

## GCS 2019 Initial Proposed Student Assignment Plan

### Frequently Asked Questions – for Families Proposed to be Reassigned to Hillcrest

**Q.** Why are students in our area being reassigned?

Fountain Inn High School is scheduled to open in the fall of 2021 as the first new high school in GCS since 1973. The Planning and Demographics department built a proposed assignment plan to populate this school and reduce the student populations at Mauldin and Hillcrest to below 2,000. The development of the plan was influenced by student data, population growth in geocodes in Southeastern Greenville County, housing construction, subdivision development with lots to go, choice data, feeder patterns, and the Board of Trustees' assignment guidelines provided in policy AD. Because Fountain Inn High is located to the south of Hillcrest, it was necessary to shift attendance boundaries to provide space for growth that will be generated by larger lower grades and new development in the Mauldin and Hillcrest attendance zones.

**Q.** How did you decide what areas to reassign from Mauldin High to Hillcrest High?

We began the development of the student assignment plan by identifying a goal for the number of students assigned to Fountain Inn, and how many additional students needed to be removed from Mauldin and Hillcrest High Schools to provide room for projected growth in their attendance areas. The development of the plan was influenced by the District's Strategic Plan and Long Range Facilities Plan, student data, population growth in geocodes in Southeastern Greenville County, housing construction, subdivision development with lots to go, choice data, feeder patterns (between elementary, middle, and high schools), and the Board of Trustees' guidelines provided in policy AD.

Utilizing schools between 80% and 100% of capacity;

- 2) Minimizing the amount of time that students spend on the bus;
- 3) The distance between student's homes and school;
- 4) Preserving the integrity of neighborhoods;
- 5) Minimizing a school's high concentration of students of poverty (as measured by the number of Free and Reduced Meals);
- 6) The geocodes of students;
- 7) Avoiding a high concentration of low performing students at a school;
- 8) Any impact on special programs and services;
- 9) Providing feeder patterns that result in an elementary school's sending at least 10 students to the same middle school or a middle school's sending at least 25 students to the same high school;
- 10) Striving to assign students in islands to a contiguous school when possible or to a school closer to their residences to the extent possible (minimizing the use of islands to the extent possible); and
- 11) The number of times that recent boundary changes and/or school closings and consolidations have affected the same students or areas of the district.

For example:

- This draft student assignment plan will result in Mauldin, Hillcrest, and Fountain Inn facilities being utilized between 76.4% and 93.7%. These percentages acknowledge the undeveloped lots zoned for single family homes in each of the schools' proposed attendance areas.

- The geocodes identified for reassignment from Mauldin to Hillcrest have easy access to the interstate, which will minimize the time students spend on the bus.
- The geocodes identified for reassignment are in close proximity to Hillcrest High School compared to other geocodes currently assigned to Mauldin.
- This draft plan reassigns neighborhoods in their entirety; no neighborhood is split.
- Based on current test scores, this plan will not concentrate low performing students in any of the three schools.
- The recommended plan does not further fracture middle school feeder patterns into Hillcrest and Mauldin High Schools. For example, the identified geocodes already attend Hillcrest Middle School. Currently 73% of HMS students are zoned for Hillcrest High.
- This plan does not create student assignment islands in which assignment areas are not contiguous.
- The geocodes identified in this plan for reassignment from Mauldin to Hillcrest have not undergone any assignment changes in the last 20-plus years.

**Q.** Why didn't you assign proposed subdivisions to Hillcrest High (or another high school) instead of reassigning longstanding Mauldin High neighborhoods?

There are multiple reasons that some future subdivisions are not included in the list of proposed geocodes for reassignment. Here are a few:

- 1) We are building FIHS and undertaking reassignment to reduce the population of Mauldin High and Hillcrest High to less than 2,000 students. Reassigning future subdivisions does not impact student populations in the immediate future.
- 2) In some cases, assigning future subdivisions would create attendance islands, which means an area is not contiguous to the school's attendance map. We have some historic islands throughout the county, but make every effort to avoid creating new ones in the student reassignment process.
- 3) Some subdivisions are targeted to "empty nesters." Even when fully built out, those subdivisions seldom impact student populations positively or negatively.

**Q.** To relieve overcrowding, would it not make more sense that the people who live in Simpsonville, Greenville, Greer go to the school in their city limits?

Attendance zones are in no way related to city limits, US Postal codes, or mailing addresses. Currently, there are residents of the City of Mauldin assigned to Southside, J.L. Mann, and Hillcrest. Reassigning all of those residents to Mauldin High School would greatly exacerbate overcrowding. In many cases, the city limits of the various municipalities stretch out a great distance from the downtown areas of those cities. Continuing annexation activity by municipalities makes it impossible to guarantee that all residents of a city will be assigned to a particular school or schools.

**Q.** What is the relationship between the taxes paid by Mauldin residents and the funding received by Mauldin High?

There is no relationship between taxes paid specifically by Mauldin residents to the City of Mauldin and those received by GCS or Mauldin High. Mauldin residents pay the same amount of taxes to Greenville

County Schools as any other citizen in our district. Taxes paid to the City of Mauldin does not impact funding received by Greenville County Schools. Mauldin High is served by the Mauldin Police Department and fire services, but none of that funding goes directly to the school.

**Q.** Why are neighborhoods in Spartanburg County (behind Village Hospital on Abner Creek) allowed to go to Riverside High? Making them go to Byrnes in their County would reduce class size at Riverside High and allow some of the kids that live way out on Bennett's Bridge or S. Batesville to switch from JL Mann to Riverside.

Families in Spartanburg (and Laurens County) who are within GCS district lines pay school taxes to our district. They are physically located within the GCS district lines drawn by the SC State Legislature. Additionally, there are portions of Greenville County that are not in our district; those students attend and reside in the Anderson County or Spartanburg County School Districts, and their local taxes go to those districts, not GCS. This is commonplace around the state.

**Q.** Why are Mauldin neighborhoods being pulled to a school in Simpsonville before Simpsonville neighborhoods?

School assignments areas are not influenced by city limits, US Postal Service codes, or other similar factors. Bethel Elementary, Mauldin Elementary and Mauldin Middle are physically in the City of Mauldin but have Simpsonville addresses. High school students currently living in the Mauldin City limits attend by assignment Hillcrest High, JL Mann High, Mauldin High and Southside High.

**Q.** I will have a freshman Mauldin High next year. Will his sister be able to attend Mauldin High? She will be a freshman when he is a senior.

Yes. Younger siblings of Mauldin High students will be allowed to attend MHS as long as the older sibling is a current student when the younger student begins high school. Though the younger student will be allowed to attend MHS all four years, transportation will not be provided once the older sibling graduates.

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