



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE
MONTGOMERY COUNTY MARYLAND BRANCH
BOX 2165 ROCKVILLE, MD 20847-2165

**RE: NAACP-Montgomery County branch Public Comment before the Board of Education
re: Boundary Recommendation for Bethesda Chevy Chase Middle School #2**

DATE: 14 November 2016

Good evening. I'm here to speak to you following up on the NAACPs concerns regarding the boundary recommendations for B-CC MS #2. As this will be the last opportunity to address the Board before a decision is rendered, I want to provide context for our November 2nd letter opposing Option 7 put forth by MCPS staff, and reinforce the eloquent statement given by one of our students attending B-CC, Emma McMillian, who shared with us the facts from the front lines – in the classroom – from a student perspective. As the oldest and boldest civil rights organization in the nation, the NAACP has fought to dismantle structural, systemic, statutory segregation in society, and most notably in public education. Right here in Montgomery County, after the NAACP won its historic decision in *Brown vs Board of Education*, it was more than 3 years before the Montgomery County Board of Education adopted a policy of integration despite it being the law of the land. We have been instrumental partners in making this school system one of the finest public school systems in the nation for families of all races and religions.

Our current discussions about setting boundaries for BCC middle school students appear to be at best unfamiliar with, or at worst suffering from amnesia about important historical discussions and events. They are:

- Almost 5 years ago to the day, the NAACP Parents' Council wrote the BOE to express our concern that the BCC MS site selection and school boundary assignments would likely re-segregate the BCC cluster by race and class, and adversely impact school and cluster-wide diversity. It was our view then, the staff's site recommendation would result in 2 unequal schools with very different educational loads, learning environments, and ultimately academic achievement outcomes.
- The March 2012 letter¹ from the Superintendent for the BCC MS #2 site recommendation, which was ratified by the Board, informed the NAACP and others to be reassured "in the strongest possible terms" that the 2 middle schools would have diverse student populations preserved.

The policy stated was that enrollment in BCC Cluster middle schools would **not** be based on a neighborhood school model that favors proximity and reflects residential segregation.

¹ http://montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/PDF/B-CC_MS_2_Recommendation.pdf

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*“Concerns have been raised about the potential for the two middle schools in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cluster to have differing levels of diversity because of the location of the Rock Creek Hills Local Park Local Park in the northern part of the cluster. This concern was expressed in the greatest detail in the minority report submitted ...on behalf of the Bethesda Chevy Chase High School National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's (NAACP) Parents' Council. Her report states that if Rock Creek Hills Local Park is selected, then a "demographic split will occur in the cluster." However, there is no basis for this conclusion"..... If boundary setting did not consider demographics and only considered distance to schools, then some imbalance in demographics might occur. However, in developing boundaries the proximity of communities to one school or another is considered in the light of the demographic impact of assigning students based on proximity....I strongly agree with ... objective to ensure diverse student populations are preserved for Westland Middle School and the new middle school when boundaries are drawn. I want to **reassure her, and others who raised this, in the strongest possible terms that this can be achieved with the new middle school** located at the Rock Creek Hills Local Park site.”*

I ask you to look at this 2012 policy decision. It provides the bedrock policy that is the basis for our recommendation of Option 11, and in our opinion precludes the approval of staff recommendation 7 which decimates the balance of diversity by 50-200%. Boundaries go far beyond the voices speaking now. Boundaries will affect generations to come. That is why decisions about boundaries are based on policies and goals.

In closing, I would like to publicly thank all those that participated in the Boundary study process, especially our NAACP representatives Tony Parchment, Michael Pinard, and Sabrina McMillan. Also a special thanks to Emma McMillian, who shared with us the reality and gravity of this decision on students.

Byron Johns
Chair, Education
NAACP- Montgomery County, MD