

Tustin school boundaries protested

More than 100 people ask board members to reconsider the lines to take racial and socioeconomic factors into account.

By **FERMIN LEAL**

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TUSTIN – More than 100 parents and community activists pleaded with Tustin Unified school board members Monday night to redesign high school attendance boundaries, saying the lines would create a racial imbalance at Foothill, Tustin and Arnold O. Beckman high schools.

Many in the crowd were residents of west Tustin and east Santa Ana, an area bounded by the district's western border and the Costa Mesa (55) and Santa Ana (I-5) freeways. These neighborhoods, with a high concentration of poor families and English-learners, will have to switch from Foothill to Beckman's attendance area.

The move would reduce Foothill's Hispanic population from 32 percent to about 20 percent, and increase the white population from 54 percent to at least 64 percent, according to estimates. It would be unfair to have the other two schools carry the bulk of the district's poor and Hispanic children, the crowd argued.

"You are unbalancing the delicate balance that should exist for the fair and equal treatment of all students," said Amin David, head of Los Amigos of Orange County.

About a dozen people, however, praised last month's 3-2 boundary vote because the redesign promoted the concept of neighborhood schools by allowing families to attend the campuses closest to their homes, they said.

"Race should not have been in issue when deciding these boundaries," said resident Vicky Moore, citing Proposition 209, which forbids the consideration of race in deciding which students attend what schools.

The board postponed a vote on allowing current sophomores and juniors in the neighborhoods switching attendance areas to remain at their schools until graduation.

The new boundaries go into effect in fall 2004, when Beckman is scheduled to open.
