

Superintendent’s Recommendation for a
Downcounty Consortium Comprehensive Elementary School Capacity Study

Executive Summary

Dr. Joshua P. Starr, superintendent of schools, is recommending that Montgomery County Public Schools undertakes a comprehensive capacity study involving 12 elementary schools in the midsection of the Downcounty Consortium (DCC) to address significant space shortages at several of these schools. This study will explore the feasibility of building classroom additions at 7 of the 12 schools in the study area, and compare the costs of this approach to construction of a new elementary school.

Five of the schools in the study area are not capable of additions since capital projects to be completed in the next few years will build these schools out to their core capacities. These five schools are adjacent to the 7 schools that would be assessed for additions, and therefore could be involved in the future in redistribution of enrollment to schools with added capacity, or to a new elementary school. However, it is important to note that the recommended comprehensive elementary school capacity study is not a boundary study nor is it a site selection process for a new elementary school. These activities could follow in the future, depending on the approach recommended following this comprehensive capacity study.

If approved by the Board of Education as part of action on the FY 2014 Capital Budget and Recommended Amendments to the FY 2013–2018 Capital Improvements Program (CIP), this study will commence in early 2013 and conclude by the end of June 2013. The study will include multiple opportunities for community input throughout the process. Community involvement will be a key component in the process to design a solution that best resolves the space issues in this section of the DCC. Conducting this comprehensive capacity study in the coming year will enable a recommendation on capital projects necessary to resolve space shortages to be made next fall, as part of the FY 2015–2020 CIP.

Background

Of the 12 elementary schools included in the scope of the comprehensive capacity study, projected space shortages are the most severe at Arcola, Forest Knolls, Harmony Hills, and Sargent Shriver elementary schools. All of these schools are projected to exceed their capacities by more than 92 seats by the 2018–2019 school year, which is the minimum threshold for consideration of a classroom addition. Some of the schools recently had or will have capital projects completed to address past enrollment increases. However, an enrollment surge in these schools now requires that additional elementary school capacity be built. Enrollment and facility information regarding these four schools follows.

- Arcola Elementary School—Arcola Elementary School opened in August 2007 with a capacity of 434 seats. Subsequent enrollment increases resulted in the need for a capital project to build the school out to its core capacity (624 seats) with a six-classroom addition scheduled to open in August 2015. The enrollment, however, is projected to be 734 students by the 2018–2019 school year, which will exceed the increased capacity at the school (624 seats) by 110 students.
- Forest Knolls Elementary School—To address previous enrollment increases, a 12-classroom addition opened at Forest Knolls Elementary School in August 2005, which increased the school capacity to 506 seats. Enrollment is projected to be 689 students by the 2018–2019 school year, which will exceed capacity at the school by 183 students.
- Harmony Hills Elementary School—Harmony Hills Elementary School was modernized in 1999 and reopened with a capacity of 535 seats. The following year, the class-size reduction initiative began at Harmony Hills Elementary School and lowered the school’s capacity to 353 seats. To address enrollment increases and the change to a class-size reduction school, a 15-classroom addition opened at the school in January 2012, which increased the capacity to 671 seats. Enrollment is projected to be 794 students by the 2018–2019 school year, which will exceed capacity at the school by 123 students.
- Sargent Shriver Elementary School— Sargent Shriver Elementary School opened in 2006 and has a capacity of 541 seats. Enrollment is projected to be 793 students by the 2018–2019 school year, which will exceed capacity at the school by 252 students.

In addition to these four schools, there are three schools in the midsection of the DCC where enrollment also is projected to exceed capacity by the 2018–2019 school year. However, the space deficit is less than the 92-seat minimum threshold for a classroom addition. These schools include Glen Haven Elementary School (-38 seats), Highland Elementary School (-73 seats), and Kemp Mill Elementary School (-48 seats).

Enrollment at the five other schools included in the scope of the study—Brookhaven, Georgian Forest, Glenallan, Weller Road, and Wheaton Woods elementary schools—is not projected to exceed capacity by the 2018–2019 school year. However, these schools are adjacent to the seven schools that are overutilized. It may be possible to either construct an addition at some of these schools and/or land may be available in the school service area to open a new elementary school.

There are two elementary schools in the DCC—Rolling Terrace and Woodlin elementary schools—that are outside the scope of this recommended capacity study and that face space shortages greater than 92 seats in the 2018–2019 school year. These schools are not included in the study due to their locations in the southern portion of the DCC and CIP plans to consider classroom additions at these schools. A Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 appropriation for facility planning funds was approved for feasibility for an addition at Woodlin Elementary School, and an FY 2014 appropriation for facility planning funds is recommended for a feasibility study for Rolling Terrace Elementary School.

Recommendation

Scope

A comprehensive capacity study, which includes 12 of the 29 DCC elementary schools, is recommended to review options to address projected space shortages at several schools. The schools included in the study are located in the midsection of the DCC on both the west and east sides of Georgia Avenue. The schools are listed as follows:

Schools West of Georgia Avenue	Schools East of Georgia Avenue
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brookhaven Elementary School*• Harmony Hills Elementary School*• Highland Elementary School• Sargent Shriver Elementary School• Weller Road Elementary School• Wheaton Woods Elementary School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arcola Elementary School**• Forest Knolls Elementary School• Georgian Forest Elementary School• Glenallan Elementary School• Glen Haven Elementary School• Kemp Mill Elementary School

*Brookhaven and Harmony Hills elementary schools are located west of Georgia Avenue, but these schools serve students residing on both sites of Georgia Avenue.

**Arcola Elementary School is located east of Georgia Avenue, but the school serves students residing on both sides of Georgia Avenue.

The comprehensive capacity study will assess the ability to build classroom additions at the schools that are over capacity, as well as at schools that are not over capacity but could relieve those schools that are over capacity through future boundary changes. The option of building additions at several elementary schools will be compared to the option of opening a new elementary school in the area. The scope of the study is broad and includes schools that are not over capacity that may be added onto or may have potential school sites in their service areas that could be used for a new elementary school. If a new elementary school were to be identified as a possible solution at the completion of the study, then a site selection process would be conducted next year.

Attachment A provides a map of the 12 schools included in the scope of the recommended study. Attachment B provides tables that compare projected school enrollments to the capacities for the 12 schools and is organized by schools located west and east of Georgia Avenue.

Schools to be Assessed for Classroom Additions

Preliminary assessments have been conducted in the past year by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Department of Facilities Management staff to identify elementary schools in the midsection of the DCC where classroom additions may be feasible. The following seven schools will be studied for an addition as part of the comprehensive study:

- Brookhaven Elementary School
- Forest Knolls Elementary School
- Glen Haven Elementary School
- Kemp Mill Elementary School
- Harmony Hills Elementary School

- Highland Elementary School
- Sargent Shriver Elementary School

It has been determined that classroom additions are not feasible at the five other schools included in the scope of the study because scheduled capital projects will build out these schools to the core capacities. The schools listed below will not be considered for classroom additions:

- Arcola Elementary School, where a 6-classroom addition is scheduled to open in August 2015
- Georgian Forest Elementary School, where a 14-classroom addition is scheduled to open in August 2013
- Glenallan Elementary School, where a modernization that expands the capacity of the school is scheduled to open in August 2013
- Weller Road Elementary School, where a modernization that expands the capacity of the school is scheduled to open in August 2013
- Wheaton Woods Elementary School, where a modernization that expands the capacity of the school is scheduled to open in August 2016

Although Arcola, Georgian Forest, Glenallan, Weller Road, and Wheaton Woods elementary schools will not be assessed for classroom additions, these schools are located in areas that could be affected by future boundary changes, which may reassign students from schools that exceed capacity to schools where space becomes available after classroom additions are completed, or where a new elementary school could be opened.

Process

If the Board of Education supports the recommendation for the comprehensive capacity study, the following steps would be taken this school year.

- An architectural firm would be hired to conduct the comprehensive capacity study for these schools. This firm would develop cost estimates for the seven classroom additions and compare these costs to the cost of constructing a new elementary school.
- A process to solicit input from MCPS staff, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members, and neighbors from the entire study area would be provided. The community involvement approach to solicit input would include the following:
 - A communitywide meeting would be conducted at the outset of the study to include all interested parties in the scope of the study. At this meeting, MCPS staff would describe the purpose, scope, and process for the study. Avenues for input during the process, both at meetings and through online opportunities, also would be described.
 - Two community meetings would be held at each of the seven schools that are studied for a classroom addition. At the first meeting, MCPS staff and the contracted architectural firm would present the option for a classroom addition at the school and receive feedback on the option. A second meeting would be held a few weeks later, when MCPS staff and the architectural firm would present any refinements to the

plan for a classroom addition that occur as a result of feedback at the first meeting. Again, attendees would be provided the opportunity to provide feedback.

- At the completion of the meetings at the seven schools studied for classroom additions, a second communitywide meeting would be conducted to present all of the options. Attendees once again would have the opportunity to provide feedback on the options.
- At the conclusion of the process, the architectural firm would provide cost estimates of the classroom additions and compare these costs to the cost of constructing a new elementary school.

The process described above would conclude by the end of the current school year. This timeline would enable a recommendation to be presented to the Board of Education as part of the *Superintendent's Recommended FY 2015–2020 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)* in the fall of 2013. The following two scenarios are possible, based on the findings of the capacity study:

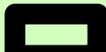
- Classroom additions may be recommended at some of the schools and included in the *FY 2015–2020 CIP* request.
- A new elementary school may be recommended and included in the *FY 2015–2020 CIP* request. If a new elementary school is approved by the Board of Education, then a site selection process would need to be completed during the 2013–2014 school year. In addition, some classroom additions may be recommended if enrollment pressures cannot be completely addressed by a new elementary school.

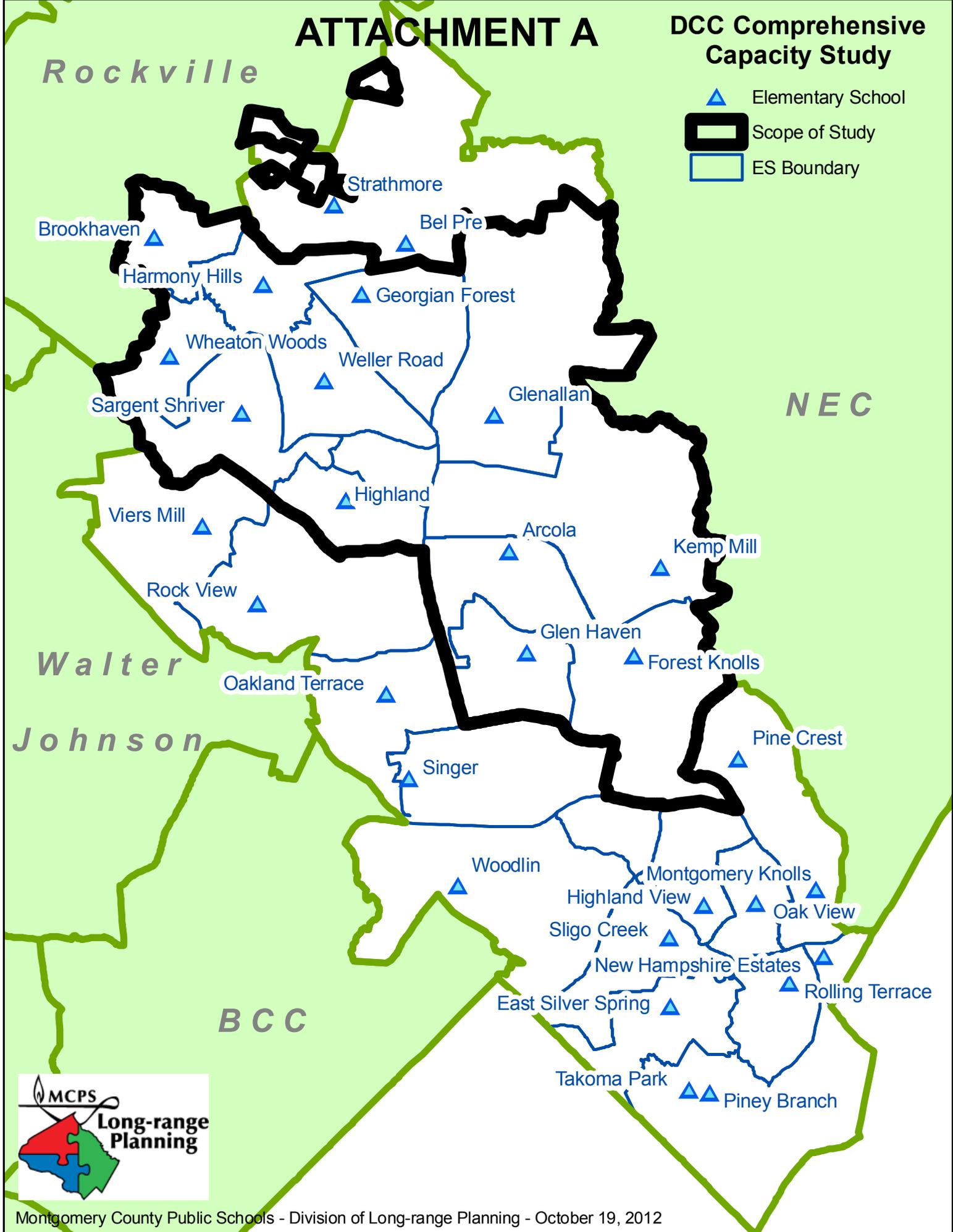
Summary

Resolving space shortages at elementary schools in the midsection of the DCC will be a complex undertaking. It is evident that solutions to the space shortages at these schools could result in the need to adjust school boundaries when additional capacity becomes available. Changes in school boundaries definitely would occur if a new elementary school is built. It is important to note that school boundary changes, if necessary, would not occur until adequate capacity is available in the area to accommodate student reassignments. Until additional school capacity becomes available, relocatable classrooms will address the space shortages of elementary schools in the study area.

ATTACHMENT A

DCC Comprehensive Capacity Study

-  Elementary School
-  Scope of Study
-  ES Boundary



ATTACHMENT B

DCC Elementary Schools in Study Area—Enrollments and Space October 30, 2012

Schools East of Georgia Avenue

School	Actual Enrollment 2012-13	Projected Enrollment					
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Arcola ES							
Capacity	434	434	434	624	624	624	624
Enrollment	719	757	762	767	759	743	734
<i>space available/deficit</i>	-285	-323	-328	-143	-135	-119	-110
				+ 6-classroom addition in 2015			
Forest Knolls ES							
Capacity	506	506	506	506	506	506	506
Enrollment	687	687	691	702	693	694	689
<i>space available/deficit</i>	-181	-181	-185	-196	-187	-188	-183
Georgian Forest ES							
Capacity	304	583	583	583	583	583	583
Enrollment	554	572	577	584	577	568	560
<i>space available/deficit</i>	-250	11	6	-1	6	15	23
<i>Comment</i>		+14-classroom addition in 2013					
Glenallan ES							
Capacity	274	723	723	723	723	723	723
Enrollment	472	500	534	548	578	591	602
<i>space available/deficit</i>	-198	223	189	175	145	132	121
<i>Comment</i>		Increase in capacity with modernization completed Aug. 2013					
Glen Haven ES							
Capacity	551	551	551	551	551	551	551
Enrollment	555	584	594	604	604	592	589
<i>space available/deficit</i>	-4	-33	-43	-53	-53	-41	-38
Kemp Mill ES							
Capacity	442	442	442	442	442	442	442
Enrollment	474	480	496	506	503	508	490
<i>space available/deficit</i>	-32	-38	-54	-64	-61	-66	-48
Total Capacity	2511	3239	3239	3429	3429	3429	3429
Total Enrollment	3,461	3,580	3,654	3,711	3,714	3,696	3,664
<i>space available/deficit</i>	-950	-341	-415	-282	-285	-267	-235

Classroom additions at Arcola ES and Georgian Forest ES are indicated, as well as expansion of Glenallan ES with modernization.

ATTACHMENT B

DCC Elementary Schools in Study Area—Enrollments and Space (continued) October 30, 2012

Schools West of Georgia Avenue

School	Actual Enrollment 2012-13	Projected Enrollment					
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Brookhaven ES							
Capacity	512	512	512	512	512	512	512
Enrollment	431	457	461	469	477	456	451
<i>space available/deficit</i>	81	55	51	43	35	56	61
Harmony Hills ES							
Capacity	671	671	671	671	671	671	671
Enrollment	741	797	817	834	848	831	794
<i>space available/deficit</i>	-70	-126	-146	-163	-177	-160	-123
Highland ES							
Capacity	462	462	462	462	462	462	462
Enrollment	534	540	548	553	561	549	535
<i>space available/deficit</i>	-72	-78	-86	-91	-99	-87	-73
Sargent Shriver ES							
Capacity	541	541	541	541	541	541	541
Enrollment	758	788	793	825	825	814	793
<i>space available/deficit</i>	-217	-247	-252	-284	-284	-273	-252
Weller Road ES							
Capacity	527	743	743	743	743	743	743
Enrollment	607	644	668	682	690	688	679
<i>space available/deficit</i>	-80	99	75	61	53	55	64
<i>Comment</i>		<i>Increase in capacity with modernization completed Aug. 2013</i>					
Wheaton Woods ES							
Capacity	334	334	334	334	740	740	740
Enrollment	472	503	533	553	571	585	585
<i>space available/deficit</i>	-138	-169	-199	-219	169	155	155
<i>Comment</i>		<i>Increase in capacity with modernization completed Aug. 2016</i>					
Total Capacity	3047	3263	3263	3263	3669	3669	3669
Total Enrollment	3,543	3,729	3,820	3,916	3,972	3,923	3,837
<i>space available/deficit</i>	-496	-466	-557	-653	-303	-254	-168

Expansion of Weller Road ES and Wheaton Woods with modernizations is indicated.