

The numbers speak for themselves, wouldn't you say?

First of all wow! What a great job Dr. Sanford and staff did to be able to obtain the most accurate data available in such a short amount of time. They should be greatly appreciated by each School Board Member and Parent that has a child in the potential boundary of the new high school. I would also applaud the fact that they did not allow for future growth in this area were as proven there is none, at least not in the foreseeable future. Neither side of this debate can be faulted for where the school was built.

The numbers are pretty clear that in order to provide ALL students in St. Tammany Parish with the best education possible then Map 1 should be voted for. Map 1 sends the greatest number of students to the new high school over the other two maps and alleviates Fontainebleau HS of its overcrowding. To quote the code of ethics of the St. Tammany Parish School Board "I seek to provide equal educational opportunities for all the children regardless of race, creed or location."

If the school board does not vote according to its code of ethics, Statement of Beliefs and "Reaching New Heights" strategic plan, (all of which can be found on their website) it may be difficult justify to the public voting against sending the most well rounded group of students possible to this school.

As Mr. Alfred stated at the last school board meeting, "We need at least 1,000-1,200 students in order to justify spending \$59 million (or \$47 million) on a school, this is the most money ever spent on a school in St. Tammany Parish and is state-of-the-art." This number will allow for the proper academic, gifted, AP, extra-curricular and athletic programs offered at this school. Without adequate enrollment, this school would be ranked a 4A instead of 5A and that could potentially affect the athletes that attend this school, it could also affect the academic & athletic scholarships awarded to these students.

Villere's map 3 sends the least amount of students to the new high school. It only considers the proximity of a 7 mile commute as opposed to a 2 mile commute. If proximity is the reason to vote for this map, then why would you even consider voting for Map 2 - a map that sends students from Abita Springs more than 20 miles one way. Does that really make any sense? Was the school board's code of ethics considered when this map was drawn?

I only hope that the St. Tammany School Board now takes a look at ALL school districts and develops a districting system that abides by their beliefs. Because the majority of schools are built within a few miles of each other, the proximity issue cannot be a factor in deciding boundaries. If we had a feeder system, this horrendous process would never have to happen again and parents, students and teachers will never have to be torn apart at the Middle School level.

Your consideration from both sides of this debate is greatly appreciated.