M. Murphy

Good Morning,

The first boundary meeting was very interesting. The committee members are unbiased and asked great questions. I am very concerned about the group working off of enrollment numbers from 9-30-18. Please consider using several data points throughout the year. One of the suggestions from committee group b was to simply draw the new boundary at Taylor Avenue, which seems like the easiest solution on paper but this solution is not going to be that easy. That would remove more children than needed from PPES and put way too many at Halstead, moving the issues from one school to the next which seems irresponsible. During one of the breaks in the meeting, Matthew Cropper came back to talk to the public observers. When a community member made the comment that people don't like change, Matthew said: "people just need to realize that lots of children are going to be leaving PPES and going to Halstead". It seems to me like he already has his mind made up about which changes he is going to recommend. I hope I am wrong but for him to make such a statement when the committee has hardly had a chance to come up with options doesn't make me believe that he is unbiased. I understand that the decision has to be made in the interest of all families living in these areas and not just a few. It just seemed to me that there are already preconceived notions about what is going to happen. Please stay unbiased and keep pushing for accurate enrollment numbers using more than 1 data point. We need a cluster of data points before the study can be considered accurate. I know this is a decision that will not be made lightly and have confidence that the committee members will make a thoughtful decision.

Regarding Cromwell Valley being left out of the study, Matthew Cropper said that it was a "walking" school and they are going to stay that way. In my research to find alternate options for my daughter in case we are removed from PPES (due to our location it would be Halstead which I consider a lesser school) I came across the magnet program at CVE. I will apply for that as a back-up ASAP but the BCPS website says "Transportation is provided for students who are zoned to attend Halstead Academy, Hampton, Oakleigh, Pleasant Plains, Rodgers Forge, Stoneleigh, Villa Cresta, or West Towson Elementary School." So was his statement about CVES being a walking school inaccurate? It doesn't seem to be strictly walking school based off of this. That also raised a red flag with me. I understand that there is a shortage of bus drivers currently so perhaps that is the problem. What of Loch Raven Elementary? I take my daughter to a nearby park often. It seems silly to me that we have overcrowding at elementary schools and a nearby elementary school sitting vacant and abandoned. I know it would be a massive undertaking to get that school up and running again but if demographics call for it, perhaps that could be the solution. Although we live in the "suburbs" these areas have high density with mainly townhome and apartment communities in the immediate area. I understand many schools in our community need a lot of resources. They need more space, air conditioning, and updating and there simply are not enough funds to give everyone what they need. Overcrowding seems to be the bigger issue as it directly correlates with safety.

I'd also like to add that the number of students in planning block 219 is not accurate. For the 2020-2021 year, 2 would have moved to middle school, 3 attend private schools which leaves us with a difference of 9 but I know only 6 attend PPES. I know as I live here and communicate with my neighbors trying to get them to get involved. I am very concerned that inaccurate numbers will lead to an inaccurate and unfair change in the boundary. If my block is not correct, I can't imagine the rest are either. I would love to know where the data comes from.

Thank you for considering the concerns of community members. I do not expect a response at this time. I will see you Sept 26th and all future meetings. Thank you