November 13, 2019

Board President Evans, Distinguished Members of the Board, and Superintendent Smith,

My name is Jay Guan. I am the Board Chair of the Chinese American Parent Association, Montgomery County (CAPA-MC). Today, I am here as a young father and a would-be parent of the Clarksburg Cluster. Thank you for the opportunity to testify with regards to the Upcounty Boundary Study.

I am here to ask the board to adopt option 9 as the alternative to the Superintendent’s recommendation.

First, a word regarding the process. The Upcounty Boundary Study process differed significantly from past studies. In previous studies, MCPS engaged the Asian Pacific American Student Achievement Action Group (APASAAG) to obtain feedback from the APA communities in MCPS. The new process did not include such outreach, or any other notable outreach from MCPS to the APA communities that I know of.

Now, onto the boundary study. The current recommendation seems to trivialize the transportation challenge for families in Clarksburg. This challenge is well known to most in the County. You probably heard about this from our State Delegates too. Clarksburg’s transportation woes are no joke.

Let me put that in perspective, the recommendation estimated that each trip will be an additional 15 minutes between Seneca Valley and Clarksburg. If we take this at face value, assuming two trips per day, and the state mandated minimum of 180 instruction days, that amounts to an additional 30 minutes per instructional day (2 trips/day, hence 30 minutes), or 5400 minutes a year, per pupil.

### Average Bus Times for Boundary Options
(Portions of Elementary School Service Areas to High Schools)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average Amount of Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabin Branch Development to Clarksburg HS</td>
<td>13 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabin Branch Development to Seneca Valley HS</td>
<td>28 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern portion of Clarksburg ES to Clarksburg HS</td>
<td>33 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern portion of Clarksburg ES to Seneca Valley HS</td>
<td>41 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1 Average Bus Time, Cabin Branch Development to Clarksburg HS and Seneca Valley HS*
However, a quick google search yields very different numbers. The time it takes to cover the same “additional” distance from Clarksburg HS to Seneca Valley HS, at the time of dismissal on a typical weekday, is 19 minutes per trip. This number is determined based on the typical traffic condition as compiled by Google Map’s traffic data. The number amounts to 38 minutes a day, 6840 minutes a year. In the event of weather and adverse traffic conditions, the commute time in this segment easily doubles.

![Google Map of Clarksburg to Seneca Valley](image)

**Table 1 Comparison of Estimated Additional Bus Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance to Cover</th>
<th>Additional Time MCPS Estimate [Min, Per year]</th>
<th>Google Estimate [Min, Per year]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarksburg HS to Seneca Valley HS</td>
<td>5400</td>
<td>6840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rocky Hill MS to Neelsville MS</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>3600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We often talk about how kids nowadays have no time to play, that they face an extremely heavy academic load. Yet, we seem perfectly happy with taking away more time and allot that to sitting in a bus. We adults often lament the amount of time we spent commuting, yet we seem perfectly happy to increase our own children’s commute time.
Some may say, it is only few extra minutes. For families, this “few minutes” is no small matter. This is time away from family, away from friends, and away from their community. This is time they can be at home, sharing their days with their loved ones.

In addition to transportation, the assignment of the “Cabin Branch” Development to Seneca Valley High School also post problems to facility utilization. This area of Clarksburg includes not only Cabin Branch (2386 units), but also three other developments, Tapestry (67 units), Clarksburg Square/Gankirk Farm (392 units), Dowden Station (105 units).

Figure 3 Development in Proposed Area of Assignment Change
They are either in the process of construction, or it’s in the process of Planning Board review. While Capital Planning does include the number of unit in these developments into account, the actual number of student generated may vary from prediction. This happened before in Clarksburg. Seneca Valley has used almost all of its available land in its expansion. In short, if the amount of students from Clarksburg varies greatly from the prediction, then Seneca Valley will be hard press to accommodate everyone. Given the demonstrated uncertainty in the number of student generated prediction, it seems like a poor risk/uncertainty mitigation practice to propose the assignment of an area with the greatest uncertainty to Seneca Valley, a school with little to no room in which to mitigate the said uncertainty (in facility utilization).

In conclusion, I implore the Board to adopt option 9 as the alternative.

Reference:
https://mcatlas.org/devfinder/
https://mcatlas.org/Development_Info/default.aspx?apno=82012010A

google.com/maps