

Introduced by: Councilmember Wright

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
RESOLUTION #2009 - 45
Montgomery County Public Schools 2009 Boundary Study

- WHEREAS, public school children in the City of Takoma Park attend Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) in and near Takoma Park; and
- WHEREAS, the Board of Education has a policy on Long-Range Education Facilities Planning that specifies the processes to be followed to keep a sound education environment as enrollment and facilities needs change; and
- WHEREAS, facility and need changes at schools in Takoma Park and east Silver Spring prompted MCPS to begin a boundary study for these schools in January, 2009; and
- WHEREAS, the boundary study process in this case has a special challenge due to the addition of 5200 residents into Montgomery County in 1997 as a result of the Takoma Park referendum which changed the Montgomery County/Prince George's County border, placing all of Takoma Park into Montgomery County; and
- WHEREAS, the area added to Montgomery County in 1997 did not include a public school facility, thus requiring placement of the over 500 school children living in the section of Takoma Park that had been part of Prince George's County into existing Montgomery County schools in and near Takoma Park; and
- WHEREAS, the MCPS Policy on Long-Range Educational Facilities Planning sets forth a process to follow for changing school boundaries which includes the solicitation of input via a community advisory committee and the consideration of four main factors: demographic characteristics of student population; geographic proximity of communities to schools; stability of school assignments over time; and facility utilization; and
- WHEREAS, the Council recognizes that there are some populations that, traditionally, participate less in committees and community processes than others; and
- WHEREAS, notification of the boundary study and the process was performed predominantly through the schools and the PTA, and not to all neighborhood residents; and
- WHEREAS, the Council recognizes the many benefits of attending neighborhood elementary schools, including increasing neighborhood cohesion and encouraging walking and biking to schools; and

WHEREAS, the Community Advisory Committee established committee criteria to help MCPS staff create boundary options and then evaluate those options, including, but not limited to: respect community boundaries, maximize walking access to schools and minimize busing, straight articulation from elementary to middle school, balance demographics at elementary and middle school levels, and provide contiguous boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Takoma Park Elementary School will undergo expansion in 2009-2010 causing current children and their families to cope with being bused to a temporary location in Grosvenor; and

WHEREAS, the Council advocates for fair appropriation of County services to all of its residents.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the City of Takoma Park urges the Montgomery County Board of Education to choose a boundary configuration for schools in Takoma Park and eastern Silver Spring that considers the criteria established by the Community Advisory Committee, input received through the Community Advisory Committee process, input provided by any individuals outside of the Community Advisory Committee process, and that considers the interests of the school children of populations that are traditionally less active in the community process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT neighborhoods that are currently designated to attend Takoma Park Elementary School, Piney Branch Elementary School and Takoma Park Middle School should continue to be allowed to attend those schools and, while additional neighborhoods may be added, no neighborhoods should be subtracted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Council supports a completion of moving students that reside in Takoma Park areas that were affected by the 1997 county boundary changes but did not get into Takoma Park schools because of space limitations by bringing them into Takoma Park Elementary School, Piney Branch Elementary School and Takoma Park Middle School.

Adopted this 20th day of July, 2009.

ATTEST:

Jessie Carpenter
City Clerk