

FAQ from Public Forum at Panther Creek High School

Will all my children be on the same track at a year-round school, even if one is in elementary and one is in middle school?

Keeping siblings on the same track is one of the highest priorities principals have when assigning tracks.

If there is high demand for traditional calendar seats, why not open Alston Ridge Middle and Parkside Elementary on the traditional calendar?

We need every seat we can get in western Wake County. Nearly every school in this part of the district is overcrowded. Carpenter, Cedar Fork, Mills Park, Olive Chapel and Scotts Ridge elementary schools, and Mills Park and Reedy Creek middle schools, all have enrollment caps. As we have stated, opening Parkside Elementary as year-round will allow us to accommodate an additional 200 students in this area. Opening Alston Ridge Middle as year-round will allow an additional 300 students to attend that school.

We are also mindful of the K-3 class size reduction mandate that looms in 2021-22. This will reduce the capacity of our elementary schools even further and force us to find additional classroom space for those grade levels. For example, if the K-3 mandate went into effect today, the already-overcrowded Mills Park Elementary would need five additional classroom spaces.

Learn more about the K-3 mandate: <https://www.wcpss.net/Page/34847>

How many walkers are there currently at Mills Park Elementary and Middle?

According to the principals, there are about 15 regular walkers and bikers at the middle school. There are no students officially listed as walkers/bikers at elementary, though there are a few most days.

Shouldn't you factor in the greenway coming from Cameron Pond?

It will be up to the board to decide the significance. Currently, there are no greenways recognized as acceptable walk paths by Wake County Public School System transportation staff for the purpose of creating No Transport/ Walk Zones.

There are a few reasons for this:

- Public streets provide lighting. Greenways are not required to do so.
- Greenways are not maintained at the same level as a public right of way. For example, downed trees from a storm likely would not be cleared as rapidly as they would be from a roadway.
- A major factor when considering whether to approve a designated walk zone is visibility of students. They are in the open and passing homes, businesses, passing motorists and others to ensure safety. Greenways do not provide these extra eyes of community members.
- In the case of the greenway coming from Cameron Pond, the terminus near Mills Park will be the park, not the school campus. We do not recognize a walkway that requires cutting through a park.

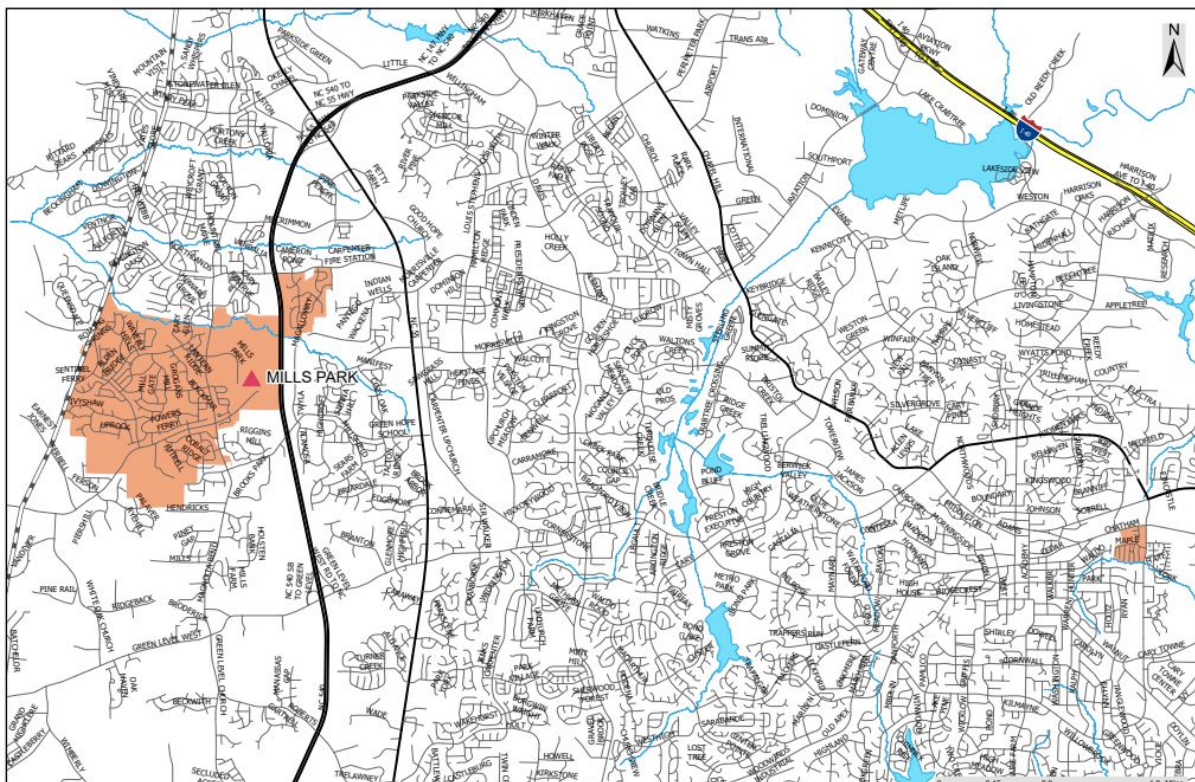
It looks like moving students from Cameron Pond into Carpenter Elementary will increase crowding there.

The raw numbers do indicate that. However, those projections do not factor in parent choices to seek transfers to other schools. By necessity, the projections show that every single student assigned to the new school attending that school. But based on parent transfer and application choices in recent years related to Carpenter and other schools in the area, our student assignment staff does not anticipate Carpenter Elementary would be severely overcrowded in 2019-20 under the current proposal.

Why can't you move developments that aren't built yet out of Mills Park Middle instead of moving existing students?

This is something we are considering for Draft 3. But please remember that doing so does nothing to relieve current crowding at either Mills Park Elementary or Middle. Both schools have enrollment caps that are keeping hundreds of students in the base attendance area from attending. Looking at the Mills Park Elementary base attendance map, student assignment staff recommends reassigning the portion of the base attendance area that is on the other side of 540, which includes the Cameron Pond neighborhood. We use major roadways as boundaries when possible.

2018-19 School Base Attendance Area
Mills Park ES



How long would an express bus ride be from the Northwest Cary YMCA be to Powell Elementary?

We estimate the ride time would be about an hour each way. This is assuming enough students would be attending Powell from this area to justify a bus. Transportation would not typically design an express route that would only have a single stop unless there were adequate numbers of students to substantially fill the bus.

I'm concerned about bus safety, particularly on busy roads.

Our buses traveled nearly 15 million miles last school year. During that time, there were no accidents that caused serious injury. Most accidents were very minor and included incidents like a bus striking a mailbox. Many accidents occurred when no children were on board. National traffic safety data shows that school buses are far and away the safest form of transportation for students. <http://schoolbusfacts.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Safety-Benefits.pdf>