

FACT SHEET ABOUT ANNANDALE HIGH SCHOOL OVERCROWDING

Annandale High School (AHS) has been overcrowded for a number of years. Even as long ago as 2001, AHS was **181** over-enrolled. However, the overcapacity has now reached a crisis point.

Currently, AHS is approximately 350 students over its capacity of **2,134** students. Despite the over-enrollment, students have continued to excel thanks to a dedicated administration and teaching staff. However, the school is now stretched far beyond its capacity and instructional quality may become compromised; teachers are expected to perform under difficult circumstances.

In fall 2009, AHS is projected to be at least **563** students over capacity. Annandale will, at that time, exceed the enrollment at Lake Braddock High School by **224** students and will have only **90** students less than Robinson High School – much larger schools in terms of capacity.

Annandale is simply out of classroom space. This is complicated by the fact that 40 classrooms are currently being used for special education and ESOL, and so are not available for General Education use. All schools are required by law to offer services to students with special needs who live within school boundaries, which is the case at AHS.

Students are attending class in 14 trailers located in the rear of the school. However, none of these trailers are equipped with running water, nor are there lockers. Students must return to the school to use the bathroom facilities – which is disruptive to the teachers and makes monitoring the students more difficult.

In March, noting continued enrollment growth projections, Principal John Ponton asked for “urgent” relief from the School Board. On April 2nd, in spite of concerns expressed by several Board members, and without adequate input from the community, the School Board voted to instruct Facilities staff to conduct a limited scope boundary study (which means limiting receiving high schools to two schools vs. several) to move a number of students from AHS to Lake Braddock SS and Falls Church HS. At the time of their vote, FCPS Facilities staff told the School Board and the public that approximately **275** students were expected to be moved (under the proposed boundary study) in the **fall of 2010**. A number of school board members voted in favor of the limited scope because of their belief that 275 students would be moved and a more comprehensive study planned for the future, which would provide additional relief to AHS. No other options were presented, and – until recently, when the county agreed to put in 2 quads behind AHS for this fall (still with no bathrooms or lockers) – no short-term measures were proposed to relieve overcrowding for the next year.

In the latest boundary maps (released by FCPS Facilities Department on April 15, 2009), **only 238** students are now expected to be transferred -- 83 to Lake Braddock and 155 to Falls Church – and still not until Fall 2010. This means that AHS will remain overcrowded by 563 students in 2009, and even **after** the transfer in 2010, AHS will remain over capacity by 449 students. And by the fall of 2013, Annandale will be over its capacity by 502 students. To allow a school to remain this overcrowded, with no significant relief for at least 3 years, is unconscionable.

YEAR	WITHOUT ENROLLMENT REDUCTIONS		WITH RELIEF UNDER BOUNDARY STUDY (238 students in 2010, 353 students in 2013)	
	PROJECTED ENROLLMENT	OVER-ENROLLMENT (without relief)	PROJECTED ENROLLMENT (with relief)	OVER-ENROLLMENT (with relief)
2009-2010	2697	-563		
2010-2011	2821	-687	2583	-449
2011-2012	2879	-745	2586	-452
2012-2013	2935	-801	2587	-453
2013-2014	2989	-855	2636	-502

Parents have also expressed concern that FCPS was not considering the negative impact of this proposed boundary change to AHS (in terms of loss of community support, student participation in sports and extracurricular activities) when making the decision which neighborhoods to move. Community support has been a crucial factor in AHS's success over the years, in spite of increasing challenges posed by a very diverse student population with equally diverse educational requirements.

Those parents and students who value the continuity of the IB MYP program and the IB Diploma program are discouraged by the limited scope proposal because it does not maintain that continuity. **Students who are currently in the IB MYP program, who live in Ravensworth or neighborhoods north of Rt. 236, would have to pupil-place (and have parents provide transportation) to Stuart HS in order to continue the IB program after 2010. Lake Braddock SS and Falls Church HS are not IB schools.**

Five surrounding high schools are currently under-capacity: Falls Church = **559**; Lake Braddock = **564**; Woodson = **184**; Lee = **317**; Stuart = **328** - and are expected to remain so (or grow even less crowded) through fall 2013. That is a total capacity of **1,954**; but this boundary study is only considering moving 238 students to two of the surrounding high schools.

The Facilities Dept and School Board have repeatedly stated that this limited transfer of students is an "interim" measure until a broader boundary study can be done – which would ostensibly include more high schools such as the ones indicated above; however, this should not be seen as a panacea. The school board is advised by Facilities staff whose job is to only find students to move. Unless current AHS families speak up about the impact, this more comprehensive study may, in fact, continue to be based only on numbers without regard to the makeup of AHS. In addition, no time-table has been given for this comprehensive study, nor has the area being considered been defined. It could be spring of 2011 or later before AHS is again considered for relief. By 2013, AHS will have nearly 3000 students in a building designed to house 2134.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Please fight for Annandale HS. AHS is very crowded but it is worth the School Board's time, attention and best solutions – not a "band-aid" non-solution that will tear away families who are invested in the success of the school...and still leave AHS bursting at the seams until 2012.

AHS is the future of Fairfax County – a model school that educates students from all walks of life and prepares them for the future. Families are concerned that these proposals remove some students but will unduly stress the school by removing some of the most invested and involved families, and without regard for the continuity of the IB educational process. There may be other options for easing overcrowding while also preserving what "works."

The School Board has NOT YET VOTED on whether to confirm this proposed change. Sign up on May 15th to speak at the June 3rd public hearing (call the School Board Office at 571-423-1075 to sign up, or sign up at <http://www.fcps.edu/schlbd/requestspeak.htm>). Plan to attend the Work Session on June 8th.

Contact the School Board BY EITHER WRITING, EMAILING, OR SIMPLY CALLING THEIR OFFICES:

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1. Ask them to reject the current boundary proposal and/or seek a broader proposal from the Facilities Department to transfer more students in order to provide real relief to AHS. This proposed boundary change does not take effect for 15 months and enrollment for Fall 2010 classes does not need to be finalized until Spring 2010.
2. Ask that other changes be made to the physical plant at AHS to increase capacity for the next 3 years or more. Adding the quads was a good start, but a modular unit or bricks & mortar addition (with lockers, bathrooms and public space) is what is needed in the long run. We need more capacity!
3. Ask your School Board members to listen to parental and community input – parents and community members have excellent insight into the impact of boundary changes; we want to be partners in this process.
4. Talk to your student's teachers and ask them what they think would be best for AHS now and in the future. Their insights – and those of the students themselves! – are invaluable to this process.

Thank you very much.