



Lower Merion School District

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Christopher McGinley, Ed.D. ♦ Superintendent of Schools

September 30, 2013

Dear Residents,

As you may know, the District is facing increasing enrollment at all school levels. Our enrollment has increased 15% in the past five years alone and is running slightly ahead of projections for this school year. Last year, the Board of School Directors approved classroom expansion projects to accommodate growth at the elementary and middle school levels. The District must now plan for the impact of enrollment growth at the high school level. Harriton High School and Lower Merion High School will exceed capacity within the next 4-6 years.

The administration believes that the District is able to accommodate the projected high school student population without new construction by using classroom space available in the "A" building on the LMHS campus. The District is using parts of the building for administrative office space, but there are up to 16 classrooms that could be re-purposed for high school use. Utilizing the "A" building would preclude the need to build new classrooms at Harriton, but there would still be additional costs for renovating the classrooms. We would also need a mechanism to ensure that the Harriton student population would not rise above capacity (around 1400 students). A proposal presented last year includes expanding the LMHS choice area to allow more students from Welsh Valley Middle School to select LMHS.

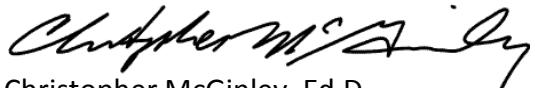
Following several months of discussion regarding this proposal, the Board elected last spring to postpone a vote until November 18, 2013 to provide additional time for information gathering and public dialogue. At several public meetings earlier this month, the District shared updated enrollment projections and reviewed the impact of the proposed choice expansion on high school enrollments. The District also presented and discussed instructional issues related to the possibility of a larger LMHS and preliminary information regarding the costs of utilizing existing facilities at LMHS vs. new construction at HHS. All of this information is available in the "Enrollment Growth" section of the District website, www.lmsd.org/enrollment-planning.

A series of additional public meetings will continue during the next two months, leading to a scheduled vote at the Board's November 18 business meeting. While we encourage you to attend all of these meetings and/or watch them online (all have been recorded and are available via our website), we will host a meeting specifically for communities most impacted by the current expanded choice proposal on Wednesday, October 16 at 7 PM in the large group instruction room at LMHS. The meeting is open to the public, but will focus on questions and topics most relevant to the Ardmore Progressive, ArdWood, Narberth, North Ardmore and Wynnewood civic associations. If you have specific questions and concerns that you would like us to address, please contact your civic association leaders and/or email us directly at communitycomments@lmsd.org.

It is our responsibility to find the most efficient, cost-effective solution to accommodate enrollment growth at the high schools, while preserving the quality of our programs. The administration believes that expanded choice is a positive, viable strategy and one worth considering. We also believe it is important for the public to have a full understanding of what this strategy means for our students and community. Our goal is to provide the Board – and the public – the information needed to make an informed, confident decision in November. We encourage you to stay involved and informed as this process unfolds in the coming weeks and months.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and for your continued support of our schools.

Sincerely,



Christopher McGinley, Ed.D.
Superintendent