



## [Georgetown ISD chooses high school attendance boundaries](#)

By Samantha Bryant

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GEORGETOWN — The Georgetown ISD Board of Trustees voted March 28 to approve an attendance boundary map for its two high schools that will go into effect in fall 2011.

Board Member Mike Hewlett, Place 5, was the only trustee who voted against Plan Eight, which divides the district roughly along the San Gabriel River. Students living north of the line will attend Georgetown High School and those who live south will go to Georgetown East View High School.

"We are all one community," said Board President Brad Smith. "I realize that this is an emotional issue."

On Feb. 21, the board approved a transition plan for Georgetown to have two high schools. The plan calls for the current ninth grade campus to become Georgetown East View High School and zoned for grades nine through 10 starting in the fall. GHS will house students in grades nine through 12. An additional grade level will be added to East View each school year.

Prior to the March 28 meeting, the school board held two meetings where public comment was allowed and looked at attendance zone plans with the help of a demographer to analyze the data.

The board considered eight plans and took into account future enrollment, bus routes, transportation costs, the number of economically disadvantaged students, driving distance for students and other factors, Superintendent Joe Dan Lee said.

Before the vote, Hewlett said that, while he might be disappointed with the outcome of the pending decision, he would choose to be positive and urged parents to do the same.

"This community cannot afford—physically, emotionally or economically—to back off from any one of our campuses," Hewlett said.

Board Member Arthur Dela Cruz, Place 3, said parents told him they were concerned about the number of East View students, under Plan Eight, who qualify for free or reduced lunches.

Cruz said the district had other schools that started out with a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students, such as Williams Elementary and Purl Elementary, but the district was able to allocate resources to those campuses and they were eventually rated exemplary by the Texas Education Agency.

"I think we need to come through and do the same thing again," Dela Cruz said.

Based on current high school population demographics, about 26 percent of economically disadvantaged students would attend GHS and 42 percent would go to East View.

Mark Bobinger, the Place 4 trustee, said that 11 of the district's 16 campuses have a greater disparity in economically disadvantaged students than Plan Eight would create at the two high schools.

"Demographics alone do not determine the success of school," Bobinger said, adding that the leadership, staff and resources all make a difference in the education of students.

"Anything that is offered at Georgetown High School will be offered to the students at Georgetown East View High School," Lee said. "We're going to make the transition as seamless as possible."

Lee said the district received a total of 916 comments on its website about the boundary issue.

"There is not a decision that can be made that will please everyone at GISD," he said.

Scott Alarcon, the Place 2 board member, said transportation was a factor in his decision to support Plan Eight.

"For me, what it came down to was any additional transportation cost essentially took money out of the classroom," he said.

Kristen Vance has a daughter in ninth grade and attended the March 28 school board meeting.

"I think the transportation issue was an important one, and this was the plan that streamlined it," she said about Plan Eight.

Vance said she was initially concerned about the number of economically disadvantaged students attending East View in Plan Eight, but said she liked what the board had to say about leadership and resources making a difference at a school.

Sheila Carter, the board member for Place 1, was not present at the meeting.

The boundary map is available on the district's website, [www.georgetownisd.org](http://www.georgetownisd.org).

**Courtesy of JB Goodwin**