

POLICY BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Related Entries: ABA, ABC, ABC-RA, ACA, ACD, ACG, ACG-RA, ACG-RB, DNA, ECM, ECM-RA, FAA-RA, JEE, JEE-RA
Responsible Office: Division of District Operations; Division of Facilities Management

Educational Facilities Planning

A. PURPOSE

To affirm the Montgomery County Board of Education's commitment to continuing to provide high-quality facilities that support the educational programming needed to ensure that every Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) student is well-prepared for success consistent with the Board's core values of Learning, Relationships, Respect, Excellence, and Equity

To establish an educational facilities planning process that effectively anticipates MCPS educational facility needs and establishes a framework for making equitable and fiscally responsible facility decisions in an uncertain future, while considering instructional program priorities, physical condition of the schools, and the impact of under- or overutilized facilities on the educational program

To promote public understanding of MCPS educational facilities planning processes and provide opportunities for stakeholders to engage in, inform, and respond to those processes

To coordinate MCPS facilities planning processes with those of other units of local governments and municipalities in Montgomery County

B. BACKGROUND

Educational facilities planning is essential to identify the infrastructure needed to ensure success for every student. The Board has primary responsibility to plan for educational facilities that sustain high-quality MCPS educational programs while effectively responding to changes in student enrollment, educational programming, and physical plant infrastructure.

C. ISSUE

1. MCPS is among the largest school systems in the country in terms of enrollment. MCPS serves a county that encompasses approximately 500 square miles, and is made up of communities of varying population density, ranging from rural to urban. Montgomery County has experienced continuing development of commercial and residential centers, as well as significant changes in its transportation infrastructure over the past few decades – all of which impact student enrollment.
2. The ability of school facilities to meet the needs of educational programming changes over time. The Board is continuously challenged to provide appropriate spaces for educational programming and services and to maintain safe, secure, and healthy learning and working environments for students and staff, while responding to aging structures and building systems at a reasonable cost.

MCPS endeavors to maintain all school facilities at consistently high operational levels to maximize the life-span of existing physical plant assets through the coordinated scheduling of building system maintenance, repairs, and replacements. While building codes and advances in construction technology have vastly increased the expected life span of structures and building systems built or installed over time, the Board requires an educational facilities planning process to determine when maintenance is no longer viable for an educational facility or its component building systems, and systemic replacement or a major capital project is required to keep current with educational programming.

3. The fundamental goal of educational facilities planning is to provide a sound educational environment amid changing student enrollment, variations in the geographic distribution of students across schools, and the effects of racial, ethnic, and other socioeconomic and demographic diversity on educational programming. Enrollment changes are driven by a wide variety of factors including the strength of the economy and employment rates; policies set by federal, state, and local governments; fluctuations in the housing market driven by residential development and other changes in land use patterns; shifting trends in household composition; fluctuating birth rates; realignment of school boundaries; and movement within and into the school system from other parts of the United States and the world.

D. POSITION

The Board requires an educational facilities planning process that includes the following elements: ongoing analyses of student enrollment projections, physical condition of educational facilities and building systems; stakeholder engagement and input into facility decision-making; and a decision-making framework that generates responsive options and

leads to equitable and fiscally responsible and educationally sound decisions, in compliance with all local, state, and federal requirements.

This policy guides the educational facilities planning process in an efficient and fiscally responsible way to meet the varied educational needs of MCPS students with consideration of environmental sustainability. The process is designed to promote public understanding of MCPS educational facilities planning processes and ensure that there are opportunities for input from parents/guardians, students, staff, community members and organizations, local government agencies, and municipalities.

1. Facility planning starts with an analysis of student enrollment projections; educational program requirements; facility utilization rates; school site size; capacity calculations; the impact of county planning as well as trends in development, land use, transportation, and housing patterns; and Facilities Condition Index as described in section D.1.c below.
 - a) Student enrollment projections take into consideration shifting demographics, while projected educational program requirements take into consideration existing and new program offerings.
 - b) School site size and capacity calculations comply with established guidelines adopted as part of the Board review of the superintendent of schools' recommended Capital Improvements Program.
 - c) The Facilities Condition Index (FCI) quantifies the depleted life and value of a facility's primary building systems, such as roofs; walls; windows; and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC). The FCI is used to evaluate a building's overall condition – one of the factors that can influence the learning and working experience.
 - d) The Capital Improvements Program decision-making framework approach is used to identify and provide a basis for prioritizing options responsive to changing facility needs. A schedule of county-wide systemic replacement projects and major capital projects at specific schools shall be adopted and revised as appropriate as part of the Board review of the superintendent of schools' recommended Capital Improvements Program based on the analysis described above. These options may include –
 - (1) county-wide systemic replacement projects required to sustain schools in good condition and extend their useful life, such as replacement of heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and mechanical systems, roofs, and numerous other building and infrastructure projects; and

- (2) major capital projects which include facility-specific projects to add capacity; renovate, renew, adapt, repurpose, or replace existing facilities; or reuse or upgrade existing space in other facilities as appropriate.
 - e) Facility planning also includes analyses of non-capital strategies to address capacity requirements and facility needs, which may include, as appropriate—
 - (1) adjustments of capacity through non-capital strategies to increase enrollment at under-capacity schools and/or incentivize transfers from over-capacity schools, which may include, but are not limited to —
 - (a) boundary changes, or
 - (b) geographic student choice assignment plans (such as consortia); and/or
 - (2) school closures and/or consolidations in the event of declining enrollment levels.
- 2. Such analyses inform the Capital Improvements Program, which is the mechanism through which the Board requests funding from the Montgomery County Council and the state of Maryland for county-wide systemic replacement projects and major capital projects.
 - a) The six-year Capital Improvement Programs includes the following elements:
 - (1) Data on enrollment projections, educational programming, available school capacity county-wide, and facility utilization levels
 - (2) Proposed county-wide systemic replacement projects as set forth in section D.1.e)(1)
 - (3) Proposed new facilities and major capital projects as set forth in section D.1.e)(2)
 - b) The Educational Facilities Master Plan is prepared by the superintendent of schools each June and summarizes all decisions by the Montgomery County Council on requests submitted in the Capital Improvements Program.

3. Longer-term planning: The Board utilizes a longer-term (i.e., beyond the six-year Capital Improvements Program interval) scenario planning framework to inform the development of the Capital Improvements Program and identify facility options that allow MCPS to innovate and align with advances in pedagogy and educational programming; and are responsive to enrollment projections, facility utilization rates, physical condition of schools, and analyses of available school capacity and nontraditional sites.
4. As permitted by overall district facility and capacity requirements, holding facilities may be designated for the purpose of temporarily relocating student populations to facilitate major capital projects.

E. STAKEHOLDER INPUT

1. The superintendent of schools shall direct staff to develop options for selecting sites for new schools, changing school boundaries, establishing geographic student choice assignment plans, closing or consolidating schools, and such other facility-related issues as identified by the superintendent of schools.
2. Staff-developed options put forward for community input will reflect a range of approaches to advance each of the factors set forth in section G below and provide a rationale that demonstrates the extent to which any option advances each of those factors.
3. In accordance with Board Policy ABA, *Community Involvement*, the superintendent of schools shall direct staff to seek input for the purpose of advising the superintendent regarding the impact on the community of staff-developed options, as follows:
 - a) The superintendent of schools shall direct staff to seek input from multiple stakeholders, and to engage in efforts to obtain broad representation from affected communities
 - b) The superintendent of schools will direct staff to conduct broad outreach using multiple strategies for obtaining community input which may vary according to the nature, size, and scope of the project. These community outreach strategies may include, but are not limited to, systemwide committees, focus groups, task forces, work groups, roundtable discussion groups, surveys, technologically-facilitated communications, and/or other planning sessions, such as charrettes that are designed for collaboration among all interested or impacted parties and provides information and feedback to staff.

4. After gathering feedback through the stakeholder process, the superintendent of schools develops recommendations to be presented to the Board along with a summary of stakeholder input. Recommendations of the superintendent of schools are made available to the public, affected school communities, and other stakeholders as appropriate.

F. BOARD OF EDUCATION DELIBERATIONS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Based on further analysis of the factors considered through the stakeholder input process, the Board may, by majority vote, identify one or more alternatives to the superintendent of schools' recommendations. Alternatives put forward by the Board will advance one or more of the factors set forth in section G below. Staff will develop options consistent with the alternatives identified.
2. The Board will allow time to hold public hearings and solicit written testimony on the recommendations of the superintendent of schools and Board identified alternatives for site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, or school closings or consolidations.
3. The Board has the discretion to adopt minor modifications to the superintendent of schools' recommendation(s) 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 for site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, or school closings or consolidations that has received public review.
4. The Board may approve a different and/or condensed process and time schedule, developed by the superintendent of schools and in accordance with applicable state or county requirements, for making recommendations to the Board regarding the capital improvements program and the facility planning activities listed above, including but not limited to selecting sites for new schools, changing school boundaries, establishing geographic student choice assignment plans, and closing or consolidating in the event that the Board determines that unusual circumstances exist.

G. FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED

1. When developing recommendations for the Board, the superintendent of schools will provide a rationale for each recommendation that demonstrates the extent to which any recommendation advances the factors below. While each of the factors will be considered, it may not be feasible to reconcile each and every recommendation with each and every factor.

2. Factors to be considered in selecting sites for new schools, changing school boundaries, or establishing geographic student choice assignment plans

a) Demographic characteristics of student population

Analyses of options take into account the impact of various options on the overall populations of affected schools. Options should especially strive to create a diverse student body in each of the affected schools in alignment with Board Policy ACD, *Quality Integrated Education*. Demographic data showing the impact of various options include the following: racial/ethnic composition of the student population, the socioeconomic composition of the student population, the level of English language learners, and other reliable demographic indicators and participation in specific educational programs.

b) Geography

In accordance with MCPS' emphasis on community involvement in schools, options should, unless otherwise required, take into account the geographic proximity of communities to schools, as well as articulation, traffic, and transportation patterns and topography. In addition, options should consider, at a minimum, not only schools within a high school cluster but also other adjacent schools.

c) Stability of school assignments over time

Options should result in stable assignments for as long a period as possible. Student reassignments should consider recent boundary or geographic student choice assignment plan changes, and/or school closings and consolidations that may have affected the same students.

d) Facility utilization

School boundary and geographic student choice assignment plans should result in facility utilizations in the 80 percent to 100 percent efficient range over the long term, whenever possible. Shared use of a facility by more than one cluster may be the most feasible facility plan in some cases, taking into consideration the impact of the resulting articulation pattern on the community. Plans should be fiscally responsible to minimize capital and operating costs whenever feasible.

3. Site selection

In addition to the foregoing factors, when evaluating potential new school sites, including nontraditional sites and those acquired through dedication or purchase and placed in the Board's inventory, the following factors should be considered: the geographic location relative to existing and future student populations and existing schools; size in acreage; topography and other environmental characteristics; availability of utilities; physical condition; availability and timing to acquire, and cost to acquire, if private property.

4. Facility design

Educational facility designs shall consider community input and provide for a healthy, safe, and secure environment, in alignment with principles of environmental stewardship, and consistent with current educational program needs as well as anticipated future program needs.

5. The process for closing and consolidating schools shall meet the requirements of Maryland law and the provisions of this policy.

H. DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. The educational facilities planning process will deliver high quality educational facilities to all students by –
 - a) identifying the infrastructure and other available options necessary,
 - b) responding to current and projected conditions,
 - c) incorporating the input of parents/guardians, students, as appropriate, staff, and the community and,
 - d) taking a balanced approach to decisions to maintain, upgrade, renovate, or replace building systems and facilities.
2. The Board expects all recommendations and decision making regarding selecting sites for new schools, changing school boundaries, establishing geographic student choice assignment plans, or closing or consolidating schools, to take into account the equity implications of Board Policy ACA, *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*.
3. Over time, facility planning processes will create increased opportunities for students to attend schools where they may attain the significant educational benefits of the broad diversity of students in Montgomery County.

4. The superintendent of schools will develop regulations with stakeholder input to guide implementation of this policy.

I. REVIEW AND REPORTING

1. The annual June publication of the Educational Facilities Master Plan will constitute the official reporting on facility planning processes and actions taken during the year by the Board and approved by the Montgomery County Council, and will include the enrollment and utilization of each school, approved projects to sustain MCPS educational facilities in good condition, and/or schools and sites that may be involved in future activities to adjust capacity through major capital projects or other non-capital strategies.
2. The superintendent of schools will monitor, evaluate, and report to the Board the outcome of the processes and their alignment with the policy.
3. This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Board policy review process.

Related Sources: *Code of Maryland Regulations* §13A.01.05.07 and §13A.02.09.01-.03

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; amended by Resolution No. 282-14, June 17, 2014; amended by Resolution No.436-18, September 24, 2018; amended September 25, 2025.

Note: Tenets of Board Policy FKB, *Sustaining and Modernizing MCPS Facilities*, were incorporated into Resolution No.436-18, amendments to this policy, and Policy FKB was rescinded upon adoption of amended Board Policy FAA on September 24, 2018.

REGULATION **MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Related Entries: ABA, ABC, ABC-RA, ACA, ACD, ACG, ACG-RA, ACG-RB, DNA, ECM, ECM-RA, FAA, JEE, JEE-RA
Responsible Office: Division of District Operations

Educational Facilities Planning

I. PURPOSE

To implement the Montgomery County Board of Education (Board) Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*

To set forth processes for the development of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the Educational Facilities Master Plan (Master Plan), and non-capital strategies to address capacity requirements and facility needs, to include site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, and school closures and/or consolidations

II. BACKGROUND

As set forth in Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*, the components of educational facilities planning include –

- A. ongoing analyses of student enrollment projections and the physical condition of educational facilities and building systems;
- B. stakeholder engagement and input into facility decision making; and
- C. a decision-making framework that generates responsive options and leads to equitable and fiscally responsible and educationally sound decisions, in compliance with all local, state, and federal requirements, taking into account the equity implications of Board Policy, ACA, *Nondiscrimination*, *Equity*, and *Cultural Proficiency*.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Adjacent schools* are, at a minimum, schools with catchment areas that are contiguous.

- B. The *Capital Budget* is the annual budget adopted for capital project appropriations.
- C. The *Capital Improvements Program (CIP)* is a comprehensive six-year spending plan for capital improvements. The CIP focuses on the acquisition, planning, construction, and maintenance of public school facilities, including county-wide systemic replacement projects and major capital projects. 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, amendments are considered to the adopted CIP for changes needed in the second year of the six-year CIP period.
- D. *Civic groups* are civic, homeowner, neighborhood, or citizen associations listed with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) or Montgomery Regional Service Centers.
- E. *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. In some circumstances, MCPS elementary schools have split articulation patterns to middle schools, and some middle schools have split articulation patterns to high schools in one or more clusters.
- F. *Consortium* is a grouping of high schools or middle schools within proximity to one another that provides students the opportunity to express their preferences for attending one of the schools based on a specific instructional program or emphasis.
- G. *Facility design* encompasses all the planning and design processes that lead up to construction of a school facility. In order of events, the milestones of facility design are as follows:
 - 1. Educational specifications describe the spaces needed to support the instructional program and guide the architect in developing the building layout and design.
 - 2. Feasibility study determines the scope and estimated cost of a project, but does not develop a detailed design of the facility.
 - 3. Schematic design is part of the initial design phase that evaluates and develops concepts into a preliminary plan for the school.
 - 4. The preliminary plan defines the general scope, scale, functional relationship, traffic flow, and cost of project components. The conceptual design conveys a clear and comprehensive image of the intended facility

improvements including conceptual organization of exterior and interior spaces, usage of interior and exterior materials, and selection of structural, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical system concepts. The preliminary plan is presented to the Board for approval.

5. Design development is the phase of the design process that refines the architectural plans and develops the infrastructure of the project including mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
 6. Construction documents provide the details of construction that are incorporated into the drawings and specifications for use as contract documents to construct the facility.
- H. *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.
 - I. *Parent Teacher (Student) Associations (PT(S)As)* are member groups of the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations, Inc. (MCCPTA). Also, in the absence of a PT(S)A, an organization of parents/guardians, teachers, and students that operate at a school in lieu of a PT(S)A.
 - J. *Stakeholder Engagement*, for the purposes of Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*, and this regulation, refers to processes designed to seek input to inform the superintendent of schools and the Board regarding the impact of facility planning options, by engaging a broad variety of stakeholders, including but not limited to parents/guardians, students, staff, community members and organizations, and local government agencies, in accordance with Board Policy ABA, *Community Engagement*, and Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*.

IV. FACILITIES PLANNING ANALYSES

The facilities planning process starts with the following:

- A. *Student Enrollment Projections*
 1. Student enrollment projections are developed in coordination with the Montgomery County Planning Department’s county population forecast and other relevant planning sources.

2. Each fall, enrollment projections for each school are developed for a six-year period. Long-range forecasts project enrollment to the subsequent 10th and 15th year. The units of analysis for long-range forecasts are secondary school level, and the cluster or consortium level for elementary schools.
3. By April of each year, revisions to school enrollment projections for the next school year are developed to refine the projections and to reflect any changes in service areas, programs, or staffing.
4. The student enrollment projection methodology utilized is provided in an appendix to the CIP and Master Plan documents.
5. *Preferred ranges of enrollment* for schools includes all students attending a school.
 - a) The preferred ranges of enrollment for schools are —
 - (1) 450 to 750 students in elementary schools,
 - (2) 750 to 1,200 students in middle schools, and
 - (3) 1,600 to 2,400 students in high schools.
 - (4) Enrollment in special and alternative program centers may differ from the above ranges and generally is lower.
 - b) The preferred ranges of enrollment are considered when planning new schools or when recommending changes to existing schools. Departures from the preferred ranges may occur if circumstances warrant.
6. *School demographic profile and facility profile*
 - a) School demographic profile includes the racial/ethnic composition of a school's student population, the percentage of students participating in the Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) and English Language Development (ELD) programs, and school mobility rates.
 - b) *Facility Profiles* include room use by program and facility characteristics such as square footage, site size, year of opening,

adjacency to parks, and number of relocatable classrooms.

B. Educational Program Requirements

1. MCPS staff members in the Division of Facilities Management will work closely with educational program staff members in the Division of School Leadership and Improvement and the Division of Teaching and Learning to identify facility requirements for educational programs.
2. Projected program requirements take into account the effect of class size changes and other relevant factors, such as existing, new, and proposed changes to educational programs.

C. Program Capacity Calculations

1. Program capacity refers to the number of students that can be accommodated in a facility based on the educational programs at the facility. 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 and program in each classroom.
2. Student-to-classroom ratios should not be confused with staffing ratios that are determined through the annual operating budget process.
3. Unless otherwise specified by Board action, the *program capacity* and the associated student-to-classroom ration guidelines are as follows:

Student-to Classroom Ratio Guidelines

<i>Level</i>	<i>Student-to-Classroom Ratios</i>
Head Start & prekindergarten	40:1 (2 sessions per day)
Head Start & prekindergarten	20:1 (1 session per day)
Grade K	22:1
Grade K-reduced class size	18:1
Grades 1-2—reduced class size	18:1
Grades 1-5 Elementary	23:1
Grades: 6-8 Middle School	25:1 ^a
Grades: 9-12 High School	25:1 ^b
Special Education, ELD, Alternative Programs	See “c” below

- a) Program capacity is adjusted at the middle school level to account for scheduling constraints. 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).
 - b) Program capacity is adjusted at the high school level to account for scheduling constraints. 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).
 - c) Special education, ELD, alternative programs, and other special programs may require classroom ratios different from those listed.
- D. *Facility utilization* refers to an analysis of current and projected student enrollment as compared to program capacity, state-rated capacity, and preferred ranges of enrollment.
 - 1. A school is considered to be underutilized if the facility utilization rate is less than 80 percent.
 - 2. A school is considered to be overutilized if the facility utilization rate is more than 100 percent.
 - 3. Unless otherwise specified by Board action, elementary, middle, and high schools should operate in an efficient facility utilization range of 80 to 100 percent of program capacity.
 - a) In the case of overutilization, an effort to evaluate the long-range need for permanent space is made prior to planning for new construction.
 - b) Underutilization of facilities also is evaluated in the context of long-range enrollment projections.
 - 4. Relocatable classrooms may be used on an interim basis to provide program space for enrollment growth until permanent capacity is available.
 - 5. Relocatable classrooms also may be used to enable child care programs to be housed in schools, and may be used to accommodate other complementary uses. Relocatable classrooms should have health and safety standards that are comparable to other MCPS classrooms.

- E. *State-rated Capacity (SRC)* is defined by the state of Maryland as the number of students who can be accommodated in a school, based on the product of state-determined student-to-classroom ratios and the number of teaching stations in a school. SRC is used by the state to determine state budget eligibility for capital projects. SRCs are provided for schools in appendices to the CIP and the Master Plan.

- F. *School site size* is the acreage desired to accommodate the full instructional program, as follows:
 - 1. Elementary schools—a preferred usable site size of 7.5 acres that is capable of fitting the instructional program, including site requirements. The 7.5 acres standard is based on an ideal leveled site, and the size may vary depending on site shapes, surrounding site constraints, limitations on available site sizes in the geographic area, density of population, and planning considerations.
 - 2. Middle schools—a preferred usable site size of 15.5 acres that is capable of fitting the instructional program, including site requirements. The 15.5 acres standard is based on an ideal leveled site, and the size may vary depending on site shapes, surrounding site constraints, limitations on available site sizes in the geographic area, density of population, and planning considerations.
 - 3. High schools—a minimum preferred site size of 35 acres that is capable of fitting the instructional program, including site requirements. The 35 acres standard is based on an ideal leveled site, and the size may vary depending on site shapes, surrounding site constraints, limitations on available site sizes in the geographic area, density of population, and planning considerations.

- G. The *Facility Condition Index (FCI)* quantifies the depleted life and value of a facility's primary building systems, such as roofs, walls, windows, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC). The FCI is used to evaluate a building's overall condition; one of the factors that can influence the learning and working experience. MCPS will establish a FCI baseline in the 2025-2026 school year. Once the baseline year has been completed, periodic FCI updates will occur on a recurring basis. Those updates will be made available publicly.

V. CLUSTER COMMENTS

- A. In June of each year, cluster representatives may submit to the superintendent of schools any facility-based concerns, priorities, or proposals that they have

identified for their schools in consultation with local PT(S)A leadership, principals, and the community.

- B. Cluster comments are to be considered in the development of facilities recommendations made by the superintendent of schools in the CIP.

VI. FACILITY PLANNING DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

- A. Each year, after new student enrollment projections are developed and other analyses set forth above are completed, and taking into account cluster comments, MCPS staff identifies and prioritizes projects to address evolving facility needs. The CIP decision-making framework will incorporate multiple factors to ensure equitable and effective investment of resources. Together, these criteria provide a framework for making informed, transparent, and strategic decisions about capital investments across the school system. Key factors include:
 - 1. The Facility Condition Index: the physical condition of a building and its major systems as defined above.
 - 2. Educational Adequacy: The extent to which the facility supports modern instructional practices and program requirements.
 - 3. Enhanced Student Needs: The unique requirements of student populations, including specialized programs and support services.
 - 4. Facility Utilization: Enrollment projections as compared to program capacity.
- B. Once priorities have been established, staff shall determine the best option for responding to facility needs and capacity requirements set forth in Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*. Options for responding to facility needs and capacity requirements may include—
 - 1. county-wide systemic replacement projects required to sustain schools in good condition and extend their useful life, such as replacement of heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and mechanical systems, roofs, and numerous other building and infrastructure projects; and
 - 2. major capital projects which include facility-specific projects to add capacity; renovate, renew, adapt, repurpose, or replace existing facilities; or reuse or upgrade existing space in other facilities as appropriate. Such project options also include construction of new facilities or additions to existing facilities.

- B. Options for responding to facility needs and capacity requirements also may include, as appropriate, adjustments of capacity through non-capital strategies to increase enrollment at under-capacity schools and/or encourage transfers from over-capacity schools, which may include, but are not limited to—
 - 1. boundary changes, or
 - 2. geographic student choice assignment plans ; and/or
 - 3. school closures and/or consolidations.
- C. The decision-making framework also may include consideration of architect selection, facility design, and other facility-related issues, as identified by the superintendent of schools.

VII. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

- A. In the fall of each year, the superintendent of schools publishes recommendations for an annual Capital Budget and a six-year CIP or amendments to the previously adopted CIP.
- B. In addition, recommendations for site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, and any other facility planning recommendations identified by the superintendent of schools as requiring more time for public review, may be released.
- C. The six-year CIP includes the following:
 - 1. Standards for Board review and action:
 - a) Preferred range of school enrollments
 - b) Program capacity and facility utilization calculations
 - c) School site size
 - 2. Background information on the student enrollment projection methodology
 - 3. Current student enrollment figures, school demographic profiles, and facility profiles
 - 4. Program capacity and facility utilization analyses

5. Elementary, middle, and high school enrollment projections for each of the next six years and long-range projections for the 10th and 15th year for middle and high schools
 6. Recommended actions, such as changes in school capacities, new facilities, major capital projects, program locations, and/or the service area of the schools.
 7. A schedule of countywide systemic projects by category, major capital projects at specific schools, and new facilities as identified in Chapter 1 of the CIP and the Master Plan.
 8. A line item summary of Capital Budget appropriation recommendations by the superintendent of schools
- D. Supplements to the CIP may be published to provide more information on issues when deemed advisable by the superintendent of schools
 - E. The superintendent of schools' recommended CIP is posted on the MCPS website. CIP documents are made available to Board members and Board staff, MCPS executive staff, and the MCCPTA president, area MCCPTA vice presidents, and cluster coordinators. In addition, notification of the CIP's publication and availability online is sent to principals, PT(S)A leadership, municipalities, and civic groups. This notification includes the Board schedule for work sessions, public hearings, and action on the CIP.
 - F. The Board timeline for review and action on the CIP consists of one or more work sessions and one or more hearings in early to mid-November, and action in mid to late November of each year. (See Section XI.B. for the public hearing process and Section XII for the annual calendar.)
 - G. The superintendent of schools' recommendations on any deferred planning issues and/or amendments to the CIP are made in mid-February. The Board timeline for these items consists of one or more work sessions and one or more public hearings in February/March, and action by April. If necessary, the timeline for deferred planning issues may be modified by the superintendent of schools to allow more time for stakeholder engagement processes.
 - H. In cases where the Board determines an unusual circumstance exists, the superintendent of schools may develop an alternative time schedule to make recommendations regarding the CIP, facility planning activities, site selection,

school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, or school closures and/or consolidations.

- I. After review and Board action, the Board-requested CIP, including official Project Description Forms (PDFs) for all requested capital projects, is submitted to the Montgomery County Council (County Council) and the Montgomery County Executive for their review and for County Council action. The Board-requested CIP also is sent for information purposes to M-NCPPC.
- J. The county executive's recommendations are forwarded to the County Council on January 15 for inclusion in the overall county CIP. The County Council timeline for review and action on the Board-requested CIP is from February to May.
- K. The County Council adopts the biennial six-year CIP, and amendments to the CIP, in late May.

VIII. EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES MASTER PLAN (MASTER PLAN)

- A. By July of each year, the superintendent of schools publishes a summary of all County Council-adopted capital and Board-adopted non-capital strategies to address capacity requirements and facility needs. This document, the Educational Facilities Master Plan (hereafter referred to as the Master Plan), is required under the rules and regulations of the State Public School Construction Program.
 - 1. The Master Plan incorporates the projected impact of all capital projects approved for funding by the County Council and any non-capital strategies to address capacity requirements and facility needs approved by the Board.
 - 2. Similar to the CIP, the Master Plan includes the following:
 - a) The following standards:
 - (1) Preferred range of school enrollments
 - (2) Program capacity and facility utilization calculations
 - (3) School site size
 - b) Background information on the enrollment projection methodology
 - c) Current student enrollment figures, school demographic profiles, and facility profiles

- d) Program capacity and facility utilization calculations
- e) Elementary, middle, and high school enrollment projections for each of the next six years, and long-range projections for the 10th and 15th years for middle and high schools. This information reflects projections made the previous fall with an updated one-year projection in the spring, and any changes in projected enrollment that result from boundary changes, geographic student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, or other changes adopted by the Board
- f) County Council-adopted PDFs for all capital projects with schedules, estimated costs, and funding sources

IX. LONGER TERM PLANNING

- A. MCPS utilizes a longer-term (i.e., beyond the six-year CIP interval) scenario planning framework to inform the development of the CIP and further allow MCPS to be forward-thinking and identify facility options that align with advances in pedagogy and be innovative in its approaches to educational programming, as well as class size changes, use of nontraditional sites, and other relevant approaches.
- B. This longer-term scenario planning framework explores growth management at the regional or cluster level, considering four growth management scenarios that could impact facility planning:
 - 1. High enrollment growth
 - 2. Moderate/low enrollment growth
 - 3. No enrollment growth
 - 4. Declining enrollment
- C. For any scenario, the analysis then determines the degree to which a school or set of schools is or may become, in the future, overutilized, or underutilized. Options generated from these analyses then suggest longer-term approaches that may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Changes to the delivery, location, or number of programs; enrollment practices and class sizes; grade level configurations; or master schedules

2. Additions to physical capacity
 3. Consideration of nontraditional sites or nontraditional uses of existing sites
- D. Tapping into the wealth of experience and knowledge that members of the Montgomery County community have regarding long-term facility planning issues and strategies, the superintendent of schools has established a Facilities Advisory Committee to advise MCPS on a wide variety of topics related to the community's vision for school facilities and planning that are outside the six-year CIP time frame but that may require attention in the 10-15 year time frame or beyond. The superintendent of schools appoints the membership of the Facilities Advisory Committee, with input from community stakeholders.

X. GUIDELINES FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES FOR SPECIFIED FACILITIES-RELATED ISSUES

A. Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines

1. Stakeholder involvement is especially critical to the success of the following MCPS facility-related planning processes:
 - a) Site selection for new schools
 - b) School boundaries
 - c) Geographic student choice assignment plans
 - d) School closures and/or consolidations
 - e) Facility design
 - f) Other facility-related issues as identified by the superintendent of schools
2. Consistent with Board Policy ABA, *Community Engagement*, and Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*, MCPS will seek stakeholder engagement for the purpose of advising the superintendent of schools regarding the impact on the community of staff-developed facility-related options for the processes specified in Section V.A.1.
 - a) The superintendent of schools will publicize opportunities to

provide input and direct staff to seek –

- (1) input from multiple stakeholders,
 - (2) broad representation from affected communities, and
 - (3) a variety of viewpoints.
- b) The primary stakeholders in the planning process are parents/guardians, staff, and students in affected communities. Additional stakeholders may include representatives of MCCPTA, local PT(S)As, or other parent/guardian or student groups; along with representatives of MCPS employees; affected municipalities; local government agencies; civic groups; and other countywide organizations, as appropriate.
- c) Staff will conduct broad outreach using multiple strategies for obtaining stakeholder engagement.
- (1) Stakeholder engagement strategies may vary, as appropriate, according to the nature, size and scope of the process.
 - (2) Stakeholder engagement strategies may include, but are not limited to, systemwide committees or advisory groups, focus groups, task forces, work groups, roundtable discussion groups, surveys, technologically-facilitated communications, and/or other public planning sessions, such as charrettes that are designed for collaboration among all interested or impacted parties and provides information and feedback to staff.
 - (3) At any point, the superintendent of schools may direct MCPS staff to use a public forum, survey, or technologically-facilitated communication in conjunction with or in lieu of other methods.

B. Additional Guidelines for Developing Options for School Boundaries and Geographic Student Choice Assignment Plans

- 1. Prior to the development of specific options to be put forward for stakeholder engagement, the superintendent of schools recommends to the Board the potential scope of changes to school boundaries and/or

geographic student choice assignment plans in terms of the geographical area(s) of the county potentially impacted.

2. The superintendent of schools develops recommendations for the scope through a multi-step process which considers first the minimum unit of analysis that could address the immediate concern, then considers the maximum extent of the potentially affected geographic area(s) that may need to be considered to effectively address the four factors established in Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*.
 - a) Typically, the potential scope of a change of school boundaries and/or a geographic student choice assignment plan in response to a capital project recommendation that is anticipated to have a limited effect on a school's enrollment (e.g., an addition which increases the school's capacity by less than 20 percent or a minor alteration of an attendance area) may be addressed by consideration of options that impact only the cluster in which the school is located as well as any immediately adjacent schools outside the cluster.
 - b) Concerns potentially affecting broader communities may require the scope to extend to consideration of options involving communities in adjacent clusters.
3. The superintendent of schools will identify potentially affected communities prior to making recommendations to the Board regarding the scope of facility-related efforts.
4. Once the Board establishes the scope of changes of school boundaries and/or geographic student choice assignment plans that are under consideration, MCPS staff develop a range of options for stakeholder engagement, based on the four factors below, as set forth in Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*, and provides a rationale that demonstrates the extent to which any option advances each of these four factors:
 - a) Demographic characteristics of student populations

Pursuant to Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*, analyses of options take into account the impact of various options on the overall populations of affected schools. Options should especially strive to create a diverse student body in each of the affected schools in alignment with Board Policy ACD, *Quality Integrated Education*. This means that a key consideration is

significant disparity in the demographic characteristics between schools in the affected geographic areas that cannot be justified by any other factor. Demographic data showing the impact of various options include the following: racial/ethnic composition of the student population, the socioeconomic composition of the student population, the level of English language learners, and other reliable demographic indicators and participation in specific educational programs. Options should also take into consideration the intersection between and among these categories of demographic data.

b) Geography

In accordance with MCPS's emphasis on family engagement in their children's schools, options should, unless otherwise required, take into account the geographic proximity of schools to the communities served, as well as articulation, traffic, transportation patterns (including public transit), and topography. As part of this analysis, walking access to the school and transportation distances should be considered. In addition, options should consider, at a minimum, not only schools within a high school cluster but also other adjacent schools.

c) Stability of school assignments over time

Options should result in stable assignments for as long a period of time as possible. Student reassignments should consider recent boundary or geographic student choice assignment plan changes, and/or school closings and consolidations that may have affected the same students.

d) Facility utilization

School boundary and geographic student choice assignment plans should result in facility utilizations in the 80 percent to 100 percent efficient range over the long term, whenever possible. Shared use of a facility by more than one cluster may be the most feasible facility plan in some cases, taking into consideration the impact of the resulting articulation pattern on the community. Plans should be fiscally responsible to minimize capital and operating costs whenever feasible.

5. At the conclusion of the stakeholder engagement phase, MCPS staff will

prepare a report for the superintendent of schools that will include, but is not limited to, a summary of the stakeholder engagement processes utilized, staff-developed options, and stakeholder feedback.

6. In addition, as appropriate, the superintendent of schools may consider any individual PT(S)A position papers.
7. When developing recommendations for the Board, the superintendent of schools provides a rationale for each recommendation that demonstrates the extent to which it feasibly and reasonably advances the factors above in Section X.B.2 and X.B.4. While each of the factors are considered, it may not be feasible to reconcile each and every recommendation with each and every factor.
8. These guidelines also may be applied to other facility-related issues identified by the superintendent of schools, as appropriate.

C. Additional Guidelines for Developing Options for New School Sites

The following factors are considered, in addition to those established in Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*, when evaluating potential new school sites, including those acquired through dedication or purchase and placed in the Board's inventory:

1. The geographic location relative to existing and future student populations and existing schools
2. Size in acreage
3. Topography and other environmental characteristics
4. Availability of utilities
5. Physical condition
6. Availability and timing to acquire
7. Cost to acquire if private property

D. Facility Design

Educational facility designs provide for a healthy, safe, and secure environment in alignment with the principles of environmental stewardship and consistent with

current educational program needs, as well as anticipated future program needs. Stakeholder engagement is sought at key milestones in the processes leading to the construction of new schools, or additions to existing schools, as follows:

1. Educational specifications describe the spaces needed to support the instructional program and guide the architect in developing the building layout and design. Educational specifications for proposed projects are developed by MCPS planning staff in collaboration with instructional program staff, and principals and staff from affected schools.
2. Design options are developed by the selected architect(s) who evaluates the educational specifications and uses them to create preliminary designs. Stakeholder engagement is gathered as follows:
 - a) MCPS staff engage in broad outreach using multiple strategies for obtaining stakeholder engagement on the facility design of capital projects.
 - b) Representatives of civic groups, municipal, county government (including Montgomery County Planning Department and Montgomery County Parks Department), and adjacent property owners, if any, may provide input into the designs of new schools and additions, or major capital projects for existing schools.
3. A preliminary plan, which includes the preliminary design, is presented to the Board for approval.

E. School Closures and Consolidations

In addition to the factors set forth in section X.B.4 above, the requirements of Maryland law are followed when seeking stakeholder engagement for school closures and consolidations.

XI. BOARD ACTION ON SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS' RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. The Board holds one or more work sessions to review the superintendent of schools' recommendations as referenced in Section VII above.
 1. The Board may request, by majority vote, that the superintendent of schools develop alternative recommendations for site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, or school closures and/or consolidations of schools.

2. Any significant modification to the superintendent of schools' recommendation requires an alternative supported by a majority of Board members. Any modification that impacts any or all of a school community that has not previously been included in the superintendent of schools' recommendation should be considered a significant modification. Alternatives put forward by the Board will advance one or more of the factors set forth in Section G of Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*.
3. Recommendations from the superintendent of schools and Board-requested alternatives are subject to a public hearing prior to final Board action. When an alternative is identified by the Board at any work session, a public hearing must be held following that work session to receive public comment on the alternative.
4. The Board has the discretion to adopt minor modifications to the superintendent of schools' recommendation or Board-requested alternative(s) if this action will not have a significant impact on a plan that has received public review. Alternatives will not be considered after a Board work session without adequate notification and opportunity for comment by the affected communities.

B. Board Public Hearing Process

1. Public hearings are conducted annually following publication of the superintendent of schools' CIP recommendations. In addition, public hearings are conducted prior to actions affecting site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, or school closures and/or consolidations.
 - a) Public hearings are conducted in November following publication of the superintendent of schools' recommended Capital Budget and six-year CIP.
 - b) Public hearings also may be conducted in late February or March for any superintendent of schools' recommendations not previously subject to public hearings.
 - c) Public hearings also may be conducted at other times during the year if the Board determines an unusual circumstance exists and the superintendent of schools has developed a different and/or condensed schedule for making recommendations.

2. In addition to other avenues of engagement, community members have opportunities to provide input to the superintendent of schools and the Board through written correspondence, public comments, and public testimony.
3. Civic groups, countywide organizations, municipalities, and elected officials may testify at public hearings.
4. MCCPTA cluster coordinators, in consultation with the local PT(S)A presidents, may coordinate testimony at the hearing on behalf of cluster schools and are encouraged to present a variety of opinions when scheduling testimony. Testimony time for each cluster is scheduled and organized by the PT(S)A organizational units (“quad-clusters”) and/or consortium whenever possible.
5. Written comments from the community are accepted at any point but, in order to be considered, comments must reach the Board at least 48 hours before action is scheduled by the Board.
6. The Board office is responsible for scheduling those interested in testifying at public hearings.
 - a) As set forth in the *Board of Education Handbook*, for CIP hearings, students, municipalities, and MCCPTA shall be accorded the opportunity to testify first, followed by PT(S)As, and then on a first come, first served basis, individuals and civic and countywide organizations.
 - b) Elected officials are given the courtesy of being placed on the agenda at the time of their choice.
 - c) Unless otherwise specified in the Board hearing notice, organizations, municipalities, and elected officials shall be limited to five minutes for testimony at Board hearings.

XII. CALENDAR

The facilities planning process is conducted according to the Montgomery County biennial CIP process and adheres to the following calendar adjusted annually to account for holidays and other anomalies.

MCPS staff members meet with MCCPTA, area vice presidents, cluster coordinators, and PT(S)A representatives to exchange information about	Summer
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the adopted CIP and consider issues for the upcoming CIP or amendments to the CIP.	
The County Council adopts Spending Affordability Guidelines for the new CIP cycle, based on debt affordability.	Early-October of odd numbered fiscal years
MCPS staff members present enrollment trends and planning issues to the Board.	Fall
The superintendent of schools publishes and sends to the Board any recommendations for site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, school closings and/or consolidations, or other facility-related issues requiring more time for public review.	Fall
The superintendent of schools publishes and presents to the Board recommendations for the annual Capital Budget and the six-year CIP or amendments to the CIP. The Board may hold a work session in conjunction with this presentation where Board members may suggest alternatives.	Fall
The Board holds one or more work sessions on the CIP and to consider alternatives to the superintendent of schools' recommended site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, or other facility-related issues.	Early to mid-November
The Board holds one or more public hearings on the recommended CIP and site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, and other facility-related recommendations. When an alternative is identified by the Board at any work session, a public hearing must be held following that work session to receive public comment on the alternative.	Mid November
The Board acts on Capital Budget, CIP, amendments, and any site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, or other facility-related issues.	Mid to Late November
The county executive and County Council receive Board-requested capital budget and CIP for review.	December 1
The county executive transmits recommended Capital Budget and CIP	January 15

or amendments to County Council.	
The County Council holds public hearings on CIP.	February - March
The County Council reviews Board requested and county executive recommended Capital Budget and CIP.	March - April
The superintendent of schools' recommendations on any deferred planning issues, site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, and other facility-related issues, and/or recommended amendment(s) to the CIP are published for Board review, if needed.	Mid-February*
The Board holds one or more work sessions and identifies any alternatives to site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, or other facility-related recommendations, if needed.	February/ early-to mid-March*
The Board holds one or more public hearings if needed and if any alternatives are identified by the Board.	Late-February
The Board acts on deferred CIP recommendations and/or site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, or other facility-related issues, if needed.	April
The County Council approves six-year Capital Budget and CIP.	Late-May
Cluster PT(S)A representatives submit comments to the superintendent of schools about issues affecting their schools for the upcoming CIP or amendments to the CIP.	June
The superintendent of schools publishes a summary of all actions to date affecting schools (Master Plan) and identifies future needs.	July

*If necessary the timeline for deferred planning issues may be modified to allow more time for stakeholder engagement processes.

Related Sources:

Code of Maryland Regulations §13A.01.05.07 and §13A.02.09.01-.03; *Charter of Montgomery County, Maryland*, Section 305; *Montgomery County Code*, Chapter 20, Article X, §§20-55 through 20-58

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