



CHESTERFIELD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Marcus J. Newsome, Ed.D., Superintendent

SCHOOL BOARD

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Dec. 8, 2009

Dear Parents and Guardians:

Chester Middle School has always held a place in the heart of our community's residents. Since it opened as a middle school approximately 50 years ago, staff and faculty members have worked tirelessly to prepare Chester-area students for future success. It's easy to look around the community and point to former Chester Middle students making a difference in Chesterfield.

The school division continues to face unprecedented economic challenges that affect the operating budget and funding for the School Board's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Difficult times require difficult decisions to ensure that the School Board is **efficient** and **effective** with taxpayer dollars.

With history in mind, it is with a heavy heart that I write to share that tonight the School Board will review plans to close Chester Middle School at the end of this school year. The proposal will include redistricting current Chester Middle students to Carver and Elizabeth Davis middle schools and using the existing Chester Middle facility to help alleviate crowding at Thomas Dale High School.

A smaller operating budget means there is less funding available for the CIP, which is our master plan for building and maintaining facilities. With our ability to pay for debt reduced, the School Board has made the difficult choice to delay the previously planned construction of a new high school that would have opened in 2016. This high school would have helped ease crowding at Thomas Dale, which is currently at 130 percent of its functional capacity.

With the proposed high school construction delayed, we must find new ways to solve crowding problems. There currently are 2,396 students attending Thomas Dale (functional capacity of 1,840). Moving the ninth-grade class to the existing Chester Middle building will allow us to ensure that the schools involved in this proposal (Thomas Dale High, Carver Middle and Elizabeth Davis Middle) are used in the most efficient and effective manner possible. With the changes proposed, all four locations (including Chester Middle with Thomas Dale's ninth-grade class) will be below 100 percent of their functional capacity. This decision is not a short-term fix; a chart on the back of this letter shows that the four schools are projected to remain below their functional capacity through at least 2018. The School Board believes this will provide an educational atmosphere that continues to be conducive to academic achievement. It also is a prudent business decision that will save \$40 million in taxpayer money.

On the back of this letter is additional information explaining the necessity of this decision. In coming months, you will receive updates about the proposal's progress, redistricting plans and opportunities to visit new schools. This time frame will include community meetings to further discuss the plan, its opportunities and its challenges.

It is our duty to provide students with a safe, supportive and nurturing learning environment in an effective and efficient manner. The School Board believes that this proposal allows us to fulfill that duty. Thank you for your continuing support during a challenging economic time.

Sincerely,

Marshall W. Trammell Jr.
School Board Chair
Bermuda District Representative

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Proposal to Address Overcrowding at Thomas Dale High School

Current and Projected enrollments/capacities are:

SCHOOL	FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY	SEPTEMBER 30, 2009 MEMBERSHIP	PERCENT OF FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY	SEPTEMBER 30, 2013 MEMBERSHIP	PERCENT OF FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY	SEPTEMBER 30, 2018 MEMBERSHIP	PERCENT OF FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY
THOMAS DALE HS	1,840	2,396	130%	2,336	127%	2,347	128%
CHESTER MIDDLE	887	697	79%	721	81%	740	83%
DAVIS MIDDLE	1,284	784	61%	738	57%	754	59%
CARVER MIDDLE	1,287	845	66%	866	67%	855	66%

Proposal:

Move the 9th grade from the Thomas Dale building to the current Chester Middle building
 Draw new attendance boundaries to eliminate Chester Middle and move those students to
 Carver Middle and Davis Middle

Current and Projected enrollments/capacities would be:

SCHOOL	FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY	SEPTEMBER 30, 2009 MEMBERSHIP	PERCENT OF FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY	SEPTEMBER 30, 2013 MEMBERSHIP	PERCENT OF FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY	SEPTEMBER 30, 2018 MEMBERSHIP	PERCENT OF FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY
THOMAS DALE (10-12)	1,840	1,775	96%	1,729	94%	1,737	94%
THOMAS DALE (9)	887	621	70%	607	68%	610	69%
DAVIS MIDDLE	1,284	1,181	92%	1,181	92%	1,193	93%
CARVER MIDDLE	1,287	1,145	89%	1,144	89%	1,156	90%