

Plan for Outreach for Redistricting 2011

By Shaina Cavazos

Tomorrow the school district will be releasing it's long-awaited maps and information about 2013's redistricting. This is hugely important to parents and students here, so below I've outlined a plan of action for us for tomorrow (Thursday) and whenever else we decide to repeat and gather more feedback. Basic: Get schools to let us pass out fliers linking to our package of maps, graphics and stories. Also, plan to promote the package on schools' PTSA facebook pages.

Script for Calling and Getting Information about PTSA/School Contacts and Permission to Pass Fliers Out Once School is Dismissed:

Use for Benton, Blue Ridge, Cedar Ridge, Derby Ridge, Lee, Mill Creek, New Haven, Parkade and Russell Boulevard elementary schools, and Gentry, Lange and Smithton middle schools. CPS Building Contact Info: <http://www.columbia.k12.mo.us/schools2.php>

Hi, my name is _____, and I am a member of the Community Outreach Team at the Columbia Missourian. We are planning a lot of coverage about the release of the redistricting maps and information this morning, and we'd love to be able to share that with the parents and students at your school. To do that, is there any way I could get the contact information for your PTSA President?

I was also wondering if your school has a newsletter for the parents, and who I could talk to about getting any of this coverage or the link in the newsletter?

Here is the link: columbiamissourian.com/packages/school-redistricting-2011

This package includes: three map approaches to the proposed boundary lines that includes scenarios for the intermediate and high school attendance areas, there are color-coded sections for easy viewing, you also have the ability to zoom in to the neighborhood street level on each map to better understand where your child could attend intermediate and high school. There is also information about which grade levels will be the first to transition into the new boundaries, information about why the district decided to redraw the school boundaries, and information about how the redrawing process works.

Use next part ONLY for Derby Ridge, Parkade and Russell Boulevard elementary schools. These are the only schools we'll be visiting to hand out fliers.

Also, would it be alright if a member of our team came out to the school when students are dismissed to hand out some fliers detailing where parents can find answers to questions and more resources? Thank you so much.

Tips:

- Be very polite. But of course, you already know this.
- Elementary schools begin at 8:50 a.m. and dismiss at 3:45 p.m.
- Fliers are by the computers. Take as many as you think you'll need.
- If you are handing out fliers, arrive a little before dismissal to go and check in with the front offices to make sure we are cleared to be there.

Once you have the contact information....

Contact the PTSA president/contact person, either by phone or email. If by phone, send the following in an email afterward (or at least the information from the handout)

Script below:

Hi, my name is _____, and I am a member of the Community Outreach Team at the Columbia Missourian. We are planning a lot of coverage about the release of the redistricting maps and information this morning, and we'd love to be able to share that with the parents and students at your school who have questions about how the redistricting affects them. Does your association have a Facebook page, listserv or other means of getting in touch with the whole group? If so, please feel free to pass along this information to your members.

**Here is where you will attach the handout pdf in the email. The pdf will be in the google docs list.

More Tips:

- Keep track of info we get from schools/PTSA people, etc, in this google doc https://docs.google.com/document/d/1gGq4_o2Na3tfcpsDGxa0qzclhYQzq3B1Sts2_X0OsRg/edit?hl=en_US
- If we don't get all the information from the schools today, that's okay. This will be big news for quite awhile.
- Once you get information on Facebook pages for the different schools, let's publicize our coverage (link to the package) on their pages to get the information to the people who need it.
- Redistricting Table (If you'd like to see what took me 3 hours to accomplish)It's a bit confusing without the maps:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AmbrFkL8Buv1dDh5c2IkMTR1ckJ6eWtnQ1RkTXFIZ2c&hl=en_US#gid=0

THE OUTCOME:

(Charesse) Austin, Melanie and I went to Russel Boulevard, Parkade and Derby Ridge elementary schools (respectively) to hand out the fliers. We ran into trouble because of some confusion over whether or not they had been approved by the school board.

Originally, we printed 100 handouts and divided them among ourselves. Melanie took hers directly to Parkade Elementary and because dismissal was already underway, she dropped her stack off at the front office. Austin and I ran into problems.

I got to Derby Ridge before their dismissal and gave the flier to parents waiting for their children. I gave approximately 20 away and all of the parents I spoke to thought it was helpful. (They hadn't originally known about the community forums and being able to comment directly on the

school boards site.) However, when dismissal was underway and I asked the vice principal the best way to continue handing out the fliers without disrupting their system, I was told that the fliers hadn't been approved and that I wasn't allowed to be there. Austin was told the same thing as soon as he got to Russel Boulevard and wasn't able to give out any.

The handouts were approved officially after school had already let out for the day. So the next effort will probably go a lot more productively.

(Shaina) Passed at least 50 handouts out at Russell Boulevard. Principal had to "check" it, but it was fine. Got a relatively positive response from parents. Some people seemed genuinely grateful and appreciative.

(Rachel) Tried to give out fliers at Lee, but the principal wasn't there, so I wasn't able to. Instead, I went to RagTag Cinema, where Parents for Public Schools was holding an event. Gave out a few fliers to people in the theater, and left a few more on a table at the front of the room. A lot of people wanted one.

HOW TO COVER?

Liveblogging or chatting, Livestream with chat, Rolling Django blog, a la Snowpocalypse, Wordle (word cloud), Put out handouts (Also send to PTSA president), Solicit feedback/story ideas from previous sources, Send out list of story ideas, Google Map of people who are showing up (need the data, however), Junior High student councils

Pros:

- Informing community members who want to be involved but can't make it out to the meetings.
- Good non-narrative way to cover these meetings
- Transcript value
- We get out of the way; reducing redundancies
- Service-oriented aspect to taking questions and answering them

Cons:

- Getting ACs and actual names
- Quotes can be taken out of context
- Do we provide that context?
 - Or does the committee? (demographics especially)
- Need very specific local knowledge...well, then do we recruit?

Logistics:

- Need to be present
- Need wifi
- Need someone who knows what they are talking about