

# HISD board rejects most rezoning plans

BY ERICKA MELLON

A divided Houston school board on Thursday rejected most of the rezoning proposals designed to reduce class sizes after dozens of parents expressed concerns about families having to send their children to different campuses.

Only two of the six proposals passed, with parents and board members in those areas generally supportive of the changes.

In the booming Energy Corridor, the attendance zone for the popular Bush Elementary School will shrink, and Shadowbriar Elementary will become a specialty school designed to relieve overcrowding for nearby campuses.

In southwest Houston, the Tinsley Elementary boundaries will decrease, with homes rezoned to Anderson Elementary.

Current students and incoming kindergarten students will be grandfathered and can stay.

“I said at the outset, rezoning’s not fun,” said trustee Greg Meyers, who represents the west Houston area, where the Bush and Shadowbriar plan also affects Daily, Ashford, Askew, Emerson and Walnut Bend elementary schools.

## TEA waivers

The school board tabled the rezoning proposals in March after board president Rhonda Skillern-Jones said she wanted additional time for

community meetings and to review a more comprehensive plan to reduce class sizes.

Superintendent Terry Grier said the proposals were an attempt to cut the number of waivers that the district receives from the Texas Education Agency to exceed the state's cap of 22 students per class in elementary schools. The district requested about 1,500 waivers this fall, more than twice the number five years ago.

“With all due respect, we have been trying to address this for many months,” Grier told the board. “Quite frankly, it’s been very frustrating for us.”

### **‘Don’t move our kids’**

With about 140 speakers signed up to address the board Thursday evening, Skillern-Jones limited their comments to one minute each. Nearly all who spoke were opposed to changes.

“We want you to listen to us. Don’t move our children,” said Rosa Rivera, a mother with children at Lyons Elementary.

The plan to rezone students out of Lyons failed.

The school’s enrollment tops 1,000 students, above the building capacity of 878. Parents said they feared sending their children to lower-performing campuses nearby.

Trustee Anna Eastman, who represents the area, said she opposed “making changes on the backs of our kids.”

“I really am opposed to going in and making changes to schools that successfully educate kids that are there now,” she said.

The proposal that drew the most criticism involved turning The Rice School into an overflow campus for the popular West University, Roberts

and Twain elementary schools.

“An option to change to The Rice School makes no sense because no one at West U. would choose to go elsewhere unless it’s to a private school,” said Michael Kamins, whose home is zoned to West University Elementary. [ericka.mellon@chron.com](mailto:ericka.mellon@chron.com) [twitter.com/e\\_mellon](https://twitter.com/ericka_mellon)