

Crestwood Area Redistricting Study Community Meeting Notes

Governor Thomas Johnson HS, 9/11/23

Speaker comments are shown in black

Staff responses are shown in red

Definitions:

ES - Elementary School

MS - Middle School

HS – High School

FCPS – Frederick County Public Schools

FOF – Find Out First

PTA – Parent-Teacher Association

BOE – Board of Education

LOU – Linganore-Oakdale-Urbana

Approximately 35-40 in attendance

- The speaker stated that when the study was released in May, one of the problems was that there was no analysis given. Policies were listed including priorities that must be taken into account. Why wasn't there an analysis of the factors? How were the various factors weighed and considered? How did staff weigh student demographics data? What were the factors that drove the decisions that were made? There is tons of data but where is the analysis? **FCPS staff noted the description of the statistical methodology for enrollment projections as well as the enrollment projections, and analysis of demographic factors, transportation, residential pipeline and split feeders found in the appendix of the report. In addition, the Highlights sections in the Addendum found after the description of the Superintendent's initial recommendation and the three alternatives provide the analysis/comparison for each of the alternatives.**
- The Speaker stated that they appreciate the development of alternatives and identified themselves as a mental health professional who works in another County. Mental health professionals have to follow the 5-day law where they give data or information to parents ahead of a meeting. It is not fair that the maps and data were released the day of the first meeting and the amount of time given between meetings has not allowed people enough time to digest and analyze.
- The speaker stated that alternative 3 is the only option that truly addresses the addition of seats at Crestwood MS. It doesn't disrupt the lives of nearly 3000 students. These students are different than students of the past due to the school shutdowns and virtual learning. They are just starting to recover. FCPS should consider not disrupting the lives of so many children. The speaker stated that the process for the Board to receive public comment depends on FCPS staff summarizing comments and relaying to the BOE and this doesn't seem like a meaningful way for the Board to receive comment.
- The speaker thanked staff for development of the alternatives and for presenting the alternatives. They also thanked staff for the survey but stated that it seemed like the survey was put together in short order and is pretty basic. It is asking people to express their opinions about each of the options. This is all qualitative. The speaker asked if it is possible to generate quantitative information as well. Could the survey ask Parents which alternative they like best

and the results tabulated? The Speaker stated that Parents feel that they have one chance to get it right with their kids and this is a really important issue. Can the survey results be released to the public and not just a summary?

- The speaker stated that it seems like moving 3000 students is too much. The speaker also wanted to know if the 5th and 8th grade students would be grandfathered in at their existing schools?
- A parent noted that she didn't see alternative 3 when she entered her address in the interactive map and wondered if that meant that she was not impacted. The speaker requested that the interactive map show impact (if any) of all the alternatives even if only to say no impact.
- A 7th grader at West Frederick MS stated that the Superintendent's recommendation and first two alternatives would move the student to Monocacy MS and Governor Thomas Johnson HS. Alternative 3 is the one the student supports. West Frederick MS and Frederick HS share athletic facilities and so West Frederick MS students should be allowed to go to Frederick HS. Lots of her peers don't know about the study and should have an opportunity to comment.
- The speaker stated that he looked at FCPS press release. Parents feel they are not being heard.. A similar redistricting was done in neighboring County and had long lasting impacts. FCPS Leadership should be aware that this decision will impact kids for years to come. The 3rd alternative is the only option that makes sense. The redistricting will impact every one of these children every day The speaker stated that some of the parents feel that FCPS skipped several steps in the redistricting process, and top leaders from FCPS should have attended these meetings to hear the concerns first hand.
- A Whittier ES student in 4th grade who likes baseball and wrestling stated that he has heard that Frederick HS has good programs for these sports. He wants to try out for their baseball program. He has heard from his sister how it is at Frederick HS. It would be weird to change schools and not be in the same feeder pattern. During COVID he was separated from his friends and if the redistricting happens, he will be separated again.
- The speaker stated - Thank you for the work that you have done. You were presented with a problem and you gathered the data. I think the Superintendent Recommendation is good as well as Alternatives 1 and 2. Every day that students go to buildings that are overcrowded, the students are impacted when nothing is done to relieve the overcrowding. Obviously impacting lives by redistricting kids is not pleasant, but we can't put on blinders and ignore the other problems going on. Alternative 3 is kind of a joke to me.
- The speaker stated - I want to echo some of the last speaker's points. FCPS enrollment increased by 10% in last 5 years. No one likes redistricting. I don't see how to avoid a disruption because housing is going up everywhere. My children went to both Frederick HS and Governor Thomas Johnson HS and we're not moving in this one, but I think we're kicking the can down the road if we don't move kids now. A split feeder is tricky but it seems like you can't avoid them altogether.
- Thank you for doing a job that has no easy answer. Thank you for developing the alternatives. The parent of Yellow Springs ES, Monocacy MS, and Governor Thomas Johnson HS students stated that they know a student who witnessed 5 fights last week at school, and this is due to overcrowding. Any alternative that alleviates overcrowding at Monocacy MS is positive. The speaker hasn't heard the voices of the Waverley families and thinks it is very important that we also hear from them.

- The speaker stated that HS students shouldn't be moved at all because they will be taken away from extracurriculars that they won't be able to do at another schools.
- The speaker stated that they are trying to understand what drives the decisions. Is there a hard and fast number for the amount of overcrowding that is allowed?
- A parent stated that in the EFMP, Yellow Springs ES will be replaced in 2 years, opening in 2026. Will it be built larger? Will there be redistricting with this project. **Staff responded that the school will be larger and, as noted in the EFMP, a redistricting may need to be considered when the replacement school opens.**
- The Superintendent Recommendation moves 5000 housing units into Governor Thomas Johnson HS. With an average of 0.1 HS students per home, this would add 500 students. Is there someone from FCPS who is on the planning board or is familiar with every development and all the data. **Staff responded that there would be 740 more approved but unbuilt dwelling units in the Governor Thomas Johnson HS attendance area, not 5000. Staff speaks frequently with County, City and Municipal planning staff about planned and approved residential development. In addition, staff contacts developers and builders quarterly to find out about the status of residential developments.**
- The speaker stated that they see the Monocacy MS numbers and understand that the overcrowding is a problem. Why was Monocacy not chosen for the addition? **FCPS staff stated that when Crestwood MS was originally designed and constructed, it was done with a plan for an addition. The core areas were oversized for the future classrooms and the original site plan approval included the footprint of the addition. In addition, the County funding for the project came from County school mitigation fees and it could only be used in areas of the County where residential development had failed the school adequacy test at that level.**
- The speaker stated that they want to reiterate the point about kicking the can down the road. As a new resident with kids at Yellow Springs ES, it is already unmanageable. The Superintendent Recommendation and Alternatives 1 and 2 sort of solve the problem although there will still be more problems to solve later. Top leadership from FCPS should consider attending these meetings to hear from the parents first hand. There needs to be an improved process. Developments are popping up quicker than 5 years. Yellow Springs ES will already be at capacity when it opens. How can we open a school overcrowded when we know it will be an issue? This district/County is very reactive instead of proactive. What is the process for public comment on the Yellow Springs ES replacement design? **FCPS staff stated that the public can view the design plans when it is presented to the Board of Education.**
- The speaker stated that they are supportive of the Superintendent's recommendation, not because it moves 2500 students, but because in the long run it is the best balance for everyone. Their third student is going to Monocacy MS and there are 330 6th graders this year. Imagine what it will be next year. The speaker thinks 300 students need to be moved to make the Monocacy MS building more comfortable for the students and for the teachers. The speaker likes Alternative 1, but feels bad for Frederick HS and how overcrowded it would be. Alternative 2 and 3 does not resolve the Monocacy MS overcrowding sufficiently. The speaker stated that Monocacy MS is a good school. The speaker understands that people don't want to change schools but kids can learn and grow and can learn to adapt to change. The Superintendent's recommendation does what is good for everyone.

- The speaker stated that they are part of a group of over 400 parents who have banded together to protect their students. They have a community that is established and has a lot of school pride. It is not about disrespecting another school. The speaker stated that there has been a stable feeder pattern for a long time, and students started at Whittier ES and have come all the way up to Frederick HS. The speaker asked If there is going to be another redistricting in a few years why make such a big change now? The speaker also agreed with all the other parents who said we need more new schools.
- The parent of students at Monocacy MS and Governor Thomas Johnson HS stated that they have been a parent at Monocacy MS for 3 years. She lives in Waverley ES attendance area and this area moves in every single option. She would like to stay with the Governor Thomas Johnson HS feeder. Her son is making friends and loves being in the band. The speaker noted that some of the Waverley ES attendance area is moving again in this redistricting, and they feel that Waverley ES has to sacrifice more than some of the other communities. The speaker also noted that some of the comments made by other speakers regarding Governor Thomas Johnson HS were disrespectful.
- The speaker stated that those who are concerned about the rate of development need to be talking to the City and County about development.
- The speaker is blown away by the bravery and articulation of the students who talked about why they did not want to be moved and hopes that everyone can understand that they have to do what is best for everyone.
- A Frederick HS parent stated that they are sad to hear that Governor Thomas Johnson parents think that Frederick HS community disrespected them. The speaker had not heard any negative comments from anyone in the community and reiterated to their Facebook page that people should not be making those comments.
- What is capacity at Governor Thomas Johnson MS and why does it not have any changes? Is it possible to keep students within TJ feeder by moving some kids there?
- A student at Frederick HS stated that overcrowding is an issue but their ES opened with portables and shuffling almost 3000 students will not help this issue. The student speaker stated that mental health professionals should have been consulted about the impacts of a redistricting, particularly on HS students. This redistricting will impact the student in some of their most crucial years of HS. The speaker thinks that FCPS is overlooking its core priority, and also stated that students should not be moved away from their communities. .