

## In the Numbers – The Great Divide

	<b>North</b> Newtown Boro, Newtown Twp., Upper Makefield, & Wrightstown 4 School Directors	<b>South</b> Northampton 5 School Directors	
Grade Levels	March 2012 Enrollment Students / % of Grade		Total
<b>K</b>	219 / 41%	315 / 59%	534
<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	365 / 48%	396 / 52%	761
<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	352 / 44%	450 / 56%	802
<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	347 / 43%	468 / 57%	815
<b>4<sup>th</sup></b>	375 / 45%	460 / 55%	835
<b>5<sup>th</sup></b>	427 / 47%	480 / 53%	907
<b>6<sup>th</sup></b>	425 / 45%	529 / 55%	954
<b>Elementary Total</b>	<b>2510 / 45%</b>	<b>3098 / 55%</b>	<b>5,608</b>
<b>7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Newtown</b> 432 / 44%	<b>Holland &amp; Richboro</b> 545 / 56%	977
<b>8<sup>th</sup></b>	448 / 45%	552 / 55%	1,000
<b>Middle Total</b>	<b>880 / 45%</b>	<b>1097 / 55%</b>	<b>1,977</b>
<b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	452 / 48%	495 / 52%	947
<b>10<sup>th</sup></b>	497 / 47%	553 / 53%	1,050
<b>11<sup>th</sup></b>	516 / 50%	507 / 50%	1,023
<b>12<sup>th</sup></b>	548 / 53%	488 / 47%	1,036
<b>Secondary Ungraded*</b>	7 / 70%	3 / 30%	10
<b>High School Total</b>	<b>2020 / 50%</b>	<b>2046 / 50%</b>	<b>4,066</b>
<b>High School Classrooms</b>	<b>103 / 54%</b>	<b>87 / 46%</b>	<b>190</b>

\* Secondary Ungraded are Special Education students that are educated until they are 21

### The Beginning of “The Great Divide”

As the district embarks on the 2012-13 school year with a compulsory change in attendance boundaries at the high school level, the chart, “In the Numbers – The Great Divide,” gives related enrollment and facilities details.

After years of lobbying by a parent group, and discussions by School Directors and Administrators, the practice of giving CR students at Richboro Middle School (RMS) the choice between attending high school at either South or North is being abolished. On February 3, 2011, the Council Rock School Board voted to “redistrict the RMS attendance area to Council Rock South effective with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class of 2011-12.” The administration will allow exceptions for students who already have siblings at North.

The new mandated attendance boundaries remove the mechanism that kept enrollments at the high schools relatively equal, with slightly more students attending North, which has 16 more classrooms than South. This redistricting sets up a future enrollment imbalance that leaves South at or over capacity and North significantly under capacity.

The mandated boundaries are not in effect until September 2012, and will take 4 years for full implementation before South enrolls all RMS students. However, over the last few years while this was an ongoing discussion and promises were made that this change would occur, more and more RMS students chose to go to South. As a result, in February, for the first time since the building opened in 2002, South's enrollment surpassed North's. At this point, even before the new attendance boundaries go into effect, the current 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades at South exceed those at North by 99 students.

As the "in the Numbers" chart demonstrates, four years from now when the current 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades are in the high school, what is currently a gap of just 26 students between South and North will be expanded to approximately 400 students. Organizing the district so that all Northampton students (with the exception of Special Education) attend schools only in Northampton sets up a "Great Divide" in the Council Rock community in academic offerings, opportunities for students, and political constituencies.

The disparate enrollment figures between the two high schools could have an effect on course offerings. Historically, courses have been dropped at both high schools due to under-enrollment, and over-registration can result in students being shut out of a class. There has never been a time since South opened that there was more than a 250 student difference between the two high schools. With an imbalance of close to 400 students likely in a few years time, offering the same courses at both schools could result in new challenges. There may be insufficient classrooms to accommodate all offerings at South, and there may not be sufficient enrollment to run all the classes at North.

With such disparate high school populations, Northampton students at South could face more competition for school activities than those at North. This includes the ability to make it on to teams and gain leadership posts in clubs.

Currently, two School Directors have constituents whose children attend both North and South. In "The Great Divide" there is no School Director who has constituents whose children attend both high schools. Five school directors' constituents will go to only Northampton schools while the remaining four school directors' constituents attend schools that only feed to North. In the future, having five Directors from the South sending area and the minority from the North sending area could spill over into political impacts that affect funding issues and other district decisions.

There will be many challenges as “The Great Divide” is fully realized. The greatest will be ensuring all students and taxpayers feel they are part of a united school district, with two comparatively compatible segments, and not just an umbrella for two distinctly different sub-districts fragmented by a schism based on location.