

Appendix T

Long-range Educational Facilities Planning Policy (FAA) and Regulation (FAA-RA)

On May 23, 2005, the Board of Education adopted a revision to Policy FAA—Long-range Educational Facilities Planning. This policy was revised in order for Policy FAA to conform to other Board of Education policies that separate policy requirements from regulations. Subsequently, on June 1, 2005, the superintendent issued interim Regulation FAA-RA. The regulation was created from language previously contained in Policy FAA that was regulatory in nature.

In adopting revisions to Policy FAA, the Board of Education directed the superintendent to conduct a public review process for Regulation FAA-RA, prior to a final regulation being issued. A review process was conducted in the fall 2005 with input from MCCPTA and other community representatives. The superintendent incorporated this input in issuing the Regulation FAA-RA on March 21, 2006.

POLICY BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Related Entries: ABA, ABC, ABC-RA, ACD, CFA, DNA, FAA-RA (pending), JEE, JEE-RA
Responsible Office: Chief Operating Officer
Planning and Capital Programming

Long-Range Educational Facilities Planning

A. PURPOSE

The Board of Education has a primary responsibility to plan for school facilities that address changing enrollment patterns and sustain high quality educational programs in accordance with the policies of the Board. The Board of Education fulfills this responsibility through the facilities planning process. Long-range educational facilities planning is essential to identify the infrastructure needed to ensure success for every student.

The Long-range Educational Facilities Planning (LREFP) policy guides the planning process. The process is designed to promote public understanding of planning for Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) and to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for parents, students, staff, community members and organizations, local government agencies, and municipalities to identify and communicate their priorities and concerns to the superintendent and the Board. Long-range Educational Facilities Planning will be in accordance with all federal, state, local laws, and regulations.

B. ISSUE

Enrollment in MCPS is constantly changing. The fundamental goal of facilities planning is to provide a sound educational environment for changing enrollment. The number of students, their geographic distribution, and the demographic characteristics of this population all impact facilities planning. Net enrollment changes are driven by factors including birth rates, movement within the school system and into the school system from other parts of the United States and the world.

MCPS is among the largest school systems in the country in terms of enrollment and serves a county of approximately 500 square miles. The full range of population density, from rural to urban, is present in the county. Since 1984, enrollment has increased where new

communities have formed, as well as in established areas of the county where turnover of houses has altered the demographic composition of communities. In areas with affordable housing, there is often greater diversity in enrollment caused by immigration.

MCPS is challenged continually to anticipate and plan for facilities in an efficient and fiscally responsible way to meet the varied educational needs of students. The LREFP policy describes how the school system responds to educational and enrollment change, the rate of change, its geographic distribution, and the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversification of enrollment.

School facilities also change. Aging of the physical plant requires a program of maintenance, renovation, and modernization. Acquiring new sites, designing new facilities, and modifying existing facilities to keep current with program needs is essential. This policy provides the framework to coordinate planning for capital improvements.

C. POSITION

The long-range facilities planning process will continue to:

1. Plan for utilization of schools in ways that are consistent with sound educational practice and consider the impact of facility changes on educational program and related operating budget requirements and on the community
2. Provide a constructive and collaborative advisory role through public hearings, position papers, written comments, and advisory committee memberships for parent organizations (such as the PTA) and other community groups in the capital improvements program. An advisory committee will be established for facilities planning activities listed below:
 - a) Selection of school sites
 - b) Facility design
 - c) Boundary changes
 - d) Geographic student choice assignment plans (such as consortia)
 - e) School closures and consolidations
3. Provide a six-year capital improvements program and educational facilities master plan which include enrollment projections, educational program needs, and available school capacity countywide, and identify:

- a) When new schools and additions will be needed to keep facilities current with enrollment levels and educational program needs
 - b) When to modernize older school buildings in order to continue their use on a cost-effective basis, and to keep facilities current with educational program needs
 - c) When school closures and consolidations are appropriate due to declining enrollment levels
 - d) Facility utilization levels, capacity calculations, school enrollment size guidelines, and school site size (adopted as part of the Board of Education review of the superintendent’s recommended CIP)
4. Provide for the Board of Education to hold public hearings and solicit written testimony on the recommendations of the superintendent
5. Provide a process for facility design that ensures a safe and secure environment and is consistent with educational program needs and includes community input
6. Provide a process for changing school boundaries and establishing geographic student choice assignment plans that:
- a) Solicit input at the outset of the process by forming a community advisory committee
 - b) Consider four main factors in development of school boundaries and student choice assignment plans, including:
 - 1) Demographic characteristics of student population
 - 2) Geographic proximity of communities to schools
 - 3) Stability of school assignments over time
 - 4) Facility utilization
 - c) The Board of Education may, by majority vote, identify alternatives to the superintendent’s recommendations for review

- d) The Board of Education will hold public hearings and solicit written testimony on the recommendations of the superintendent and Board identified alternatives
 - e) At such time as the Board of Education takes action on school boundaries or geographic student choice assignment plans, the Board has the discretion to adopt minor modifications to the superintendent’s recommendation or Board identified alternatives if, by a majority vote, the Board has determined that such action will not have a significant impact on an option that has received public review
7. Provide a process for closing and consolidating schools that meets the requirements of COMAR (Chapter 13A)
 8. Provide for articulation in school assignments by:
 - a) Traditional Student Assignments

Structuring high schools for Grades 9-12 and, where possible, creating straight articulation for clusters composed of one high school, and a sufficient number of elementary and middle schools, each of which sends its students, including special education and ESOL students, to the next higher level school in that cluster
 - b) Student Choice Assignment Plans

In cases where schools do not have boundaries and students participate in a student choice assignment plan (e.g., consortium) to identify the school they wish to attend, articulation patterns may vary from the straight articulation pattern that is desired in traditional student assignment
 9. The superintendent will develop regulations with student, staff, community, and parental input to guide implementation of this policy

D. DESIRED OUTCOMES

A long-range educational facilities planning process that identifies the infrastructure necessary to deliver high quality educational facilities to all students and incorporates the input of parents, staff, and community and, as appropriate, students.

E. REVIEW AND REPORTING

1. The annual June publication of the Educational Facilities Master Plan will constitute the official reporting on facility planning. This document will reflect all facilities actions taken during the year by the Board of Education and approved by the County Council. The Master Plan will project the enrollment and utilization of each school, and identify schools and sites that may be involved in future planning activities.
2. This policy will be reviewed after its initial implementation, but no later than 2007, in accordance with the Board of Education's policy review process.

Policy History: Adopted by Resolution No. 257-86, April 28, 1986; amended by Resolution No. 271-87, May 12, 1987; amended by Resolution No. 831-93, November 22, 1993; amended by Resolution No. 679-95, October 10, 1995; amended by Resolution No. 581-99 September 14, 1999; updated office titles June 1, 2000; updated November 4, 2003; amended by Resolution No. 268-05, May 23, 2005.

REGULATION MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: ACD, CFA, DNA, FAA, JEE, JEE-RA
Responsible Office: Chief Operating Officer
 Planning and Capital Programming

Long-Range Educational Facilities Planning

I. PURPOSE

To implement the Board of Education Long-Range Educational Facilities Planning policy (FAA) to achieve success for every student by providing appropriately utilized, functional, and modern facilities. These regulations provide direction on how the planning process should be conducted.

II. BACKGROUND

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) operates in a dynamic environment and is among the largest school systems in the country. Montgomery County is increasingly diverse, both in terms of population and types of communities encompassed within the county. This environment, combined with the needs of the physical infrastructure and fiscal realities, demands a planning process that incorporates the needs of our community and produces the physical foundation for an excellent school system.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. The *Capital Improvements Program (CIP)* is a comprehensive six-year spending plan for capital improvements. The CIP focuses on the acquisition, construction, modernization, and renovation of public school facilities. The CIP is reviewed and approved through a biennial process that takes effect for the six-year period that begins in each odd-numbered fiscal year. For even-numbered fiscal years, only amendments are considered to the adopted CIP for changes needed in the second year of the six-year CIP period.
- B. The *Capital Budget* is the annual budget adopted for capital project appropriations.
- C. *Cluster* is a geographic grouping of schools within a defined attendance area that includes a high school and the elementary and middle schools that send students to that high school.

- D. *Community outreach*, for the purposes of Policy FAA: *Long-Range Educational Facilities Planning*, and this regulation means that reasonable and systematic efforts will be made to solicit input from stakeholders on decisions that impact them. These efforts may include, but are not limited to, postings to the MCPS Web site and related electronic media, notices published in local newspapers, newsletters, and/or notices sent to community representatives.

- E. *Consortium* is a grouping of high schools or middle schools within close proximity to one another that provide students the opportunity to express their preference for attending one of the schools based on a specific instructional program or emphasis.

- F. *Geographic Student Choice Assignment Plans* identify the geographic area(s) wherein students may express a preference for a school assignment, based on program offerings or emphasis. These geographic areas may include areas, known as “base areas,” where students may be guaranteed attendance at the school under certain criteria; or, the area may be a single unified area with no base areas for individual schools.

- G. *Program Capacity* is the student capacity figure that reflects how a school facility is used based on the educational programs at the school. The MCPS program capacity is calculated as the product of the number of teaching stations in a school and the student-to-classroom ratio for each grade or program in each classroom. The MCPS program capacity is used for county capital budgeting and facility planning analyses for future capital project needs, boundary changes, and geographic student choice assignment plans.

- H. *Quad-cluster* is a grouping of geographically contiguous clusters that is overseen by a community superintendent.

- I. *State-rated Capacity (SRC)* is defined by the state of Maryland as the maximum number of students who can reasonably be accommodated in a facility without significantly hampering delivery of the given educational program. The SRC is calculated as the product of the number of teaching stations in a school and a state-determined student-to-classroom ratio. The SRC is used by the state to determine state budget eligibility for capital projects funded through the Public School Construction Program administered by the Interagency Committee for Public School Construction (IAC).

IV. PROCEDURES

The following procedures, criteria, or standards apply to the facilities planning process:

A. Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

1. On or about November 1 of each year, the superintendent of schools will publish recommendations for an annual Capital Budget and a six-year CIP or amendments to the previously adopted CIP. Boundary change or geographic student choice assignment plan recommendations, if any, will be released by mid-October.
2. The six-year CIP will include:
 - a) Background information on the enrollment forecasting methodology
 - b) Current enrollment figures and demographic profiles of all schools including racial/ethnic composition, Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) program participation, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) enrollment, and school mobility rates
 - c) Enrollment forecasts for each of the next six years and long-term cluster, consortium, or base area forecasts for secondary schools for a period of 10 and 15 years
 - d) A profile of each school facility showing facility characteristics, capacity, and room use for programs, such as Head Start, prekindergarten, kindergarten, ESOL, special education, or other special use
 - e) A line item summary of Capital Budget appropriation requests by the Board of Education
 - f) Recommendations on the following guidelines for Board review and action:
 - (1) Preferred range of enrollment
 - (2) School capacity calculations
 - (3) Facility utilization
 - (4) School site size

- g) A summary of recommended actions that affect programs at schools or the service area of the schools. Supplements to the CIP may be published to provide more information on issues when deemed advisable by the superintendent of schools
 - h) Project Description Forms (PDF), the official, county authorized budget forms used for all requested capital projects, are included in the Board adopted CIP request to the County Council
3. Copies of the superintendent’s recommended CIP will be sent to MCPS executive staff, department and division directors, school principals, Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations (MCCPTA) cluster coordinators, local PTA presidents, and public libraries. (In lieu of, and in the absence of a regular PTA, the existing affiliation of parents and teachers that serves a comparable purpose will be provided with copies of the superintendent’s CIP.) The superintendent’s recommended CIP also will be posted on the MCPS Web site. In addition, notification of the CIP’s publication and availability will be sent to municipalities, civic groups registered with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the Montgomery County Region of the Maryland Association of Student Councils, and the Montgomery County Junior Council. This notification will include the Board of Education schedule for worksessions, public hearings, and action on the CIP. Other interested parties may request a copy of the CIP document from the MCPS Division of Long-range Planning.
 4. The Board of Education timeline for review and action on the CIP consists of a worksession in early November, followed by a public hearing in mid-November, and action in mid- to late November of each year. (See Section V of this regulation for the public hearing process and Section VII for the annual calendar.) The superintendent’s recommendation on any deferred planning issues and/or amendments to the CIP is made in mid-February. The Board of Education timeline for these items consists of a worksession in late February to early March, a public hearing in mid-March, and action in late March.
 5. After review and Board of Education action, the Board-adopted CIP is submitted to the County Council and county executive for their review and County Council action. The Board-adopted CIP also is sent for information to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Maryland State Department of Education, State IAC, and municipalities.
 6. The county executive forwards his/her recommendations to the County Council in mid-January for inclusion in the overall county CIP. The County

Council timeline for review and action on the Board-adopted CIP is from February to May.

7. The County Council, as required by county charter, adopts the biennial six-year CIP.

B. Master Plan

By June 30 of each year, the superintendent of schools will publish a summary of all County Council-adopted capital and Board of Education-adopted non-capital facilities actions. This document, called the *Educational Facilities Master Plan*, is required under the rules and regulations of the State Public School Construction Program.

1. The facilities master plan will incorporate the projected impact of all capital projects approved for funding by the County Council and any non-capital facilities actions approved by the Board of Education.
2. The facilities master plan will show projected enrollment and utilization for schools for the next six years and for a period of 10 and 15 years for secondary schools. This information will reflect projections made the previous fall with an updated one-year projection in the spring, and any changes in enrollment or capacity projected that result from capital projects, boundary changes, geographic student choice assignment plans, or other changes authorized by the Board of Education.
3. The master plan will include demographic characteristics of school enrollments, facility characteristics, and program capacities of schools.
4. The master plan will include County Council-adopted PDFs that provide schedules, estimated costs, and funding sources.

C. Enrollment Forecasts

1. Each fall, enrollment forecasts for each school will be developed for a six-year period. In addition, long-term forecasts for a period of 10 and 15 years also will be developed for secondary schools. These forecasts will be the basis for evaluating facility space needs and initiating planning activities. The forecasts should be developed in coordination with the Montgomery County Department of Parks and Planning county population forecast and any other relevant planning sources.

2. On or about March 1, a revision to the enrollment forecast for the next school year will be developed to refine the forecast for all schools and to reflect any changes in service areas or programs.
3. The enrollment forecast methodology utilized will be identified in an Appendix in the CIP and Master Plan documents.

D. Preferred Range of Enrollment

Unless otherwise specified by Board action in the adopted CIP, the preferred ranges of enrollment for schools includes all students attending the school.

1. A preferred range of enrollment for schools is:
 - a) 300 to 750 students in elementary schools
 - b) 600 to 1,200 students in middle schools
 - c) 1,000 to 2,000 students in high schools
 - d) Special and alternative program centers will differ from the above ranges and generally be lower in enrollment
2. The preferred range of enrollment will be considered when planning new schools or changes to existing facilities. Departures from the preferred range may occur if an educational program justifies or requires it. Fiscal constraints also may require MCPS to operate schools of other sizes. If larger or smaller schools are built or created, alternative approaches to school construction, management, organization, or staffing will be considered in order to facilitate effective delivery of educational programs.

E. Capacity Calculations and Facility Utilization

1. Unless otherwise specified by Board action in the adopted CIP, the capacity of a facility is determined by the space needs of educational programs. The MCPS program capacity is based on the student-to-classroom ratios shown in the following table, and should not be confused with staffing ratios as determined through the operating budget process.

Level	Student-to-Classroom Ratios
Head Start & prekindergarten	40:1 (2 sessions per day)
Head Start & prekindergarten	20:1 (1 session per day)

Grade K full-day	22:1 (1 session per day)
Grade K-reduced class size full-day	15:1
Grades 1-2—reduced class size	17:1
Grades 1-5/6 Elementary	23:1
Grades 6-12 Secondary	
Grade: 6-8 Middle School	25.1*
Grades: 9-12 High School	25.1**
ESOL	15:1

* Program capacity differs at the middle school level in that the regular classroom capacity of 25 is multiplied by .85 to reflect the optimal utilization of a middle school facility (equivalent to 21.25 students per classroom).

**Program capacity differs at the high school level in that the regular classroom capacity of 25 is multiplied by .90 to reflect the optimal utilization of a high school facility (equivalent of 22.5 students per classroom).

Special education, some special programs, and class size reduction initiatives may require classroom ratios different from those listed.

2. Unless otherwise specified by Board action in the adopted CIP, elementary, middle, and high schools should operate in an efficient utilization range of 80 to 100 percent of program capacity. If a school is projected to be underutilized (less than 80 percent) or does not meet the preferred range of enrollment, or is overutilized (over 100 percent) or does not meet the preferred range of enrollment, a boundary study, non-capital action, or a capital project for facilities planning may be undertaken. In the case of overutilization, an effort to judge the long-term needs for permanent space should be made prior to planning for new construction. Underutilization of facilities also should be evaluated in the context of short-term and long-term enrollment forecasts.
3. Relocatable classrooms may be used on an interim basis to provide program space for enrollment growth and class-size reduction initiatives until the demonstrated need for permanent capacity is met. Relocatable classrooms also may be used to enable day care programs to be housed in schools, and may be used to accommodate such programs as:
 - a) Parent Resource Centers

- b) Linkages to Learning
- c) College Connection Programs
- d) Judy Centers
- e) Baldrige Training Labs
- f) Career and Community Connections
- g) Other programs as appropriate

Relocatable classrooms should meet the same health and safety standards as other MCPS facilities.

F. School Site Size

Unless otherwise specified by Board action in the adopted CIP, preferred school site sizes are:

- 1. 12 usable acres for elementary schools
- 2. 20 usable acres for middle schools
- 3. 30 usable acres for high schools

Sites of these approximate sizes accommodate the instructional program including related outdoor activities. In some circumstances school sites may be smaller or larger than the preferred sizes. In these circumstances special efforts to accommodate outdoor activities may include the use of adjacent or nearby park properties or shared use of school fields. In some cases it may be necessary to acquire more than the standard acreage in order to accommodate environmental concerns, unusual topography, or surrounding street patterns.

V. GUIDELINES FOR FACILITY PLANNING

A. Evaluating Utilization of Facilities

- 1. By November 1 each year, after new enrollment forecasts are developed, utilization of all school facilities will be evaluated and incorporated into the superintendent’s CIP recommendations. The effect of any proposed educational program changes, including prekindergarten programs, special education programs, ESOL programs and centers, or grade level

reorganizations also will be evaluated. For schools that are projected to have insufficient capacity, excess capacity, or other facility issues, the superintendent may recommend:

- a) A capital project
 - b) A non-capital action such as boundary change, geographic student choice assignment plan, school pairing, facility sharing, closing/consolidation, or any other similar action
 - c) No action or deferral pending further study of enrollment or other factors
2. Facility recommendations made by the superintendent of schools will incorporate consideration of educational program impacts. As part of the process of developing facility plans, MCPS staff will work closely with appropriate program staff to identify program requirements for facility plans.
 3. Recommendations that relate to school boundary changes or geographic student choice assignment plans will be made after the superintendent of schools receives advice from a school boundary or choice area advisory committee.
 4. The superintendent of schools also may request advice from the community for other types of facility recommendations.

B. Development of School Boundaries and Geographic Student Choice Assignment Plans

In cases where the utilization of a new school, or the utilization of existing schools (including school pairings) are reviewed through a boundary study, or where revisions to geographic student choice assignment areas are reviewed through a study, the following factors should be considered by any advisory committee, the superintendent of schools, and the Board of Education in the study process.

1. Facility
 - a) School boundary and geographic student choice assignment plans should result in school utilizations in the eighty percent to one-hundred percent efficient range whenever possible.
 - b) Plans should be fiscally responsible to minimize capital and operating costs whenever feasible. The geographic scope of the studies should

be broad enough to realize economies in costs and provide long-range plans to address facility issues while preserving as much stability in school assignments as possible.

- c) When special education programs are assigned to a facility, any required modifications to the facility will be made in accordance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA).
- d) Shared use of a facility by more than one cluster may be the most feasible facility plan in some cases. In these cases, it is desirable for 25 percent or more of articulating enrollment to move on to each of the assigned upper-level schools.

2. Population

- a) School boundary and geographic student choice assignment plans should consider the impact of various options on the affected school populations. A school population consists of students assigned from a specific geographic attendance area regardless of the school building itself.
- b) Where reasonable, school boundaries or geographic student choice assignment plans should be established to promote the creation of a diverse student body in each of the affected schools. Data showing the impact of various options shall be provided for the following factors:
 - (1) The socioeconomic background of students as measured by participation in the federal FARMS program
 - (2) The level of English language learners as measured by enrollment in the ESOL program
 - (3) Student mobility rates at schools
 - (4) The racial/ethnic composition in accordance with the Quality Integrated Education policy
 - (5) Other reliable demographic indicators, such as the mix of single family and multiple family dwellings, also may be considered where applicable

- (6) Special education programs (large special education programs in schools or proposed to be in new schools) should be considered

3. Geography

- a) In most cases, the geographic scope of elementary school boundary studies and geographic student choice assignment plan studies should be limited to the high school cluster area. For secondary schools, one or more clusters of schools may be studied.
- b) In accordance with MCPS emphasis on community involvement in schools, one of the goals of boundary and student choice area plans should be service areas that are, as much as practical, made up of contiguous communities surrounding the school. Walking access to the school should be maximized and transportation distances minimized when other factors do not require otherwise.

4. Stability

- a) Recognizing that, at times, changes to boundaries and student choice assignment plans may be necessary, plans should result in as long a period as possible of stable assignments.
- b) Recommendations for student reassignments should consider recent boundary or geographic student choice assignment area changes, and/or school closings and consolidations that may have affected the same students.

C. Cluster Comments

- 1. In May, cluster representatives should state in writing to the superintendent of schools any proposals, priorities, or concerns that they have identified for their schools in consultation with local PTA leadership, principals, and the community. (In lieu of, and in the absence of a regular PTA, the existing affiliation of parents and teachers that serves a comparable purpose will be provided with copies of the superintendent’s CIP.)
- 2. Amendments to cluster comments may be submitted by September 1 in cases where preliminary fall enrollments or unusual events require them.
- 3. Cluster comments are to be considered in the development of facilities recommendations made by the superintendent of schools in the CIP.

D. Public Hearing Process

1. Public hearings are held annually following publication of the superintendent's CIP recommendations.
 - a) The PTA cluster coordinators and/or PTA area vice presidents in consultation with the cluster PTA presidents will coordinate testimony at the hearing on behalf of cluster schools and are encouraged to ensure that diversity of opinions are accommodated when scheduling testimony. Testimony time for each cluster will be scheduled and organized by quad-cluster and/or consortium whenever possible.
 - b) Civic groups, municipalities, and countywide organizations should contact the Board of Education office to schedule testimony.
 - c) Public comments from individuals also will be heard by the Board of Education. Individuals should contact the Board Office to schedule testimony.
2. Written comments from the community will be accepted at any point, but in order to be considered, comments must reach the Board 48 hours before the time scheduled for action by the Board.
3. Public hearings also may be held on any CIP or facilities planning issues deferred from the fall. These hearings usually would occur in late February or early March. In unusual circumstances, public hearings may be called at other times to consider facility issues that do not fit into the fall or spring timetables.

VI. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROCESSES

A. Community Representation

School and community involvement in MCPS facility planning is important to the success of its plans. Parents, staff, and students are the primary stakeholders in the planning process.

1. Stakeholders and interested members of the community have several opportunities for input into the facilities planning process that may include: participation as members of advisory committees; submission of letters, alternative proposals, or other written material for consideration by the

superintendent of schools and staff; and/or testimony in written or oral form before the Board of Education.

2. MCCPTA, local PTAs, or other parent or student representatives along with appropriate MCPS staff should be involved in the following planning processes:
 - a) Site selection
 - b) School boundary or geographic student choice assignment plans
 - c) Issue roundtables
 - d) School closings and consolidations
 - e) Facility planning (educational specifications, architect selection, and architectural design) for new schools, additions, and modernizations

3. Additionally, MCPS employees, municipalities, local government agencies, civic and homeowner associations, and countywide organizations contribute to the planning process. A civic or homeowner association must be registered with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. Countywide organizations are those with members throughout the county.

4. The Board will conduct public hearings for potentially affected school communities prior to actions affecting attendance and/or choice areas and the closure or consolidation of schools.
 - a) Public hearings will be conducted following publication of the superintendent's recommended Capital Budget and six-year CIP.
 - b) Public hearings also may be held in March for any boundary/choice assignment recommendations deferred in November or in cases where boundary/choice assignment and non-capital decisions must be made in March.
 - c) Written comments from the community will be accepted at any point but, in order to be considered, comments must reach the Board 48 hours before the time scheduled for action by the Board.

- B. The following sections describe the community involvement process in site selection, facility design, boundary changes, geographic student choice assignment plans, and

school closures and consolidations. These sections refer to the formation and operation of advisory groups. In addition to these activities, all community members have opportunities to advise the superintendent of schools and Board annually through cluster comments, written correspondence, and public testimony.

1. Site Selection

- a) MCPS staff will work with the Montgomery County Planning Board during the development of county land use master plans to identify future school site requirements based on existing and proposed residential development. General locations of sites are identified on master plan maps. As subdivision occurs, site dedications may be requested. If not identified for a specific school construction project, sites acquired through dedication or purchase are placed in the Board’s sites inventory for future selection.
- b) Site selection for a specific school construction project begins when MCPS projections indicate a new facility is required in the six year CIP.
- c) MCPS staff works with MCCPTA area vice presidents, cluster coordinators, or PTA presidents to form a Site Selection Advisory Committee (SSAC) composed of MCPS staff; PTA representatives; appropriate municipal and county government agency officials. For a secondary school site, representatives of more than one cluster may be involved in the committee.
 - (1) MCPS staff work with the SSAC identifying and reviewing alternative site candidates from the Board’s sites inventory and, in some cases, from private ownership for potential site purchase.
 - (2) The SSAC considers and compares the attributes of each candidate site, including but not limited to:
 - (a) The geographic location relative to existing and future student populations
 - (b) Environmental constraints
 - (c) Availability of utilities
 - (d) Vehicular and pedestrian access

- (e) Cost to acquire
 - (f) Cost to develop
 - (g) Ability to meet educational program requirements
 - (h) Compatibility with an educational environment
- (3) The SSAC reaches consensus and makes a recommendation to the superintendent of schools.
- (a) The superintendent of schools evaluates the recommendation and then makes his/her recommendation to the Board.
 - (b) The Board considers the committee and superintendent's recommendations before formally taking action to select a site for the specified school construction project.

2. Facility Design

- a) Parent representatives will serve with MCPS staff on facility advisory committees to modify, modernize/replace, or construct new facilities.
 - (1) Parent representatives will be identified by MCCPTA area vice presidents, cluster coordinators, or PTA presidents in collaboration with school principals.
 - (2) Student representatives at the high school level will be identified by the principal or chair of the committee to serve on the committee.
 - (3) Adjacent property owners are invited to serve on the advisory committee. Representatives of the neighborhood homeowner and/or civic association registered with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission also may be invited to serve on the advisory committee.
- b) Educational specifications developed by MCPS staff will be reviewed in consultation with school-based administrators, staff, and PTA representatives, as needed.

- c) MCPS staff will involve the school administration, school staff, and PTA representatives in selection of an architect.
- d) Viewpoints of adjacent homeowners and registered homeowner and/or civic associations will be included in the review of architectural plans. Concerns of these groups should be considered at the design stage before architectural plans are finalized.

3. School Boundary Changes and Geographic Student Choice Assignment Plans

When directed by the Board of Education, MCPS staff will facilitate the process of community input on school boundary changes or geographic student choice assignment plans.

- a) When the Board of Education identifies the need for changes in school service areas and the geographic scope of a study, an advisory committee will be formed to evaluate boundary change options or geographic student choice assignment plan options developed by MCPS staff. The superintendent of schools will develop the charge for the advisory committee. MCPS staff will organize and work directly with this group.
 - (1) Membership on school boundary or geographic student choice assignment plan advisory committees will consist of individuals who are familiar with the affected school communities. The advisory committee membership should be racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse.
 - (2) The MCCPTA area vice president, cluster coordinator(s), or PTA presidents will identify parent representation from areas throughout the geographic scope of the study approved by the Board.
 - (3) The MCCPTA area vice president, cluster coordinator(s), or PTA presidents also may identify additional representatives from parent or student organizations who have knowledge of the schools involved.
 - (4) MCPS staff may call on other community resources such as civic and homeowner associations for input.
- b) At the outset of meetings, the committee will identify community criteria to assist staff in the development of options. In addition, the

committee will consider factors outlined in the section of this regulation titled "*Development of School Boundaries and Geographic Student Choice Assignment Plans*" (Section V.B). MCPS staff will consider community criteria and factors included in this regulation in developing options. The superintendent of schools and the Board of Education also will consider community criteria and factors in this regulation in their review of boundary changes or geographic student choice assignment plans.

- c) Staff will develop and present approximately three to five viable options for the advisory committee to consider. The advisory committee may request development of additional options; however, the total number of options developed for the committee shall not exceed 10.
- d) MCPS staff will notify civic and homeowner associations registered with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in the potentially affected communities of proposed boundary changes or geographic student choice assignment plans being considered by MCPS in their area.
- e) Advisory committee representatives serve as liaisons between the committee and the community they represent. Representatives share committee discussions and options with their community through PTA meetings and other forums. Input received from the community is then presented by representatives at subsequent advisory committee meetings. Community input also is factored into committee member option evaluations and optional PTA or cluster position papers.
- f) An advisory committee report including evaluations of the options by committee representatives, and any individual PTA or cluster position papers submitted on the options, will be forwarded to the superintendent of schools.
- g) The superintendent of schools will develop a recommendation after considering staff advice, the advisory committee report, option evaluations and any PTA or cluster position papers, as well as input from other organizations and individuals who have provided comments. The superintendent of schools will publish his/her recommendation in mid-October, or mid-February when necessary.

- h) Copies of the superintendent’s recommendation are distributed to the affected schools and PTAs and posted to the MCPS Web site.
- i) The Board of Education will hold a worksession and may request by majority vote that alternatives to the superintendent's recommendation be developed for Board consideration. Any significant modification to the superintendent’s recommendation requires an alternative. Any modification that impacts any or all of a school community that has not previously been included in the superintendent’s recommendation should be considered a significant modification.
- j) Recommendations from the superintendent of schools and Board-identified alternatives will be the subject of a public hearing prior to final Board action.
- k) The Board has the discretion to adopt minor modifications to the superintendent’s recommendation or Board-identified alternatives if this action will not have a significant impact on a plan that has received public review. To the greatest extent possible, additional alternatives will not be considered after the Board of Education alternatives worksession without adequate notification and opportunity for comment by the affected communities.

4. School Closures and Consolidations

In cases where a school closure or consolidation is contemplated, the Board of Education, superintendent of schools, and MCPS staff will follow requirements of the Maryland State Board of Education set forth in COMAR, Chapter 13A (www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/13a/13a.02.09.01.htm).

This regulation provides the procedures governing school closings that must be used by local school systems. The regulation also sets the timeline for announcing school closings, and the procedure for appealing a local Board decision to the Maryland State Board of Education.

VII. CALENDAR

The long-range facilities planning process will be conducted according to the county’s biennial CIP process and will adhere to the following calendar adjusted annually to account for holidays and other anomalies.

MCPS staff meets with school principals, cluster coordinators, and PTA representatives to exchange information about the adopted CIP and consider issues in the upcoming CIP or amendments to the CIP. (In lieu of, and in the absence of a regular PTA, the existing affiliation of parents and teachers that serves a comparable purpose will be provided with copies of the superintendent’s CIP.)	Summer
MCPS staff presents enrollment trends and planning issues to the Board of Education	Mid-October
County Council adopts Spending Affordability Guidelines (SAG) for the new CIP cycle. SAG sets limits on debt affordability	Early-October of odd numbered fiscal years
Superintendent publishes and sends to the Board of Education any recommendations for school boundary or geographic student choice assignment plans	Mid-October
Superintendent publishes and sends to the Board of Education recommendations for the annual Capital Budget and biennial six-year CIP or amendments to the CIP	November 1
Board of Education holds a worksession to consider alternatives to superintendent recommended boundary changes or school choice assignment plans	Early-November
Board of Education holds a public hearing on the recommended CIP and boundary or school choice assignment plan recommendations and any alternatives identified by the Board at its worksession	Mid-November
Board of Education acts on Capital Budget, CIP, amendments, and any boundary changes or geographic student choice assignment plans	Late November
County executive and County Council receive Board of Education adopted capital budget and CIP for review	December 1
County executive transmits his/her recommended Capital Budget and CIP or amendments to County Council	January 15
County Council may hold public hearings on CIP	February - March
County Council reviews Board of Education requested and County executive recommended Capital Budget and CIP	March - April
Superintendent recommendations on any deferred planning issues, boundary change or geographic student choice assignment plans, and/or recommended amendment(s) to the CIP are published for Board of Education review	Mid-February
Board holds worksession and identifies any alternatives to boundary change or geographic student choice assignment plan recommendations	Late-February/ early-March
Board holds public hearing (if needed)	Mid-March
Board acts on deferred CIP recommendations and/or boundary or geographic student choice assignment plans	Late-March
County Council approves Capital Budget and CIP	Late-May

Cluster PTA representatives submit comments to the superintendent about issues affecting their schools for the upcoming CIP or amendments to the CIP	May
Superintendent publishes a summary of all actions to date affecting schools (Educational Facilities Master Plan) and identifies future needs	June 30

In the event the Board of Education determines that an unusual circumstance exists, the superintendent will establish a different and/or condensed time schedule for making recommendations to the Board, for scheduling public hearings on recommendations for alternatives not previously subject to public hearing and for Board action.

Regulation History: Interim Regulation, June 1, 2005; revised March 21, 2006; revised October 17, 2006; revised June 8, 2008.