

## Board of Education Meeting, 2/7/12

Thank you for this opportunity for me to share my concerns related to our new Assignment Plan. I would like to share with you specific situations that I have learned about relating to my personal situation and Millbrook High School. Now I most certainly recognize the hours of work that have gone into developing this plan as well as the fact that the plan is already in motion. I also understand that our superintendent is advising us to wait as he believes most will be happy when the process is complete.

Here are a few specific examples I have encountered:

Students new to our system, coming out of charter or private schools, can be assigned to Millbrook instantly whereas my child, who has been in the system since K goes through the choice process praying that a seat will be available.

Students within our neighborhood, new to our system, could choose Millbrook as a magnet choice while I was told that my child cannot choose Millbrook as a magnet choice because she can choose Millbrook based on proximity.

There is a child who lives a few houses down from us, who has been classmates with my child 8 of the last 9 years, who has been assigned to Millbrook. This is when I learned that the program looks at where the child went to 5th grade to determine the feeder pattern for high school. This particular child went to the new charter school for that one year. Thus he was preassigned to Millbrook as the closest high school. However, I'm told my feeder pattern is Sanderson!

I've talked to several who have been completely surprised upon learning that grandfathering is not operational in this plan. Families need to be held together, yet grandfathering only comes into play when the computer program distinguishes who gets top of the choice list, but this does not guarantee a seat. The plan should automatically allow for siblings to get a seat at the school where the older student is. Furthermore, the plan should incorporate a "sunrise" clause allowing families who previously had a student graduate from a school for the younger sibling to have a seat at the same school.

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This past Thursday we hosted our 9th grade curriculum fair at Millbrook. Traditionally this is a very well attended event where parents and their rising 9th graders have the opportunity to talk to teachers and staff across the disciplines to begin thinking about the path they intend to take as they begin high school. Typically our cafeteria is packed! However, this past Thursday teachers and staff may have outnumbered the visitors!

We heard from many frustrated parents who were there because they want to be at Millbrook but they do not know yet if they will be awarded the school through the choice process. This explained the low turnout. Families do not yet know which school their child will be attending next year.

Families need to have a better idea of where their child will be in school by mid point of the previous school year. In making choice, we do not know how to plan as we have to wait to know if we get that choice. By the time I know whether or not my child can attend the school we know is best for our family, it will be too late for us to adapt to make alternative plans should she not get a seat.

It is mind baffling to me that a Student Assignment Plan that was initially touted based on student achievement and proximity is playing out having emphasis on forced feeder patterns and capacity! As this plan is playing out it is dividing neighborhoods and families.

While I hear Superintendent Tata implore us to just wait, I question why we can't break from some of these illogical feeder patterns, and why we can't make some corrections to the plan as we become aware of things that don't make sense and need fixing.

Thank you for your time, your service, and for listening to me and what I have to say.