

# **TUSD Board Adopts New High School Boundaries**

The Tustin School Board adopted new high school boundaries at its meeting on Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup> that some residents say "create segregated high schools."

The addition of the new Beckman High School which opens next September meant that boundaries for the attendance areas of Foothill High, Tustin High and Beckman all needed to be established.

## **The Process and Recommendation**

The areas of Tustin Ranch and West Irvine that have been paying Mello Roos taxes all along were assured of being placed in the boundaries of the new Beckman High.

The question was which other areas were to be altered. The Board considered "Map B" developed by a citizen's committee appointed by the Board. Because most students from the Mello Roos areas had been attending Tustin High, and Tustin High's student population was already lower than Foothill High's student population, attention was focused on those areas within the current Foothill High boundaries that were to be reassigned to either Tustin High or Beckman High.

The Map B proposal moved the area around Heideman Elementary School on the west end of Tustin from Foothill High to Beckman High. The proposal also moved most students in the Estock and Guin Foss elementary school attendance areas (between the 55 Freeway and Newport Ave, and between the I-5 and 17<sup>th</sup> Street) from Foothill High to Tustin High.

## **Community Input**

Many people in the Guin Foss attendance area objected to the change, saying that they felt that the change would disrupt their families by forcing them to a new high school.

For the first time only a week earlier, the option of taking the Lambert Elementary attendance area that includes Lyons Street in Santa Ana out of Foothill High and moving it also to Beckman High had been presented to the Board at the request of a member.

All options developed by the Boundary Committee had kept that area in Foothill High, and the residents there had been among the earliest to express their strong desire to remain at Foothill High.

Over 30 parents and students from the Lambert Elementary attendance area attended Monday night's meeting to voice their desire to remain at Foothill High, discussing their student's involvement there in extra curricular activities and teams as well as their desire to retain their friendships with students from other parts of the Foothill area. (See the photo on the first page of the Local section of Tuesday's Orange County Register to see this group.)

## **The Board Votes**

Each of the five Board members voted to retain nearly all of the Guin Foss and Estock areas that had been proposed to move to Tustin High in Foothill High, as the families in the area had requested to avoid disruption of their educational plans.

In a surprise move, the Board voted by a 3 to 2 margin to take the Lambert Elementary attendance area that includes Lyons Street in Santa Ana out of Foothill High and move it also to Beckman High, over the strong objections of families from that area.

The motion to implement this last minute change was made by Francine Scinto and seconded by Ann Albertson and was supported by Board President Tammie Bullard. Board members Jonathan Abelow and Lynn Davis objected strongly. Scinto, Albertson and Davis all have children attending Foothill High School.

### **Analysis of the Impact**

It was noted at the meeting that this change would dramatically alter the ethnic make-up of the three high schools, making them much different from each other than they are today. According to figures published in Monday's Orange County Register, currently Latino students make up 33% of the Foothill High student body and 44% of the Tustin High student body. On many measures and statistics, the two schools differ by roughly ten percent.

The new boundaries adopted by the narrow Board majority show a very different story:

<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Foothill High School</b>	<b>Tustin High &amp; Beckman High</b>
Latinos	23%	50%
Whites	65%	30%

As mentioned before, the Mello Roos areas were required by law to be reassigned to Beckman High. In examining the group of students to be moved out of Foothill High under the Board majority's decision, we find the following:

#### **Odds that a future Foothill High student was removed from the school:**

For Latino Foothill High students	55%
For White Foothill High students	4%

Overall, 82% of the non-Mello Roos area students removed from Foothill High are Latino.

In addition, the new boundaries assure that the three high schools will differ in terms of how many at each are from socio-economically disadvantaged families, such as those who qualify for free or reduced lunches. Some feel the Board action puts a "poor need not apply" label on Foothill High.

SIMBY President Lyann Collins is concerned that Beckman High may open with over half of its students being from the Heideman and Lambert/Lyons area.

### **TUSD Residents React**

Many residents are expressing dismay at the magnitude of the "ethnic realignment" created by the Board's decision. With Latino students twelve times more likely to be impacted than white students, several believe that the impact could not possibly have been a random side effect. Others question the need to move from a small difference between our two high schools to a much larger difference with the new boundaries where Foothill has twice the ratio of whites and one-half the ratio of Latinos of the other two high schools.

Several people have expressed support for an option that would allow students in the Lambert Elementary attendance area to continue to choose to attend Foothill High.

Concerned voters are being asked to:

1. Email Lyann Collins at [lyann@simby.org](mailto:lyann@simby.org) to be place on an email list of people concerned over the Board's decision.
2. Email the Tustin School Board members at [Board@tustin.k12.ca.us](mailto:Board@tustin.k12.ca.us) to express your opinion.
3. Write letters to the editor of the Orange County Register, Los Angeles Times, Tustin News and Irvine World News citing these statistics and letting people know about the magnitude of this decision.
4. Attend the Tustin School Board meetings to express your opinion. (The next one will be held Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. at the district offices at 300 "C" Street in Tustin.)
5. Visit the [SIMBY.ORG](http://SIMBY.ORG) web site at least weekly to keep up with news and alerts.

Each of the three Tustin School Board members who supported this move will be up for re-election in November 2004 - just two months after the opening of Beckman High. Let them know that you will remember their actions now when you vote in that election.