

High School Redistricting Public Forum Minutes
Thursday, August 28, 2003 – 7:00 p.m.
School Board Meeting Room
Stuart, FL 34994

Members Present

Dr. David Anderson, Chairman
Vicki Davis, Vice-Chair
Susan Hershey
Laurie Gaylord
Lorie Shekailo
Dr. Sara A. Wilcox, Superintendent
Tom Elfers, School Board Attorney
Matt Rudling, Student Representative (SFHS)

Members Absent

None

Staff Present

Hank Salzler, Lori McWilliams, Diane Lamb, Mark Capley, Jolina Allison, Darrell Miller, Laura Allen, Louise Piper, Dr. Frank Raffone

Public

James Smith, Scott Chalmers, Amy Alpert, Samia Ferraro, Barbara Hocker, Gina Barbieri, David Cardno, Danielle LaCombe, Ruth Ann LaCombe, Richard Hammock, Tara Powers, Debbie Lyon, Linda Molfetta, Kimberly Baker, Rick Barnes, Linda Reymore, James Christie, Katie Drake, Tiarra Maxwell, Gail Drake, Martin Moss, Jayne Oster, Denise Jones, Kristine Schenk, Laura Heilman, Kimberly Baker, Johnnie Bell, Shelley Williams, Ishya Dotson, Frank McChrystak, Rachael Drake, Kim Fleming, Joesy Missimer, Kate Schenk, Cheryl Gehrun, Veronica Dotson, Ashley Dotson, Chris Coady, Chris Leddy, Lynda Hartley-Urban, Bill Clasen, Sherri Safford

Press

PBPost – Andrew Marra

Stuart News – Michael Samuels

MCEA – No Representation

AFSCME – No Representation

Call to Order by the Chairman and Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

- 1. Presentation of Information Regarding High School Capacities and Current Attendance Zones**
- 2. Long Range Planning Committee Recommendations**

Dr. Raffone introduced Samia Ferraro, Chair of the Long Range Planning Committee, who reviewed the committee recommendation. Dr. Raffone reviewed the following scenarios as fine-tuned by staff:

- Move New Monrovia students to Martin County High School (MCHS) from South Fork High School (SFHS),
- Remove East Stuart students from AAA and send to MCHS,
- Remove Rocky Point students from AAA and send to MCHS,
- East Stuart and Rocky Point both attend MCHS and the numbers, and
- Golden Gate and Rocky Point attend MCHS and New Monrovia attends SFHS.

3. Open to the Public

- Barbara Hocker feels the board would go over budget transporting students from Rocky Point to Jensen Beach and feels Jensen Beach is developing quickly.
- Gina Barbieri– declined to comment.
- David Cardno expressed concern with his children being sent to AAA from Rocky Point. He lives 7.8 miles from SFHS and 11.5 from AAA. He feels this would pose a problem for parents involved in the schools due to the extra distance.
- Danielle and Ruth Ann Lacombe agreed with Mr. Cardno and voiced opposition to moving Rocky Point students from SFHS. Ruth Ann (student) explained she is in the Ag program at SFHS and does not believe AAA would offer her the career programs that she prefers.
- Richard Hammock, MCHS parent, does not want his daughter to move from MCHS due to the extent of her extracurricular activities.
- Tara Powers asked if school choice would continue and feels traffic to SFHS is bad enough without being transported to Jensen.
- Debbie Lyon asked what curriculum would be offered at AAA and asked if the same curriculum and electives would be offered for their degrees and scholarships.
- Linda Molfetta asked the Board to send students that live in the north to the north schools and those that live in the south to the south schools. Her son is in the band program and made the All State Band.

- Kimberly Baker does not feel it is fair to ship students to a school outside of their neighborhood and have parents deal with the added traffic problems. She turned in signed petitions urging the board to leave the Rocky Point students alone and stated the New Monrovia area seems to never have any changes. If her child has to attend AAA she won't be able to be as involved as she currently is.
- Rich Barnes implored the Board to listen to the concerns of the residents. Six years ago he made the decision to move to Martin County and did so under the assumption of where his children would go to school. He applauded the Board on their efforts.
- Linda Reymore voiced concern with SFHS losing the IB program to AAA and the Board advised that would not happen.
- James Christie expressed concern with East Stuart students being rezoned to attend AAA. He explained the natural progression for this group of students is to attend J. D. Parker School of Science, Math and Technology, Stuart Middle School and then MCHS. He feels a move would cause higher drop out rates with splitting of families and less parental participation.
- Katie Drake and Tiarra Maxwell (students) – Katie, a Rocky Point resident, voiced concern with the amount of gas it would take her to get to AAA. She stated her career choice is at Chapman's and is worried that the new school won't offer this specific program and stated she is also a swimmer. Tiarra voiced concern with being kicked out during her senior year and stated she is in the CNA program. Dr. Wilcox explained the signature programs would continue to be available at the new school and school choice would be an option for those students who want to attend those programs. Mrs. Hershey explained that seniors would not be moved, only freshman, sophomores and juniors.
- Gail Drake voiced concerns with the amount of time parents would have to drive with the rezoning changes. She discussed the friendships that the students have garnered over the years and splitting them at this point would not be good. She stated the Rocky Point students currently have no contact with the North County students.
- Martin Moss lives on Salerno Road and is disturbed that his child, an Ag student, would be required to switch schools for his junior year. He stated he choose to live in the SFHS zone when he moved here from Miami. Dr. Wilcox reiterated that the Ag program is a signature program provided only at SFHS. He discussed his daughter being in the SADD program at SFHS, which is more successful than the other schools.
- Jayne Oster explained her children have been enthusiastically awaiting their attendance at SFHS and know of all the opportunities offered. She feels they should continue with their peers at SFHS.
- Denise Jones appreciates the need for a new school, however does not agree with pulling students from so far away especially when AAA would be full within a couple years. Her daughter is involved in student government and SADD and does not feel students should be pulled away from their friendships. She doesn't want her child driving to Jensen Beach through all the traffic and over the bridge.
- Kristine Shenk, a SFHS IB student, spoke on behalf of her friends and brother who may be rezoned to AAA and discussed the friendships involved.
- Laura Heilman, a Golden Gate parent, has an ESE student and is concerned with having to go to another school next year and does not feel this is fair to the children.
- Johnnie Bell, President of Concerned Citizens of East Stuart, asked why this high school is being built in Jensen Beach and feels it was poor planning on the part of the school board.
- Shelley Williams asked if she would have two children in different schools (she has a senior and another child in high school) and stated the Board would be breaking up friendships and bands.
- Ishya Dotson lives in New Monrovia and is a SFHS graduate. She discussed the tradition of students attending Port Salerno Elementary School, Murray Middle School and then SFHS. She discussed the relationships that her children have formed and feels causing students to transition would only be detrimental to them.
- Frank McChrystal commented that he cannot believe the Board is turning MCHS into Palm City High School. The solution is simple – Palm City students go to SFHS and Stuart to MCHS.
- Rachel Drake has a dream of being on the swim team at SFHS and only SFHS.
- Kim Fleming, a North County parent, discussed the serious traffic problems and asked that anyone that wants stay south of the bridge should be allowed to remain there.
- Joesy Missimer is concerned with the cut and dry approach of redistricting and feels there needs to be a more gradual approach. She feels siblings experiencing the same teachers is important as well as their friendships and attachments. The Board needs to plan for redistricting earlier and give students options to continue in their school of choice. Slow the process down.
- Kate Shenk is concerned with siblings attending different schools and was looking forward to keeping her children together.
- Cheryl Gerun understands the board would not make any sibling preferences and discussed the animosity between MCHS and SFHS students.
- Veronica and Ashley Dotson voiced concerns with their friendships being split apart. They are devastated with the prospect of having to attend MCHS and discussed the rivalry between the two schools.

- Chris Cody discussed the logistics of Rocky Point being at one end of the spectrum and AAA the other end.
- Chris Leddy feels this rezoning would affect the property value of the Rocky Point residents and asked the board attorney what the parents have to do to stop this rezoning process. Mr. Elfers explained the parents and community are being given the opportunity to voice their concerns through this public forum and then the Board would make the final decision.
- Linda Hartley-Urban asked when the programs and curriculum would be decided for AAA and would like to know this before the Board decision is made. She questioned if the school would even be finished by next summer. Dr. Wilcox stated staff and the new principal are working on the curriculum and it would be available shortly.
- Bill Clasen discussed the charge of the Long Range Planning Committee to populate the three schools evenly. He stated Rocky Point naturally flows to SFHS and not to AAA. He stated AAA would be filled soon with all the new developments going in in Jensen Beach and that the transportation logistics and natural flows need to be considered.
- Sherri Safford lives in East Stuart with a daughter going into 11th grade at MCHS and wants to remain in MCHS.

4. Discussion of 2003-2005 Rezoning

5. Open to the Board

Matt Rudling

Agreed the drive from Rocky Point to AAA is long, however feels redistricting would be difficult for all involved. He believes the best decisions for the student population as a whole would be made. He never realized how much decision making is made until he came on the Board. He stated that the Board's minds are not made up and they are in fact open to opinions.

Mrs. Shekailo

Thanked the Long Range Planning Committee and parents in attendance. She reminded the public that the Jensen community came out in force requesting the school be built in Jensen and knows of approximately 2,500 – 3,500 residential units that are planned for Jensen. She asked the Board to consider this new information and not fill AAA immediately. She understands the feelings of the community; however the alternative of not building the school is very overcrowded schools and asked the Board to consider future growth in Jensen.

Mrs. Gaylord

Thanked the parents, the Long Range Planning Committee and staff for attending. She understands the parental concerns about students staying together. She asked staff if there is a desired number the Board needs to open the new high school with.

Mrs. Hershey

Attended the Communities that Care Symposium and feels parent to child bonding is important and to the extent possible, the Board should preserve and foster the bonding issues that keep communities together. She informed the public that the one thing that does not sway her decision one way or the other is if you're a bulldog or a tiger and does not agree with fostering that ill attitude.

Mrs. Davis

Throughout the process she has had concerns with Rocky Point students going to the AAA high school and with the transportation times involved. She feels this would be hard for parents to make the time commitment if these students are moved. She discussed Martin County's past when there was one high school for the entire County, however this is not the case anymore due to growing pains and change has to take place. She agreed with Mrs. Shekailo that room needs to be left at AAA for the growth of North County and believes this would happen sooner than later. She informed the public that the final decision would be made on September 15, 2003 at 6:00 p.m. and the meeting would be held here at Stuart Middle School.

Dr. Wilcox

Informed the public that she and the Board does not take these decisions lightly and explained they know that families are involved and agreed community and neighborhood schools are important in Martin County. She appreciated the public input and it would all be looked at. She reminded the Board and public that the Advanced Learning Center would open in August, 2004, and the high technology curriculum is currently being developed. This school would house approximately 200 juniors and seniors and provides another opportunity for our county students. She thanked Long Range Planning for their work.

Mrs. Davis

Thanked Long Range Planning and staff.

High School Redistricting Workshop Minutes
Thursday, August 28, 2003 – 7:00 p.m.
Page 4 of 4

Mrs. Hershey

Attended a conference as a representative of the FSBA State Board and presented the State of Florida Constitution and read Article VIII, Section I, which addresses education. The Board unanimously voted to support the re-examination of the sales tax exemptions. Individual districts are independent and are not required to abide by the State Board decision and this would allow additional funds to be funneled into the school systems.

There being no further business to bring before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

CHAIRMAN (Dr. David L. Anderson)

SECRETARY (Sara A. Wilcox, Ph.D.)