

2009 Attendance Area Adjustment Committee  
Meeting #2  
July 21, 2009

Summary

The second meeting of the 2009 Attendance Area Adjustment Committee (AAAC) began at 7:10 PM. Joel Gallihue Manager, School Planning, opened the meeting.

Staff members in attendance:

Ken Roey, Executive Director of Facilities Planning and Management  
Joel Gallihue, Manager of School Planning  
Jennifer Bubenko, Planning Specialist

Committee members in attendance:

Kemi Adetunji	Jill McLeigh
Marie desJardins	Rita Morsberger
Jonathan England	Mary Jo Neil
Jennifer LaStova	Theodore D. Wimberly, Sr.

Committee members not in attendance:

Verron "Ron" Brade	Ayeola Fortune
Lynne Ensor	Jon E. Offley III

Administrative

The meeting will be recorded again.

Handouts

Copies of the emails and the letter that were passed around last week were made available to the AAAC members.

Recent Concerns/Calls from Howard County Residents

Susan Arnsmeier called about younger siblings of current students in the Greenbridge Area. One BOE member has brought this point up before. The Greenbridge area is currently assigned to River Hill HS (RHHS) with an open enrollment option to choose Glenelg HS (GHS) and staff has recommended that the Greenbridge Area is redistricted back to GHS. Past HS redistricting was phased-out. Ninth graders would attend the school that the attendance area was reassigned to, and the rising 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders would continue to attend the original school assignment for general redistricting. When a new school opens, rising 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders are moved to the new school. We can't afford to do phase-outs at ES and MS. Ms. Arnsmeier is concerned that siblings may be split between two schools. If staff were to recommend that trailing siblings could chose the same school as their older sibling even after a redistricting, staff would want a clear end-point with a declared period for trailing siblings could sign up for the school. The neighborhood produces between 100-200 high school students each year.

The AAAC members discussed the topic, noting several points:

- \* There needs to be a cut off if it is done, but fundamentally it seems like a bad idea because this is no different than any other redistricting.
  - \* Keep it consistent for all HS redistricting.
  - \*No harm no foul with a clear cut limit.
  - \*If there is a feed or capacity utilization issue, you may not be resolving the issue by allowing this choice.
  - \*This option would be setting a precedent for all future redistricting decisions.
  - \* Parents look forward many years, even if their students are many years from HS. When would the cut off be?
  - \*What if the students are one or two years apart? Parents would be shuttling kids around.
  - \*The kind of redistricting that we could be doing in the future could be on a larger scale. This would be a big impact across the county.
- Mr. Gallihue asked the AAAC to think about this topic more. We can return to it at a later date.

Mrs. Thalhiemer also called Mr. Gallihue. She and her husband are interested in a comprehensive redistricting planning that better capacity utilization and increases feed percentages across the county. Additionally, their neighborhood is closer to RHHS and, even though they believe that RHHS and AHS are both good schools, it would be more reasonable for their neighborhood to go to RHHS. He will meet with her about their plan.

AAAC Member Rita Morsberger received a question from a resident about number in the Feasibility Study. The resident questioned the total number of kids proposed to be moved in the Feasibility Study. She noted that the Feasibility Study lists 136 kids and 96 kids. Mr. Gallihue noted that a weakness of plan is that it takes two years of redistricting to resolve the small middle to high school feed and that it creates a small feed from elementary to middle school. Specific questions can be emailed to [boundary@hcpss.org](mailto:boundary@hcpss.org).

#### Announcements/Notes

- \* Any ideas can be sent to the Office of School Planning before AAAC meetings of time so that staff can run the scenarios through the “What If” software.
- \* Policies are refreshed on a six year schedule.
- \*The MS Gilbert report is available now and the ES report will be available in August. After the HS report was completed, staff completed a separate capacity study and proposed changes to the all high school capacities. Previously, the high schools all had a target capacity of 1332 plus 68 seats for Special Education. These recent capacity changes have relieved potentially false concerns about overcrowding at the HS level. Middle and Elementary school capacities may be reevaluated in the future by staff.
- \*The APFO O/C schools chart only closes a developer for additional allocations for three years.
- \*Geographic region boundaries differ at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

#### Presentation

Mr. Gallihue presented a power point presentation. After the presentation, the Feasibility Study was reviewed and the AAAC asked questions. Mr. Gallihue noted that every consideration of the policy can not be met with each plan.

One member noted that the number of kindergarten classes increased from three to five on one year at Talbott Springs ES (TSES). The committee discussed the growth of kindergarten classes across the county and the possibility that parents are removing their kids from private school because of economy. The committee reviewed the projection sheet for TSES. Mr. Gallihue noted that birth rates, home resales and new home construction strongly affect the projections.

Staff originally recommended an addition at West Friendship ES (WFES). As projections decreased, the recommendation was changed to a renovation/conversion, and with continued decreasing projections, the recommendation for a capital project was removed. The main concern about WFES is the environmental requirements for the septic system from MBE are unpredictable and the discharge requirements are lowered each inspection. The new Sequencing Batch Reactor systems are very expensive to buy (between 5-7 million dollars) and to maintain. It is a potential risk and repurposing the school should be a consideration.

One committee member noted that the capacity utilizations at elementary schools in the west are not proportionate and even with the closing of WFES scenario, some schools are still under populated. Another committee member noted that, if the WFES was repurposed, and the students were redistricted to TRES, this would help the Woodmark Area small feed.

Mr. Gallihue discussed the western region. Dayton Oaks ES and Bushy Park ES were built with the same design plans, which saved money. They are the largest elementary schools and redistricting plans are difficult to create due to the distance students would need to travel to fill the schools. The yields used to estimate the student population in the western region were from established single family home communities. The new constructions are not yielding as many students as expected, possibly because of home affordability.

One committee member asked if there is there a policy for the max distance from a school. Like PG County, the uneven development could cause longer busing routes. Transportation polices are handled in Policy 5200. According to this policy, transportation services will be provided to students when the distance between their home and the home school is greater than the following:

- a. Half-day Pre-Kindergarten morning, noontime and afternoon: 0.5 mile
- b. Full-day Kindergarten through Grade 8: 1.0 mile
- c. Grades 9 through 12: 1.5 miles

More particular details are in the policy.

It was noted that cascade/domino redistricting can cause longer busing routes. The scorecard does have a measure to evaluate distance traveled. This is less of a factor at the elementary level because of the number of elementary schools.

A committee member asked why some students pass one or more elementary schools to get to their assigned elementary school? Mr. Gallihue commented that the attendance area is based on past redistricting decisions and that redistricting decisions are difficult to make. Remember to keep an open mind and apply the policy as decisions are made. Existing boundaries are not perfect. A committee member noted that needs are not always centrally located around the school site. We can redistrict, but we can not move the school locations. If you sent each student to his/her closest school there would be a cascading redistricting. Some attendance areas look strange on the map, but if you look closer at the streets/egresses of the neighborhoods, the attendance areas may be better than they seem. Another member said that some redistricting is historical or political. Another member indicated that sometimes a home looks close to a school on the map, but that the geographic boundaries (woods, etc) may make a travel distance longer.

Since programs can be moved from one school to another, one committee member asked if a list of programs at each school be provided to the committee. Mr. Gallihue said that a list can be made available. Moving Special Education programs can be difficult. The Office of School Planning has had more communication with the Special Education Office in recent years about the location of Special Education programs and the facility needs of these programs. Many times a high percentage of the students in the regional programs are actually in their own attendance area. JROTC is at AHS, OMMS and Howard HS. Programmatic changes can cause staffing changes and some staff members are split between multiple schools.

#### Columbia East/Columbia West Regions

\*A committee member asked if redistricting from the Columbia East or Columbia West Regions to the Southern region been considered. Mr. Gallihue noted that it has been considered, but it raises feed issues.

\*A committee member asked if balancing capacity and considering feed issues were both considered in the redistricting plan because the number of small feeds was increased from 21 to 31. Mr. Gallihue answered staff attempted to balance both. The plans could be improved to better the resulting feeds.

\*A committee member asked if the Columbia East or Columbia West Regions can be redistricted across Route 29. Mr. Gallihue answered yes, but many of the walkers would become bus riders. The Columbia Town Center Project information is available at [www.howardcountymd.gov/DPZ/community/downtowncolumbia.htm](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/DPZ/community/downtowncolumbia.htm).

\*Modular buildings can be made permanent, but relocatables are temporary. The BoE approves relocatable changes each year.

\*The projections include housing data from the DPZ. Land allocations are accurate for about 3 years into the future. Zoning changes are accurate about 5 years into the future. The DPZ projects housing based on the Howard County Master Plan and available land further in the future.

\*Wilde Lake MS will be affected by the Columbia Town Center.

### Northeastern Region

\*New capacity from recent additions at Elkridge ES, Bellows Spring ES and Full Day Kindergarten projects is available along the Route 1 Corridor. A new Northeastern ES was proposed to provide approx. 500 seats (similar to TSES) in the Feasibility Study, providing additional capacity in 2011. The school would be primarily walkers on a very small school site (2-3 acres) and potentially multiple levels.

\*Veterans ES was a recent redistricting. Residents across the street do not attend the school because it was built on the southern side of the expected attendance area.

\*Turf Valley has most of its residential allocations, has recently completed commercial projects and is working with the school system on a potential elementary school site. The site on Route 40 has been considered as a middle school site for Turf Valley and the surrounding areas.

\*Community members from Elkridge have often asked for a new HS, but the capacity need is only about 600 students and HCPSS high schools are double that size.

\*The capacity utilization is above 110% at Howard HS. The BoE voted on a lower capacity than staff recommended. The school should be able to run effectively for another year or two before redistricting is needed.

### Southeastern Region

\*This region will also be affected by the Route 1 revitalization. Capacity is needed and redistricting will be necessary. Fulton ES may be used to access capacity at DOES. Renovations with potential additions at Hammond ES and Bollman Bridge ES and a potential addition at Gorman Crossing ES may help capacity needs. A committee member asked if there are money or space issues for additions in this region. There is limited space in the region, but space is available on the sites for additions.

\*Relocatables add temporary capacity now for middle schools and capacity in the west may be needed to relieve over capacity in this region.

### Northern/Western Regions

\*There is capacity available in the West. Manor Woods ES and Waverly ES could accept students from the Turf Valley area. There is space to build in the west, but there are issues with land capacity/septic discharge requirements and a low density of population.

\*Staff has recommended that the small feed from Folly Quarter MS to Marriotts Ridge HS (Woodmark Area) is resolved at the middle school level.

### Additional Notes

Systemic renovations at Mt Hebron HS and Atholton HS will make the buildings much easier to use and may increase the capacity. The longer term high school redistricting plans were not fully developed. One committee member indicated that the AAAC should consider future HS needs now. Members think that parents may want more time to plan for redistricting at the high school level.

It was recommended that staff should consider consolidating 2011 and 2013 elementary and middle school redistricting so that the same students are not redistricted at elementary school and then middle school a couple of years later.

The AAAC would like the Woodmark area and Greenbridge area actual feed percentage rather than the feed percentage rather than geographic feed percentages.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.