southwest Area Boundary Study Committee were distributed to each member of the committee and staff. The materials included a meeting agenda and schedule, materials updated to reflect preliminary September 30, 2015 enrollment, responses to questions and requests for information raised at Meeting #2, and DRAFT options A – E, developed based on committee feedback from Meeting 2.

The draft option materials included 8 ½ x11” maps of options A – E as well as large table sized maps of the options for review in small groups. Disaggregated data for all options was provide in the form of charts reflecting Full-Time Equivalent Enrollment (FTE), FTE percentage of enrollment, number of students over/under capacity, percent minority enrollment, and percent of students receiving Free-Reduced Lunch. Additional charts provided data on the number of students affected by each option.

Summary notes for Meeting 2 were included in the packet, along with copies of email items received on-line from committee members. Also included were maps of current walking boundaries for specific schools.

### Meeting Highlights

- At 6:00 p.m. Mr. Cropper greeted committee members and observers and introduced committee co-chair Heidi Miller.
- Heidi Miller thanked members of the committee for devoting their time to this study and for their diligence in considering the welfare of all students at all schools and encouraged them to continue to not focus on or advocate for any one school but to consider the region as a whole when examining proposed boundary options. She also commended the principals involved for facilitating communication by referring interested members of the community to the website and the interactive maps.

- Mr. Cropper began his presentation by informing the committee that the data included in the summary charts in this meeting's packet has been updated to reflect the preliminary September 30, 2015 enrollment data for all schools involved in the study. (This replaces the earlier data that was based on enrollments from the end of the 2014-2015 school year.)
- Mr. Cropper informed the committee that the main purpose of tonight's meeting would be to review maps and data on new DRAFT boundary change options that were developed based on feedback supplied by the committee on the three preliminary scenarios presented at Meeting 2. These new DRAFT options would include five options labeled A – E.
- Mr. Cropper then reviewed communications protocols.. He indicated that email comments provided by members of the committee were included in tonight's packet and that the large number of public comments would all be acknowledged and then consolidated and compiled by theme or topic into a written format that could be shared with the committee prior to each meeting. He reminded folks that questions could be directed to the FAQ and Web site. He also directed folks with questions to use [bdystudy@bcps.org](mailto:bdystudy@bcps.org) to send in their questions and comments online.
- Mr. Cropper took a few minutes to go over questions that were raised at Meeting 2 regarding Pre-K student enrollment, Scholars K – 8, and details of walking boundaries.
  - All enrollment data in the Meeting 3 packet is stated in terms of Full-Time Equivalent enrollment (FTE) and includes Pre-K.
  - Scholars K-8 Students have been included in the enrollment data for the home schools that they could be attending, based on their current addresses.
  - The Department of Transportation has supplied walking boundary maps for a number of the schools. These are included in tonight's packet. Maps for the remaining schools will be provided as soon as available.
  - This information may be revised as needed for future meetings.
- Mr. Cropper shared responses from the Department of Transportation concerning the walking and bus transportation considerations around major roads, such as Route 40.
  - BCPS provides bus transportation for students who, if walking, would otherwise cross divided highways with posted speeds greater than 40 mph. This is common around the county.
  - Bus routes are regularly planned that cross major roads, provided there are multiple intersections with traffic lights.
- At approximately 6:15, Mr. Cropper reminded committee members that they are still in the process of developing as many feasible options as possible before attempting to narrow the field. Those options will then be refined in Meetings 4 and 5. Statistics and maps on the five scenarios presented tonight are in the packet and will be available for public view on the internet tomorrow.
- Mr. Cropper reminded committee members that DRAFTS of new options A – E are based on committee feedback from Meeting 2. The impact of these options on all schools is reflected in tables that focus on FTE enrollment, enrollment over/under capacity,

percentage of minority enrollment, percentage of students receiving Free and Reduced price Meals (FARMS), and total number of students impacted by each option.

- Mr. Cropper then instructed committee members to break into small groups (randomized based on pre-populated numbers on their name tags) for about 45 minutes to discuss and mark up baseline maps of the five DRAFT options and to provide feedback, ask questions, and share their idea on the positive and negative aspects of each option.
- At approximately 6:20, the committee broke into small groups to review the options and report back on their findings and observations. Each committee was provided with large scale maps of options A – E, as well as a flip chart for recording comments.
- At approximately 7:10 p.m., Mr. Cropper re-convened the committee as a whole to allow each of the small groups to present their views on each of the boundary change options.
- Group 1 reported the following observations:
  - Option A did not seem viable, since it did nothing to affect overcrowding in schools north of Route 40. The schools receiving the most relief are those receiving additions.
  - Option B has potential but still provides little relief for Johnnycake and Halethorpe.
  - Option C leaves Johnnycake at 111% and Halethorpe at 112%, which is significantly over 100%
  - Option D is not ideal, with Johnnycake at 120% of capacity and no real solutions.
  - Option E engendered a concern involving the shifting of planning block 525 and the resulting impact on the receiving school's demographics.
- Group 2 reported the following observations:
  - The group questioned the timing of the proposed completion dates of the planned additions to Relay and Lansdowne and asked whether the overcrowding of Arbutus, Halethorpe, Relay and Lansdowne should be solved now, before the additions are completed.
  - Group 2 also made the observation that some schools that will be under capacity are not geographically close to those that are over capacity.
  - Option A provided the least relief for folks at the top of the map (north of Route 40). The group understood why Halethorpe wished to keep the planning block including the Burmese students.
  - Option B echoed the same reservations related to the schools north of Route 40 while pointing out the under-utilization of Westowne, which will receive an addition and could serve more students. This group also questioned the “one kid” planning block included in the option.
  - Options C, D, and E seemed to be options in which Catonsville's boundary was stretched too broadly, but the group felt that all five of the options offered showed improvements over the three initial starter samples provided at the previous meeting.
  - Mr. Cropper reminded the committee that, given the limited number of new seats planned for this area, we cannot relieve every school with this boundary change process.

- Group 3 reported the following observations:
  - Option A engendered concerns about the lack of relief north of Route 40. Sending planning block 447 to Westowne was viewed as a positive move. Moving planning blocks 527, 407, and 406 made sense as it's a straight shot to Relay.
  - Option B movement of planning blocks 502, 485 and 484 would destabilize Johnnycake.
  - Option C was viewed negatively as it did not sufficiently relieve schools north of Route 40.
  - This group had insufficient time to review D & E.
- Group 4 reported the following observations:
  - Option A does not address the over-crowding north of Route 40. The move of planning block 447 to Westowne is good. This group favored keeping the complex with the Burmese population at Halethorpe.
  - Option B worked well for Westchester and Johnnycake. Planning block 447 should go to Westowne.
  - Option C was viewed negatively since the move of planning blocks 480, 482, and 483 stretched the Catonsville ES boundary too far in an effort to relieve Johnnycake
  - Option D movement of southern Hillcrest to Catonsville was viewed as positive, as would be a move of planning block 447 to Westowne, since it can handle that number of students.
  - Option E provided better relief by moving Johnnycake students to Westchester instead of Catonsville. Westowne should pick up planning block 447 since it has room to provide relief.
- Group 5 reported the following observations:
  - Option A was the preferred option, but that the area north of Route 40 should be provided with more future seats. They suggested that planning blocks 439, 431, and 385 should be moved together.
  - Option B seemed to flip flop students between Johnnycake and Hillcrest without making much positive impact
  - Option C appeared to stretch the new Catonsville boundary too far in several directions. It was also pointed out that planning block 351 is within walking distance of Catonsville. It was also suggested that middle school boundaries and elementary school boundaries should match one another.
  - Option D was also somewhat popular. It was suggested that planning block 513 remain in Hillcrest and that the existing middle school boundaries should help to guide the establishment of elementary school boundaries that lead to 100% feeder patterns from elementary school to middle school.
  - Option E raised the question of why we would flip flop planning block 514 back to Hillcrest.
- Group 6 reported the following observations:

- This group felt that much of what they noticed as positives and negatives had already been covered in the previous presentations.
- Group 6 was concerned that several of the options did not offer any relief to schools north of Route 40 and that some schools south of Route 40 that were slated to receive additions appeared to be substantially under capacity in some of the scenarios.
- A question was raised concerning whether we should we fill a school to capacity if its enrollment is projected to increase. This was followed by a question concerning the general accuracy of enrollment projections.
- Mr. Cropper indicated that he would use the notes and suggestions included on the marked up maps to guide the creation of new set of hybrid option maps to be considered in Meetings 4 and 5 that should result in several viable options to present to the public.
- An additional comment was raised about the need to tap into what may be sensitive areas of dialog in the interest of equity, such as whether we should "warehouse" certain groups of students in a manner that would deny them new experiences by keeping them separate from others.
- Mr. Cropper responded that demographic diversity is one of the criteria for this boundary change and will continue to be considered as additional options are developed.
- There was a question about the timing of the completion of the Relay addition, as it is slated to be completed later than the Catonsville and Westowne projects.
- Mr. Taylor responded that boundaries established during the boundary change process will be long-term boundaries for the involved schools. However, the implementation of these boundaries will be based on when the projects providing extra seats are constructed and ready for occupancy.
- Mr. Cropper again thanked committee members for their hard work and careful consideration of the options offered this evening. The meeting ended promptly at 7:30 p.m.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Boundary Study Committee Meeting # 4

Wednesday, October 28, 2015

Catonsville High School Cafeteria

6:00-7:30 p.m.

(Light dinner for committee members served at 5:30 p.m.)