



Brian Osborne, Superintendent  
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Dear South Mountain Parent/Guardian:

A presentation at the February 22, 2010 Board of Education meeting demonstrated that enrollment has been increasing over the past few years with a six percent increase in the 2009-10 school year over the previous year's enrollment. The demographer's projections indicate that elementary enrollment will continue to grow in the 2010-11 and the 2011-12 school years with projected increases of approximately two to three percent. The projections indicate that elementary enrollment will start to decline beginning in the 2012-13 year.

Elementary projections for South Mountain Elementary School exceed the available space in the building. It is expected that South Mountain will be short two rooms in 2010-11, two rooms in 2011-12, three rooms in 2012-13, and two rooms in 2013-14. While the district planned for increased enrollment by creating additional classroom space this past summer, the six percent increase in enrollment resulted in the need to temporarily convert a music room into classroom space and class size was increased in second grade with an additional teacher to support those classes.

A detailed analysis was completed to determine a proposal for addressing the increased elementary enrollment figures. District administration has evaluated a number of options ranging from creating additional space in the district, creating magnet programs at some elementary schools, moving the fifth grade to the middle school, as well as other options. The following principles guided the creation of a proposal for consideration by the Board of Education:

- Respect target capacity for all elementary schools
- Create boundaries that are sustainable in the future
- Impact as few families as possible
- Use natural boundaries (avoid dividing streets, look at major roads as natural dividing lines)
- Keep rising fifth graders in current school (consideration extended to siblings)
- Maintain demographic balance
- Minimize cost impact

A presentation of the proposed plan is scheduled for the March 22 Board of Education meeting. The plan being presented would rezone the following streets to the Marshall/Jefferson pairing: South Wyoming Avenue (146-216), Collinwood Road, Collinwood Road South, Crestwood Drive (1-21), Sunset Terrace, Colonial Terrace, New England Road, Evergreen Place, Audley Street, and Washington Park.

Students residing on these streets are in closer proximity to Jefferson Elementary School than they are to South Mountain Elementary School. Students would receive transportation to Marshall School for grades K-2. These students would continue to attend South Orange Middle School.

Current fourth graders from the affected streets would stay at South Mountain for fifth grade, along with their siblings who are already attending South Mountain School this year. Students who are currently attending South Mountain on a transfer basis must reapply for consideration for the 2010-11 school year. In addition, rising second graders who would be scheduled to attend Marshall School for one year before transferring to Jefferson School would remain at South Mountain for second grade and would attend Jefferson School for third grade in the 2011-12 school year.

A community forum is scheduled on this topic for Monday, April 12, at 7:00 pm in the Board of Education District Meeting Room. Any questions regarding this topic can be e-mailed to [enrollment@somsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:enrollment@somsd.k12.nj.us)

Sincerely,

Brian Osborne