

November 1, 2019

Dr. R. Stephen Green, District Superintendent; Mr. Daniel Drake, Interim Chief Operations Officer
Hans Williams, Director of Planning & E-SPLOST Programming;
Dr. Sherry Johnson, Regional Superintendent, Region I
Dr. Michael Erwin, District 3 (Board Chair)
Mr. Marshall Orson, District 2 (Vice Chair)
Mr. Stan Jester, District 1
Ms. Allyson Gevertz, District 4
Mrs. Vickie Turner, District 5
Mr. Dijon DaCosta, District 6
Dr. Joyce Morley, District 7
DeKalb County School District
1701 Mountain Industrial Boulevard
Stone Mountain, GA 30083

Dear Dr. Green, Mr. Drake, Mr. Williams, Dr. Johnson and Board Members:

Thank you for inviting community feedback on the Austin Elementary Redistricting process. We write today to clarify Chesnut Elementary PAC's position, based on stakeholder feedback, and thank you for considering our community's needs.

Unfortunately, we cannot approve any of the three redistricting options provided on Oct. 23rd, because none of them benefit our school. They all propose an overall reduction in our student enrollment and they all divide the DNCA neighborhood along the Tilly Mill corridor.

A. Splitting the DNCA Violates Redistricting Criteria and Hurts Chesnut

- Sending DNCA families east of Tilly Mill Road (area D of Option 2) to Kingsley does not comply with the first criterion (Geographic Proximity) of the Board Policy on Alteration of School Attendance Areas — by increasing their distance to school by 33 to 62 percent.
- At Chesnut, 40% of PAC Council parent seats and PAC Action Team parent volunteers are filled by

DNCA Street	to Chesnut	to Kingsley
Cherry Hill Lane	1.2 miles	1.6 miles
Stonehenge Drive	1.5 miles	2.2 miles
Claridge Court	1.6 miles	2.6 miles

parents in the DNCA area east of Tilly Mill Road. Withdrawing these families would significantly diminish parent leadership at Chesnut, to the detriment of the efficient running of Chesnut's robust academic and community initiatives.

B. Chesnut Willing To Share in Cluster Overcrowding

- Rather than lose students, we welcome a slight increase in enrollment.
- We are open to discussing scenarios, such as the addition of Dunwoody Elementary's Area E on Option 2, that may slightly increase Chesnut's enrollment, in an effort to equitably distribute the number of portables across the six Dunwoody cluster schools.

Chesnut's Reality: Not Severely Overcrowded

- With a current student enrollment of 473, Chesnut is actually 110% utilized.
- Chesnut's stated School Capacity on Oct. 23 was misreported as 358, inflating Chesnut's utilization rate to 135%, making Chesnut appear to be as overcrowded as Vanderlyn and more overcrowded than DES.
- Our school building's actual Instructional Capacity is 428 students, as reported on the corrected Oct. 28th Facility Capacity Report.
 - We challenge the 15% reduction applied to our 428 Instructional Capacity, termed the Scheduling Factor [a "reduction of total [student capacity] to account for the number of periods the room is not used and allow for teacher allotments"].
 - While a Scheduling Factor of 85% may help determine classroom funding, when assessing our building's Instructional Capacity, it is an unrealistic manipulation of the data, because homerooms are static. No homeroom class can be accommodated by utilizing a combination of classrooms during the 15% of the day each of the other rooms is not in use.
- Chesnut's lower field is able to accommodate 4th grade in portables while leaving adequate field, track and playground space for students to play during recess. There is room for an additional trailer to accommodate a slight increase in our enrollment.

C. Adhering to Redistricting Criteria

We therefore urge you, as you consider rezoning options, to maintain or slightly increase Chesnut's current size, and keep the DNCA area whole, in accordance with the following redistricting criteria.

Primary Criteria

1. **Geographic Proximity** - We ask all DNCA neighborhoods east of Tilly Mill Road remain in Chesnut district, as they are all closer to Chesnut than Kingsley (per above table). If Perimeter Gardens (Area E in Option 2) were rezoned to Chesnut, they would be .3 miles closer to school than they are to DES.
2. **Instructional Capacity** - Any proposal that ultimately reduces the number of students at Chesnut will cause our small school to lose funding for teachers and instructional support staff, undercutting our proven method of delivering an excellent education for all students. We prefer to welcome additional students from overcrowded areas to retain our working education model.

Secondary Criteria

1. **Safety and Traffic Patterns** - Moving DNCA students east of Tilly Mill Road to Kingsley will add traffic to already congested main thoroughfares Tilly Mill Road and North Peachtree Road. Conversely, there are established Safe Routes to School that allow these students to walk or bike to and from Chesnut safely. If Perimeter Gardens were to be rezoned to Chesnut, they could utilize the existing DCSD bus route that serves Chesnut students at Columns at Lake Ridge.
5. **Intact Neighborhoods** - After using the appropriate channels in the correct forum — Sept. 26th's Round 1 Austin Elementary Redistricting Meeting — our voice was not heard. We ask again that the DNCA be kept intact. DNCA's area encompasses community members on the west and east side of Tilly Milly Road, including: Dunwoody North, Andover Estates, Laurelwood Farms, Dunwoody Trails, Brafferton Square, Briers North, The Madisons, and Chestnut Landing.

D. Prioritize A Chesnut Rebuild

Lastly, we strongly request DCSD make a rebuild for Chesnut its first priority in addressing Dunwoody's elementary school overcrowding, and expedite this project's undertaking. Not only do we have the lowest Facility Condition Assessment (43.17) in the Dunwoody cluster, we have one of the largest properties, which we hope can be utilized to increase our capacity and eliminate the shortage of elementary seats in the cluster.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Chesnut Parent Advisory Council