

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

November 14, 2017

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Recommendations: Supplement A—Superintendent’s Recommendation for Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5 Boundary Study

The new Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5 will open for students in fall 2018. A new elementary school is needed in the Richard Montgomery Cluster due to current and projected overutilization at each of the four existing elementary schools. Beall Elementary School currently is at 129 percent utilization; College Gardens Elementary School is at 127 percent utilization; Ritchie Park Elementary School is at 132 percent utilization; and Twinbrook Elementary School is at 102 percent utilization. The new boundary assignment for Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5 must be drawn from these four existing elementary school catchment areas, and must ameliorate the capacity conditions that exist and are projected to continue.

From March through May of 2017, a Boundary Advisory Committee met to explore options for boundary assignments for the new school. The committee identified a total of eight boundary assignment options and issued its report in July. On October 23, 2017, I released my initial recommendation for the Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5 boundary assignment. On November 2, 2017, the Board of Education approved three alternative boundary assignments for consideration. The Board also adopted a resolution regarding the socioeconomic diversity of the cluster assignments.

Boundary reassignments are challenging and require disruption to existing patterns and practices. The Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5 boundary reassignment process has further been complicated by changing conditions in recent stages of the process. As a result of three particular events, we have distributed updated and corrected enrollment and demographic information and have reconvened the Boundary Advisory Committee to discuss and provide feedback on the updated information. In addition, I am submitting subsequent recommendations for the Board’s review and consideration, pursuant to the Board’s November 2, 2017, resolution.

The following three events resulted in a need to provide updated boundary options.

1. As the planning and initial construction phase continued this fall, it became evident that the capacity of Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5 could be increased within available funding due to recent favorable construction costs. Increasing the capacity allows for additional future flexibility to meet enrollment changes, as well as the opportunity to lower utilization rates across all Richard Montgomery Cluster elementary schools. Building out the planned shell space increases the capacity of the new school from 602 to 740, and changes the utilization rate of Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5.

2. As we continued to review the boundary option data, particularly in light of some questions from community members and elected officials, staff identified an error in the calculation of the Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) demographic information. Unfortunately, this error had the effect of altering the FARMS data presented in the boundary options. It also altered the FARMS impact in my recommended boundary option.

Following our identification of this error, staff recalculated this demographic information and has carefully analyzed and reviewed the resulting data tables. Corrected information now is available for each option developed by the Boundary Advisory Committee and for the alternatives adopted by the Board of Education at its November 2, 2017, work session.

3. At the November 2, 2017, work session, the Board adopted a resolution requiring that I review the boundary recommendation for Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5, solicit stakeholder input, and “submit more equitable recommendations for FARMS distribution of students to the Board of Education.”

To reflect the increased capacity and the corrected demographic information, staff has developed updated effects tables for each of the eight options developed by the Boundary Advisory Committee. In addition, staff has developed tables for the three Board adopted alternatives. Each of the 11 options reflects the most recent data available, which includes: 1) the increased capacity at Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5; 2) current year enrollment figures for each school; 3) current year demographic data; and 4) corrected FARMS calculations. The updated tables and information have been widely distributed to the school communities, posted on our website, and reviewed by the Boundary Advisory Committee.

Based on the updated and recalculated FARMS data, my initial recommendation no longer meets the intended objectives for the factor of demographic characteristics of student population. It is not likely that I would have recommended that option based on the current information available to me. At this juncture, I recommend that the Board focus its discussion on the three alternatives it approved on November 2, 2017, and the three options that I submit pursuant to the Board’s November 2, 2017, resolution.

Board of Education Policy FAA, *Long-Range Educational Facilities Planning*, specifies four main factors for consideration in development of school boundaries: demographic characteristics of student population; geographic proximity of communities to schools; stability of school assignments over time; and facility utilization. The policy does not specify the relative priority of any of these factors. It is important to recognize that these four factors do not always align easily or evenly when we are implementing them in specific neighborhood, school, and boundary conversations. It also is important to recognize that each family, neighborhood, and school will experience these factors differently.

Montgomery County Public Schools has the benefit of a diverse student body from a wide range of racial, ethnic, language, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Our commitment always is to provide the highest standard of educational excellence to all students, regardless of background or of geography within the county. We provide differentiated resources to schools to meet the particular needs of the students within each school so that all of our students have the specific supports and opportunities they need to thrive in their future. I firmly believe that our diversity is a strength, and that students benefit from attending diverse schools with students who may not be like themselves. I also believe that all of our schools are excellent schools and that parents/guardians should feel confident in the quality of education their children are receiving across all of Montgomery County.

We must strongly adhere to these values at the same time that we are mindful of the neighborhoods and geography of our school communities, and mindful of the experience of each family within these school communities. This challenge is evident in the Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5 boundary study options. To work within geography and boundaries can lead to schools with varying demographic characteristics. To fully diversify each school can create boundaries where students and families travel farther from their home community to reach their elementary school community and are separated from neighbors.

Consistent with the Board's November 2, 2017, resolution, I am submitting recommendations that represent "more equitable distribution of Free and Reduced Price Meals System students in the Richard Montgomery Cluster elementary schools." Each option has benefits and challenges, particularly in light of the four factors outlined in Board policy. They are not presented in any priority order.

Board of Education Alternative #3 is the first option that I would submit and is consistent with the Board's resolution. In this option, only the students at Twinbrook Elementary School who are currently in the walk zone for Twinbrook Elementary School would remain at Twinbrook Elementary School. The other Twinbrook Elementary School zones would be reassigned to Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5, and College Gardens and Ritchie Park elementary schools. To address utilization, zones from Ritchie Park and Beall elementary schools would be reassigned to Twinbrook Elementary School.

I have developed a second option that also is consistent with the Board's resolution and that is a modification of Option 8 that was identified by the Boundary Advisory Committee. This option, labelled "Updated Superintendent's Recommendation #2 Pursuant to Board Adopted Resolution," preserves more geographic proximity than the Board Alternative #3 while

still reducing the FARMS rate at Twinbrook Elementary School. In this option, zones T5 and T2 move from Twinbrook Elementary School to Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5 and to College Gardens Elementary School. Zone B5 from Beall Elementary School would move to Twinbrook Elementary School. Zone RP5 would move from Ritchie Park Elementary School to Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5.

These two options are most consistent with the Board's resolution to create "more equitable distribution of Free and Reduced Price Meals System students in the Richard Montgomery Cluster elementary schools." Both also result in diverse student populations from a racial and ethnic perspective as well. Moving forward, we will continue to refine our transportation analysis for these options; however, given the location and geographic characteristics of this cluster, transportation for students and families may present challenges in implementing these options. It is important to note that zones T2 and T5 have been identified for reassignment in both options because, even though they are at a far end of the catchment area, they have a large number of students participating in the FARMS program who currently do not walk.

In addition to these two options, I submit a third for the Board to consider. While it is less consistent with the Board's resolution, it works to achieve diverse student populations across the cluster to the extent possible while placing a greater emphasis on geographic proximity and community access for students at Twinbrook Elementary School. I also am informed by the discussion of the Boundary Advisory Committee on November 9, 2017, that emphasized the benefits to the Twinbrook Elementary School community to remain as a school community. I recommend that the Board consider this as part of its discussion on November 14, 2017, to fully understand the community's views and interests on this option.

"Updated Superintendent's Recommendation #3 Pursuant to Board Adopted Resolution" also is a modification of Option 8. The primary difference between this and my second option is that in this option no students are reassigned from Twinbrook Elementary School. Zone RP5 would be reassigned to Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5, as would zones B5 and B7 from Beall Elementary School. While the FARMS rate at Twinbrook Elementary School would remain at 70 percent, the other four schools would range from 15.1 percent to 24 percent. Again, I acknowledge the relative disparity of FARMS rate at Twinbrook Elementary School in this scenario. However, this option may need to be considered from the perspective of retaining community and family proximity and access to the elementary school of assignment.

I would like to note one additional geographic element for all three of these options. In our preliminary analysis, the majority of zone RP2 has been identified as a walk zone to Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5. All three of these options continue the assignment of zone RP2 to Ritchie Park Elementary School. While this is not consistent with the possible walk zone for the new school, this assignment is an important factor in the FARMS demographic discussion and provides continuity of school assignment for this zone.

Policy FAA provides for "a different and/or condensed process and time schedule, developed by the superintendent of schools, for making recommendations to the Board regarding the capital improvements program and the facility planning activities listed above, including but not limited to changing school boundaries and establishing geographic student choice assignment plans

in the event that the Board determines that unusual circumstances exist.” I have developed a different time schedule and process than that outlined in Regulation FAA-RA, *Long-Range Educational Facilities Planning*, in response to the three unusual circumstances outlined here. I have done so to ensure adherence to our principles of community engagement, communication, and feedback, and a highly participatory process. I also have worked to conduct this process within a timeline that will allow the Board to act on the previously identified date of November 27, 2017. I believe that this is important to allow families certainty of their school assignment, and to plan for the upcoming school year. This timeframe also is important for us to hire, staff, and plan for opening the new Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5 in fall 2018. In light of these unusual circumstances, I recommend the following resolution to the Board.

WHEREAS, During review of the Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5 boundary assignment, three unusual circumstances occurred that required the superintendent of schools to provide updated utilization, demographic, and enrollment information and to develop a different process for making recommendations to the Board of Education regarding school boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Policy FAA, *Long-Range Educational Facilities Planning*, provides that the superintendent of schools may develop a different process for recommendations on school boundaries if the Board of Education determines that unusual circumstances exist; and

WHEREAS, The increased capacity of the new school, the unforeseen error in calculating Free and Reduced-price Meals System data for the cluster elementary schools, and the Board’s adoption on November 2, 2017, of a resolution requiring the superintendent of schools to submit additional recommendations for the Board’s consideration all are highly unusual in the typical boundary assignment review process; now be it therefore

Resolved, That the Board of Education determine that unusual circumstances exist in the boundary assignment process for Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5, and authorize the superintendent of schools to develop and implement a different process, consistent with policies on community engagement and in a timely manner.

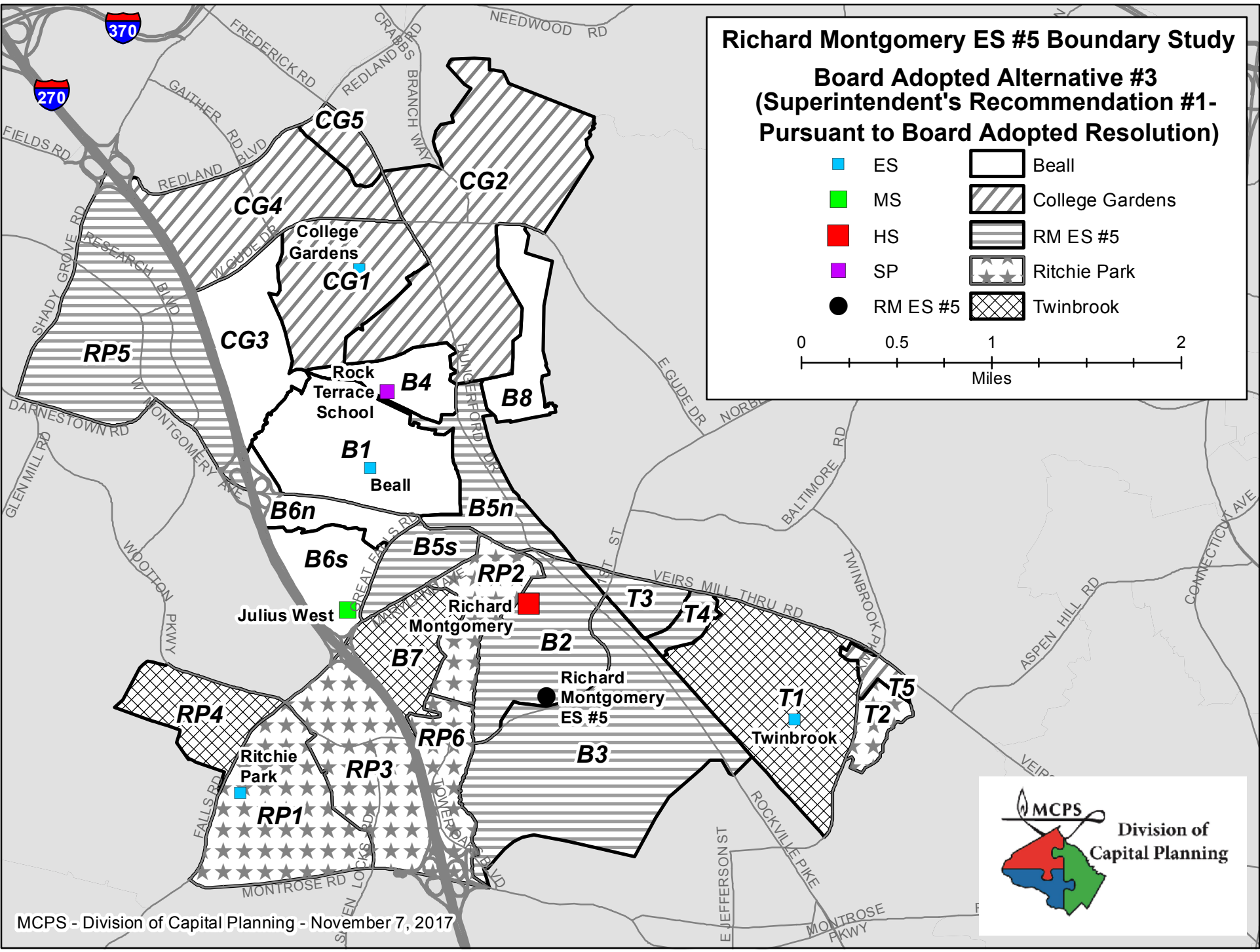
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Attachment

Richard Montgomery ES #5 Boundary Study

Board Adopted Alternative #3 (Superintendent's Recommendation #1- Pursuant to Board Adopted Resolution)

- ES
- MS
- HS
- SP
- RM ES #5
- Beall
- College Gardens
- RM ES #5
- Ritchie Park
- Twinbrook



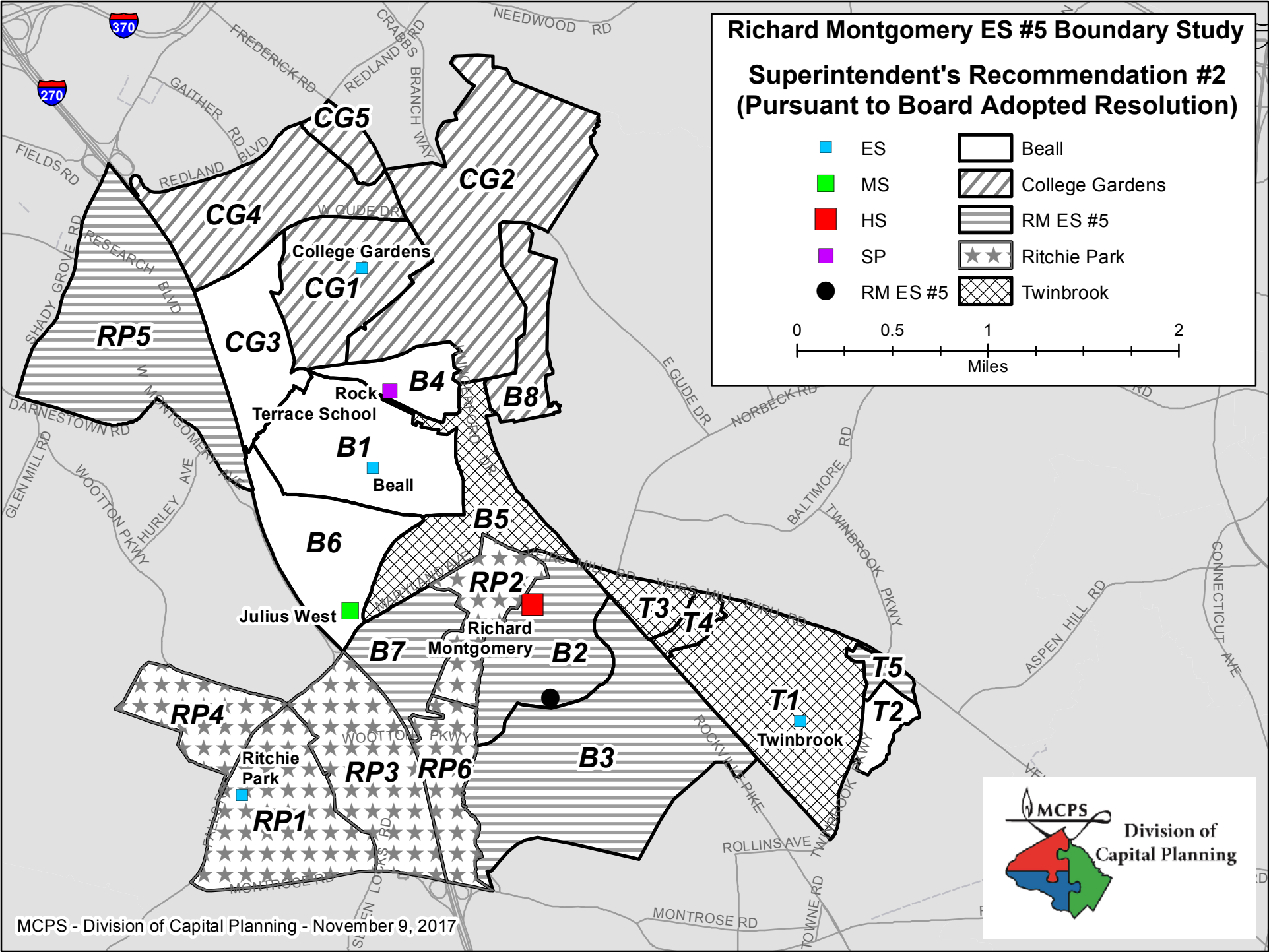
Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5
Board Adopted Alternative #3
(Superintendent's Recommendation #1—Pursuant to Board Adopted Resolution)
November 13, 2017

School	Boundary Implemented						Grade K–5 Demographics 2017–18						
	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24	Race/Ethnic Percentage					%FARMS	% ESOL
							Afr. Amer.	Asian	Hispanic	White	2 or More		
Beall Elementary School													
Maximum Number of Seats=637 No Change:													
Number of Students	849	824	840	838	848	857	11.6%	25.0%	23.7%	34.1%	5.5%	25.1%	18.4%
Percent of Building Occupied	133%	129%	132%	132%	133%	135%							
Available Seats	(212)	(187)	(203)	(201)	(211)	(220)							
Reassign Zones B2, B3, B5N, and B5S to Richard Montgomery ES#5 and Zone B7 to Twinbrook ES. Receive Zone CG3 from College Gardens ES.													
With Change:													
Number of Students	582	528	537	546	545	551	13.7%	17.3%	21.6%	40.9%	6.5%	22.7%	15.3%
Percent of Building Occupied	91%	83%	84%	86%	86%	86%							
Available Seats	55	109	100	92	92	86							
College Gardens Elementary School													
Maximum Number of Seats=693 No Change:													
Number of Students	893	853	846	843	839	837	17.5%	23.7%	14.9%	35.9%	8.1%	12.8%	13.4%
Percent of Building Occupied	129%	123%	122%	122%	121%	121%							
Available Seats	(200)	(160)	(153)	(150)	(146)	(144)							
Reassign Zone CG 3 to Beall ES and Chinese Immersion Program to Richard Montgomery ES #5 and receive Zone T5 from Twinbrook ES.													
With Change:													
Number of Students	789	747	732	716	717	715	16.6%	20.7%	26.2%	30.0%	6.4%	24.8%	22.4%
Percent of Building Occupied	114%	108%	106%	103%	103%	103%							
Available Seats	(96)	(54)	(39)	(23)	(24)	(22)							
Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5													
Assign Zone B2, B3, B5N, and B5S from Beall ES, Chinese Immersion from College Gardens ES, RP5 from Ritchie Park ES, and T3 and T4 from Twinbrook ES.													
Maximum Number of Seats=740 With Change:													
Number of Students	586	652	663	669	680	685	12.6%	31.1%	23.5%	27.4%	5.5%	23.6%	20.5%
Percent of Building Occupied	79%	88%	90%	90%	92%	93%							
Available Seats	154	88	77	72	60	55							
Ritchie Park Elementary School													
Maximum Number of Seats=387 No Change:													
Number of Students	544	530	520	524	529	508	15.1%	21.0%	19.7%	37.4%	6.8%	20.7%	13.2%
Percent of Building Occupied	141%	137%	134%	135%	137%	131%							
Available Seats	(157)	(143)	(133)	(137)	(142)	(121)							
Reassign Zones RP4 to Twinbrook ES and RP5 to Richard Montgomery ES #5 and receive Zone T2 from Twinbrook ES.													
With Change:													
Number of Students	433	406	397	409	403	380	15.8%	20.6%	29.6%	26.5%	7.6%	40.0%	26.1%
Percent of Building Occupied	112%	105%	103%	106%	104%	98%							
Available Seats	(46)	(19)	(10)	(22)	(16)	7							
Twinbrook Elementary School													
Maximum Number of Seats=558 No Change:													
Number of Students	561	566	585	585	590	586	9.5%	12.8%	64.1%	9.9%	3.7%	70.0%	54.9%
Percent of Building Occupied	101%	101%	105%	105%	106%	105%							
Available Seats	(3)	(8)	(27)	(27)	(32)	(28)							
Reassign Zone T2 to Ritchie Park, Zone T3 and T4 to Richard Montgomery ES #5, and T5 to College Gardens and receive Zone B7 from Beall and RP4 from Ritchie Park.													
With Change:													
Number of Students	457	440	462	451	461	457	7.9%	12.0%	46.5%	28.1%	5.4%	44.3%	35.1%
Percent of Building Occupied	82%	79%	83%	81%	83%	82%							
Available Seats	101	118	96	107	97	101							

Richard Montgomery ES #5 Boundary Study

Superintendent's Recommendation #2 (Pursuant to Board Adopted Resolution)


- ES
- MS
- HS
- SP
- RM ES #5
- Beall
- College Gardens
- RM ES #5
- Ritchie Park
- Twinbrook

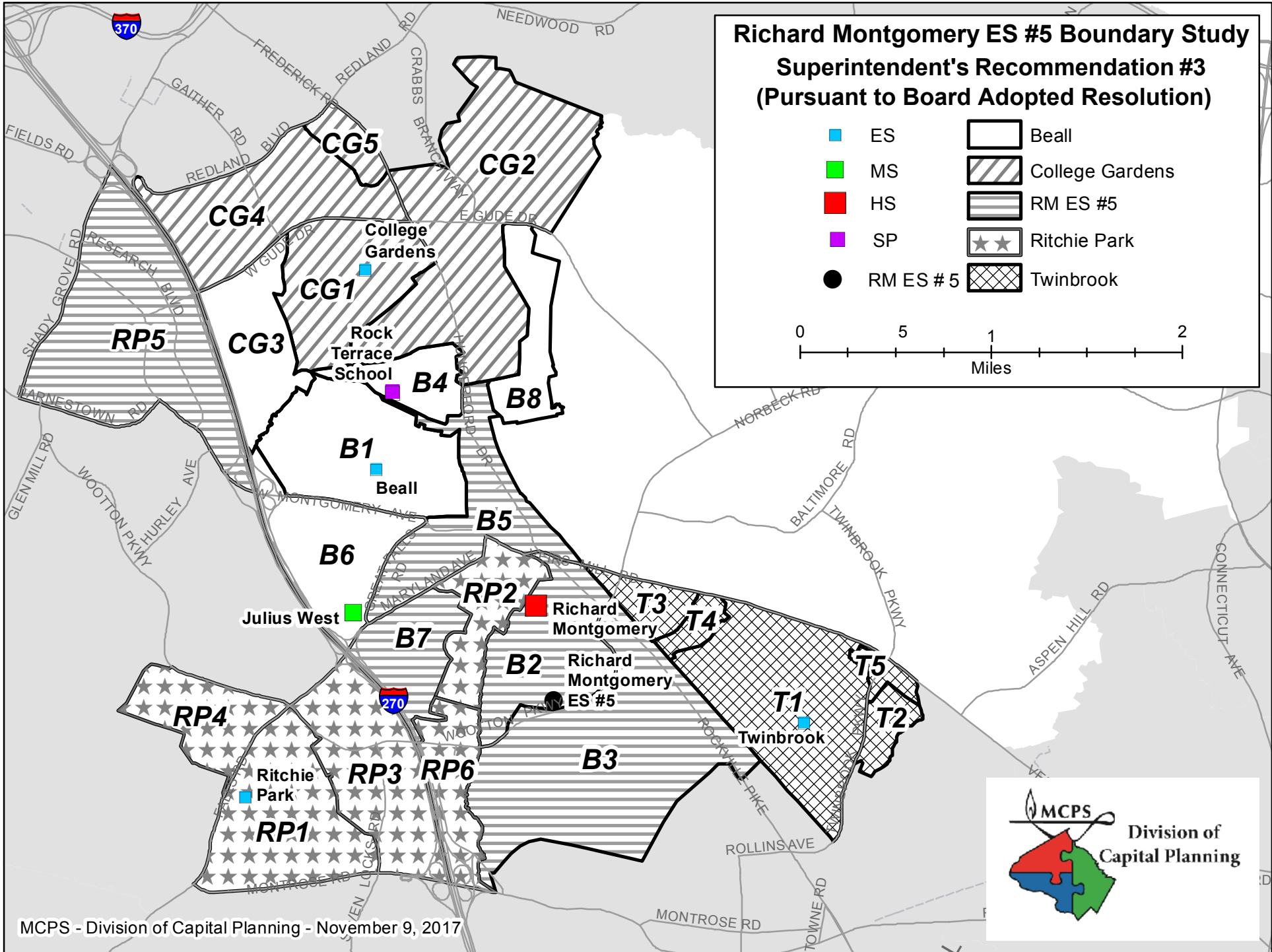


Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5
Superintendent Recommendation #2
(Pursuant to Board Adopted Resolution)
November 13, 2017

School	Boundary Implemented						Grade K-5 Demographics 2017-18						
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Race/Ethnic Percentage					%FARMS	% ESOL
	Afr. Amer.	Asian	Hispanic	White	2 or More								
Beall Elementary School													
Maximum Number of Seats=637 No Change:													
Number of Students	849	824	840	838	848	857	11.6%	25.0%	23.7%	34.1%	5.5%	25.1%	18.4%
Percent of Building Occupied	133%	129%	132%	132%	133%	135%							
Available Seats	(212)	(187)	(203)	(201)	(211)	(220)							
Reassign Zone B8 to College Gardens ES and receive Zone CG3 from College Gardens ES, reassign Zones B2, B3, and B7 to Richard Montgomery ES #5, and reassign Zone B5N and B5S to Twinbrook ES and receive Zone T2 from Twinbrook ES.													
With Change:													
Number of Students	613	553	566	579	573	579	11.6%	18.0%	25.7%	37.7%	7.0%	29.7%	20.7%
Percent of Building Occupied	96%	87%	89%	91%	90%	91%							
Available Seats	24	84	71	59	64	58							
College Gardens Elementary School													
Maximum Number of Seats=693 No Change:													
Number of Students	893	853	846	843	839	837	17.5%	23.7%	14.9%	35.9%	8.1%	12.8%	13.4%
Percent of Building Occupied	129%	123%	122%	122%	121%	121%							
Available Seats	(200)	(160)	(153)	(150)	(146)	(144)							
Reassign Zone CG3 to Beall ES and receive Zone B8 from Beall ES and reassign Chinese Immersion Program to Richard Montgomery ES #5.													
With Change:													
Number of Students	758	721	697	687	683	681	20.3%	21.8%	18.9%	32.0%	7.0%	18.6%	16.1%
Percent of Building Occupied	109%	104%	101%	99%	99%	98%							
Available Seats	(65)	(28)	(4)	6	10	12							
Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5													
Assign Zones B2, B3, and B7 from Beall ES, Chinese Immersion Program from College Gardens ES, Zone RP5 from Ritchie Park ES, and Zone T5 from Twinbrook ES.													
Maximum Number of Seats=740 With Change:													
Number of Students	598	645	659	646	659	665	10.8%	29.3%	29.1%	25.5%	5.2%	28.8%	25.5%
Percent of Building Occupied	81%	87%	89%	87%	89%	90%							
Available Seats	142	95	81	94	81	75							
Ritchie Park Elementary School													
Maximum Number of Seats=387 No Change:													
Number of Students	544	530	520	524	529	508	15.1%	21.0%	19.7%	37.4%	6.8%	20.7%	13.2%
Percent of Building Occupied	141%	137%	134%	135%	137%	131%							
Available Seats	(157)	(143)	(133)	(137)	(142)	(121)							
Reassign Zone RP5 to Richard Montgomery ES #5.													
With Change:													
Number of Students	410	378	373	374	379	356	14.7%	19.6%	20.2%	37.7%	7.9%	24.0%	14.6%
Percent of Building Occupied	106%	98%	96%	97%	98%	92%							
Available Seats	(23)	9	14	13	8	31							
Twinbrook Elementary School													
Maximum Number of Seats=558 No Change:													
Number of Students	561	566	585	585	590	586	9.5%	12.8%	64.1%	9.9%	3.7%	70.0%	54.9%
Percent of Building Occupied	101%	101%	105%	105%	106%	105%							
Available Seats	(3)	(8)	(27)	(27)	(32)	(28)							
Reassign Zone T2 to Beall ES and receive Zone B5N and B5S from Beall ES and reassign Zone T5 to Richard Montgomery ES #5.													
With Change:													
Number of Students	468	476	496	505	512	507	9.2%	13.4%	53.0%	20.2%	4.1%	52.8%	41.9%
Percent of Building Occupied	84%	85%	89%	90%	92%	91%							
Available Seats	90	82	62	54	46	51							

Richard Montgomery ES #5 Boundary Study Superintendent's Recommendation #3 (Pursuant to Board Adopted Resolution)

- | | | | |
|---|----------|---|-----------------|
|  | ES |  | Beall |
|  | MS |  | College Gardens |
|  | HS |  | RM ES #5 |
|  | SP |  | Ritchie Park |
|  | RM ES #5 |  | Twinbrook |



Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5
Superintendent's Recommendation #3
(Pursuant to Board Adopted Resolution)
November 13, 2017

School	Boundary Implemented						Grade K-5 Demographics 2017-18						
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Race/Ethnic Percentage					%FARMS	% ESOL
							Afr. Amer.	Asian	Hispanic	White	2 or More		
Beall Elementary School													
Maximum Number of Seats=637 <u>No Change:</u>													
Number of Students	849	824	840	838	848	857	11.6%	25.0%	23.7%	34.1%	5.5%	25.1%	18.4%
Percent of Building Occupied	133%	129%	132%	132%	133%	135%							
Available Seats	(212)	(187)	(203)	(201)	(211)	(220)							
Reassign Zones B2, B3, B5, and B7 to Richard Montgomery ES #5 and receive Zone CG3 from College Gardens ES.													
<u>With Change:</u>													
Number of Students	582	528	537	546	545	551	13.7%	17.3%	21.6%	40.9%	6.5%	22.7%	15.3%
Percent of Building Occupied	91%	83%	84%	86%	86%	86%							
Available Seats	55	109	100	92	92	86							
College Gardens Elementary School													
Maximum Number of Seats=693 <u>No Change:</u>													
Number of Students	893	853	846	843	839	837	17.5%	23.7%	14.9%	35.9%	8.1%	12.8%	13.4%
Percent of Building Occupied	129%	123%	122%	122%	121%	121%							
Available Seats	(200)	(160)	(153)	(150)	(146)	(144)							
Reassign Zone CG3 to Beall ES and Chinese Immersion Program to Richard Montgomery ES #5.													
<u>With Change:</u>													
Number of Students	710	656	636	626	620	617	18.4%	22.5%	17.1%	34.6%	7.4%	15.1%	14.2%
Percent of Building Occupied	102%	95%	92%	90%	89%	89%							
Available Seats	(17)	37	57	67	73	76							
Richard Montgomery Elementary School #5													
Assign Zones B2, B3, B5, and B7 from Beall ES, Chinese Immersion Program from College Gardens ES, and RP5 from Ritchie Park ES.													
Maximum Number of Seats=740 <u>With Change:</u>													
Number of Students	584	645	660	660	672	678	12.2%	31.4%	18.9%	31.5%	6.0%	17.5%	16.2%
Percent of Building Occupied	79%	87%	89%	89%	91%	92%							
Available Seats	156	95	80	81	68	62							
Ritchie Park Elementary School													
Maximum Number of Seats=387 <u>No Change:</u>													
Number of Students	544	530	520	524	529	508	15.1%	21.0%	19.7%	37.4%	6.8%	20.7%	13.2%
Percent of Building Occupied	141%	137%	134%	135%	137%	131%							
Available Seats	(157)	(143)	(133)	(137)	(142)	(121)							
Reassign Zone RP5 to Richard Montgomery ES #5.													
<u>With Change:</u>													
Number of Students	410	378	373	374	379	356	14.7%	19.6%	20.2%	37.7%	7.9%	24.0%	14.6%
Percent of Building Occupied	106%	98%	96%	97%	98%	92%							
Available Seats	(23)	9	14	13	8	31							
Twinbrook Elementary School													
Maximum Number of Seats=558 <u>No Change:</u>													
Number of Students	561	566	585	585	590	586	9.5%	12.8%	64.1%	9.9%	3.7%	70.0%	54.9%
Percent of Building Occupied	101%	101%	105%	105%	106%	105%							
Available Seats	(3)	(8)	(27)	(27)	(32)	(28)							
<u>With Change:</u>													
Number of Students	561	566	585	585	590	586	9.5%	12.8%	64.1%	9.9%	3.7%	70.0%	54.9%
Percent of Building Occupied	101%	101%	105%	105%	106%	105%							
Available Seats	(3)	(8)	(27)	(27)	(32)	(28)							