

**SW Area Boundary Study**  
**Public Email Log**  
**December 9, 2015 to December 11, 2015**

Prepared by the Baltimore County Public Schools

Office of Strategic Planning, December 11, 2015

## Southwest Area Boundary Study Public Email Log: 12/9/15 to 12/11/15

**12/9/15, 2220 hrs**

Erica Russo [erica@taddrusso.com](mailto:erica@taddrusso.com)

Dear Mr. Cropper and the Boundary Committee, Thank you for your careful consideration of the many comments and survey responses you have received.

I strongly urge you to select option 3.2a as the redistricting best for several schools. In particular, this option allows Westchester to keep its current students while alleviating some overcrowding at Hillcrest by shifting PBs 508 and 509 to WES. This option also respects the wishes of the Johnnycake community to remain together, which will hopefully lead to a new facility for them. Furthermore, by projecting WES enrollment at 87%, option 3.2a allows for future growth as based upon the county's own numbers.

I ask you to please remove option 3.2 from consideration. Opening Westchester at 98% will only lead to the overcrowding issues (in a very short term) that both WES and Hillcrest are already experiencing. In addition, this option moves just enough Johnnycake students to decimate the staffing they need to best serve their community.

Thank you for supporting 3.2a. Respectfully submitted, Erica Russo President, Westchester PTA Sent from my iPhone

**12/10/15, 1058 hrs**

Amy Reilly [amyreilly@yahoo.com](mailto:amyreilly@yahoo.com)

I know you're getting a lot of emails from the public so I'll keep this short...

CES will have the capacity at the new school, so why move PB 447 (~43 kids) to Westowne? PB 447 is the ONLY planning block being moved OUT OF CES. For continuity's sake, please keep PB 447 at CES. Thanks, Amy Reilly Dunmore Resident

**12/10/15, 1131 hrs**

Jani [ilaskaris2003@yahoo.com](mailto:ilaskaris2003@yahoo.com)

Dear Sir or Madam:

I write to express my support for option 3.2a because it gives appropriate consideration to the factors that guide this rezoning process.

Very truly yours, Ioannis Laskaris

**12/10/15, 1131 hrs**

Nicole Rossini <[nmrossini@gmail.com](mailto:nmrossini@gmail.com)>

Good morning, I am a parent of 2 children who attend CES. We have been following the boundary process as a family and also as a community (PB447).

I realize there is much that goes on behind the scenes about this process. I would like to take the opportunity to voice my concern and opinion. Why not keep PB 447 at CES? There are other PB blocks (I see PB 464 and 463) that could go to Westowne. Why take PB 447 out of CES where we have been and add another nearby PB in to CES. This is changing 2 groups/neighborhoods. Makes sense to me to make the least amount of changes necessary to minimize the impact on children and families. Looks like pb 447 is the only area to leave CES. This does not make sense to me. If CES has the space and it appears it does according to the numbers, then why not leave our neighborhood (PB 447) at CES? I'd like the committee to consider options that impact as few people, children and families as possible. Looks like pb 447 could stay at CES and the it would not significantly affect the numbers in any option.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to communicate these concerns, Nicole Rossini

**12/10/15, 1134 hrs**

Amy Isler [amyisler@gmail.com](mailto:amyisler@gmail.com)

If CES has the capacity at the new school, why move a small planning block of kids (PB 447 ~43 kids?) out of CES? Dunmore would be the ONLY planning block being moved out. Thanks! Amy Isler

**12/10/15, 1141 hrs**

Patrick Lynch [plynch5@jhmi.edu](mailto:plynch5@jhmi.edu)

Hi. I'm a resident of the Dunmore Community and have been following the proceedings of the school rezoning process.

I'm at a loss to see how uprooting the children from Catonsville Elem and shipping them off to Westowne serves their best interest. There has been no evidence put forth to bolster that claim.

My concerns for these children are as follows:

- Obviously, having them move to a new school will burden them with a transition that is unnecessary
- Moving to Westowne will mean they will attend elementary school with a different set of children than those that will attend Junior and Senior High; again another transition
- Currently, some of the children walk to school; this will no longer be possible for them if they are sent off to Westowne

These are all things that effect the disposition of the Dunmore Community children. I think we should keep these in mind.

Thank you for reading this email and considering the thoughts therein.

Regards, Mike Lynch 4 Dunganrie Rd.

**12/10/15, 1232 hrs**

Laura Ratta [lratta@verizon.net](mailto:lratta@verizon.net)

Dear Mr. Cropper and Southwest Boundary Committee:

Our 2 children are at Westchester Elementary and we would like to advocate for Option 3.2A as the best option for our neighborhood school.

Please take our preference into consideration as you move forward. Thank you for all your work on this issue!

Laura and Mike Ratta Lismore Lane, Catonsville, MD 21228 410-971-6896

## Southwest Area Boundary Study Public Email Log: 12/9/15 to 12/11/15

**12/10/15, 1311 hrs**

Molly DeBoy [mdeboy5@gmail.com](mailto:mdeboy5@gmail.com)

To Whom it May Concern,

My husband and I recently moved to the Dunmore community this past summer after a long and extensive home search in the Catonsville area. We chose Dunmore for several reasons, one being the elementary school and the other was how close knit the community is. We have a young son and I am a teacher. It was important to us that our son would be able to attend a strong public school in our neighborhood. As you can imagine hearing that our neighborhood may be rezoned for Westowne Elementary School instead of Catonsville Elementary came as a shock. Our community is much closer to CES and has established strong relationships with the families and teachers from CES. The families of Dunmore are extremely happy with CES and do not want their children to be rezoned. We support their feelings. Catonsville is the community where we live and our children should attend the school in their community. We would like our son to go to the same Elementary School as his friends in the neighborhood. Dunmore is the only community who currently attends CES that would be rezoned. Please keeps us at CES!!!! Warmly, Molly and Steve DeBoy

**12/10/15, 1427 hrs**

Bob White [bob.white@sherwin.com](mailto:bob.white@sherwin.com)

Dear Mr. Cropper & BCPS Boundary Committee, I advocate for map 3.2.A Best, -Bob & Diane White

**12/10/15, 1645 hrs**

Sender: Jennifer Watson

E-mail: [jenwat82@aol.com](mailto:jenwat82@aol.com)

IP Address: 71.121.174.42

Address: 6009 Chesworth Rd Baltimore MD 21228

Phone #: 240-899-7140

Message: In regards to the construction and boundary changes for the elementary schools in the southwest area: I am delighted to see improvements and change may occur to move some students from Johnnycake elementary to Westchester elementary. It will be a improvement that is certain. Both with diversity and providing relief to johnnycake, that has been over capacity. I am hoping and preying that the map and boundary change that is presented to the board includes this change as well. As was presented in boundary draft options 1, 2,3, and 4.I hope this change is made it dose not make sense to have an over crowded school and then one operated way under capacity. I hope the final decision is made to try to improve ALL schools and not just the schools in the "nicer" "wealthier" neighborhoods.

**12/10/15, 1507 hrs**

Mon [monicamother2006@yahoo.com](mailto:monicamother2006@yahoo.com)

Dear sir or madam, I write to express my support for map 3.2a because it gives appropriate consideration to the factors that guide this rezoning process. Sincerely, Monica Laskaris

**12/10/15, 1523 and 1600 hrs**

Stacie Palmer [staycsun@netzero.com](mailto:staycsun@netzero.com)

After reviewing the latest maps, I believe 3.2.a does the best job at meeting a lot of requests for continuity and community input, while retaining existing boundary lines as much as possible. In looking at the latest numbers, this map leaves a comfortable margin for capacity at the 4 schools being considered in this planning process. This allows for future capacity numbers for property growth near Westowne and Hillcrest. It also honors Johnnycakes' request to not be considered in hopes of a new school in the future. And, it meets most of Hillcrests' requests for continuity of certain planning blocks.

I am a part of planning block #447, Dunmore, and remaining a part of CES is very important to our community. Why move an existing 43 students from a school that can allow for them in the future. It does not make sense. Please consider our request as a community ti remain at CES. Thanks, Stacie Palmer

**12/10/15, 1635 hrs**

Carole Crist [carolecrist@yahoo.com](mailto:carolecrist@yahoo.com)

Yes, I advocate for 32.A. Signed Carole Crist Thank you. Sent from my iPad

**12/10/15, 1935 hrs**

Beth [morrison.beth@gmail.com](mailto:morrison.beth@gmail.com)

vote option 3.2A

**12/10/15, 1943 hrs**

Rebecca Kurtz [rldegenford@gmail.com](mailto:rldegenford@gmail.com)

At the public meeting held on November 18,2015 the final four maps selected all respected the request that children in blocks PB525 and PB462 be placed at the same school for the community. In the final maps PB525 was placed at Hillcrest. At the public meeting we were invited to vote and give feedback on these four maps.

But at the December 9 meeting 4 new maps( 3.1, 3.1a, 3.2,3.2a) were introduced. PB525 goes back to Westchester. The community is now broken up into three piece where each PB goes to a different elementary school. I thought this issue was resolved. Why would you add these new options. These options were never showed to the public and the public will never be allowed to vote and give feedback on these options. The committee will meet next week and decide on a final recommendation. Where is the transparency! A week is hardly enough time for the communities to comment on these new maps especially with the Holidays fast approaching.

I am especially concerned with Option 3.1. The minority percentage at Westchester goes from 30% with Option 3 to 40% with Option 3.1 while Hillcrest minority percentage drops from 42% to 31%. Every other school systems minority percent barely changes with this option.

Free-lunch percentages follow the same pattern. At Hillcrest free lunch percentages go from 37% with Option 3 to 25% under Option 3.1 while Westchester percentages jump with option 3.1. This option seems to be skewed for the benefit of only Hillcrest. I realize that Hillcrest parents were very vocal and active but this disregards the welfare of every other school system in the area.

Source: Boundary Study Email Box ([bdystudy@bcps.org](mailto:bdystudy@bcps.org)) unless otherwise noted

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Utilization estimates for these new maps also present problems. The goal is to reduce overcrowding. However, in Option 3.1a Halethorpe jumps to 113% capacity while Jonnycake, already an overcapacity school, goes from 108% to 121%. In Option 3.2 Westchester utilization is at 98% while Westown and Catonsville, both new schools, utilization number drop to 86% and 85%. Both of these areas are stable in growth while the Westchester area growth is soaring. Under this option Westchester will be overcrowded in a couple of years. As for Option 3.2a, Jonnycake again goes from 108% utilization to 121%. Halethorpe goes to 113% overcapacity. Clearly these maps make things worse.

I feel like this process has been a bit of a bait and switch. These four maps were never vetted with the public. The public is under the impression that the four maps presented on November 18 were the only choices. Now within the week a final recommendation will be made and the very real possibility exists that an Option will be chosen that the general public has never seen.

Please either delay a final decision and let the public give feedback or only consider the maps presented on November 18.

Respectfully, Rebecca Kurtz

**12/10/15, 2042 hrs**

Danielle Schollaert [dschollaert@gmail.com](mailto:dschollaert@gmail.com)

Hello, we are in favor of 3.2A because it is not fair for students to have to cross route 40 to get to school. We should keep neighborhoods together as much as possible. Danielle Schollaert

**12/11/15, 0007 hrs**

Jason [profjason@gmail.com](mailto:profjason@gmail.com)

To the Southwest Area Boundary Committee,

Greetings! After watching the committee's meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2015, I was very pleased to see that feedback from the community has gone into new plans, which I believe are a vast improvement upon the options presented to the public in November. In particular, I would like to strongly support option 3.2a as the best option, given all of the factors that the committee is trying to balance in their decision making.

One of the things that option 3.2a does better than any other option available is align the assignment of elementary schools with the middle school feeder patterns. With this option, almost every elementary school feeds 100% of their student body in one middle school, and with some slight modifications, this could be reduced to only Westowne Elementary sending their students to 2 different elementary schools (with a 51% to 49% split between two middle schools). This is an ideal situation where students will be with their cohort of peers from elementary school and then get to join them at the same middle school, which will help reduce the stress on students as they make the challenging transition from elementary school to middle school. No other option comes as close to aligning the middle school feeder patterns, since option 3 has 191 students not in their feeder school, option 3.1 has 213 students, option 3.1a has 141, option 3.2 has 99 and option 4 has 286 students, compared to the 27 in option 3.2a.

The second reason that option 3.2a succeeds over the other current options is that it moves the least number of students from one school to another school. In the process, we have all known that some students will be disrupted, but trying to minimize those disruptions should be one of the highest goals of the committee. With option 3.2a, only 317 children will need to be moved to a different school than they are currently attending. Only option 3.1a comes close with moving 372 students, but remember with option 3.1a, you have a larger number of students that displaced with the middle school feeder patterns.

Another reason to be in favor of option 3.2a is that it does a better job of utilizing the facilities, while looking at future growth in the area. Westchester Elementary in future projections of attendance could see up to over 100 additional children move into their region. In option 3.2a, Westchester is currently 88 students under capacity, so they can increase their enrollment without any issues. Furthermore, in planning blocks 510 and 354, there is currently new construction of homes with Caton's Reserve. These planning blocks would be going to Catonsville Elementary, which under option 3.2a is 104 students under capacity. So therefore, they can easily take on any additional enrollment from the new construction in those planning blocks. In option 3.1a, those students would be sent to Hillcrest Elementary, which is already closer to capacity and part of the reason for this entire boundary process was to eliminate the overcrowding at Hillcrest. So, option 3.2a does the best job of giving schools that are going to see a growth in enrollment to have the room to take in extra students without immediately being over capacity again (this seems to be a major concern of Westchester with option 3.2).

Finally, option 3.2a does a solid job of addressing diversity in the area. Unfortunately, no plans completely balance diversity in the southwest region, but option 3.2a does a better job of that balancing than other plans. In this plan, Catonsville has 40% minority, Hillcrest is at 36% and Westchester is at 32%. While it would be great if you could balance the diversity a bit more, this seems like the best available option. The same pattern falls with FARMS students, where Catonsville is at 34%, Hillcrest is at 30% and Westchester is at 24%.

The biggest concern about options 3.2a and 3.1a, is that they do not address the overcrowding issue at Jonnycake Elementary school. In listening to the representatives from Jonnycake (including its principal talking to the committee), it appears that Jonnycake would rather remain like it currently is than to get some relief in overcrowding. The relief for the overcrowding at Jonnycake takes away neighborhoods from it that are key to its PTA and some of the few single family households in their district. Moreover, by reducing their numbers, they are going to lose resources which they currently need to serve their student population. While it would be great to reduce the overcrowding at Jonnycake, it seems like their population thinks they would be better served by remaining as is and hopefully get a new building in the near future. I hope that the committee will be able to recommend strongly to the school board that Jonnycake Elementary get a new school as soon as possible.

So overall, I feel that option 3.2a does the best job of changing the boundaries with keeping in the goals and guidelines of the boundary committee. It moves the least number of students, it better aligns the elementary school boundaries with the middle school feeder patterns and it allows for future growth to be more easily accommodated by the schools.

I want to thank the committee for allowing the public to have its input in this process and I have been greatly impressed by the professionalism of the committee members. I look forward to attending the meeting on December 16 and finding out what the recommendation of the committee is. Sincerely yours, Jason Palmateer

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**12/11/15, 0027 hrs**

[mark.dali@yahoo.com](mailto:mark.dali@yahoo.com)

Boundary Committee,

I just saw the update to the boundary redistricting plan that was presented the other night and am curious the direction that the planning board took after reviewing the survey results. The first thing to consider in the survey is that Johnnycake ES respondents almost universally strongly opposed all plans proposed and while certainly an indicator of their desire to be excluded from this project, their volumes should perhaps not be included in the weight of each option as a result. This follows Jim Kitchel's request to limit the redistricting schools and board members to those who are actually impacted. If you remove Johnnycake, then Hillcrest represents about 60% of all responses to the survey- we really care what happens to our kids!

It was clear that Option 2 was not favored by any group significantly enough to warrant further inclusion in options. Option 1, 3 and 4 were all relatively close in both support and opposition, so clearly the 3 to consider. However, in the new options presented, only Option 3 had variations created, which only adjust the homes on the southwest area of Hillcrest's boundary. It seems that the board is catering to a vocal group who's only argument for staying at Hillcrest is that they want to stay at Hillcrest. In any option, their neighborhood community does not get torn apart like other areas do by Option 3 and its new sub-options. There are far more supportive families for Options 1 and 4 combined, which keep our community together, than in Option 3 alone.

We are residents of Summit Park and are also advocating staying at Hillcrest Elementary School, but not simply to stay at Hillcrest, it's to keep our neighborhood together. After reviewing the current proposals, we believe that Option 1 and 4 are the only ones that truly meet the primary priority of the planning process- to keep neighborhoods together. Option 3 slices a small section from our community off that isolates and separates us from our tight community. How can you justify splitting our community into multiple planning blocks without any actual reasoning? To send planning block 351 off to Catonsville ES with no other Catonsville ES students even within safe walking distance of our neighborhood is extremely disruptive and arbitrary. Looking at a simple street map, I can see the proximity makes sense, but is that really the best you can do? There is an unsafe industrial area between us and the school and even further to go before encountering another student to visit. The majority of Catonsville ES students live inside 695, which is not fostering community ties for our neighborhood. You should be reattaching planning blocks 351 and 515 to PB 514, which is our entire community, not disconnected slices arbitrarily chosen. Keep us together and Option 1 or 4 work fine, since the entire community goes to the same school together. But honestly, why bother even considering Option 4, when keeping current walkable students at Hillcrest makes more sense, as presented in the smartest choice, Option 1.

So as your planning board makes it's decision on which option to present to the schoolboard, take a legitimate look at the impact of the planned redistricting and don't let the squeaky wheel with their own propaganda website get all of your attention, while your neglect of this neighborhood's stressed axle will be far more detrimental to the community as a whole. We look forward to continuing to work with you to identify the best plan for our community. Mark Dali

**12/11/15, 0633 hrs**

EmailUser sarahsf [sarahsf@lzy.net](mailto:sarahsf@lzy.net)

To Whom it May Concern,

I recently learned that additional options have been put forth and are being considered as part of the southwest area elementary boundary process. After reviewing the options that the committee will consider for a final vote on December 16 we support the following:

- Option 3,
- Option 3.1,
- Option 3.2, or
- Option 4

We are OPPOSED to options 3.1a and 3.2a. These do not work for our family as they move our child to Halethorpe Elementary School. Our licensed daycare provider is in the Relay Elementary School district and it would be a financial hardship for our family if we were forced to change our child's before and after care provider, as it would result in an increase in tuition. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, Sarah Firestone and Matt Leich Putnam Rd, 21227

**12/11/15, 0830 hrs**

Heather Cassetta [Heather\\_Cassetta@hcpss.org](mailto:Heather_Cassetta@hcpss.org)

Good morning,

Having seen all the options, please include my vote for 3.2a Thank you in advance! Heather Cassetta (Catonsville/WES parent)

Heather Cassetta Science Department Mt. Hebron High School 410-313-2880 <http://planbookedu.com/s/LM8N8>

**12/11/15, 0852 and 0903 hrs**

Stacie Palmer [staycsun@netzero.com](mailto:staycsun@netzero.com)

Map 3.2 a!!!

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**12/11/15, 1127 hrs**

Rachel Balis <[rsbalis@yahoo.com](mailto:rsbalis@yahoo.com)>

I am writing in favor of the new options 3.1 and 3.1a that were presented to the Redistricting Committee on December 9, 2015. When I read through the community email logs it was mentioned countless times that PB 510 should remain within the Hillcrest Boundaries. I would like to thank the committee for thoroughly vetting this option. As stated before moving PB510 out of the HES boundaries does not take into account the factors set forth in Rule 1280.

In regards to options 1,2,3.2, and 3.2a:

RULE 1280

4. Use of natural boundaries, such as railroads, creeks, major highways, election districts, existing school boundaries, and location of feeder schools;

-PB510 is surrounded to the south and west by state park land, and is also cut off from the rest of the Catonsville Elementary School boundaries through Hillcrest Elementary school boundaries and CCBC land. There are also 2 creeks that run between PB 510 and the Catonsville Elementary school boundary. One of these creeks was the old school boundary line. In plans 3, 3.2,3.2a, and 4, PB 510 is the only planning block with houses on Hilton Avenue that is being taken out of the Hillcrest Elementary school boundary, cutting these children off from their street and community. PB 510 should be zoned for the same elementary school as PB 1001. Going through PB 513, up Hilton Avenue, is the only way that the children from PB 510 can exit their PB.

5. Elimination of existing satellite zones (areas districted to a school that are outside of its boundary);

-PB 510 would become a satellite zone if included in the Catonsville Elementary school boundary. The children in this PB will have to travel through their neighborhood that is now districted to a different school, cross over a major thoroughfare (South Rolling), and along another busy street to reach the elementary school they have been redistricted to. This more than doubles the travel distance the children have now, and eliminates the children's ability to travel safely to their school by foot or bike. Right now the children walk and bike up and down Hilton Avenue using the designated bike lane that spans the whole length of Hilton Avenue to get to school. This distance is just over a mile and is a safe journey with the only road to cross being Frederick Road, which is manned by a crossing guard. There is no safe way for the children of South Hilton to travel by foot or bike to the school they will be redistricted to.

6. Maintaining feeder school patterns from elementary to middle and middle to high school to keep students from the same communities together;

-PB 510 is districted for Catonsville Middle school. Moving this PB to Catonsville disrupts the feeder school patterns for the children of PB 510. These children will be separated from their community for elementary school. The children of PB 510 will now have to travel well over a mile in some cases to get to a classmate in their new school.

When looking at the statistics for Westchester Elementary School, Hillcrest Elementary School, and Catonsville Elementary school, in all the new proposed versions of option 3, capacity hovers around the same percentage for all the schools in all the new options. The only exception being option 3.2 which puts Westchester opening at 98%. Minority and FARMS at all 3 schools only vary by a few percentages in all the options also.

With that in mind I urge the committee to look at the feeder school patterns and percentages of students being moved. When looking at Hillcrest, the old feeder school pattern was 88% CMS, 12% AMS. Option 3.1 and 3.1a varies the feeder pattern slightly to 92% CMS, 8% AMS. Options 3.2 and 3.2a further widen the disparity in the school to 96% CMS, 4% AMS. In regards to CES in options 3.1 and 3.1a, the feeder pattern is 84% AMS, 16% CMS. Options 3.2 and 3.2a further widen the disparity again to an astonishing 99% AMS, 1% CMS.

When looking at the percentages of students being moved out of the HES boundaries Options 3.1 and 3.1a also prove to be a better option for the students. In option 3.1 and 3.1a 18% of the students are being redistricted as a whole to one school. In option 3.2 and 3.2a, 9% of students are being moved to CES, and another 6% are being moved to Westchester. For the continuity of the community, it would make the transition easier for the students to be moved as one whole group, not two small groups.

I would also like to request that PB 510 be zoned with PB 1001 directly north of us, in all of the options regardless of which one is chosen. This was done in all the previous options and made the most sense in regards to neighborhood continuity and feeder school patterns. PB 510 is the only planning block on Hilton Ave with houses that have a Hilton Ave address being separated. This is creating an island of 11 houses. Those 11 houses are not part of a newer community or a home owners association. Their ties to the surrounding community is through the street they live on. By separating our houses you have made us the 1%. Our children will be attending an elementary school where 99% of their peers are zoned for another middle school. Please consider this request if the committee goes forward with Options 3.2 or 3.2a.

Thank you,Rachel Balis

**12/11/15, 1301 hrs**

Cassie Crosby [cassievcrosby@gmail.com](mailto:cassievcrosby@gmail.com)

I am writing to express my support in keeping PB447.

I am a part of the Catonsville Elementary community, and have been for over a decade. It's a wonderful, tight knit school that I've been happy to send my children to. I've always liked having that "old school house" feel because our school can only accommodate just over 400 students.

Thankfully, for as long as I've been there we never experienced overcrowding to the extent that the other schools in our community has.

Therefore, we are getting a newer school with more seats to help accommodate, and take the load off of our neighboring schools. I'm happy to welcome the new families to our new school. We will have a capacity to house over 700 students at our new location. That being said, we will have more than enough room to welcome new students without making any changes to our current student body. To exclude a portion of our student body when we will have plenty of space for new students, does not make sense in my opinion, as well as others that feel the same way that I do. The current maps shown does not personally affect my family, but I'm in total support of keeping all current students that are zoned for CES to stay at CES. Our school will be large enough to accommodate all new students, while keeping all current students.

I hope you will strongly consider keeping PB447 in keeping CES a complete family, but happy to welcome all who are affected by the overcrowding in our community.

Concerned community parent, Cassandra Crosby Sent from my iPhone