

Redistricting in Greensboro: Many questions

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five zones; the others selected seven and four zone areas, respectively.

Most participants wanted some reassurance before proceeding to consider feeder zones — a reassurance the redistricting committee, for the most part, could not give. Dudley junior Tiffany Bailey's question about the fate of magnet schools under redistricting was met with a vague answer.

Jim Bush, a stake holder member representing local realtors in the steering committee, told Bailey that the consultant hired by the school system instructed the committee to wait until after the zones were drawn to consider magnet schools.

The steering committee was able to answer one student's question. Crystal DeBerry wanted to know how much her input counted.

"Will this go back into the community to be voted on, or will we have to live with you all's decision?" asked DeBerry, a freshman at Dudley.

Community input will not be solicited after the attendance maps are drawn, steering committee member and NAACP representative Gladys Robinson told DeBerry.

A mapping committee, comprised of representatives from each of Guilford County's 94 schools, will determine attendance lines within the feeder zones after the redistricting steering committee decides upon a map.

In order to receive community input, the steering committee scheduled a series of 24 forums to take place April 14-24. The school system hopes to have attendance lines drawn for the 1998-99 school year.

Two distinct desires arose from forum participants: neighborhood schools and diversity. African-American parents will no longer allow the school system to only bus black children in order to racially balance

schools, said Ervin Brisbon, a member of the mapping committee.

LaToy Kennedy, former PTSA president at Dudley asked why white students were rarely bused into the inner city schools like Dudley.

"I don't have a problem with busing, as long as it's fairly done," said Kennedy.

Yet relying solely on choice and neighborhood schools may result in neglected inner city schools, Brisbon warned.

"They want to draw the lines and lock you in," he told the crowd of about 100 people.

"You've got to watch, the game is being played," Brisbon added.

Angelia Joyner, a member of the Dudley PTSA, raised the same concerns in regards to the school board and steering committee's failure to identify academic achievement as a guiding principle.

Historically, inner city schools contain higher numbers of low-achieving students, said Joyner. Some of the zones offered by the steering committee isolated inner city schools from middle class black neighborhoods.

"If we don't take academic achievement into account, we're going to have a lot of low-achieving students in one school," said Joyner, thus risking state intervention under the ABC plan for accountability.

"We want to make sure we're not setting up some of these schools, these zones, to fail," Joyner added.

Joyner, like many others, wanted to know why the school board was not present at the meeting to answer questions.

In order to insure that no one would feel the school board was directing the redistricting, the board took a "hands-off approach," said Susan Mendenhall, school board chairperson. School board members are planning to attend at least one meeting, Mendenhall added.

A consultant hired by the school

system has not issued a report, said Mendenhall, but has only monitored redistricting steering committee meetings in place of the board. When asked if the consultant would offer recommendations to the school board or administration, Mendenhall said that she didn't know.

Many people believed the school board and administration had already collaborated to draw the lines, Mendenhall explained. "Initially, there was some mistrust," she said.

The forum at Dudley High bore evidence that the mistrust still exists.

"The school board should be impeached for having wasted money on another propaganda campaign, that has nothing more than infuriated citizens and wasted paper," charged David Levy, one of the few white participants at the meeting.

Raymond King echoed Levy's remarks, and said that the school board was "insulting our intelligence."

"I believe a decision has already been made," King told the redistricting committee. "I think you've been used as a pawn."

Still, many participants wanted their voices heard. Shamekka Stallings, a freshman at Dudley, was one of the large number of students who spoke at the forum. She was concerned about the end result in zoning neighborhood schools, since most communities are still predominantly segregated.

"When redistricting, you're not doing anything but racially separating schools," said Stallings.

Brisbon told the parents and students to look to Winston-Salem's schools in order to determine how well — or poorly — school choice works. Since the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools redistricted several years ago, the predominantly African-American schools have lost even more white students.



Winners of WSSU's Charles C. Ross Community Leadership Award were announced in a ceremony April 14.

WSSU announces winners of Ross Community Leadership Award

Dr. Alvin J. Schexnider, chancellor of Winston-Salem State University, recently announced the winners of the university's Charles C. Ross Community Leadership Award.

The award is to honor Winston-Salem community leaders who contribute significantly to the advancement of race and multicultural relations and neighborly goodwill.

The late Charles C. Ross, for whose honor the award is named, was one of Winston-Salem's most distinguished community leaders who dedicated his life to public service and positive race relations. His commitment to these ideals is witnessed through his service as a member of the Winston-Salem Board of Aldermen and through his work as the first African American to serve as chair of the Winston-Salem State University Board of Trustees.

The winners of the award are as follows:

The Rev. J. Donald Ballard, pastor of United Metropolitan Missionary Baptist Church; Geneva B. Brown, a member of the Winston-Salem Forsyth County School Board and a former teacher and principal; The Rev. David Hughes, pastor of First Baptist Church in Winston-Salem; Annie B. Kennedy, Esq., a partner in the law firm Kennedy, Kennedy, Kennedy and Kennedy; Ruth Julian, former vice chairman of the North Carolina Museum of Art; Dr. Charles Kennedy, lead physician at Aegis Family Health; Dr. Richard Janeway, executive president for health affairs at Wake Forest University's Bowman Gray School of Medicine; and the Honorable Martha S. Wood, mayor of the City of Winston-Salem.



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