

CMS 2010-11 School Assignment Options Eastover Community Input Meeting

Myers Park High School
October 8, 2009
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Purpose: to involve parents & community in the development of new school boundaries

Discussion: student assignment options for overcrowding relief at Eastover Elementary

Attendance: approximately 165 parents, school personnel and community members

Scott McCully, executive director of planning and student placement, welcomed everyone to the meeting. Participants received a packet of information detailing the three discussion options created by the Planning Services Department and an individual input worksheet to be submitted at the conclusion of the meeting. Participants were also given the opportunity to provide their email address if they wish to be included on a distribution list for assignment update emails.

Tonight CMS staff presented two of the previous three discussion options and the reasoning behind the creation of those options. Mr. McCully announced to attendees that the third option (facility swap between Myers Park Traditional and Eastover) is no longer being considered by the Superintendent. Staff also introduced three revised discussions options. The three revised options were created as a result of numerous phone calls and emails and from input received from participants who attended the first community input meeting.

Tonight's meeting is the second of two to discuss the overcrowding issue at Eastover Elementary. The first meeting was held on September 29th at Myers Park High School.

The student assignment process timeline is as follows: public engagement meetings will be held in September and October. The staff recommendations will be presented in a report to the School Board on October 27th. A public hearing and the Board vote will take place on November 10th. The student assignment lottery process begins in January.

Mr. McCully introduced the CMS staff present:

- Tom Tate, school board member, District 4
- Joel Ritchie, area superintendent, Central Learning Community
- Christine Hamlett, planning specialist, Planning Services Dept.
- Jennifer Holmes, planning specialist, Planning Services Dept.
- Dennis LaCaria, planning specialist, Planning and Project Management
- Jeff Linker, director of magnet schools
- Mike Raible, executive director, Planning and Project Management
- Tom Spivey, principal, Myers Park high school
- Cynthia Robbins Shah-Khan, media relations supervisor, Communications Dept.

The individual worksheet listed 9 criteria that CMS should consider when developing boundaries. The list was compiled from criteria that had been mentioned most often in previous boundary meetings. Mr. McCully asked participants to rank what they felt are the top 5 criteria – from 1 to 5 in order of importance.

Attention was then directed to the information packet prepared for the meeting. The packet includes the following information: 2009-10 20th day enrollment data, enrollment history, detailed information of the previous assignment discussion options, map of the boundary change option, and demographic/student data. Information regarding the three revised discussion options was not provided in the packet. The revised discussion options were presented in staff's presentation.

After presentation from staff, participants were given 30 minutes to look over and discuss the options in small groups at their tables and to report back to attendees which option they preferred or what solution they would recommend. Staff was available to answer questions and address concerns. Before we began a few questions were asked:

Question: Is there a cap for partial magnets?

Answer: There is no cap for the attendance zone, however, there is guaranteed seats for students residing in the attendance zone. Staff can control cap for magnet program.

Question: Could you explain what a partial magnet program is? Are the students all in the same classroom?

Answer: It is the same as a full magnet but has an attendance zone area associated with the school. Partial magnet school guarantees a seat for the students residing in the boundary. Yes, students are all in the same classroom.

Question: Does Option 1&2 of the new options move the magnet program from Dilworth to First Ward?

Answer: Yes

Question: Assuming First Ward students are given a choice to attend Dilworth School, what is the number?

Answer: 155 students

Question: Will we receive copies of the maps/data you presented tonight?

Answer: Copies of the maps/data will be posted to the website next week.

Question: Staff has presented a total of five options (facility swap between Myers Park Traditional and Eastover no longer being considered), how do we know which option staff will recommend to the Board on October 27th?

Answer: Staff will post staff recommendation to the website prior to meeting.

Question: Has anyone looked at splitting First Ward's zone- ½ to Dilworth and ½ to Eastover.

Answer: We can certainly look at that. The Eastover, Dilworth and First Ward option shows about 14 students moving from First Ward to Eastover. We can look at sending more students from First Ward to Eastover.

Question: There are multiple schools with issues. What is the long range plan with dealing with First Ward and the emergency situation at Eastover?

Answer: First Ward will change substantially. Currently, the enrollment is low due to the elimination of the partial magnet program. Long range planning is occurring as well. We will move forward with options to help First Ward.

Throughout the process, up-to-date information can be found on the Planning Services Department website.

<http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments/StudentPlacement/PlanningServices/Pages/Planning.aspx>

The following were comments from each table:

Comment: I'm interested in the concept of a home school for Dilworth that is large enough to ensure the critical mass of families from Eastover zone. If Dilworth can be the home school it should be.

Comment: Two of the options given today are superior to what we were previously presented. I want to ensure my children will receive first class superior education from day one.

Comment: The options presented tonight were superior to previous options. Have Dr. Gorman removed options 1 & 2 previously presented on behalf of parents here tonight.

Comment: What the district needs is a second strong home school, an attendance zone that builds the critical mass. We should support new home school whether you live in attendance zone so it is successful, Cotswold is an example. The solution is a second neighborhood school and we will commit to making it work.

Comment: Create a school that has the critical mass it needs to succeed and one the neighborhood would embrace and support.

Comment: Leadership of school is very important. Parental support and strong leadership at the school has to be present; strong leadership besides the parents in this room.

Comment: Education equity is needed at Dilworth and First Ward. First Ward will not be a great school if CMS doesn't get behind it. First Ward needs strong leadership; CMS administration and partnerships committed to the arts after you move it to First Ward.

Comment: Options 1 and 2 (previous options) have to go. I equally like options A and C of the new options.

Question: What is CMS looking at long term, not just short term? Are we creating boundaries with anticipation of problems at Selwyn and Sharon? Are we looking long term?

Comment: Education equity- the same as Eastover. My children deserve what every other kid in the zone is receiving.

Comment: The students at First Ward are not as disciplined as we are used to and will need more work. Consider splitting First Ward's boundary so that most of First Ward's students are not at Dilworth. Are

there any possibilities students can be grandfathered so existing students could stay where they are so magnet schools are not overcrowded?

Other comments and/or questions:

Question: If Dilworth became a neighborhood school, what would the bell time be- 7:30 or 8:30?

Question: How long would it take to get the schools, Dilworth and First Ward into their new operations?

Question: What happens when students return back to their home school? Will there be more overcrowding?

Question: Can you clarify capacity utilization?

Question: How much involvement do parents have?

Question: Any considerations in having First Ward operate as a partial magnet?

Question: Will First Ward teachers be dispersed or will Dilworth receive all of their teachers?