

Speech – 10/04/11 BOE Meeting

Good evening, Board members and Superintendent Tata.

As with all the new schools the county has opened in the last ten years, the new \$59 million high school in Apex will have to be filled with students. You've promised stability. How are you going to fill that school under a choice plan? Wishful thinking seems like a risky bet.

So, the constituency that seems to come last when discussing the matter of student assignment is parents. An important dialog would be one that answers the question, "How will you fill this \$59 million school when it opens in 2015?"

If there's a controlled school choice model in place, and if there is grandfathering in 2015—a big unknown—then who will fill the 2,200 seats?

Students and their families have an amazing loyalty to their high schools. It's not likely that you'll have a lot of volunteers willing to have their children reassigned to the new facility. And if siblings of students already attending a high school are given priority to attend their brother or sister's high school, that further compounds the issue.

So, how will you fill this school under a "choice" plan? I imagine some new families moving to the area will choose it. Or, if you start by filling this school with just 9th or 10th graders, you are not using a \$59 million facility efficiently. But, if you operate under a choice model and try to fill this school to its capacity so tax dollars are used efficiently, it won't be the parents who get the choice. You will likely make the choice for them.