Notes Summarizing Input from September 9, 2003
The participants who attended the Public Hearing on Tuesday, September 10, 2003, provided 47 verbal and 34 written comments which have been extremely useful as the committee continues to work on a boundary proposal. The comments have been compiled into four categories: (1) Straight questions and answers; (2) Comments for the Committee to Consider; (3) Sense of Community; and, (4) Suggested Boundary Adjustments to Consider.

Straight Questions and Answers
What are the date and locations of school board meetings related to this issue? The boundary committee will make a recommendation to Superintendent Beth Everitt in mid-October. Superintendent Everitt could then make a recommendation to the Board of Education. Tentatively, the boundaries could be considered at the Capital Outlay /Technology Committee of the Board on October 20, 5 pm, John Milne Board Room, 725 University Blvd. SE. The committee could refer the boundaries to the full Board of Education meeting scheduled for November 5. Board agendas are available at www.aps.edu under Departments, Board of Education, Active Calendars or by calling the Board office at 842-3758.

Where is the new elementary school located? The school is at 801 Elizabeth SE. Proceed south on Eubank to Southern, turn left and then right on Elizabeth. This school is located in a growing area commonly referred to as Manzano Mesa which includes the WillowWood and Mirabella subdivisions. The permanent facility, when complete, will have a capacity for 750 students.

Several commented about lack of representation in the boundary process. All affected schools (principals, parent representative and teacher representative) have now received an invitation to join the SE Boundary Committee.

What is the functional goal of redistricting? Board of Education policy J.01 School Attendance Areas describes this. “The administration is to regularly evaluate the viability of schools and school clusters in light of population dynamics, facility adequacy and site capacity.” The full policy is posted at www.aps.edu under Policies and Procedures. The General Provisions in the NM State School Code require the local school board to define and adopt by rule the boundaries of attendance areas for each school. There is no provision for a referendum on this issue.

Enrollment across the study area is over-all flat or declining and the J.01 board policy calls for balancing these enrollments. Balancing will not create “equal” numbers of students; rather, will maximize the use of existing district classroom capacity. Efficient use of capacity will provide equitable opportunities for staffing, teaching and learning.

Analysis documents used by the SE Boundary Committee are also available in this file and include: projected enrollment trends, transfer patterns, current boundaries, current boundaries with number of students living in the area, number attending each school and capacity for 03-04 and the currently proposed option using projected students living
within that boundary. These documents are not intended to tell the full story; rather, they are a result of analyzing quantitative information as well as district, school and neighborhood stories (qualitative). The real estate value of homes is not a criteria in determining boundaries; and, in fact, would expose APS to equity complaints. Nor are test scores used as a criteria.

Compiled Comments which the SE Boundary Committee Will Consider at it’s Next Meeting

Comments about grandfathering, transfers, magnet and year-round school
Parents inquired about automatic transfers for students already in a current attendance area who may be moved outside the current attendance area.

A suggestion was made to provide accommodations for students and families where boundary changes include a move from a traditional-schedule school to a year-round school.

Consider “grandfathering” students who are already attending a school until they have completed their education at that school.

A magnet school remains a magnet so long as parents continue to vote in favor of the magnet. At Inez (a magnet school), 233 students were accepted from outside the attendance area this year. In one proposed boundary, the area identifies 184 students living in the attendance area. These 184 students would have priority over students requesting a magnet placement.

Bus Traffic at Schools
Health and safety improvements always have the highest priority in our Facilities Master Plan and cannot be moved out of the plan.

Busing safety is managed by the APS Transportation Office. It is important to note that APS does not own or operate any buses. These are privately operated; although APS does have checks and balances written into all 17 of its busing contracts.

The APS Transportation Office has been present at all boundary committee meetings and provides advice on bell schedules, numbers of buses and the capacity to bus students. Requests for bus information should be directed to Community Relations at 881-8421. Immediate and proposed needs at Bellehaven (for example) can be met using an existing bus turn-around on the site east of school. There is also an opportunity on the site to expand parking on the west side. Parking will be provided according to city code which considers size, use and occupancy of the building. If a safety issue is identified, an immediate solution will be provided.

The opportunity to walk to school is very important to parents, students and the well-being of the community. Parents said don’t bus students when they can walk. The committee will be revisiting the impact that the proposed boundary has on walking.
A walk zone is defined by state transportation rules as one mile “as the child walks.” All others outside that walk zone are eligible for busing. Anecdotal stories indicate that many students who could walk are dropped off by car. Increased busing is also an added cost to the district’s operational expenses.

**Boundary changes may affect feeder middle schools**
The committee is aware that boundary changes could affect feeder schools; however, middle school or high school changes are not a part of the assigned task.

**Facility Issues**
Chelwood and Onate were opened with “modular” facilities and have long range plans for “permanent” buildings. The new elementary school on Elizabeth will be opened with “portables” and a permanent core which includes kindergarten, media center, administration, cafeteria and playground. The new elementary will include a City of Albuquerque Childhood Development Center facility. Subsequent permanent phases, at all three schools, are contingent on future elections.

**Why are there no schools east of Tramway?**
Historically, the school district has had enough classroom capacity to accommodate students from communities located east of Tramway.

**Sense of Community**
The District (Board, Superintendent, Staff) has been working toward smaller, neighborhood schools for 3 or 4 years. This is best exemplified by the revision of *Board Policy J.01 School Attendance Areas* which eliminated the requirement of a minimum of 300 students for a viable school.

Several speakers (parents, grandparents, teachers) spoke about the value of community, the success of their schools and their commitment to the school community.

Some daycare choices may be affected by changing boundaries.

Would boundaries have an impact on a parent’s ability to participate in the school community?

Have businesses along Juan Tabo been consulted?

**Suggested Boundary Adjustments Follow**
Why aren’t we taking students for Eubank from Collet Park? Change Onate to Collet Park. Have La Mesa go to Inez or Mark Twain. Nineteen students in the proposed area need to remain with the rest of the Collet Park community. Eubank changes are to the detriment of Bellehaven. Eubank is a community school and would welcome students from La Mesa. Onate boundary is two blocks from the school. Acoma students who are currently in a non-contiguous “pocket” have formed a community and a boundary change will disrupt that community. Chelwood parent does not want to move to Acoma where it
will be difficult to teach son community values. Acoma is losing students. Bellehaven community is going through change with population turn over; keep the school as a neighborhood school which neighborhood history indicates was built on donated land. Population east of Tramway should be bused to Acoma. Leave Chelwood alone.