Testimony

Dear BOE members,

I am Sangita Sakaria, a Clarksburg resident and a mother of a 4th grader and a Kindergartner who will be affected by this boundary study. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify today.

We moved from Canada to Clarksburg a few years ago hoping to be in the best school system in the USA. My husband travels a lot for work. Only person left to take care of the kids is me. This is while I keep up with work and making sure my kids get to school safe and sound. As parents, our basic responsibility is the safety, mental health and overall wellbeing of our kids. Let’s talk about all that in relation to this boundary study.

If the Superintendent’s recommendation is selected, my kids will be riding the bus from Cabin Branch down MD-355 to Neelsville Middle School during rush hour in both directions. When we moved to Clarksburg, we were well aware that there are transportation issues we have to face as an adult. We were not aware that our kids would have to face that issue as well. In the morning when I-270 is packed with crazy drivers, there are so many people who take different routes, either Clopper Rd or MD-355, in order to get to work on time and they are as busy and packed as I-270. These are the same routes the recommendation is suggesting the kids take to school.

I support option 9 because it gives us freedom to stay in our neighborhood schools. I support option 9 because it solves my family's hardship of every day commuting in traffic. My kids will have to sit on a bus in bumper to bumper rush hour traffic. When my youngest goes to middle school, my oldest will be riding in the other direction on the high school bus. What happens if for some reason they miss the bus or if there was an accident? Which by the way happens on Clopper Rd or MD-355 most of the time. Who will be driving the kids to school? What if it happens with both my kids' buses? Do I have time to leave my work and drop both kids in different directions during rush hour? In addition, in order to get to the school they need to wake up earlier than needed and coming home for the entire 180 school days would be a 45 min to 1 hour commute. As a one parent household most of the time, my kids will be missing after school activities or school events due to needing to take a long bus ride. They love to attend extra activities at school and that will suffer. For the parents in the community, lots of PTA activities will be missed as everyone is trying to get home, make dinner, and feed their kids. During winter time, our kids will hardly see sunshine as they will be spending most of their time either riding the bus or sitting in the classroom. To keep the kids from a long bus ride, I will be shuffling between work and kids’ pick up and drop off. I would rather spend precious time with my kids. More cars, more buses, more pollution, and the safety of kids will be neglected.

Don't we all deserve a good education? “All means All” I also worry about my kids getting less sleep due to long hours of commuting. This will lead to less attention paid in the classroom due to exhaustion. That will lead to poor performance in school. Teenagers are already stressed due to puberty and with this long commute, it will add up the stress in our family life. All kids need fairness in this decision “All mean All” There was a 91.6 percent vote for geography in the clarksburg cluster. Please consider this point when you send Clarksburg kids out of their neighborhood schools. I support option 9 because of all these reasons.

Respectfully
Sangita Sakaria