



Board of Education Summary  
January 15, 2010  
Board Meeting  
Bluffton High School

**Chairmen Fred Washington called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M.**

**Chairmen Washington called for the approval of the agenda.**

Approved

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Media properly notified**

**Invocation**

**Public Session**

Chairmen asked the public if they would defer and hold their comments until after the superintendent has presented more options concerning student reassignment. All deferred.

Superintendent Truesdale presented more options for student reassignment.

Superintendent Truesdale gave the reasons for the need for student reassignment. There were two: Defining attendance areas for the three new schools opening in fall 2010 and adjusting demographics to meet the request from the Office of Civil Rights.

Chairmen Washington said to the public that there will be no action taken at this board meeting.

Superintendent Truesdale mentioned to the public again that there was a perception that decisions were already made and no decisions have been made at this point. Options are still being presented.

Superintendent Truesdale reviews the week for the public information settings and recommended additional options for the board to consider:

**Elementary Schools Student Assignment**

We recommend the original **Elementary Option 3** as follows:

Bluffton ES: The attendance area would include only neighborhoods on Buckwalter Parkway south of the intersection with the Bluffton Parkway at the Townes, and excluding the Willows, Arborwood, and Sandy Pointe.

MC Riley ES: The attendance area would lose the "satellite piece" of the Hwy 170 corridor to Pritchardville Elementary.

Okatie ES: The attendance area would be as current, with the addition of the Willows and Arborwood. Islands West area moves to Pritchardville Elementary.

Red Cedar ES: The attendance area would be as current, minus the Vista View area and all of the streets on Hwy 46 from Buck Island Rd to Buckwalter Pkwy.

Pritchardville ES: The attendance area includes all of the areas along the Hwy 170 corridor, all neighborhoods off Hwy 46 from Rose Dhu Creek west to the New River, includes all neighborhoods on Old Miller Rd and adds Vista View and all the neighborhoods along Hwy 46 west of Buck Island Road.

## **Middle Schools Student Assignment**

We recommend a new **Middle Option 4:**

Bluffton Area: At the January 8 retreat, Dr. Carbiener and Ms. Bush asked if reconfiguring the middle schools' grades and finishing out Bluffton Middle would be feasible to help alleviate Bluffton High overcrowding. After due diligence regarding the building construction, costs, availability of funds, sports participation impact, research on success of ninth graders, and analysis of student data, we recommend that the Board consider **assigning sixth and seventh graders to Bluffton Middle and eighth and ninth graders to McCracken Middle School for at least two years.**

Increasing Bluffton Middle School's capacity from 800 to 1100 students (14 classrooms) could be accomplished by fall 2010 at a cost of approximately \$1.1 million. Funds are available in the Bluffton Middle School project budget (2006 referendum). We would also save the cost of moving mobile classrooms to Bluffton High School.

Adopting this Option 4 would leave approximately 500 students at McCracken Middle for their ninth grade year and reduce BLHS enrollment from 1653 to approximately 1295 (moving students up plus allowing for growth of about 75 students). One suggestion from community input sessions was to reconfigure the elementary schools as PK-6 and form two 7, 8, 9 schools at BLMiddle and HEMMS. Because of fewer fields at BLMiddle, ready access of after school sports between HEMMS and BLHS, and the opportunity for highly able students to take advanced courses at the high school, **we recommend serving grades 6, 7 at Bluffton Middle and grades 8 and 9 at HEMMcCracken Middle.** The principals agree with this approach.

Beaufort Area: Students who are assigned to Beaufort Elementary School currently split for middle and high school attendance. About half (246) attend Beaufort Middle School and about half (219) attend Robert Smalls Middle School. **We recommend that all BES-zoned students attend Beaufort Middle School and then Battery Creek High School.** This action adds about 80 students to BMS, increasing the percentage of African-American students from 27% to 33%, with Hispanic and Other categories remaining about 11%. Adopting this option keeps the PK-8 population from Beaufort Elementary together.

## **High School Student Assignments**

We recommend the following **new High School Option H:**

Whale Branch Early College HS: The attendance area would include all of the WBMS zone, plus Laurel Bay and the areas just outside of the gate including the neighborhoods of Irongate, Capehart, and Pinewood subdivisions.

Battery Creek HS: The attendance area would include the RSMS zone (minus the areas assigned to WBECHS) and adds all of the Beaufort ES zone and the Port Royal ES area.

Beaufort HS: The attendance area includes all of LIMS zone plus the area of Mossy Oaks Elementary.

Bluffton HS: Attendance boundaries would not change; however, ninth graders would be served at McCracken Middle School.

Hilton Head HS : Attendance boundaries would not change.

### **Additional Policy Recommendations:**

- a) "Grandfather" rising high school seniors who are affected by student assignment changes.

The school board discussed these options and gave a sense of support for the options recommended by Superintendent Truesdale.

Community members that had signed the form to speak came to the front and expressed a sense of gratitude for bringing this recommendation.

Chairmen Washington stated no action would be taken on this matter today.

The meeting then concluded.