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Baltimore County Board of Education Fails to Vote on the Middle School Redistricting Map
Response by Delegates Szeliga and Nawrocki

For Immediate Release - Baltimore County, MD – June 14, 2023 - The delegates have been closely following the Northeast and Central Middle School Redistricting process over the past months. This contentious decision will impact the lives 30,000+ students potentially attending 10 schools. Former superintendent Darryl Williams initiated the boundary study in spring 2022 to alleviate overcrowding and determine who will attend the new \$100 million Northeast school to open in Fall 2024 on King Avenue in Rosedale. However, he chose not to seek renewal of his contract and will not see it through to the end himself. While Baltimore County citizens assumed the newly appointed superintendent would be the one to implement the approved boundary study, instead, the Baltimore County Board of Education did not finalize the redistricting plan on Tuesday night.

After months of work facilitated by an outside consultant, the Board of Education has had the chance to review the data from various map options, community input meetings, boundary committee discussions, and thousands of messages on a public comment forum. However, in the eleventh hour, a school board member made a motion to amend the proposed final map by moving students from Halstead Academy to go to Dumbarton Middle School instead of Loch Raven Academy. Delegate Nawrocki said, “We are very disappointed that the board did not vote to approve or deny the final option thereby elongating the process.”

Now, the committee must do an impact study on how this change will look before the board can come to a final decision with no scheduled date established. This frustrates the elected officials alongside the many parents who have participated in the process from the beginning. There have been plenty of opportunities for this suggestion to come up ahead of the final vote. This raises a concern that Dumbarton will be the next school requesting an emergency boundary study. A precedent has been set for this to take place after the previous Baltimore County boundary study that resulted in overcrowding at Hampton Elementary which then needed an emergency study to remedy the problem. The decision to not vote last night discredits the months of time and effort put into the boundary study by the Committee volunteers and attempts to upend their recommendation with no data, supporting documentation, or rational reasoning.

The elected officials have stressed during this entire process that these determinations can also influence property values and, consequently, the lives of many more people than the families directly redistricted. Delegate Szeliga said, “It is unconscionable that the Board of Education would tamper with the lives of thousands of children and potentially impact all these communities outside of the approved boundary study process by considering another change at this point.” Delegate Nawrocki followed up saying, “If large changes to the boundary map are back on the table, we ask for another review to take place on the Bowleys Quarters/Middle River/White Marsh area feeder schools.”

A portion of Vincent Farm Elementary’s population is proposed to be redistricted to the new middle school on King Avenue and significant changes are being made to Chase Elementary and Seneca Elementary as well. This will combine some of these children with the students currently enrolled at Golden Ring Middle which is consolidating upon the opening of the new building - another decision with little transparency. This impact is monumental and should be reviewed with community input more carefully. The only two community input meetings took place in Towson and Parkville - not remotely close to the Eastern Baltimore County neighborhoods impacted by these decisions. Delegate Szeliga commented on the situation saying, “Baltimore County students, parents, teachers, and community members deserve better.”

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