

## Report of the Highland Park ISD Demographics Parent Committee (1/9/06)

### I. Introduction/Charge

In April 2005, the Board of Trustees received a copy of Dr. Dennis Harner's Demographic Analysis and Enrollment Projections for the Highland Park I.S.D. In subsequent action by the Board, a parent committee composed of three representatives from each elementary school campus was formed. The charge of the committee was to "study the issues associated with the Demographic Study" and make appropriate recommendations. This is the resulting report of the parent committee to the Board of Trustees.

### II. Issues

During the Committee's discussions, the following five broad issues were identified as needing to be addressed:

- Issue A: Harner Demographic Projections Update
- Issue B: High Operating Capacity Challenges
- Issue C: Reliance on Temporary Structures
- Issue D: Accurate Facility Capacity Study
- Issue E: Managing Community Impact of Zone Realignment

#### Issue A: Harner Demographic Projections Update

- The Harner and Associates demographic study's attendance zone projections are presented below.

**Table 1: Elementary Attendance Zone Projections**

Zone	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	% Change, 04 to 09
Armstrong	531	526	512	509	514	514	-3.2%
Bradfield	613	628	655	692	695	697	13.7%
Hyer	539	533	525	498	500	498	-7.6%
University Park	650	645	650	650	649	646	-0.6%
TOTAL	2333	2332	2342	2349	2358	2355	

*Source: Harner's Demographic Study, Table 6, page 24.*

- A comparison of actual 05/06 enrollment versus Harner's projected 05/06 enrollment shows that Harner's projections were accurate in total, but varied significantly between campuses, as seen in the table below.

**Table 2: Comparison of Harner's Projections and Actual Enrollment**

School	Harner's Projection	Actual Enrollment	# Difference	% Difference
Armstrong	526	539	13	2.5%
Bradfield	628	596	-32	-5.1%
Hyer	533	561	28	5.3%
University Park	645	657	12	1.9%
TOTAL	2332	2353	21	0.9%
<i>Actual enrollment as of 9/28/05.</i>				

The committee feels this variance can be partially attributed to two likely factors. First, there have been some forced shifts in enrollment as individual campus grade levels reached maximum enrollment. Seven campus grades out of a total of 20 are at or above capacity:

- Armstrong: 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- Bradfield: 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades
- Hyer: 2<sup>nd</sup> grade (oversubscribed by 2)
- UP: 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, 4<sup>th</sup> grade (oversubscribed by 6)

Second, parents who move between attendance zones may request children remain at school of first attendance.

The committee, however, is not suggesting that the 2005 variance is solely attributable to these two factors and feels further understanding is needed.

- Given the variance in 2005 actual enrollment at each school vs. the Harner report, the Committee felt that the 2006 – 2009 projections should be modified to reflect this change in mix. For purposes of our analysis, the Committee revised Harner’s projections using actual 05/06 enrollment data and our best judgment. Table 3 presents revised projections used by the Committee.

**Table 3: Revised Harner Projections Used By Parent Committee**

Zone	2004	2005 Act.	2006 Rev.	2007 Rev.	2008 Rev.	2009 Rev.	Adjustments to Harner 06 – 09
Armstrong	531	539	512	509	514	514	No Change
Bradfield	613	596	630	667	670	672	- 25 Each Year
Hyer	539	561	540	513	515	513	+ 15 Each Year
University Park	650	657	660	660	659	656	+10 Each Year
TOTAL	2333	2353	2342	2349	2358	2355	No Change

The committee believes the demographic study’s projections need to be further validated prior to using them as the basis for changing attendance zones. Specifically, the projected increase in attendance at Bradfield should be better understood. Dr. Harner may need to be called upon to explain his projections. Additionally, enrollment at each elementary school’s kindergarten round-up, scheduled for February 7, 2006, may provide an indicator as to whether projected 06/07 enrollment seems reasonable.

Issue B: High Operating Capacity Challenges

- Currently the district is operating at 97 percent capacity overall (operating capacity = number of current students / number of current sections x 22), with University Park topping out at 99.5%. This high operating capacity rate creates difficulty in serving students in their elementary attendance zone of residence and leaves little room for population growth.

**Table 4: Elementary School Operating Capacity by Campus**

School	Classrooms/Sections Available	Total Student Capacity	Current Student Populations	Operating Capacity
Armstrong	26	572	539	94.2%
Bradfield	28	616	596	96.8%
Hyer	26	572	561	98.1%
University Park	30	660	657	99.5%
TOTAL	110	2420	2353	97.2%

- Without changes in attendance boundaries or additional capacity, the Committee’s revised projections show that the District would continue operating at the high 97% capacity rate with significant variation between campuses. Bradfield clearly stands out as having the largest potential issue based on these projections, with UP close behind.

**Table 5: Future Operating Capacities Under Revised Harner Projections**

		<u>2005</u> <u>Act.</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Armstrong	Student Pop.	539	512	509	514	514
	% Op. Capacity	94%	90%	89%	90%	90%
Bradfield	Student Pop.	596	630	667	670	672
	% Op. Capacity	97%	102%	108%	109%	109%
Hyer	Student Pop.	561	540	513	515	513
	% Op. Capacity	98%	94%	90%	90%	90%
University Park	Student Pop.	657	660	660	659	656
	% Op. Capacity	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%
Total HP	Student Pop.	2353	2342	2349	2358	2355
	% Op. Capacity	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%

Issue C: Reliance on Temporary Structures

- While intended to be a temporary solution to capacity, portable buildings have become a permanent part of each campus’ capacity. In fact, portables account for 15% of the District’s Available Student Capacity – and at University Park, a full 20%, housing the entire 4<sup>th</sup> grade. The concerns of the committee involve security, aesthetics, difficulty in renewing building permits, and higher operating costs, to name a few. The actions taken to address capacity issues should also encompass decreasing dependence on portables as appropriate.

**Table 6: Use of Portable Classrooms at Elementary Schools**

School	Classrooms/Sections Available	Portable Classrooms	Portables Share of Capacity
Armstrong	26	4	15%
Bradfield	28	2	7%
Hyer	26	4	15%
University Park	30	6	20%
TOTAL	110	16	15%

#### Issue D: Accurate Facility Capacity Study

- An accurate facility capacity study does not exist. The most recent capacity study was dated July 1998 and since that time, significant programmatic changes have occurred that impact facility utilization. These changes include: half day to full day kindergarten; addition of PPCD section; and additional physical education minutes requirements, etc.

#### Issue E: Managing Community Impact of Zone Realignment

- Attendance zone realignment is an emotional issue. There are still some ill feelings about the previous boundary changes and anxiety over being “forced” out of one’s current elementary school. Several concerned parents attended one of our Committee meetings. In order to allay community concerns and ease parental anxiety, a clear communication plan regarding the Board’s intentions should be developed and executed as soon as possible.
- While Grandfathering eases the anxiety in changing campuses, it creates significant difficulty and uncertainty in accurately projecting enrollment by school and also creates delays in reaching the desired outcomes. In addition, it requires more zones to be realigned to achieve the desired student population shifts.

### **III. Guiding Principles**

As the Committee considered strategies for addressing these issues, it was guided by the following principles:

- Any change implemented should be cost-effective, given current school financing constraints.
- Realignment of attendance zones should cause the least amount of disruption as possible.
- HPISD should make every effort to educate all elementary school students inside fully utilized permanent structures.
- HPISD should make every effort to ensure attendance in the zone of residence.

#### **IV. Alternatives Considered**

Under each of the three following alternatives considered, the Committee believes that the District should:

1. Update the 1998 facility capacity study to ensure optimal utilization at each campus;
2. Validate the projections in the Harner Demographic Study;
3. Explore opportunities to reduce its significant dependence on portable structures, and;
4. Develop and execute a communication plan for the community..

##### **A. Status Quo**

Under this alternative, the District would continue its current practice of filling individual classes at each campus up to the maximum of 22 per section. Once a grade level is filled at a campus, additional students are reassigned to an alternate elementary school with capacity.

##### **B. Reassign Elementary School Attendance Zones**

Pending kindergarten round-up enrollment figures and the validation of Harner's projections, shift planning areas for the 06-07 school year with the primary goal of alleviating overcrowding at Bradfield and with the secondary benefit of providing some relief to UP. Specifically, planning areas 202, 222, 223, and 234 (area bounded by Bryn Mawr, Preston Road, Lovers Lane and the Tollway) would move from Bradfield to Hyer. Planning area 401 (area bounded by Daniel, Boedeker, Milton, and Central Expressway) would move from UP to Armstrong.

Based on instructions in Dr. Bryce's memo, it is our understanding there will be Grandfathering:

- Currently enrolled students at UP and Bradfield would be allowed to finish their elementary school years at their current school.
- Younger siblings will be allowed to enroll at their current elementary school as long as an older sibling is currently enrolled at UP or Bradfield.
- A younger sibling of a student who attended Bradfield or UP previously but is now at another school (e.g., MIS) will attend the new school.
- New students – either those entering kindergarten with no older sibling currently enrolled at the school or students new to the district – would attend the new school.

Under this scenario, school attendance projections would be as follows:

Table 7: Student Population Projections & Operating Capacities Under Option B\*

		<b>2004</b>	<b>2005 Act.</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
Armstrong	Student Pop.	531	539	517	520	530	547
	% Op. Capacity		94%	90%	91%	93%	96%
Bradfield	Student Pop.	613	596	621	644	631	598
	% Op. Capacity		97%	101%	104%	102%	97%
Hyer	Student Pop.	539	561	549	536	554	587
	% Op. Capacity		98%	96%	94%	97%	103%
University Park	Student Pop.	650	657	656	650	643	623
	% Op. Capacity		100%	99%	98%	97%	94%
Total HP	Student Pop.	2333	2353	2342	2349	2358	2355
	% Op. Capacity		97%	97%	97%	97%	97%
Shift Projections**	% Op. Capacity			10%	25%	40%	80%
*Planning areas 202, 222, 223 & 234 would shift from Bradfield to Hyer; planning area 401 would move from UP to Armstrong.							
**Shift Projections are the assumed rates at which the populations in the affected zones move from the "old school" to the "new school" – an attempt at projecting the impact of Grandfathering and incorporating into this analysis.							

### C. Realign Boundaries and Expand Capacity

In addition to pursuing boundary realignment as noted under alternative B, elementary school capacity would be expanded to address the current capacity utilization rate of 97 percent, the extensive use of portables at each campus, and the likelihood of future population growth. In addition, as noted by Dr. Harner, approximately 20 percent of students who live in the District attend private school, and this rate could shift at any time.

If this option is pursued, the following would be required:

- Update the 1998 facility capacity study of current structures
- Complete strategic review of future programmatic needs
- Engage an appropriate expert to determine where capacity can be added and what the financial requirements would be to implement them
- Identify a community involvement and outreach program
- Develop a proposed plan of action and seek approval from the Board of Trustees or the voting population as appropriate
- Rezone attendance zones to equalize population based on new capacity

## **V. Recommendation**

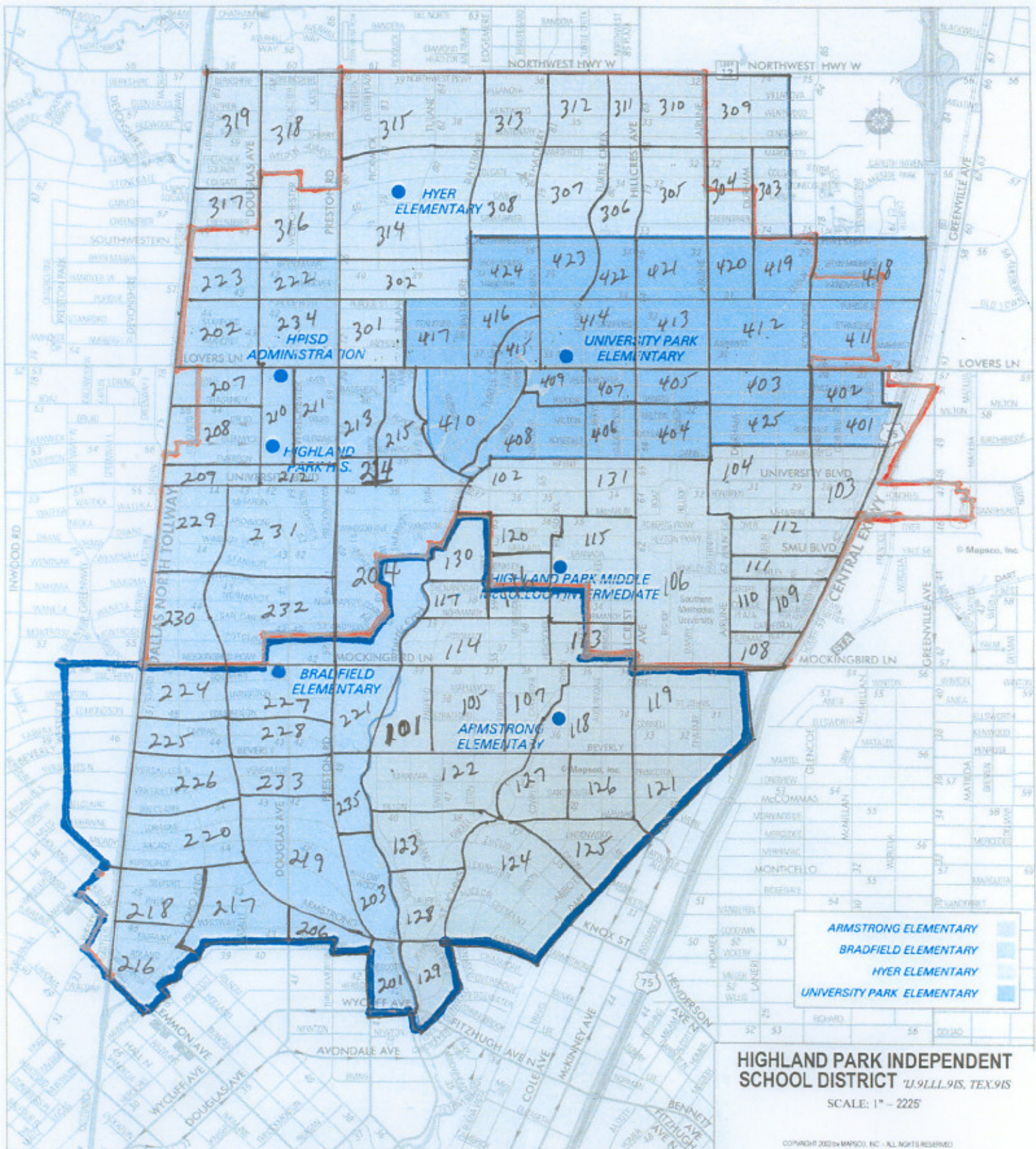
Based on our research, discussion and community input, the Demographic Study Committee recommends that the Board pursue Option C, Realign Boundaries and Expand Capacity. While Options A and B provide temporary relief, they are not long-term solutions. On the other hand, while there are no perfect solutions to the current and projected overcrowding situation in the District elementary schools, Option C provides the District with the best opportunity to responsibly prepare for the future.

Respectfully Submitted,

Demographics Parent Committee

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