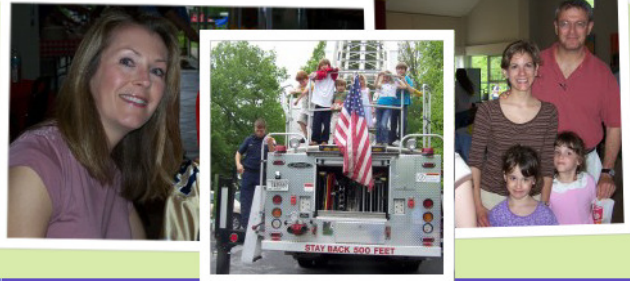


High Point Civic Association
Sandy Springs, Georgia
www.HighPointCivic.com

To preserve and enhance the integrity of our neighborhood by maintaining a consistent and unified adherence to sound land use.



HOME EVENTS - MEETINGS COMMUNITY ZONING SAFETY MEMBERSHIP - JOIN US ABOUT US - CONTACT US

Archive for May, 2007

[Redistricting of High Point Elementary School](#)

Tuesday, May 15th, 2007

By participating in the **Fulton County School Redistricting** process, HPCA's objective is **to ensure that district lines are drawn to encourage each neighborhood to participate in its neighborhood school and, where possible, such lines should reflect historical boundaries and avoid separating neighborhood groups.** One important facet as this pertains to redistricting High Point Elementary School is to maintain the integrity of HPCA's incorporated boundaries, to include the east side of Roswell Road.

12/10/07 Final Redistricting Meeting Announcement:

The third and final redistricting meeting is **December 10th, from 7-9 p.m. at North Springs High School.** There is power in numbers! Please come and join our coalition for improving High Point Elementary School by appropriate redistricting to relieve overcrowding!

HPCA/Community Members: [Many thanks](#) to Brittany Charron and her team for their outstanding leadership in this process. We also appreciate the fine support of our Mayor and City Council. The second of three redistricting meetings was held this past Tuesday night and we had an excellent turnout from the High Point area! The third meeting will be held on **Dec 10th** and, after Thanksgiving, we'll be sending out more info on how to email your comments on the plans. Have a safe and happy holiday! We are all working for the best solution! Thanks for your continued support of this very important issue for our community. **Plans A, B, and C** <http://www.fultonschools.org/redistricting/>

Message From the Planning Office to our community: Thank you for taking the time to provide input regarding the current Sandy Springs elementary school redistricting effort. We realize that not all members of the community could attend the November 13th community forum. We also realize that people who did attend may have additional insights to share. Therefore, staff will continue to receive comments via the website, email, mail, and fax from the community through the end of November.

Using the primary and secondary criteria outlined in the Board policy and comments collected from the community related to the plan alternatives and these criteria, staff will develop one or more draft plans. These plans will be presented to the community on December 10th at 7:00 p.m. The purpose of the third community meeting is to again gather further input about the pros / cons of the draft plans. Staff will revisit the criteria and use the information collected from and after the third community forum to develop the final Board recommendation.

The Board of Education will receive a recommendation in January for first reading. They are scheduled to take action in February. The times / dates / locations as well as directions to scheduled Board meetings are available on our website at http://www.fultonschools.org/2007_08_boardmeetings.asp

History and Future High Point Elementary School:

Many times in life it is useful to go back and review history – so that the same mistakes are not made over and over again.

The Past:

High Point Elementary School was constructed in Sandy Springs in the early 1960s. This school was originally designed to accommodate 350 students. Due to many demographic issues beyond the direct control of the nearby neighborhoods and School Board, it became necessary to overload this school with almost 900 children. Additional classrooms and bathrooms were constructed in 2006, and the elevation of the stage was lowered in order to comply with GA regulations – but the internal core resources of the school (auditorium, kitchen, clinic, playground, entrance way, etc.) remained the same. This overloading caused the nearby families to either send their children to private schools or move from our nearby neighborhoods. Currently, the neighborhoods near HPES send fewer than 10% of their children to public schools (but of course 100% of these neighborhoods pay over 50% of their property taxes to the School System). In other words, our nearby neighborhoods only make up about 10% of HPES' current population of 820 students.

However, after much effort, the School Board was able to commit to building 2 additional elementary schools in Sandy Springs, and this expansion triggered the necessity and opportunity to re-align the school attendance zones in Sandy Springs in 2007. Also, the creation of the city of Sandy Springs has shown our neighborhood groups that if we are organized, we can in fact affect governmental agencies to improve our quality of life.

The Future:

The School System indicates that High Point ES's current student population of 820 will be reduced down to approximately 550 children by the fall of 2009. (We believe that HPES is equipped to handle no more than 500 children – and we will continue to discuss this issue with the School Board, at appropriate times and places.)

Looking forward, we hope that soon there will be enough available spaces at HPES to allow our nearby neighborhoods to once again want to send their children to a public school – and our goal is that soon 50% of the children going to HPES will be from nearby neighborhoods. And, to get this goal in motion, we have begun holding neighborhood meetings to actively solicit attendance of children for the upcoming school years. (If you attended the Round II Meeting at North Springs HS, you would have seen that many young moms of prospective students WERE in attendance.)

So now the focus is on selecting those attendance boundaries for HPES that can best energize the nearby neighborhoods to once again support our local school. We seek your support.

High Point-Ridgeview Coalition for Better Schools November, 2007

“Even if you do not have children in the public school system, your house value is very much tied to the public school system.” - S.S. Councilwoman Ashley Jenkins
We must show the Fulton County School Board that we are a neighborhood who backs our school, and that we are willing to work to get the best for our children.

We must show the Fulton County School Board that we are a neighborhood who backs our school, and that we are willing to work to get the best for our children. **High Point Elementary is a wonderful school – but it is overcrowded.** Our presence at the redistricting meetings will help ensure that we are treated with equality when new school district lines are decided by the FC School Board.

What do we want from redistricting?

- a smaller, neighborhood school.
- 500 students at HPES next year – max!
- no more trailers.
- lunch that does not begin (as now) at 10:35 a.m. and finish at 1:05 p.m.
- core areas (cafeteria, Media Center, clinic) that are not overburdened.

11/13/07 Meeting:

Gail Dean, the School Board rep. for the High Point ES district conducted her public meeting on 11/13/07 at 9:30am at Spalding Drive Elementary Charter School. While part of this meeting addressed the process of the ES Redistricting and overcrowding issues at HPES, none of the elected school board reps. attended the Tuesday night redistricting meeting, which was run by executives from the Fulton County School System. The School Board will receive the recommended plan from the Staff and then vote on the plan in February, 2008.

Questions or comments or to volunteer to help with this effort, please contact Brittany Charron, Chair, HPCA Committee for Better Schools at 404.303.9345 or email info@highpointcivic.com using subject *Redistricting*.

More Comments from our elected officials:

“The redistricting of Sandy Springs is of course very important... The re-drawing of the attendance boundaries for each school should take into account **transportation** and **safety** issues – **especially on Roswell Road. Regarding High Point elementary school...** I believe its western **boundary should be returned** to its **traditional boundary...the east side of Roswell Road.** Now that some of the tremendous overcrowding in our elementary schools can be alleviated, we all have a chance to work with the Fulton County School System to get each neighborhood back involved with our public schools. We all pay school taxes – and all our children should have an equal chance to attend an excellent elementary school in the public sector.” –**S.S. Councilman DeJulio**, November 6, 2007.

” I personally agree with all of (HPCA’s) requests to the School Board. They are all quite reasonable. **I especially agree that the west boundary for High Point elementary school should be Roswell Road. That makes total sense.** This is not just an issue of safety, but also of equity. The High Point neighborhoods have suffered with inappropriate attendance boundaries for many years - and it is time to provide some equity to the children in southeast Sandy Springs.” –**S.S. Mayor Galambos**, November 6, 2007.

Comments on R.E. Impact:

“I have worked in real estate in metro Atlanta for over 25 years and have been a resident of Sandy Springs for 11 years. I have personally sold over 1,000 homes in the metro area, 100’s of which were to people relocating to the area from outside of Georgia, and the first question was always ‘What are the good school districts?’ High-rated school districts add value to property as people desire to relocate to those areas and will pay more for the houses in those areas. Also, houses sell faster if they are located in good school districts. Unfortunately, when I sell homes in Sandy Springs, I usually recommend that my clients consider sending their children to private schools. What a shame!

Ave. home sale in 2007 Sarah Smith ES district \$897,877 (which is directly south of High Point).

Ave. home sale in 2007 High Point ES district \$641,026 (29% less).

In spite of the fact that homes in the Sarah Smith ES district have higher property taxes (because they are located in Atlanta), they sell for significantly higher amounts than High Point’s ES. In explaining this differential, the quality of the public schools is certainly one of the major factors (and that is why our databases collect sale prices by school districts.)” - Deborah Harris, R.E. professional

Letter to Fulton County Staff from a neighborhood mom:

As a High Point resident and a parent of a future High Point Elementary School student, I am very concerned about the overcrowding at the existing school. The redistricting process is an opportunity to alleviate the stress on the existing facility and provide an environment more conducive to learning for our High Point Children. Please return High Point Elementary to the community school it was meant to be.

Our community boundaries are the Fulton/DeKalb border on the East, the Fulton/City of Atlanta border on the South, Roswell Road on the West, and 285 on the North. By using this geographic area, school enrollment should not exceed 500. This creates an ideal learning environment based on the existing cafeteria, bathroom, gymnasium and classroom sizes. All trailers should be removed as soon as possible.

It is my understanding that over the past year, the existing overcrowding has caused unsafe and unsanitary conditions for the children. While the addition is a much needed help, the facilities are still being taxed beyond their intended enrollment numbers. It is also my understanding that because of the overcrowding, some children begin their lunch at 10:35 and others not until 1:05. This is not an ideal situation for children in a learning environment.

I have been a High Point resident for 8 years and Fulton County taxpayer for 18 years. As a product of public education, I believe every child deserves the opportunity to attend public school in a learning conducive environment. I do not believe our High Point children are being afforded the opportunity that they deserve. As a Fulton County taxpayer, I deserve a choice in where I send my child to school. Given the existing overcrowded environment, and the subsequent facility issues, my decision to send my child to our public school cannot be made without question as to what is best for my child. That is not fair.

The Fulton County Board of Education has the opportunity and the responsibility to return High Point Elementary to the community school it was meant to be. Eliminating overcrowding will attract community parents to make our public school the school of choice for their children. Please help us in our effort to create a great school for all High Point children. Respectfully submitted, Jennifer Barnes