

November 25, 2019

DeKalb County Board of Education  
1701 Mountain Industrial Blvd.  
Stone Mountain, GA 30083  
c/o Ms. Ramona Tyson

DeKalb County School District  
1701 Mountain Industrial Blvd.  
Stone Mountain, GA 30083  
c/o Dr. Michael A. Erwin

Ms. Tyson and Dr. Erwin:

As a preliminary note, we want to express our appreciation for the efforts of the entire DeKalb County School District (“DCSD”) to reconcile the many disparate (and often conflicting) views to implement an equitable and reasonable redistricting to address overcrowding concerns of the Dunwoody cluster. The Austin PAC writes in follow-up to our letters dated October 29, 2019 and October 1, 2019, and in response to the third redistricting meeting held on November 20, 2019.

As you are undoubtedly aware, the DCSD criteria for redistricting provides three primary criteria for this process, including (1) geographic proximity, (2) instructional capacity, and (3) projected enrollment. Despite the difficult task at hand, we believe that the staff recommended plan successfully and correctly addresses each of these criteria. First, the staff recommended plan seeks to re-align students that live in close proximity to their closest elementary school. Many of the reallocated areas accomplish this goal, with areas A, B, and J addressing additional concerns about high-growth areas that have been raised through the prior three meetings. Second, the staff recommended plan best accomplishes an equitable distribution of students and portable units. The substantial reduction in overall portables for the entire cluster through this plan (-17 portable units) is laudable, and we appreciate efforts of the staff to achieve this result while placing a minimum number of portables at the New Austin elementary. In addition, the staff recommended plan provides substantial and immediate relief for Dunwoody Elementary School and Hightower Elementary School – all of which will improve and promote instructional capacity.

Third, and most significantly, the staff recommended plan takes a comprehensive and equitable view of projected enrollment, particularly with respect to high-growth areas. For example, areas A and B present significant high-growth areas, neither of which are located geographically near any current elementary school. The staff recommended plan provides the best workable solution for distributing high-growth areas to relatively close schools, without disproportionately overcrowding any single school. It is our view that the staff recommended plan also successfully fulfills and satisfies each of the secondary criteria, including (1) minimizing safety and traffic concerns, (2) hews most closely to previous redistricting, (3) balances special programs, (4) substantially maintains school feeder alignment, (5) keeps intact the maximum number of neighborhoods, and (6) enables the most efficient and economical operations.

In closing, it should not go unrecognized that DCDS has endeavored to resolve many of the stated concerns from the first two meetings – an effort which is appreciated and demonstrates this process results in a map that most closely aligns with the concerns of the parties impacted. Specifically, New Austin will open with portables – a less-than-desirable result for Austin, but something which has been repeatedly urged by parents involved in the process. Second, Dunwoody Elementary and Hightower Elementary receive immediate overcrowding relief, while allowing for cluster wide balancing of enrollment. Third, geographic proximity appears to be a predominant feature of the staff recommended plan – an element that will limit traffic impact and enable the most neighborhoods to remain intact (e.g. Dunwoody North, Oxford Chase, and Woodsong). Finally, the use of Doraville United demonstrates a creative solution to a very difficult problem – a repeated request from the previous two meetings.

As established by the above, it is our conclusion that the staff recommended map is the best practicable and reasonable solution to a complex challenge, and we ardently urge you to accept and recommend this plan to the Board.

Thank you for your consideration.

Amy Sand  
Chair Austin ES PAC

Jenny Shulman  
Co-Chair Austin ES PAC

Justin Delfino  
Austin ES PAC Parent

Scott Jarvis  
Austin ES PAC Parent

Katie Keser  
Austin ES PAC Parent

Callie Parker  
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CC: Stan Jester  
Marshall Orson  
Allyson Gevertz  
Vickie Turner  
Dijon DaCosta  
Joyce Morley  
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