

BOE Public Comment 6-7-2011:

**The Devil You know; Green offers More Certainty**

I applaud the efforts of the Superintendent for the work that has been done thus far in creating a new assignment plan for our county. Clearly this is work that belongs in the able hands of staff—people who have direct access to ...and experience evaluating data on our historic and anticipated growth, facility locations and demographics of our students.

You have also made some effort to engage the public through the web site and public hearings; however, I am disappointed that Mr. Tata would come out so early expressing favoritism for one plan over the other...without allowing the public to come to their own conclusions based on the research your team has assembled.

I hope citizens will take more than a cursory view of the plans so they can draw a true comparison and not be blindsided because they didn't look past the '*blue is mostly green*' chart on the web.

Here are a few things I realized in doing so.

For both Blue and Green, you can apply for various calendar options and all siblings will be on the same track if you are in a year round school. But with BLUE, it is less certain that you can get your calendar choice.

Under GREEN newcomers purchasing a home will know the schools they are assigned to and can apply to a different calendar or magnet if they choose; under BLUE, there is greater uncertainty in where your child will attend, especially if the closest school or the 'achievement school' has filled.

GREEN has guaranteed transportation for base assignments, yet BLUE may make use of express buses which will likely deter families from selecting their true choice.

You say GREEN schools could get capped if there is overcrowding, yet BLUE schools can disappear off the list when they fill. Neighborhood friends choosing the same school under the BLUE plan may well be separated.

**The Blue plan seemingly offers more choice, but it does so for the price of uncertainty.** The issues I have mentioned are a few that should be addressed before moving forward with this plan.

Again, I would encourage our school board to make thoughtful, **incremental** improvements in our school system—to use a scalpel as their preferred tool...rather than an axe. We need to proceed with extreme caution in making sweeping changes that could have hidden and long-term ill-effects for our community. The devil is in the details and the Devil we know, may be a much better friend than the Devil we don't know.

A. Lumpkin