

Redistricting Public Hearing

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I will comment on what I feel is the neglect of the Jefferson–Houston student population in the redistricting process.

Here are the key problems with the current situation at Jefferson–Houston:

- Concentration of poorer children in Jefferson Houston (measured as 75% FARM)
- Concentration of minorities in Jefferson Houston (85%; with a clear correlation to income in my opinion)
- Very poor performance (worse than rural Virginia) and non–accreditation of Jefferson Houston (over many years)
- Wealthy parents in Jefferson Houston district opting out by moving or going to private school
- Poor families do not have the option to move or go to private school; thus they are forced to go to a failing school
- School districts bordering Jefferson Houston have much lower FARM % (Lyles Crouch and Matthew Maury 25% vs Jefferson Houston 75%) and much higher shares of white students (50% vs Jefferson Houston 10%).
- The school border between Jefferson Houston and Lyles Crouch is very strange. What are reasons to put a boundary one block next to a school? It cannot be walkability. King Street is just two lanes and has a pedestrian activated traffic crossing at Harvard Street.

Potential goals for redistricting could be:

- Goal 1: give poor and minority students currently concentrated in Jefferson Houston (and without any option to move or go to private school) more chances for a better education (school)
- Goal 2: attract more wealthy parents to send kids to public school

Potential solution:

- create balanced schools by FARM and race/ethnicity by somehow pooling Lyles Crouch, Matthew Maury, and Jefferson Houston. I understand prior to 1999 Maury and Lyles Crouch were paired to achieve racial/ethnic balance. This was discontinued in 1999/2000.
- This solution would be a difficult sell to Lyles–Crouch and Maury parents, but I think the concentration of poor kids and minorities in one school is not acceptable