

Crestwood Area Redistricting Study Community Meeting Notes

Frederick HS, 9/07/23

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 100 attendees

- Parent of a Junior at Frederick HS who is recommended to move to Governor Thomas Johnson HS, thanked FCPS staff for their work on the study and asked if it was possible for 5th, 8th and 12th graders to be grandfathered at their current schools? **FCPS staff responded that this question will be considered by the BOE and determined when they make their final decision.**
- On the survey will there be a vote about which option we prefer? **FCPS staff replied that the survey is not a vote. The survey asks the respondents to comment on the original recommendation and each of the three alternatives.**
- A student at West Frederick MS who lives in an area recommended to move to Governor Thomas Johnson HS stated that they prefer alternative 3 because it moves the least number of students, and the student enjoys sharing sports fields between West Frederick MS and Frederick HS. The student also stated that their peers need to know about the study and have a chance to share their opinions.
- A 4th grader at Whittier ES who loves sports and looks forward to playing for Frederick HS stated that he would like to be a Cadet for middle and high school and has heard from kids at Frederick HS about how great it is.
- A Frederick HS freshman who lives in Whittier ES neighborhood stated that the entire community has been raised to attend Frederick HS. Moving schools would be a serious toll on their mental health and cause anxiety. American Institute of Statistics finds that stress is #1 concern among HS students. The redistricting committee should have included mental health professionals.
- A 6th grader at Crestwood MS, who attends out of district there now, stated that she would have to return to Ballenger Creek MS because schools that are part of a redistricting are closed for out of district transfers the first year after the redistricting. The student chose Crestwood MS because they participate in the spelling bee. Ballenger Creek MS does not participate in the spelling bee so she is upset that she can't stay at Crestwood MS. The student created a sign to keep Cavaliers together.

- A 2nd grader at Orchard Grove ES who loves his school said that they spent Kindergarten as a virtual student and had to make new friends in 1st grade. The student would miss other Orchard Grove students who would have to move schools.
- A junior at Frederick HS prefers Alternative 3 because other options cause students to lose friends and activities. The speaker stated that the reputation of Frederick HS and Governor Thomas Johnson HS are vastly different. In addition, there is no LYNX program at Governor Thomas Johnson HS.
- Parent of 10th grader at Frederick HS stated that their family loves going to Frederick HS and loves the Frederick HS community with many talented teachers. The speaker thinks that the process listed in policy 200 was not followed. The speaker also thinks that the community engagement plan had to be changed from what was originally planned to address the policy. The parent appreciated that the Superintendent changed the process to address community input but stated that the Superintendent's recommendation should have been withdrawn and four new options should have been offered to the BOE. The parent also stated that the recommendation should include grandfathering clause.
- A parent of 2 students at Frederick HS and a teacher at Whittier ES asked how FCPS plans to support mental health for students when they move to a new school. As a teacher, the parent has observed that kids need a lot of intervention to socialize after the pandemic, and states that students will have difficulty adjusting.
- A parent asked if the survey will be sent via email. It would be good to make the survey more user friendly as well.
- A staff member at Frederick HS and parent of Frederick HS 10th grader, stated that, in looking at enrollment projections for the various options, all options show that Frederick HS will be overcrowded. Since all options keep Frederick HS over capacity and the Superintendent's Recommendation moves a lot of students, only Alternative 3 is a viable option. The parent asked why Frederick HS does not have enough classroom space.
- A community member stated that the emotional toll of the pandemic on students was huge. Stability and belonging to a community are factors that help mental health. Moving 2400 students interrupts the academic success and mental health for all of the students.
- A 10th grader at Frederick HS stated that she and all of their friends would be moved to a different school but students are just starting to recover from the pandemic.
- A 10th grader at Frederick HS who attended Whittier ES and West Frederick MS stated that she is very involved in after school activities such as Student Government Association and Future Farmers America. Governor Thomas Johnson HS doesn't have FFA. The student also plays softball and is concerned about competition for varsity spots at Governor Thomas Johnson HS. The student likes the LYNX program and Governor Thomas Johnson HS doesn't have it. The BOE should only move 5th and 8th graders because they have to transition to a new building anyway. The speaker thinks that the students will not be happy about moving and will lose connections they made in the past.
- Student at Frederick HS who participates in FFA stated that it is unique for an inner-city school to have opportunities in agriculture and for scholarships. Please consider the future of Frederick HS students in FFA.
- Current 10th grader at Frederick HS stated that they are devastated by the redistricting study. The student really likes the LYNX program and the opportunities it offers students, and would

like to be able to continue to attend the LYNX program. The student stated that it is not good for West Frederick MS to be split when they are being told about Frederick HS programs and opportunities. The speaker believes that mental health challenges for students after the pandemic have increased, and breaking school bonds does not help students and it is scientifically proven to worsen mental health of students.

- The speaker stated that alternative 3 creates a three-way split feeder at Crestwood MS and that is not good. A parent in Butterfly Ridge ES, Crestwood MS, Frederick HS feeder stated she went through BRES redistricting and it was difficult. Impact of splitting kids up from level to level is challenging and it will be more so with a 3-way split.
- A Parent stated that they were a Cadet and their children are cadets but Frederick HS needs to stop demonizing Governor Thomas Johnson HS at these meetings. Everyone is neighbors and connected.
- A Student from Frederick HS on wrestling team is concerned about moving athletes from one team to another because there is already a deep rift between the Frederick HS and Governor Thomas Johnson HS teams.
- Parent asked if the BOE makes grandfathering decision at same time as redistricting decision.
- Parent is thankful for new options to consider. Split feeders are never a good thing and FCPS should be working to resolve all split feeders and not propose any new ones. If changes are made to resolve split feeders here, then FCPS must resolve all split feeders in the County.
- Speaker asked if the meeting is being video or audio recorded? Policy says the meetings will be recorded and FCPS should be offering different opportunities for people to hear the presentation. **FCPS staff stated that there are no video/audio recordings of the community meetings but staff is taking notes and the notes will be shared with the BOE members as will the emails that staff is receiving along with the survey results. Staff also stated that while the actual meeting in the high school is not being videoed, a video recording of the presentation will be made in the studio and posted on the project web page in both English and Spanish for those who were unable to attend any of the meetings.** The parent stated that they are not confident that the BOE will actually read through the comments in the survey. The speaker thinks that the original redistricting plan called for all meetings to be recorded and captioned. The speaker stated that all comments should be posted on the webpage in writing and not just summarized. This will make people feel their comments have been heard.
- Parent of 9th grader and 7th grader at Frederick HS asked about projections and how development is included. The speaker asked how is the number of anticipated kids from these future developments calculated. The speaker is concerned that decisions are being made on historical data that may not predict what is going to happen in the future. **Staff explained the methodology used to prepare enrollment projections stating that grade succession rates unique to each grade level and each attendance area are used.**
- Speaker asked why other underutilized schools haven't been included in the study (such as Middletown MS and Catoclin HS).
- Where can we see what redistrictings may impact students in the future? **Staff directed the speaker and those present to Figure 7A in the Educational Facilities Master Plan that lists the proposed capital projects planned for the next ten years, the time lines for design and construction, and those projects that would necessitate a redistricting study.**

- Speaker noted that the Interactive map did not mention Alternative 3 and needs to be clearer about what is happening in each option when an address is looked up.
- The speaker asked if the BOE makes the final decision, how many members are there on the BOE, And how will 7 people vote for 4 options.
- The speaker is a LYNX advocate at FHS who loves their job and working at Frederick HS, and intends for her kids to go to Frederick HS. The speaker has a 3rd grader at Whittier ES who would also like to go to Frederick HS and believes that Superintendent's Recommendation and Alternatives 1 and 2 are huge examples of inequity in our schools. The speaker believes that these options move students with higher needs to Frederick HS which is inequitable and unfair to Frederick HS students and staff. The speaker asked if the projections accounted for students who rolled over from last year which is over 100 students. Speaker and staff will be going in 2 weeks to welcome the 8th graders who expect to be going to Frederick HS. All but Alternative 3 creates extreme inequity, with very high multilingual learners and students eligible for Free and Reduced Meals. The speaker believes that the biggest problem faced at HS level is that they can't get Title I funds and that is a big strain on the HS. There aren't enough staff because they don't get extra funding and they can't find additional teachers. So don't move any students who need more services to Frederick HS.
- A student stated that they have worked hard on marching band show and would hate to throw that out the window because they have to change schools.
- Another marching band student stated that half of the Frederick HS band would be impacted and they might not get to play same instrument at the new school and have to move to another instrument and then it would be hard to get to be section leader.
- A Military mom whose kids have moved schools every 3 years is concerned about having to move kids again in between military moves.
- Frederick HS parent talked about recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey which sampled a portion of all students at Frederick HS. The speaker stated that high percentages of students indicated that they did not feel like doing normal activities and considered attempting suicide. These percentages are higher than previous years (from 20-21 school year).
- Speaker has 3 kids and youngest is a rising junior. Recruitment process starts with junior year for college sports and kids may not be able to be recruited or get as much play time if they move schools in their junior year.
- Speaker stated that parents in leadership of boosters and PTA would be switched to other schools leaving a void at the school.
- Speaker is appreciative of 10-year Educational Facilities Master plan. The speaker also asked why the redistricting has to happen now, or can it be done at a later date. The speaker also asked if someone else (such as the developers) should be required to contribute more towards the solutions for this problem such as building more additions or new schools rather than the students experiencing the impacts of redistricting.
- A student who took part in the recent Youth Risk Behavior survey and indicated suicidality in two survey participations, stated that there aren't enough resources in the schools for mental health issues. The speaker stated that the response from counselors is that he has to go to a mental hospital and this makes him feel insignificant.
- A 10th grader at Frederick HS in the marching band stated that going from middle to high school was really hard and would have been harder without marching band. The student plays clarinet

and enjoys the company of clarinet and flute players. These instruments are not very loud and they have a hard time getting enough people. If redistricting goes through, they will lose one of the only remaining flute players. Also, robotics club doesn't have a lot of members and if any one leaves to go to another school, they won't be able to do anything at all in the club.