

Background on the Boundary Study Process

The boundary study process involves 6 of Blair Cluster school. A boundary study process occurs when there are changes in the capacity and utilization of schools. The [Division of Long Range Planning](#) oversees the community input, the superintendent makes a recommendation, and then the Board of education votes on the recommendation in next year's Capital Improvement budget decisions. The Division's Website is:

http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/CommunityInfo_Boundary.htm

If you want to see the present boundaries of our schools go to <http://gis.mcpsmd.org/gis/> for maps of the area.

Parents (yes, that's us) sometimes get possessive about our schools and our kids. However, PTA leaders and others involved in this process must maintain a balance between representing our schools, and representing the PTA mission of doing our best to serve *all* children in our county schools. The MCCPTA as a county organization is most effective when each cluster recognizes and supports the needs of other clusters in our testimony to our elected officials. The cluster, too, is most effective when each school recognizes and supports the needs of other schools in making decisions or taking positions.

Below is an outline of the history and the process to date.

HISTORY

When Takoma Park was unified 10 years ago or so, the Long Branch neighborhoods close to New Hampshire Avenue were brought into the MCPS school system. The increase in students was one of a number of factors that led to:-Northwood HS re-opening -SSIMS opening in the old Blair HS building-Sligo Creek ES opening in another section of the old Blair HS building-some of the Long Branch kids going to TPES and others getting bussed to SCES.

Later, when elementary schools in our area went from half day to full day in 2001, the need for kindergarten classrooms doubled. This affected all K-2 and K-5 elementary schools, and impacted SCES, ESSES, and TPES.

About 5 years ago, TPES PTA leadership pushed for an expansion of the school, and ESSES PTA leadership were torn by losing 3rd grade to Piney Branch. The overcrowding in our elementary schools in our corner of the county was getting tough to deal with. The consultative process that led to TPES and ESSES getting construction money to expand was held with participation of the four schools directly affected by overcrowding - TPES, SCES, ESSES, and PBES. That construction was approved and has started (for ESSES) and will finish up for both schools in Summer 2010. The boundary advisory committee of PTA parents that is in process this spring looks to provide input into the Superintendent's recommendation to the school board on how to establish boundaries for students to attend elementary school in Fall 2010. There will be

more room at both TPES and ESSES. SCES is overcrowded, and PBES is about at capacity. The six schools that are participating in the process are TPES, ESSES, PBES, and SCES and the two middle schools, SSIMS and TPMS.

WORK FOR PTAs

The representatives at the meeting will be representing their own opinion, but each PTA can and should prepare a position paper. Each PTA has to really work hard with the school leadership to develop a way to inclusively gauge parent interest and parent positions once the options for boundaries are presented on March 25, based on the input that MCPS received from parents at last week's meeting. These PTA meetings will have to be held between March 25 and April 22.

Suggestions to pull in parents are:

- Connect ed phone calls from the principal
- Prepare a set of questions for the school's parent outreach coordinator to ask of parents who s/he is in contact with for their opinion-arrange translation and call parents directly to invite them to the meeting.-ask friends who live elsewhere or who don't usually go to meetings what they think about the options.
- Have a poll on the listserv - even though this will only get to the internet connected parents.

We will be contacting the TPES PTA once the options are developed by the County for us to respond to.