

December 12, 2007

To readers of Calhoun Falls Today:

This letter is in response to statements that are being circulated throughout the district.

COURSE OFFERINGS:

*Any advanced placement (AP) class (e.g. Calculus, English, and Biology) requires that the teacher must receive training and become AP certified.

*Any class offered for dual-credit requires a college level teacher (i.e. a teacher who has a master's degree in the subject area or has a masters degree +18 credit hours in subject area)

*Psychology/Sociology can be offered by a teacher with Social Studies certification.

These types of classes are **SITE** decisions based on faculty training and student needs. The classes may be offered **REGARDLESS** of what the other high schools in the district offer. Apparently, these honor classes were offered two years ago at Abbeville High School. Calhoun Falls High School was in full operation during that time period and there has been no serious district-wide reduction in force since then. To say that CFHS is the reason for those classes not being offered at AHS this year is ludicrous and a **GROSS MISREPRESENTATION OF THE TRUTH.**

COST PER CHILD

One factor that **MUST** be considered when examining cost per child is the fact that we are a Title I school. We are the **ONLY** Title I high school in the district. Therefore, we will always have a higher expenditure per child because we receive these funds. I agree that the \$10,176 figure is much higher than in previous years. This anomaly warrants further investigation to determine the underlying cause so that it can be rectified.

However, the \$10,176 figure is very much in line with other Title I high schools in SC.

DECLINING ENROLLMENT

Declining enrollment is a district-wide problem. It will not be remedied by closing CFHS and moving those students. Another problem within the district is students not attending the school in their attendance zone. This **is especially true** in the CFHS attendance area. Because of this, we do "seem" to have a large decline in enrollment. However, if you take x number of students (pick a number, any number; it still probably won't even be close to the actual number) several things happen:

1. Decline in enrollment **DECREASES**
2. Student/Teacher Ratio **INCREASES**
3. Cost per child **DECREASES**

I'm definitely not a science person, but I feel comfortable in saying that it has a direct cause and effect. Even with this zoning problem, if you look back to last year (2005-2006), you will notice that CFHS and AHS **BOTH** had a 9% decrease in enrollment.

FACTS AND FIGURES

One issue many have taken (and I see their reasoning) is that the student/teacher ratio being distributed does not depict the true situation of CFHS. The student enrollment used to determine that ratio only included grades 9-12. CFHS houses grades 7-12. Most of the faculty, teach both middle and high school. Therefore, is it accurate to say they are full-time HIGH SCHOOL teachers? Some have determined that a more accurate way would be to include all the students and the number of classes offered and divide by the number of teachers. Does that seem more logical? If so, it brings us to a 10.56 to 1 ratio. Still lower than the other two, but much closer in line.

IN CLOSING

Many recent comments, forum posts and letters show some obvious hard feelings toward the re-structuring of Westwood and Long Cane Elementary. I do not feel however, that it can be compared to the closing of CFHS. In that situation, students will be reorganized and some will move to a different location while remaining a few miles apart. Our students face the possibility of their school being **CLOSED** and asked to travel out of their community and several miles across the **COUNTY**, which will in turn disenfranchise them of many opportunities, while every other high school student will not be asked to give up anything. At the end of the day I encourage you to ask yourselves the question: How would I feel if this was something **MY** child had to face? Sure, we all want the best for **ALL** of our students, but there is no one anywhere more concerned with **ALL** as compared to your **OWN**.

Respectfully,
CF Educator
Tax-Payer

Parent of many wonderful children of whom I've had the blessed opportunity to teach.