

# Panola school lines considered

By Mary Ellen Cannington  
Neighbor Staff Writer

Most students who will attend the elementary school under construction on Panola Way in south DeKalb will come from Redan and Stoneview elementaries, according to a school attendance area projection presented to the DeKalb Board of Education April 20.

Panola Way Elementary School, designed to help alleviate the county's overcrowded classrooms, will open for the coming 1987-88 school year, DeKalb School Superintendent Robert Freeman said at the school board meeting.

Boundary lines for the new school begin at the intersection of Young and Panola roads, south to Covington Highway, east to Phillips Road and north to the intersection of Singer Way and Young Road.

Redan Elementary will send 563 students to Panola Way for the 1987-88 school year, while Stoneview will send 256.

Students in south DeKalb will have a little more elbow-room in the new school, especially if they are coming from Redan.

Board member Donna Wagner said Redan is designed to house 800 students, but more than 1,200 are now squeezing past its doors.

"(Panola Way Elementary) is a stop-gap at best," Ms. Wagner said, "and a wonderful one. The area's growing as fast as you can blink your eyes — literally."

Board member David Williamson agreed south DeKalb, like many other areas in the state, is growing.

"This school will slow (the overcrowding problem) down, but it won't stop it," he said. "We've got to keep building other schools" to

keep up.

In other action, the board unanimously approved Chairman Norma Bergman's decision to form an adult literacy committee to devise solutions to help alleviate one of the county's most widespread problems.

Ms. Bergman said the committee would be "a great asset to the school system."

Members also voted to wait until the May 4 meeting to decide whether some school system employees will be allowed to work past the retirement age of 70.

Members questioned the legal right to make that decision, but School Services Administrator Franklin Grant said federal law states the move is a "voluntary decision of the school board."

DeKalb News Sun Aug. 26, 1987

## Getting Ready For School

DeKalb students will return to school next Monday, Aug. 31. The schools project an enrollment of 72,500, according to Andy Olsen, Director of Communications. A new elementary school, Panola Druid Hills high schools will be combined on the campus of Briarcliff and Hills. The former Briarcliff High has been renamed the Jim Cherry Center and will house the Open Campus high school previously at Kitteridge. Gordon High School will open this fall as McNair Junior High, and the former Walker High School will open as McNair Senior High.

**Panola Way Elementary School  
Lithonia, Georgia**

Panola Way, under the principalship of Dr. Barbara Riordan, is located in the southeastern part of DeKalb County. It was opened in 1987 by Panola Way's only other principal, Mr. Brooks Tuck, as result of the rapid growth pattern in this area. Up until the Fall of 1997, Panola Way housed over 1200 students in Pre-K through sixth grades. It was then the largest elementary school in DeKalb County. Then the sixth grade students were moved into middle schools, to accommodate the population growth in this area, as of the Fall Semester of 1997. Currently, Panola Way houses approximately 830 students in grades Pre-K through Fifth and is still one of the largest elementary schools in DeKalb.

Panola Way continues to seek academic excellence with an instructional program geared to meet the needs of every child. With this in mind, Panola Way has chosen to adopt a "Global" approach to education. With this approach, teachers relate instruction to events that are happening daily throughout the world. This approach allows students to have an understanding as to why they are studying math, science, language arts, and social studies. Atlanta is an international city, and we want our students to have an interest and curiosity which enables them to compete academically.

Panola Way has incorporated a broad spectrum of strategies, programs, and activities to attain its educational goals. These include, but are not limited to, the establishing of a Pre-K program, lowered per pupil ratio, conflict mediation procedures, Teacher Support Specialists to help new teachers, A School Community Action Team(SCAT), Drug Abuse Resistance Education(DARE) in grades 3-5, a computer club, a school chorus, a parent volunteer program, a student mentoring program, a Beta Club, and a student council. It also has after school tutoring every Monday. This is a time for teachers to work with small groups to improve math and reading skills. Panola Way's Bi-dialectal classes were featured on local and national television. The media center and science lab have access to Scholastic Internet for Children. The Intergrated Learning System computer network is in every classroom grades 3-5. Each teacher has personal access to a Gateway 2000 computer in the classroom. Other programs include the Caring Moms and Caring Dads programs which are now held in each classroom. Students participate in the Black History Quiz Bowl, Social Studies Fair, and the Spelling Bee. Discovery students participate in the Science Olympiad. We have visits from Harry the Hawk and Homer the Brave - both of which are drug Education programs. Egleston Children's Hospital presents the Safety House for the first grade. Per-K through fourth grades attend performances at the Alliance Theater. Fifth grade students attend the Symphony. Two pilot programs have been implemented in first and second grades for students identified as at risk. Each class consists of one teacher, one paraprofessional, and a maximum of eighteen students. Red Ribbon Week and Exceptional Children's Week are highlighted annually. The boys and girls of Panola Way experience an educational program that is varied as well as individualized.

As you can see, Dr. Barbara Riordan and her Staff continue to implement programs to meet the needs of students academically and emotionally. Self-esteem is nurtured so as to encourage positive attitudes and good citizenship. Panola Way is called the "CARING PLACE", because we know it takes more than just academic knowledge to mold a student into a productive citizen. It takes the school and the community working together to provide love, guidance, care, and redirection as needed. Since 1987, Panola Way has lived by this philosophy and will continue to do so as long as there are children to teach.