

School Board Public Hearing on Redistricting
Remarks by
Catalina Rojas

December 8th, 2016

We know from last night that the committee favors map #9. The committee noted that map #8 would lead to a bigger disparity in the percentage of students eligible for free and reduced meals at Patrick Henry vs. Tucker.

The website notes ten criteria for redistricting. Spreading out the FARMs-eligible students amongst the schools is not listed as a criteria. I know it was discussed at last night's meeting and stats were outlined in last night's flyer, so I'll address this seemingly newer concern here.

Per page 9 of last night's handout (see link below), all schools besides PH and Tucker will have the same FARMs rate regardless of map #8 or #9.

<http://esbpublic.acps.k12.va.us/attachments/2368951a-34de-4cef-8c40-c14a706f0b07.pdf>

Under map #8, the enrollment at PH based on this year's live-ins would be 738 students (see page 3). This is the combo of those currently zoned for PH and those who would be rezoned from Tucker. Based on 2016-2017 stats, 78% of PH students would be eligible for free or reduced meals under this scenario, so per map #8, this would equate to 575 students. (See page 9 for the FARMs stats.)

Under map #9, the enrollment at PH based on this year's live-ins would be 762. Here too, this is the combo of those currently zoned for PH and those who would be rezoned from Tucker. Based on 2016-2017 stats, 73% of PH students would be eligible for free or reduced meals under this scenario, so per map #9, this would equate to 556 students.

We certainly can all agree that diversity is important, with regards to both racial and ethnic diversity and socio-economic diversity. But we should put this into perspective. The committee's preference for map #9 based on the FARMs rate for PH is about the difference of 19 students...575 FARMs students at PH with map #8 vs. 556 FARMs students with map #9.

Again, only the FARMs rates at PH and Tucker differ between maps #8 and #9; all other schools remain constant in this regard. And of course, the district's overall FARMs rate remains constant regardless of the map; the cost remains the same. **We understand that its's ideal to spread the cost and work to implement this important program fairly amongst the schools, but the placement of 19 students will not make a big difference in this regard.**

I also want to note that there are only three planning blocks that are different between options 8 and 9. Planning blocks 22, 28, and 118. And barely more than that has changed from today's map. Except for the new school, we're about the only community at risk of being zoned out of our current school, and with block 118, we are by far the closest to those schools.

I want to end by reminding all of us here the overall project goal with redistricting which is to *“enable students to attend their neighborhood school with equitable access to instructional programs and services.”*

On behalf of all the parents, children and residents of block 22, we urge you to decide in favor Block 22 remaining as part of the Samuel Tucker Elementary school. Its our neighborhood, our school. Patrick Henry is not.

Catalina Rojas, PhD
Parents, children and residents from Block 22