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*Ann Albertson*

## Tustin board rejects new high school map

**By George Stewart**  
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The Tustin school district's controversial high school boundaries, recently redrawn by the school board, will remain intact, at least for now, despite the attempt by one school board member to modify them.

Trustee Jon Abelove asked for a discussion of modifications to the map at Monday night's board meeting. Abelove, along with fellow trustee, Lynn Davis, voted against the current boundary map on Sept. 29, but they were voted down by trustees Tammie Bullard, Ann Albertson and Francine Scinto.

Since then, Irvine and Tustin Ranch parents, whose children will go to the new Beckman High School to open in Irvine next year because they paid Mello Roos funds for the school, have protested plans for the busing of students from the district's west side to Beckman.

Parents of the west side students, many of them Latinos, have joined in the protest, preferring to be bused to Foothill High School, as they are now.

Abelove's proposal would extend the Beckman area southward to El Camino Real between Red Hill Avenue and Jamboree Road and create an open enrollment area between Irvine Boulevard and Main Street, from the western border of the district to Newport Avenue. The students in this area, which encompasses the Western Section and Old Town Tustin, would have their choice of being bused to any of the three schools.

"By extending the area of Beckman," Abelove said, "the school has more of an opportunity to achieve needed critical mass for a master schedule."

The district staff has determined that at least 800 students are needed to form the curricular master schedule when Beckman opens to freshmen and sophomores in the fall.

Currently, 903 students are designated for Beckman, provided about 80 students from the Lambert Elementary School attendance area, on the west side, who are eligible to go to Foothill, decide to go to Beckman. The same map shows 2,105 students at Foothill and 2,043 at Tustin High. It projects by the year 2007 there will be 1,895 at Foothill, 1,964 at Tustin and 2,037 at Beckman.

Abelove's map shows 1,687 at Foothill, 1,649 at Tustin and 767 at Beckman,

with 947 students in the open enrollment area in 2004. In 2007, it shows 1,734 at Foothill, 1,303 at Tustin and 1,689 at Beckman, with 1,170 students in the open enrollment area.

Abelove's map was supported by a group of parents called Neighbors United from the Irvine part of the district. Its chairman, Joe Crotty, said it has more than 500 members, since it formed after the Sept. 29 vote.

"A large segment of our community deeply believes in the concept of neighborhood schools," Crotty said. "The price you ask us to pay is too high. We believe the end does not justify the means. The criteria used here is biased."

Naresh Nadeswaran told the board, "It's your duty to relook at school boundaries. The criteria should be the shortest distance to the school."

Zeke Hernandez of Santa Ana, representing the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), also supported Abelove's map.

"This will provide the best results for equal educational opportunities for all students at Tustin Unified School District."

However, Abelove's fellow board members did not agree.

President Tammie Bullard said Beckman will start with too few students if the school depends on students with the freedom to choose.

"I am in favor of ensuring that all three schools even out," Bullard said, "but I can't support a plan that gives 1,200 students their choice."

"I think this (current) map best serves all three high schools," said Albertson. "With the grandfathering that's going on, people's fears will not be realized."

Scinto said, "I believe we do give equal educational opportunities to everyone and I don't believe that will change."

Davis, who voted with Abelove against the current map, did not support him on this one.

"This proposal takes a step I think is very interesting and intriguing in that it gives a choice," Davis said. "Let's set this aside and let the process go forward before we make any decisions on boundary issues."

The board voted 4-1 to table the issue until staff can report on the results of the intra-district transfer process. Usually done in the spring, this year the process will be done in December and January, to ascertain how many students will want to sign up at Beckman.

Scinto voted against tabling the items because she believed the concept of the transfer of choice for the southwest part of town was worth further exploration.

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