

Letter to Freedom Area Parents
May 27, 2020

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Last school year, we wrote to notify you that the Board of Education had formed a committee to explore and study potential redistricting options to alleviate overcrowding at Freedom Elementary School. The committee was established in accordance with CCPS Board policies, which state that when an elementary school exceeds 105% of its capacity, potential solutions for overcrowding will be explored. Freedom Elementary is currently at 114.7% of its capacity and is projected to be at 122% by 2022. The committee was set on a timeline to report to the Board of Education in June 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the related school closures and community health restrictions impacted the work of the committee. At its meeting on April 27, 2020, the Board of Education discussed the impact that the pandemic closures and restrictions have had on the work of the Freedom Elementary Redistricting Committee. The topics discussed included:

- Committee work was entering the critical analysis stage requiring live display of GIS mapping and various large displays of reference material;
- This process is most effective when the committee members can be together in a setting that is highly interactive, fluid, dynamic, and includes healthy discussion and debate;
- The pandemic closures and restrictions impact each household individually. We wanted to be respectful of this and refrain from asking committee members to give more time right now to the process;
- The outcome of a redistricting process tends to elicit strong public interest and feedback. We need to ensure that we have followed the best process possible; and
- The end of the redistricting process requires active public participation through hearings. Typically redistricting options result in significant public participation. We want to be sure that our process will conclude with a full and open opportunity for public hearing.

Following this discussion, the Board decided to suspend the Committee's work until it may resume in a more traditional manner. At this point, we know we will not meet the original timeline of producing a report in June 2020. Depending on when restrictions are relaxed enough to allow work to continue, we will determine if we will be able to meet the timeline for redistricting defined in Board Policy and Administrative Regulations JCAA: Boundary Adjustments. That timeline requires committee recommendations in September 2020, two public hearings and a board work session in September/October 2020, and a final action by the Board in November 2020. The earliest that any redistricting changes would take place, if adopted, would be the following school year, 2021-22.

When there is any change in status of the Freedom Elementary Redistricting Committee, it will be discussed and announced publicly by the Board of Education. We will also post any status updates on the Board's web page dedicated to the committee.

If we are unable to resume the Committee early enough to meet the timeline in Policy and Regulation JCAA, then the process may be pushed into the next year. If that were to occur, we would continue to monitor our enrollment and any changes to enrollment projections. Freedom Elementary School would continue to operate in the same manner it has been. The school is at 114.7% of capacity this school year and is expected to increase to 117.9% of capacity next year. Staffing is allocated to each school based on total enrollment. There are four relocatable classrooms at the school, which will remain to address capacity needs.

The status update provided in this letter is also posted on the Board's web page. As parents who may be directly impacted by the committee's work, we will continue to update you with any changes in status.

Steven A. Lockard
Superintendent of Schools