



SPARTANBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT THREE **UNDERSTANDING "CLOSE PROXIMITY"**

IN FEBRUARY 2009, DISTRICT THREE VOTED TO ALLOW "CLOSE PROXIMITY STUDENTS" TO ATTEND SPARTANBURG SCHOOL DISTRICT THREE.

WHY?

IT FILLED THE OPEN SEATS IN OUR DISTRICT. **WITHOUT IT, OUR DISTRICT WAS IN DANGER OF BECOMING TOO SMALL.**

SO SMALL, THE STATE MIGHT HAVE FORCED US TO CONSOLIDATE IF POPULATION KEPT DECLINING. NOT ONLY DID THIS BRING STUDENTS TO OUR DISTRICT, IT BROUGHT STATE FUNDING WITH EACH CHILD.

IT'S CALLED THE "**PROXIMITY RULE.**" IT'S A STATE LAW FROM THE 1960'S WHICH STATES, "IN CASES WHERE A NEIGHBORING DISTRICT'S SCHOOLS ARE CLOSER TO A STUDENT THAN THEIR HOME DISTRICT, THE NEIGHBORING DISTRICT CAN ALLOW THESE STUDENTS TO ATTEND TUITION-FREE IF THE HOME DISTRICT'S SCHOOL BOARD WILL RELEASE THE STUDENT."

THAT'S A LONG WAY OF SAYING **THE STATE MONEY FOLLOWS THE CHILD.**
WE HAVE 127 OF THESE STUDENTS IN DISTRICT THREE.

WE GET \$2,780 IN STATE MONEY FOR EACH OF THESE STUDENTS. **THAT'S \$353,060 THAT WE WOULD NOT QUALIFY FOR IF THESE STUDENTS WERE NOT IN OUR DISTRICT.** THAT PAYS THE SALARIES AND BENEFITS OF 5 TO 7 TEACHERS.

THE DISTRICT TAKES STEPS TO ENSURE FOLLOWING THIS LAW DOESN'T COST TAXPAYERS MONEY: WE DON'T HAVE TO HIRE MORE TEACHERS; WE DON'T HAVE TO BUILD MORE CLASSROOMS.

WE SPEND AN AVERAGE OF ABOUT \$11,744 PER STUDENT FROM ALL FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL SOURCES (PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE).

WE KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING. "IF WE SENT THE OUT-OF-DISTRICTS STUDENTS BACK TO THEIR HOME DISTRICTS, WE WOULD "SAVE" A WHOLE LOT OF MONEY, BECAUSE THEY WOULDN'T BE HERE TO SPEND ALL THAT MONEY ON."

BUT THAT'S NOT THE WAY IT WORKS. WE WOULD NOT SAVE 127 SHARES OF OUR PER PUPIL SPENDING WHEN THEY LEAVE. WE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO TAKE 127 PORTIONS OF TEACHERS' SALARIES OUT OF THEIR PAY, REDUCE 127 PORTIONS OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES ALREADY IN PLACE, NOR REDUCE 127 SHARES OF WATER, POWER, SEWER, GAS, AND MAINTENANCE BILLS AT ANY SCHOOL.

LOSING 127 STUDENTS WOULD NOT CHANGE ANY BUS ROUTES, PARK ANY BUSES, REDUCE ANY WORK ORDERS, OR ANY CAFETERIA STAFF. IT WOULDN'T SEND A PRINCIPAL HOME, CLOSE A SCHOOL, OR DO AWAY WITH ANYBODY AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL.

IT WOULD, HOWEVER, COST US ABOUT \$353,060 IN STATE REVENUE THAT WOULD WALK RIGHT OUT THE DOOR WITH THEM IF THEY WEREN'T HERE. IF WE CONTINUE TO LOSE THOSE STUDENTS, WE MIGHT HAVE TO CONSOLIDATE WITH ANOTHER DISTRICT.

RIGHT NOW, THE STATE LETS DISTRICTS WITH 1,500 OR MORE STUDENTS STAY OPEN. THE CONSOLIDATION DISCUSSIONS IN THE LAST TWO LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS, HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN ABOUT DISTRICTS WITH LESS THAN 2,500 STUDENTS.

OUR 45TH DAY ENROLLMENT WAS 2,722. IF WE LOSE THOSE 127 STUDENTS AND THE REFERENDUM FOR A NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL DOES NOT PASS, WE COULD RISK FALLING BELOW THAT NUMBER.

DISTRICT THREE MUST GROW OR RISK CONSOLIDATION.