

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HEARING

How was the county's master plan weighted with growth, and does the committee take planned developments into consideration when calculating growth and future student populations?

A representative of the Charles County government's planning and growth management department serves on the redistricting committee. The representative presented all existing and planned developments for the affected areas and provided answers to questions raised by committee members. Members of the county's planning and growth management reviewed and evaluated all alternatives once finished to ensure room was included for growth. According to county data, the zones for William A. Diggs Elementary School and Theodore Davis Middle School are the highest growth areas.

Will there be before- and after-school care at William A. Diggs Elementary School?

Yes, there is before and after-school care planned for Diggs. The extended-day program is offered at all public elementary schools in Charles County and is provided through a contract with AlphaBest Education, Inc.

How will I register for the before- and after-school care program?

AlphaBest will set a date for registration for all before- and after-school care centers, which will most likely be in late May or early June for the 2006-07 school year. They will make arrangements for parents to register for the Diggs program at their child's current school. Check the Diggs Elementary School website (www.ccboe.com/diggs) for the most up-to-date information. When AlphaBest provides the school system with its registration dates, the dates will be posted.

Why does the school system wait so long to do its rezoning process?

The school system likes to work with the most up-to-date enrollment figures and development plans and approvals from the county in order to more accurately assign neighborhoods and students to schools. We did, however, have the redistricting committee develop proposals for Theodore Davis Middle School while it was meeting to develop proposals for William A. Diggs Elementary School. We will monitor the results of that decision, and possibly start the work earlier on future redistricting.

Why were current daycare providers not aware of redistricting?

The school system does not have a list of all daycare providers. Many daycare providers have called our offices seeking information, which we have provided. We have publicized the redistricting process since the summer of 2005. The information is available on our websites, in our schools, on Comcast Channel 96, which is the school system television station, and has been mailed home to all middle school parents and sent home with elementary school students.

Will our children be moved again in a couple of years?

As long as Charles County continues to grow and build new schools, redistricting will be necessary. Board of Education policy states that the Board will attempt to limit redistricting for an elementary or middle school to once every three years. The last

elementary school redistricting in the areas affected by Diggs was seven years ago.

Will there be full-day kindergarten at Diggs?

Yes, all kindergarten classes at Diggs will be full-day classes. State law requires that school systems convert all kindergarten classes to full day by the 2007-08 school year. All new schools will open with full-day kindergarten and full-day kindergartens are being phased in at existing schools. Parents with children entering kindergarten in 2006-07 should register their children at the school where they are currently zoned to attend. Schools will automatically transfer registrations of students who have been redistricted to their new school.

Where can I find more information on my child's new school?

All elementary schools, including Diggs, have information linked to the school system's website (www.ccboe.com). There is a schools and departments link at the top of the school system's page that directs viewers to the school of their choice.

Middle School Questions

Why aren't representatives from each school affected by the redistricting on the committee?

There are three primary parent positions and three alternates on the committee. School principals submit names of parents interested in serving on the committee and the available positions are selected at random.

Are traffic lights going to be placed on Route 228 at Mill Hill Road and Bunker Hill Road?

Yes, the school system has been working with state and county officials and agencies to have traffic lights placed on these roads. We have received approval for the lights and submitted designs, which are awaiting state approval. Our hope is that the lights are in place by the start of the 2006-07 school year.

How will teachers be selected for Davis?

Teachers for Davis will be selected the same way teachers are selected for all schools. In early spring of each year, teachers are required to fill out a declaration of intent form, which indicates if they want to stay at their current position or transfer. Simultaneously, the human resources division is recruiting new teachers to fill the 200 to 300 anticipated vacancies systemwide. Principals at each school then interview those requesting transfers as well as prospective teachers and make the final selection for their individual schools.

My daughter will be entering eighth-grade in the 2007-08 school year. Would she go to Davis or stay at Somers?

Students entering eighth-grade in the 2007-08 school year who live in a neighborhood affected by the final rezoning decision will transfer to their new school. If students in your neighborhood are rezoned to attend Davis Middle School, that is where your daughter will attend.

Why are children who will be attending Diggs and even North Point under current redistricting options not automatically attending Davis?

Though we attempt to keep students as close to their homes as possible, the locations of our schools do not allow for a true feeder system. We have to consider growth in the areas with closest proximity to Diggs, Davis and North Point to ensure those schools can absorb the growth. Where growth can be absorbed for Diggs and North Point, it cannot necessarily be absorbed by the middle school. The overcrowded conditions currently experienced by Somers and Henson in large part are due to students attending those schools who live east of Davis. Additionally, there are more elementary schools to distribute students in grades 1-5 and high schools are larger than middle schools and can accommodate larger student populations.

Will eighth-grade students be “grandfathered” in to complete their three years at middle school at the same place where they started?

There is no “grandfather” provision included in the middle school redistricting plan. Eighth-grade students in school year 2007-08 will be included in the rezoning.