

**SW Area Boundary Study
Committee Member Emails
December 9, 2015 to December 11, 2015**

Prepared by the Baltimore County Public Schools
Office of Strategic Planning, December 11, 2015

Brocato, Christopher J.

From: Shaunta Chapple
Sent: Friday, December 11, 2015 10:41 AM
To:

Cc:
Subject: Dear Committee Members....
Categories: Orange Category

Dear Boundary Study Committee,

Wednesday's meeting was a turning point in my participation in the boundary study process, where I witnessed firsthand the lack of ethics and respect that some of our boundary committee members possess. I want to remind everyone that ultimately, what we are dealing with here is the education of some of our communities' most vulnerable members- our children- all of whom deserve our best and most upstanding efforts to enhance their educational experience while we have the opportunity to do so.

I completed a small group exercise with two principals, one of whom failed to record the weakness I identified in two of the options until I repeated it several times. The other scribbled over the weakness I identified once it was written down while I was not watching. Luckily, I identified this malicious (and juvenile) act, informed Mr. Cropper, and noted the group's paper beside the "scribble." I felt that the options that provided no relief to Johnnycake Elementary school were flawed, but the principal of Johnnycake Elementary did not respect me or my contribution to the group enough to allow my identified weakness to be displayed to Mr. Cropper, the rest of the committee, as well as the public.

I hate that I allowed the influence of my group member to sway me and cloud my judgment on the night of the meeting, but am thankful that after giving it much thought and consideration, I have the courage to share my experience and my opinion. I urge my group members from 12/9's meeting to do their own research prior to next week's meeting.

The principal of Johnnycake said that the majority of families in her school said to leave Johnnycake as is, and mentioned that 25% of the total responses to the survey were from Johnnycake. She added that removing 70 children would not make a significant difference, and seemed to be a minimal effort to appease the Johnnycake community. The principal shared that most of the members on the school's PTA board reside in an area of single family homes who were threatened to be rezoned to Westchester, and emphasized that the PTA does a lot for the school. The principal went on to share that since the beginning of the school year, the student enrollment has increased from 600 to 700, and that Johnnycake has always been overcrowded. Finally, she shared that it was questioned why it is acceptable for Johnnycake students to cross Route 40, but not vice versa. The principal also noted that members of the Hillcrest community have reached out to Johnnycake offering their assistance in fighting for a new school.

In response, I want to share that in a school with approximately 700 students (based on the principal's estimation), a survey response from 307 is not representative of the majority of the school- this is less than half. Furthermore, there was no limit on how many times one person could take the survey, so how reflective are these numbers of the general consensus of the Johnnycake community? In spite of this, when you read into the data, the primary concern expressed through the survey (50.6%-54.7% of respondents) is that none of the four options address current overcrowding. Our group was the ONLY group that selected an option that left Johnnycake as is, and while I do not understand the principal's intent, I request that the option that does not relieve Johnnycake at all be removed from consideration in light of the principal's attempts to influence our group with questionable information. The principal also failed to mention that with the closing of the Scholars K-8 school, options that do not change Johnnycake's boundaries put the school at 121% capacity. This is unacceptable.

To be frank- the reason families south of 40 do not want their children to cross Route 40 to attend a school north of Route 40 is not a safety issue, it is an equity issue. Standardized test scores and community ratings of schools north of 40 do not begin to compare to those south of 40, sadly. So obviously, parents north of 40 would be within their right to want their child crossing 40 if it means that they have access to a higher quality educational experience.

Buses that transport children to/from their community to/from Sudbrook Magnet Middle School, for example, travel an expansive area of the county, crossing and traveling major roadways. The same parents who would send their child to a magnet school are some of the same ones claiming that it is unsafe for their child to cross Rt. 40 to go to school. This is ridiculous, to say the very least.

Mr. Cropper, please develop a map or amend a previous map for final consideration at next week's meeting that includes the following adjustments:

- 1. Add PBs 490, 485, 482, 484, 483, 481 to Westchester**
- 2. Add PB 525 to Hillcrest**
- 3. Add PBs 486 and 487 to Westowne**

I would like to rescind the statement that I made in regard to Halethorpe at the meeting. I do not believe that Halethorpe should remain overcrowded just because of Lansdowne's impending replacement; this was poor judgment on my part, and at the time I said this, I was not thinking of how long it will actually take for Lansdowne to be constructed, leaving Halethorpe overcrowded for too long. A brand new, larger-capacity Relay should provide at least some relief to Halethorpe, and we as a community can ensure that the same children who are rezoned with this process are not rezoned again. Therefore, **I DO support the addition of PBs 407, 527, and 406 to Relay's boundary, but advocate for the omission of PBs 418 and 420 (even though there are no children in these areas anyway, it is visually more appealing).**

I want to take this opportunity to encourage anyone who cares about children and who values their education to help advocate for the schools north of Route 40. A replacement school is needed, and should be at the top of the BCPS Board of Education's list of priorities- not in the middle or at the bottom. Show up at the Board Meetings and speak out based on what you have learned from this process. Regardless of skin color or socioeconomic status, every child in the world deserves a good education. As a community (the Southwest Area) lets band together and help our neighboring community- the Northwest Area- we can help them find their voices to say hey, our children matter too!

To the principal of Johnnycake Elementary- if you lose your PTA board members as a result of this process, take advantage of that critical time and invest your efforts in grooming less likely parents into being the officers of your school's PTA. They can be effective too, with the proper resources and education in place. I am hopeful that you will divert your efforts to teaching your more vulnerable families how to speak up and advocate for their children. While you may still be overcrowded after a fraction of children are rezoned, every little bit helps, and will illustrate that the Johnnycake community's voices were heard and considered too.

Sincerely,

Shaunta Chapple

Parent- Relay Elementary

Brocato, Christopher J.

From: Shaunta Chapple
Sent: Friday, December 11, 2015 12:29 PM
To:

Cc:
Subject: Re: Dear Committee Members....
Categories: Orange Category

Hello again,

Please disregard my third suggestion in my previous email- PBs 486 and 487 should NOT be added to Westowne because these students are in Johnnycake's walk zone and would put Westowne over capacity.

Mr. Cropper- Can you possibly start with Option 3, then modify to add PB 490 to Westchester and add PB 418 to Lansdowne? Thanks for your consideration.

Shaunta