



Date: August 2, 2012

To: Tom Forcella, Superintendent

From: Todd LoFrese, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services

Re: Planned redistricting process for Elementary #11

A redistricting team has been established to develop and implement the process to be used for the creation of the plan for the redistricting of students associated with the opening of Elementary #11 next year. A brief written overview of the process has been created and is shared in the following few pages. You will also find two related attachments that are mentioned in this overview.

Background

After a spike in enrollment growth in the 2011-12 school year, the need for Elementary #11 became urgent. Thanks to a strong partnership with the Board of Orange County Commissioners, funding for Elementary #11 was provided this past spring and construction began in earnest. The new school is currently on schedule and we are looking forward to its opening in August 2013.

Currently, most of our elementary schools are above capacity and some are extremely overcrowded. District level programs and required services are placing stresses on all of our schools. Finding new space for classrooms is extremely difficult and as a result the district has used a variety of strategies including; purchasing mobile classrooms, relocating Pre-K classes, relocating EC classes, and even increasing class size. The need for the new elementary school is clearly great.

With the opening of Elementary #11 comes a system wide reassignment of students at the elementary level to rebalance all of our elementary schools with respect to available capacity. In order to complete this process, we may need to reassign over 1000 students to a different elementary school. While we have a policy that provides guidance on the parameters of making students assignment decisions, it does not specify the process for how it should occur.

In 2008, the Board of Education requested that a review committee be formed to evaluate both the outcomes and process used with the redistricting associated with Morris Grove Elementary School. The Board specifically requested that the committee develop recommendations to make the process

more accurate and more efficient. A committee was formed that included Board members, parents, and district employees. A comprehensive review was conducted and a report (attached) was delivered to the Board. The review committee made several recommendations related to improving outcomes of future redistricting efforts and the process to be used to conduct a future redistricting. It was recommended that most of the redistricting plan development process be completed by district staff that has the expertise and district focus and mission in mind when making these recommendations. Input from the myriad constituencies in the district are still vital to a successful redistricting plan, but the review committee felt their time would be better served in an advisory and balancing role, rather than in a comprehensive administrative role. It was recommended that the process should change to include more administrative functions in the development of data and plan variations, while streamlining community involvement to make the process more efficient. Specifically the January 2009 report to the Board made the following recommendations:

From the January 2009 report

Redistricting process recommendations to increase efficiency:

- 1. The administration should be charged with creating a minimum of three redistricting plans based upon the needs and priorities of the district.*
- 2. The administration will seek out input, information, and advice from others as necessary to complete the recommended plans.*
- 3. The recommended plans will then be presented and reviewed by an advisory committee. The advisory committee shall work with administration and provide input and feedback. Administration and the advisory committee shall solicit public feedback in the form of one or more public hearings. The plans and notice of the public hearing will be widely shared with the school community, including the school improvement teams. After the recommendations and input from the public are reviewed and incorporated, as necessary, recommended plans will be presented on work session at a Board of Education meeting and the item will follow the normal agenda approval process.*
- 4. After approval, district and school staff will develop and implement a plan to share this information with parents and staff.*

There were also recommendations made with respect to our data and how and when it should be used. Specifically the report made the following recommendations.

Redistricting data recommendations to improve accuracy:

- 1. Since approximately 6-8% of the population has received a transfer approval, this information needs to be provided to the consultants responsible for creating the calculation tool.*
- 2. The student information data needs to be accurate. The committee recommended waiting until the 40th day of enrollment to provide data to be used for a redistricting occurring in the fall of the subsequent year. Waiting until the 40th day gives the opportunity for student information updates and changes that occurred over the summer to be captured and reflected in the data to be used by our consultants.*
- 3. Segment data needs to be updated with the assistance of real estate professionals. The SES labels were created nearly 10 years ago and some segments may have changed in terms of relative wealth.*

4. *We need to expand the data we collect and provide to the consultants to include more accurate Free and Reduced lunch information. This is a better measure of socioeconomic status since it is actually tied to the students as opposed to segment data which is only based on housing values. Due to the extensive movement of students, it is necessary to make sure Free and Reduced lunch numbers are accurately reflected in redistricting data.*

Overview of the Planned Process for Elementary #11

After reviewing and considering previous redistricting efforts as well as the recommendations made in the report, administration has developed a process to be used for the redistricting associated with the completion of Elementary #11. Various aspects of the process are described briefly below.

Redistricting Team

A redistricting team has been created and has begun the necessary background and planning work for the redistricting process. The team is comprised as follows:

- Betsy Booth, Family Specialist Estes Hills Elementary School
- Jim Ellis, Transportation Director
- Jillian La Serna, Assistant Principal Carrboro Elementary (UNC Central Office Internship)
- Todd LoFrese, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services
- Catherine Mau, Student Enrollment Coordinator
- Mike Miller, ORED Labs Program Manager
- Steve Scroggs, Redistricting Support Contractor
- Rodney Trice, Associate Superintendent for Student and School Services/Equity Oversight

In addition to these team members, other administrators and program contacts will need to be made as plans are developed. The redistricting team will seek out and share information from and to principals, EC staff, the Pre-K department, and other support areas, as necessary, to create the recommended plans for consideration. The team's charge is to develop three plans for sharing with the Redistricting Advisory Council and following public feedback opportunities, ultimately bring a recommended plan forward to the Board for approval. The team has already begun to work. Some of the activities that are currently occurring are the organization and verification of data necessary for completing the process, a development of communication plans, a review of changes in housing patterns, a review of changes in developments, a review of changes in enrollment levels, a review of changes in relative home values, a review all current walk zones and potential walk zones, and a review of transportation patterns along with recommendations for walk zones for the new school. Recommendations for the new school's walk zone will be presented for approval at the September 6, 2012 Board meeting.

Big Picture Goals and Issues

The redistricting team met to discuss some of the big picture items that need to be included in our review process and included in our recommended plans.

Manage Building Capacity: We want to minimize capacity issues on any one school. Since we are likely to be close to 100% full at the time Elementary #11 opens, it is critical that we develop a plan that provides for the best possible enrollment levels at each school. We will take into account factors such as the age and design of the school as well as the number of available modular classrooms on site when determining the target number of students to assign to each school.

Data Accuracy: While the 2008 review committee's report recommended waiting until the 40th day, in practice, we can't wait that long. The redistricting plan needs to be approved before we enter the busy spring time. Decisions around school assignment need to be made in time for kindergarten information and registration sessions, to provide time for school transitions to occur, and to avoid becoming a distraction as we enter the spring semester with other important issues that need focus such as testing, district priorities, and the budget development process. The use of 20th day data will be a significant improvement from previous efforts where the data was over a year old before it was used in the development of the plans. We will also be accounting for individual students assigned to special programs in each segment. We will communicate to all data managers the importance of being timely with the data cleanup process and the need for the timely completion of any enrollment changes.

Communication: The need for a thoroughly developed and implemented communications plan is of paramount importance. Our goal is be sure that every family in our district is aware that redistricting is occurring, are informed of the proposed plans, and are informed about how they can provide feedback on the proposed plans. A draft of the communications plan is included in the materials this evening. Some key aspects of the plan include parent letters, post cards, radio and media releases, electronic phone call system, videos, and a comprehensive website to name a few. Communication efforts will commence prior to the start of school.

Balance by Socioeconomic Status: As the Board is aware, the State of North Carolina has received a directive from the US Department of Agriculture about free and reduced lunch data. Essentially, the US Department of Agriculture and the State of North Carolina are stating that this data can't be used for student assignment purposes such as this. This has dealt a major blow to our ability to effectively balance our schools in terms of socioeconomic status. We are now limited to relative housing values in our segments. Our housing values have been updated with the last revaluation and associated segment values will be updated with our administrative review process.

Balance by Student Achievement: We will be utilizing three years (including the recently administered) EOG assessments in grades 3-8 to help make assignment decisions. There are also other assessments

that are being reviewed for possible inclusion in our decision making process including, ACT, PLAN, and measures of literacy and math in grades K-2. The student assessment and achievement data will be tied to segment information and utilized in our planning tools as we develop district wide student assignment plans. With the restrictions related to free and reduced lunch data, student achievement data will be an important criterion to consider when developing the redistricting plans.

Dual Language: Decisions have been made for the Spanish Dual Language program. Our plans will take into account the newly created magnet school at Frank Porter Graham and the magnet model at Carrboro Elementary School. We will need to account for current Dual Language students, account for rising siblings, and develop transportation routes for the district wide magnet program. We will also review and consider the request from Chinese Dual Language parents for relocating the middle school program to Smith Middle School.

Pre-K: The redistricting team is entering the redistricting process with the intent of placing at least one Pre-K classroom at each of our elementary schools. Generally principals support the concept of having Pre-K programs at our elementary schools. The connection would be even more meaningful if we were able to increase the likelihood of the stability this program on all of our campuses as well as be able to have students attend Pre-K at the site they will attend Kindergarten. Practically, since we also need to deal with the difficulties of licensing and specific room and location requirements, it is likely we will seek to minimize the movement of these classrooms.

Middle School: Our middle school numbers are relatively balanced and currently we are not planning on impacting middle school assignment zones in any significant way. We do need to be sensitive to feeder patterns with all school levels so it is possible that there could be modifications to a few segments for this purpose.

Carrboro High School: In the 2011-12 school year, Carrboro High School was operating at around 884 students, 84 above the school's SAPFO capacity. If the past two years of growth continue we will need to take action to reduce the attendance zone at Carrboro High School. It is believed that this can be done by looking at moving some segments on the periphery of the current attendance zone as opposed to an entire high school redistricting process.

Redistricting Advisory Council

An advisory council of stakeholder will be created for the purpose of reviewing and making recommendations for the improvement of the three plans developed by administration. We are recommending that each elementary school and Carrboro High School solicit two to three volunteers to serve on the Redistricting Advisory Council. Principals will be consulted with in advance and will be requested to help ensure that a diverse group of volunteers is brought forward for consideration. We will be seeking volunteers who can commit to the amount of time necessary and more importantly are interested in seeking to make recommendations for the improvement of the plans for the entire district. The redistricting team will be responsible for ensuring that the Redistricting Advisory Council represents

a diverse group of parents and staff and that each elementary school and Carrboro High School has two representatives on the Redistricting Advisory Council. It is important to note that not all volunteers will be able to serve on the Redistricting Advisory Council.

The Redistricting Advisory Council will meet in the Carrboro High School Café Commons on Monday evenings in November. The primary role of the Redistricting Advisory Council will be to thoroughly review all of the plans brought forward by the redistricting team and provide feedback and recommendations to the redistricting team for use in the final development of the plans to be shared with the entire community and brought forward for consideration by the Board of Education. These meetings will be open to the public to observe the process and hear presentations and discussions. Public comments will not be taken at these meetings. In a previous redistricting, the planning tool used to create the various plans was widely shared and accessible to anyone in the district. That process will not occur with this redistricting. Given the narrow timing window from when accurate data is available to when the plan needs to be approved by the Board, administration does not have the manpower or available time to review and comment on plans developed by individual members of the public. With the use of more accurate data and an advisory council to review multiple plans, we are confident that we can deliver to the Board of Education a plan that best meets the needs of the district and students. Furthermore, there will be a variety of opportunities for public input as described in the next section.

Parent and Public Input Opportunities

It is extremely important that parents and the public have numerous opportunities for input. There will be multiple ways and opportunities for input from the community. A brief summary is listed below.

District Website Comment Box: An electronic comment box will be included on the district website. While we will not be able to respond to these comments, we will read them and they will be accessible by the Board. This will be a way for people to share their thoughts and opinions on the proposed plans.

Email Address: A district email address for redistricting will be established to receive comments. While we will not be able to respond to these comments, we will read them and they will be accessible by the Board. This will be a way for people to share their thoughts and opinions on the proposed plans.

School Improvement Team Meetings: Recommended plans will be widely distributed to community and school groups at the beginning of December. School Improvement Teams will be asked to provide an opportunity for parents to express their opinions on the recommended plans. The School Improvement Teams can also share their opinions with the redistricting team and/or the Board.

Public Hearings: Two public hearings will be scheduled in December in high school auditoriums. At these hearings ample opportunities will be made available for the public to express opinions, provide input, and provide feedback on the recommended plans.

Following the public hearings, the plans will follow the normal Board agenda process. They will first be presented to the Board of Education on Work Session on December 20, 2012. Following feedback and

direction from the Board, the redistricting team will make any necessary adjustments and prepare a recommendation for approval consideration during the January 17, 2012 Board meeting.

Key Dates

School Improvement Teams

- December Meetings: Review of plans

Redistricting Advisory Council Meetings 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at Carrboro High School Café Commons

- Monday November 5, 2012
- Monday November 12, 2012
- Monday November 19, 2012
- Monday November 26, 2012

Public Hearings 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

- Monday December 3, 2012 Carrboro High School Auditorium
- Wednesday December 12, 2012 Chapel Hill High School Auditorium

Board of Education

- Thursday December 20, 2012 7:00 p.m. Work Session at Lincoln Center
- Thursday January 17, 2012 7:00 p.m. Discussion & Action at Town of Chapel Hill Town Hall

Summary

This document is meant to provide an overview of the process to be used to complete the redistricting associated with the opening of Elementary #11. The process that has been developed is consistent with the report and recommendations made by a previous committee that had been charged by the Board to recommend ways to improve the efficiency and our outcomes with our process. Redistricting will demand a lot of work and attention over the next several months. The procedure outlined by administration seeks to create a detailed, accurate, and efficient process that provides ample opportunities for public feedback.