

School Board Begins Comprehensive Growth Plan

by Nick DeRatto
Village News

If there is one problem that has dogged Chesterfield County schools for years, it is the issue of overcrowding. Even with the addition of four new schools by the start of this upcoming school year, continuing and projected growth throughout the county continue to take a toll on many of the already overcrowded schools.

"We are planning for growth and the numbers reflect that," says David Wymen, Dale District representative on the Chesterfield County School Board. "As the growth continues in the county, we may see a lull in student enrollment, but we have to plan for those

developments that have already been approved by the Board of Supervisors."

In an effort to help control growth in the county's schools, CCPS has formed the Chesterfield County Public Schools Growth Task Force to research and update assumptions used by the School Board to address capacity needs. Areas to be looked at by the task force include the design and construction of schools, current facility needs, and alternatives to building new schools. Recommendations made by the task force could be used to guide the upcoming CIP budget process and the County Comprehensive Plan.

"We will begin meeting at the end of this month and will meet once a month until November to discuss See 'Growth Plan' page 3.

Meeting Schedule	
Identifying the Issues	May 29, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. School Board Central Office
School Construction, Additions and Renovations	June 26* Elizabeth Scott Elementary School
Alternatives to Bricks and Mortar	August 28* Thomas Dale High School
Cost and Financing of Schools	September 25* Cosby High School
Recommendations	October 30* School Board Central Office
<small>*Time to be determined at May 29 meeting</small>	

Growth Plan

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these issues," says Wymen. "Each session will be open to the public and we will have some way for the public to comment on what is being discussed and what they would like to see."

Despite severe overcrowding at many schools such as Thomas Dale, Wymen says that overall the county schools as a whole are below or just slightly above capacity. In all, the high schools are at 102 percent capacity, the middle schools are at 98 percent capacity, and the elementary schools are at 90 percent capacity. However, these numbers could soon be increasing.

"According to data, we will need 13 new schools within the next 14 to 15 years," says Wymen. "There is still much more work in front of us that we need to do."

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Holland to Hold Dale District Community Meeting

Jim Holland, Supervisor of Dale District, will hold a Dale District Community Meeting on Thursday, May 29 at 7 p.m. Citizens are invited to the open forum meeting to discuss local issues that concern them.

The meeting will be held at Salem Church Middle School, 9700 Salem Church Rd.