

**REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**September 23, 2008**

**Comments by School Committee Chair, Barbara Whidden:**

- Meetings will not be for public to attend. This is an administrative committee.
- Last redistricting was 4 years ago. Done under the assumption that Foster Farm School was going to be built. That is not the case now.
- This process will not solve all our problems. We will not get all libraries, art and music rooms back.
- This may not do anything for Kittredge. The School Committee understands that Kittredge is busting at the seams.
- The redistricting committee should visit each building, (preferable on a rainy day), to get a feel for what the other schools are going through.
- Facilities Review Committee documents will be helpful. Obtain those from Stan Limpert.
- Dealing with the press and public may be difficult. Don't get backed into promises you cannot keep. It is easy for people to misinterpret what you say. Appoint a spokesperson but the press will probably still contact you individually.
- Start with a blank canvas

**Things to discuss:**

1. Goal is to be done in March. How do you address the many house sales that typically take place between March and September?
2. Special Education:
  - a. assign locations for self contained classrooms and allow siblings to attend same school-prevents break up of families, keeps sped kids in district v. private placements and may see savings in transportation for sped (parent has to drive regular ed student anyway)
  - b. K-2/3-5 medically fragile-possibly in one building (Atkinson?)
  - c. K-2/3-5 PDD-anywhere but Kittredge
  - d. language based (consult SPED director)
  - e. English Language Learning Center?
3. Thomson School Choice Second Year-can we get a commitment from parents who may move their kids out of Thomson?
4. 5<sup>th</sup> grade students have the option to stay at current school-try to get commitment from parents that they are staying if redistricted.
5. What happens to those students who have voluntarily redistricted but are not going to be in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade? Are they put back in the mix?

6. School Committee will consider splitting Royal Crest into two schools (Franklin and Atkinson). Peachtree the split?
7. Some things you may be asked about Kittredge at the public hearing:
  - a. Send Kittredge 5<sup>th</sup> graders over to the Middle School
  - b. Split Kittredge and Atkinson K-3 to Atkinson, 4-5 to Kittredge. (This may impact the placement of special ed self contained classrooms.)
  - c. Send Kittredge ½ day kindergarten to the new preschool (may or may not be room).
  - d. Send Kittredge ½ day and full day kindergarten elsewhere.
8. School Committee has already ruled out district wide tiered approach-busses too costly.
9. Goal- to give back library and one related arts room if we're lucky. Who decides what open rooms would be used for? Each building is unique and each school is doing different things (i.e., Sargent has no library but are and music room, Franklin has art and music on cart, kept library).
10. No need for computer room. Schools have indicated that computers on cart work.
11. Chris Nobile will draft a disposal policy. There is a lot of junk in the schools that needs to be cleaned out.

**Dr. Marini's Comments:**

1. Reviewed the handout containing the draft of the process that the redistricting committee will follow.
2. Explained that we will not solve all the issues and it will not be a perfect system. Every school already has too many students. The new preschool will release some of that pressure.
3. Reconfiguring the system to have K-2 and 3-5 schools creates too much transition for students and reduces the sense of community at those schools.
4. We all have to be free to express our ideas without being judged for our opinions.
5. Confidentiality-nothing in meeting is secret; however, you should be able to say something that is sensitive without being quoted/repeated. It is necessary to have open conversation.
6. Committee members have the responsibility to keep parents in their respective schools informed through PTO newsletters and PTO reports.

### **Identifying criteria to guide the redistricting process.**

As indicated in the handout describing the process we will follow, the Committee generated the following criteria to guide redistricting decisions.

- Neighborhood schools
- K-5 at every school
- Transportation costs/length of time on bus
- Class sizes
- Equitable space in schools (music, art, library, etc.)
- Location of district programs (sped, ELL)
- Continuity of incoming 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Thomson School choice
- Least disruptive to school system
- Blank sheet logic
- Title I not a driver
- Utilization of space at new preschool
- Equity of programs at each school
- Impact from previous moves
- 3-5 year solution
- Projected population growth
- Trends in enrollment
- NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) criteria
- Diversity

### **Discussion about next meeting:**

At next meeting we will prioritize criteria. Next meeting will be October 7<sup>th</sup> @ High School library.

Dr. Marini will get current class sizes from every school. Suggested we stick with the School Committee guidelines for class size. Will get map of current district.

An email address will be set up for residents to submit questions to the committee. The school website will contain a link that you can click on to submit a question.

Everyone should talk to their schools at their next PTO meeting about the redistricting. Encourage parents to submit questions via email to their PTO representative or to the email address set up on the school district's website.

Minutes of the redistricting committee meetings will be posted on the website.

Room utilization- Principals will provide list of rooms and its current use.