

February 2012

**Mary Lin Elementary Local School Council
APS Demographic Capacity/Utilization Study
Summary of Round Two Options and Recommendations**

Atlanta Public Schools (APS), through their demographers, recently published their second set of, or “round two”, proposed options. These proposed options may be viewed on the Atlanta Public Schools website, under “Demographic Study” [<http://www.atlanta.k12.ga.us/Page/413> select “Option A and Option B Feedback Form”]. Everyone is asked to fill out surveys and provide feedback regarding the proposed options by **February 24, 2012**. The survey is available on the APS website under “Demographic Study” and then under “Option A and Option B Feedback Form (1/31/12)”. **We strongly encourage all Mary Lin parents and residents of the Lin community to complete the survey by February 24, 2012.** The Mary Lin LSC’s recommendations with regard to responding to the survey, and suggested comments to be made on the survey, are set forth below.

APS’ round two proposals include two options, Options A and B. **The Lin LSC has reviewed these two options in light of three guiding principles or fundamental goals that the LSC has followed throughout this process: (1) Keeping the current boundaries for Lin intact, so that the Candler Park, Inman Park, and Lake Claire communities remain together; (2) Expanding and renovating Mary Lin; and (3) Keeping Mary Lin at Inman middle school and Grady high school. Of the two proposed options, Option A is consistent with these three fundamental goals, and is therefore recommended by the Lin LSC.** ¹

Some of the reasons the Lin LSC supports option A, and some suggested comments to make on the survey form, are as follows:

Elementary School

Option A keeps the current Lin boundaries intact and includes the addition and renovation at Lin. Option B, on the other hand, merges Lin with Toomer elementary school, with a K-2 school likely at Lin, and a 3-5 school likely at Toomer. Option B also does NOT include the planned addition and renovation at Lin.

There is a long history behind the planned addition and renovation at Lin that significantly pre-dates the current demographic study process. Lin began to reach capacity in 2006, and multiple portable or trailer classrooms were required by 2007. Shortly thereafter, Lin was notified by APS that an addition was being planned for Lin, and by the 2008-09 school year, a set of architectural plans or drawings was presented to the Lin community by APS facilities personnel. There were multiple meetings at Lin in 2009 between Lin parents and APS building representatives discussing and going

¹ By recommending option A, the Lin LSC does not necessarily endorse or support other parts of option A that affect other schools, and does not endorse splitting any other neighborhoods. Specifically, the Lin LSC does not support splitting north Morningside from the rest of Morningside as in option A, nor does it support splitting Kirkwood as in option B.

over the architectural plans and drawings, and there was discussion that construction would begin within two years.

By 2010, Lin parents were told that the Lin addition project had been put on hold. We were first told by APS that there had been a financial shortfall in SPLOST III, which the Lin project was part of, causing the project to be delayed. We were next told by APS that the project would have to wait until a demographic study was completed, which started in 2010, and was completed in October 2010. By 2011, we were told that there would be a second phase of the demographic study (which we are still in now), and the Lin project would have to wait until that was completed. By latter 2011, we were told that SPLOST IV would need to pass in order for the Lin project would be done. The Lin community, including the Lin LSC, campaigned for and supported SPLOST IV, and it passed in November 2011. The Lin project was specifically listed in the SPLOST IV budget prior to the election, and it remains in the SPLOST IV budget today.

The Lin addition and renovation project has long been planned, discussed, and promised – since well before the current demographic study. Lin is now considerably over capacity, and has been using multiple portable/trailer classrooms for over five years. The time has come for the addition and renovation project to be done, and the Lin LSC strongly urges the Lin community to provide feedback and comments on the survey forms asking that the project be done.

Lin LSC recommended elementary school comment 1: The addition and renovation project at Mary Lin has long been needed and planned, since well before the current demographic study process, and has been a part of SPLOST III and SPLOST IV, and the project should now be completed.

The proposed addition at Lin would add 176 seats (8 classrooms at 22 seats each), raising Lin's capacity from 528 to 704 (based on 22 students per class). Lin's current total enrollment is 590. Recent demographer projections, however, suggest that Lin may reach 780 students over the next 10 years. If the addition were for 10-12 classrooms (which the Lin LSC believes is possible on the Lin grounds), instead of 8 classrooms, then Lin should remain within capacity for 10 years even under the demographers' recent higher projections. It is also possible that potential capacity issues after the addition could be addressed by pulling Lin's 5th graders out and placing them in a new 5-6 upper elementary school (see discussion of new 5-6 school below).

Lin LSC recommended elementary school comment 2: Because it is projected that Lin's enrollment may reach 780 students in the next ten years, the proposed Lin addition should be for 10-12 classrooms (220-244 students), instead of 8 classrooms (176 students). In the alternative, a new 5-6 upper elementary school should be considered.

The proposed option B merger with Toomer elementary into split K-2 and 3-5 schools is disfavored for many reasons, including because it would not be possible for Lin students to walk to school during the 3 years they are at Toomer, it would be logistically hard on parents with children at both schools, it would add another

unnecessary school transition, and it would cause traffic problems and other issues on DeKalb Avenue, a major thoroughfare with limited crossing points.

Lin LSC recommended elementary school comment 3: I oppose option B and the merger with Toomer elementary with split K-2/3-5 schools because it would not be possible for Lin students to walk to school during the 3 years they are at Toomer, it would be logistically hard on parents with children at both schools, it would add another unnecessary school transition, and it would cause traffic problems and other issues on DeKalb Avenue.

Middle School

Option A keeps the Lin area at Inman middle school, which is strongly supported by the Lin LSC. Inman is currently near capacity, and projected to exceed its capacity with the attendance areas currently zoned to Inman in the near future. Option A does remove Centennial elementary from Inman to address future over-crowding. Centennial parents and leaders have expressed a desire to be a K-8 school, which APS is currently considering, and which the Lin LSC, and many neighboring schools, support. Under option A, it is believed that Inman will remain within capacity (900 students as stated by the Inman principal) for approximately five years.

After five years under option A, Inman will likely exceed 900 students and exceed capacity. Also under option A the Hope-Hill elementary (Old Fourth Ward) area will not attend a middle school in the Grady cluster. Although it does not currently attend Inman, Hope-Hill does currently attend Grady high school, and is likely to remain in the Grady cluster under all current or future proposals. The Lin LSC supports addressing the future projected over-crowding at Inman, and bringing Hope-Hill into the Grady cluster middle school system, by considering certain alternatives that have been discussed by and are gaining some momentum with many parents and neighboring school leaders, including: (1) a new 5-6 upper elementary school, to include Lin, Springdale Park, Morningside, and Hope-Hill; (2) a new 6th grade only school, to include Lin, Springdale Park, Morningside, and Hope-Hill, located either on the current Inman grounds or other suitable location; or (3) an expansion of the current Inman facility.

Lin LSC recommended middle school comment: I support option A because it keeps the Mary Lin area at Inman middle school. While Inman may remain within capacity for five years under option A, to address future potential over-crowding, and to bring Hope-Hill elementary into the Grady cluster middle school system, I urge APS to consider the following alternative solutions: (1) a new 5-6 upper elementary school, to include Lin, Springdale Park, Morningside, and Hope-Hill; (2) a new 6th grade only school, to include Lin, Springdale Park, Morningside, and Hope-Hill, located either on the current Inman grounds or other suitable location; or (3) an expansion of the current Inman facility.

High School

Option A keeps Lin at Grady high school, along with most of the current Grady cluster, including Springdale Park, Morningside, and Hope-Hill. It should be noted,

however, that current figures indicate approximately 300 out of zone students attending at Grady. APS demographers have also indicated recently that a 20% "transfer rate" is built into their projections at Grady, meaning that they assume that fully 20% (or approx. 250 to 300) of Grady's population into the future will be comprised of students who do not live in the Grady attendance zone. We believe this is wrong and that no one in the current Grady attendance zone would need to be redistricted out if the significant out of zone student problem at Grady is brought under control.

Lin LSC recommended high school comment: I support option A because it keeps the Mary Lin area at Grady high school. However, APS demographic data indicates that there are currently 300 out of zone students at Grady high school, and that demographers are projecting a 20% transfer rate (or 250 to 300 students) into the future. This needs to be addressed and brought under control. No one should be redistricted out of Grady until the number of out of zone students is significantly reduced.

These are the Lin LSC recommendations and suggested comments for the round 2 options. Please be sure to fill out the surveys on the APS website (or obtain hard copies in the Mary Lin office) **by February 24, 2012. Please respond to the surveys and provide feedback to APS as this is the best way to ensure that your, and Lin's, voice is heard in this complex process.** The APS demographic process will continue with recommendations by Superintendent Erroll Davis in March, with a possible final vote by the school board in April.

Thank you and please contact the Lin LSC with any questions or comments.

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