

Superintendent's Recommended FY 2027 Capital Budget and the FY 2027–2032 Capital Improvements Program



Published by:

the Department of Materials Management

for the Office of Facilities Management and the Division of Planning, Design, and Construction

45 West Gude Drive, Suite 4100

Rockville, Maryland 20850

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning>

October 13, 2025

Ms. Julie Yang, President
and Members of the Board of Education
15 W. Gude Drive, Suite 100
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Ms. Yang and Members of the Board of Education,

As you are well aware, we have a serious problem. For some time, the infrastructure of the school system's facilities slowly has deteriorated and is now at a critical point in need of correction. Candidly, we have not kept pace with major system replacement and school replacements, renewals, and renovations. This has led to a significant backlog in projects that will take decades for us to catch up.

Previous strategies that have ranged from ignoring critical issues to only supporting partial projects or projects in isolated geographic areas has left the school system in a state of gross inequity. Compounding our challenges, critical centralized support infrastructure and holding schools have been neglected to the point where many of the facilities necessary to operate the school system are either at or near a condition that is no longer serviceable.

Knowing that these corrections will not happen overnight but rather will take us decades to correct, we must embark now on a proactive plan to catch up, to regain a state of equilibrium—where planned capital projects align with the replacement of assets based on planned useful life. This plan must extend beyond the six-year window of the Capital Improvements Program and look at a longer range of needs and how we might better utilize our facilities to optimize value for our community, while also providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environment for our students and working environment for our employees.

To this end, I am pleased to submit my *Recommended Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Capital Budget and the FY 2027–2032 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)* for your consideration and adoption. This submission marks a deliberate shift in our approach—from reactive, enrollment-driven construction toward a disciplined, data-informed framework that prioritizes lifecycle renewal, equitable access, and fiscal sustainability. Though it represents only a small fraction of the real needs in MCPS, this six-year CIP plan includes the expenditure recommendations for FY 2027–2032 and provides the recommended FY 2027 Capital Budget funding appropriation authority needed to implement the CIP during the fiscal year that begins July 1, 2026, and ends June 30, 2027. The first year of the biennial CIP review process is FY 2027. In accordance with the Montgomery County charter, all CIP projects are considered in odd-numbered fiscal years; therefore, this recommended CIP will receive a full review by the county executive

and the Montgomery County Council during the coming months through the Montgomery County Council's final action on the FY 2027–2032 CIP in late May 2026.

The *Superintendent's Recommended FY 2027 Capital Budget and the FY 2027–2032 Capital Improvements Program* totals \$2.704 billion, an increase of \$948.9 million more than the approved CIP. I fully acknowledge that the amount of funding requested in this CIP is significant in comparison with previous requests. Sadly, even at this rate, we are not remotely near meeting the level necessary to sustain our existing portfolio of facilities. We need to make a concerted effort to work with our funding partners to establish revenues that better align with demonstrated need.

Consequently, it is my responsibility as superintendent to present a complete picture of the state of the school system's capital infrastructure. Unfortunately, our present outlook is not a pretty one. In preparation for the first full, biennial CIP of my tenure, we have reviewed all components of the Board of Education's facility and property portfolio; begun the process of assessing the Facility Condition Index of each building; and mapped our operational infrastructure vulnerabilities across the district.

The more complete amount of funding that would be needed to bring the system to an equilibrium point ("on pace") in facility repairs would be nearly double the requested amount. Our analysis shows that to reach a point of doing the number of replacement and upgrade projects that a system of this size should do each year would require a six-year request of more than \$5 billion, approximately \$833 million per year. I put this fact forward not to be hyperbolic, but to illustrate the true extent of the infrastructure backlog within the school system, both in full transparency and with the awareness that this amount of funding truly is unreachable at this moment. While the \$2.704 billion request I put forward for your consideration is ambitious, it still represents only a fraction of the true cost of addressing the needs of our capital inventory.

I fully recognize that we will need to build over time to reach our desired state of sustainable equilibrium. This also will require significant partnership with our funding partners and the community to make this a reality.

We are very appreciative of the action the Montgomery County Council took on October 7, 2025, to increase the Spending Affordability Guidelines (SAG) for the FY 2027 Capital Budget and the FY 2027-2032 CIP for General Obligation (GO) bonds used to fund a significant portion of the county's CIP. The adopted SAG of \$1.8 billion for the six-year period is an increase of \$20 million per year and \$120 million over the six-year CIP period from the adopted level for the two previous CIP cycles. Even so, this new Spending Affordability level is at the same level that was approved in the FY 2009–2014 CIP cycle, and is less than the highest approved SAG level of \$2 billion in the FY 2017–2024 CIP cycle. Acknowledging that fiscal policies must balance numerous economic factors and considerations, we also must acknowledge that inflationary pressures alone exceed the funding levels approved within the recent trend toward reducing SAG. We have been going backwards in supporting our facility infrastructure and it shows. We need to reverse course.

This CIP submission comes in a time of transition for MCPS. Our preliminary September 30, 2025, enrollment signals a significant shift in enrollment patterns. The preliminary September 30 Prekindergarten–Grade 12 student enrollment is 156,541 for the 2025–2026 school year, a decrease of 2,641 students from the 2024–2025 school year. While our previous projections for the six-year period anticipated more moderate to level growth in enrollment, we now are projecting continued gradual decline in enrollment to an overall level of 149,706 students by the 2031–2032 school year.

The COVID-19 pandemic marked a turning point in our enrollment patterns as it did in so many ways for our region and our school system. Preliminary enrollment for this school year is 8,726 less than the recent high enrollment point in 2019. In the years leading up to 2020, MCPS was routinely adding net increases of 1,000 to 2,000 students annually. Our capital priorities reflected this growth pattern, as the system and our county leaders focused on building classrooms and seats for the incoming cohorts of students and families. While the MCPS CIP funding level in these years struggled to keep pace with enrollment, it did not even begin to approach the level needed to also address the systems and infrastructure underpinning our facilities and operations.

Thus, we find ourselves today facing an extensive and mounting backlog of Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC), roof, and renovation projects that require our attention, as well as the transportation, warehouse, and office structures that keep our school system operating. We know we must be strategic in our use of our facilities and properties; excellent stewards of the Board of Education's assets; and efficient in our use of resources.

These changes in circumstances require a change in strategy.

My Recommended FY2027–2032 CIP reflects these priorities:

1. **Complete projects in process:** Funds are requested to complete the major projects of Crown, Charles W. Woodward, and Northwood high schools, Burtonsville Elementary School (ES), and JoAnn Leleck ES at Broad Acres within the six-year period. We need to deliver these projects on-time and under-budget;
2. **Invest in systemic upgrades:** I recommend funding to increase the number of major system replacement projects to complete each year in areas such as HVAC, Roof Replacements, Emergency Replacement of Major Building Components, and Restroom Renovations. Though this will not remotely come close to matching the need, we need to incrementally increase the project capacity each year until we reach the necessary equilibrium to sustain our existing portfolio of facilities;
3. **Account for the true cost of time:** Each project includes an estimated inflation measure across the six-year period to reflect funds that will be needed to keep pace with cost increases, separate from scope increases. Ignoring this in the past has led to project overruns and supplemental requests for additional funds unnecessarily;
4. **Plan to sustain system operations:** Key operational facilities require project planning and funds to ensure continuity of service, including the Carver Educational Services Center, materials management warehouse, transportation service centers, and holding schools

to allow for seamless school construction and continuity of learning to occur. A critical chokepoint in this plan depends on our ability to centrally function to capitalize on economies of scope and scale;

5. **Address aging facilities:** Adhere to a process of renovating, renewing, and replacing schools according to weighted assessment criteria, with a strategic approach to project scopes, primarily based on facility useful life. Projects to be initiated in the CIP are: Burning Tree, Cold Spring, Highland View, Piney Branch, and Sligo Creek elementary schools; Eastern and Sligo middle schools; and Damascus High School.

Our inventory assessment took a hard look at facilities and system elements across the district and compared them to industry standards for lifecycle and replacement. Attached to this letter is a table that illustrates the hard truth: a \$5.15 billion total needed investment that reflects a planning approach that is much closer to meeting necessary industry standards. Though far from what is needed, the \$2.704 billion recommended request begins the process of bending the curve in the right direction. HVAC projects provide a useful illustration:

- The normal useful life of an HVAC system is 20 years.
- Across 238 facilities we should be replacing approximately 12 systems per year.
- Averaging costs for elementary and secondary system sizes yields an approximate annual HVAC replacement budget of \$127 million.
- In FY 2026, the system received \$39.5 million and completed 4 HVAC replacements.
- My FY 2027 recommendation is for \$55 million and 7 projects, increasing to \$88.3 million and 9 projects in FY 3032.

This model reflects a recommendation that still is not where we need to be to achieve the necessary equilibrium to meet our facilities portfolio's needs, but it does represent progress . . . if we stick to it.

We have taken a similar analytical approach to our facilities. Combining the Facility Condition Index review with additional factors such as student need and facility utilization give us a quantitative understanding of the current relative condition of each facility. The goal is to pursue a funding plan and strategic roadmap that incorporates the following lifecycle benchmarks; until we get "caught up", each project will be assessed on a project by project basis.

- **Renovation, every 25 years** – Upgrading at least five major systems (HVAC, roof, plumbing, electrical, flooring, life safety, windows, doors/hardware, etc.). Proactively addresses aging infrastructure, enhances comfort and functionality, and protects the asset's value.
- **Renewal, every 50 years** – A comprehensive interior reconstruction, down to the structural frame, retaining the slab and shell of the building when in good condition. The result is a facility that feels "like new", but can be more cost-effective than a replacement.

- **Replacement, every 50 years (if a Renewal will not work)** – Complete demolition and reconstruction when the slab or structure is in poor condition, or when the site cannot meet current or future needs by keeping the existing building in place.

Here again it is critical to note that the fundamental math of our buildings' ages and conditions far exceeds the funding I am requesting:

- Given the current age of our elementary school buildings, more than 60% of our elementary schools are eligible for a renovation, while 5% are eligible for a renewal or replacement. **To reach our long-term goals, we will need to renovate, renew, or replace 6–7 elementary schools per year for the next 20 years.**
- Given the current age of our secondary school buildings, almost 60% of our secondary schools are eligible for a renovation, while almost 10% are eligible for a renewal or replacement. **To reach our long-term goals, we will need to renovate, renew, or replace almost 3 secondary schools per year for the next 20 years.**
- My recommendation initiates 5 elementary school projects and 3 secondary school projects across the six-year FY 2027–2032 CIP period.

Adhering to a capital investment plan that prioritizes infrastructure and facility renewal requires discipline in decision-making to remain sustainable and fiscally responsible. It requires relying on data to determine what level of construction and project sequence is necessary, and it requires up-to-date project scope adjustments as conditions change over time. It requires a collective acknowledgement that our facility conditions together with our fiscal environment demand a “must do” approach to prioritizing capital investments rather than a “nice to have” request.

Strategic stewardship of resources will also require us to let go of and adjust our expectations in some cases. The “Old Blair” high school facility which for many years has housed two schools, Silver Spring International Middle School (SSIMS) and Sligo Creek Elementary School (SCES), increasingly is compromised as a building and as a site. Our best attempts to upgrade and address the building for many years have been thwarted by unforeseen building conditions, intractable structural issues, and, of course, the Purple Line construction. I cannot in good conscience recommend the level of investment in the building that would be required to facilitate continued use in its current form, for two permanent schools. Instead, I recommend the following:

- Build a new Sligo Creek Elementary School on a new site in the Silver Spring area. Depending on the selection of the new site, a boundary study may not be necessary.
- Accommodate Silver Spring International Middle School students through new construction at Eastern Middle School and Sligo Middle School, as well as other adjacent schools through a localized boundary study
- Initiate the process to close Silver Spring International Middle School as an MCPS school.
- Convert the existing SCES/SSIMS facility into a holding school for downcounty elementary and secondary projects.

This recommendation will be emotional for some in our community, and I appreciate and value the connections and bonds that our staff, students, and families have with their schools. This recommendation, however, is a prudent use of available properties to solve an increasingly frustrating and expensive experience for both schools, and to create flexibility for other secondary projects in the future.

I am pleased to put forward elements to make progress on several confounding but essential pieces of operational infrastructure.

- **Materials Management:** We are finalizing a lease agreement for a large warehouse property. This lease will allow us to vacate the primary warehouse on Stonestreet in Rockville, which has been a major priority for the City of Rockville and our Lincoln Park neighbors. The new warehouse also will allow us to consolidate operations from a variety of smaller locations in the county, creating operational efficiencies and freeing up additional spaces for regional needs.
- **Transportation:** We have identified several Board-owned properties to house regional transportation support services. Combined with the county's work on a new transportation maintenance facility on Gude Drive, these projects will position MCPS to significantly reduce its footprint on the current Shady Grove site and work toward a permanent solution.
- **Carver Educational Services Center:** This facility is an important piece of MCPS history; however, it has deteriorated severely. We plan to preserve the history and to rebuild a stronger, up to date facility that can accommodate the public facing and central service leadership functions of the school system.
- **Holding Schools:** With the re-opening of Charles W. Woodward High School, MCPS loses its only secondary holding school. This CIP includes funds to both expand our available holding schools, which will facilitate future projects, and to perform required maintenance and replacements in the existing holding schools to improve their working condition and the educational experience during use.

We will re-use available properties also to create the right program space where and when we need it. The Blair G. Ewing Center at Avery Road, formerly known as Mark Twain, has been in the CIP for more than a decade without forward progress, and the facility is in serious disrepair. The alternative education program currently is located at both Avery Road and at the North Lake Center. My recommendation begins the process of upgrading existing properties such as the Fairland Center and the Spring Mill Center to align with the program's needs and to provide the educational opportunities our students and staff deserve. As part of future planning, we will determine the combination of sites best suited to the program and students' needs, as well as review options for the best use of the Avery Road location.

Through our current boundary studies for reopening Charles W. Woodward High School and opening the new Crown High School, and through our work to envision regional programming structures that increase access and opportunity for all students across the district, we are laying a new foundation for the structure of MCPS. This CIP builds from that basis and begins the shift to supporting regional operations. We are planning for strategic facilities for early childhood centers, transportation services, cross-functional team office spaces, and other support services to serve each region. This approach will locate services closer to the schools, and reduce driving

times and distances. It also will continue the work begun with the cross-functional teams to more closely connect central services and central service staff to the schools they support.

As enrollment and housing patterns continue to shift, non-capital solutions also must be a part of right-sizing and upgrading the MCPS facility inventory. When the Board of Education takes up the recommendations for the Crown and Charles W. Woodward high schools boundary studies early next year, I plan to bring forward a proposal to follow this secondary level boundary work with a comprehensive boundary study for elementary schools. This next step will be important to improve facility utilization across schools, reduce split articulation and “island” assignments, and ensure alignment of elementary school patterns with new regional and secondary boundaries.

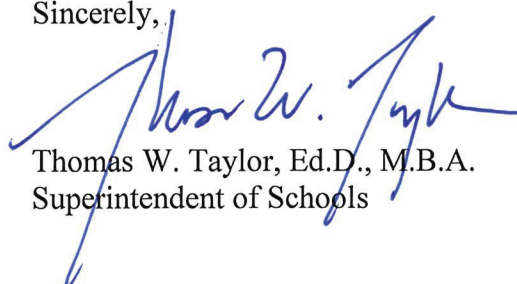
The work outlined here will take several CIP cycles to establish and move forward. We can—and we must—begin to change this trajectory by investing in the infrastructure and systems recommended in my FY 2027–2032 Capital Improvements Program. This plan follows decades of chasing seating capacity and adding space without a unified long-term strategy—decades in which short-term fixes, deferred maintenance, and patchwork solutions became the norm. The FY 2027–2032 CIP is designed to change that trajectory, setting MCPS on a path toward sustainable facilities planning, stronger equity of access, and better spaces for students and staff.

The *Superintendent's Recommended Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget and the FY 2027-2032 Capital Improvements Program* will be presented to the Board of Education on October 14, 2025. Following that presentation, the Board is scheduled to hold two public hearings on October 23 and 28, 2025. Following the public hearings, the Board will hold a work session on November 4, 2025. If necessary, there will be a third public hearing on November 6, with a third Board work session on November 11. The Board is scheduled to act on the *Superintendent's Recommended FY 2027 Capital Budget and the FY 2027-2032 Capital Improvements Program* on November 20, 2025.

The county executive will publish his CIP recommendations for all County agencies by mid-January 2026. The Montgomery County Council will hold hearings in early February 2026, conduct work sessions in March and April 2026, and adopt the FY 2027 Capital Budget and the FY 2027–2032 CIP in late May 2026.

Throughout this process, we will work together and with our community to align our investments with our values, and to ensure every student and staff member has the safe, appropriate spaces they must have to work and learn.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thomas W. Taylor".

Thomas W. Taylor, Ed.D., M.B.A.
Superintendent of Schools

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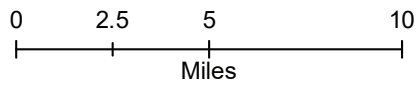
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Cluster Service Areas 2025-2026



Introduction

In November 1996, the voters of Montgomery County approved by referendum an amendment to the County Charter that changed the County Council's review and approval cycle of the six-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) from an annual to biennial cycle. The referendum specified that in odd-numbered fiscal years (on-years), the County Council would conduct a full review of the six-year CIP and in even-numbered fiscal years (off-years), the County Council only would consider amendments to the adopted CIP. The FY 2027–2032 CIP falls in an odd-numbered fiscal year and will receive a full review by the County Council. The *FY 2027 Capital Budget and the FY 2027–2032 CIP* provides the recommended appropriation authority for funds needed to implement CIP projects during FY 2027, and the expenditure schedule for the FY 2027–2032 CIP.

This document contains the following sections:

Chapter 1, *The Superintendent's Recommended FY 2027 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY 2027–2032 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)*, is a review of the major factors that have influenced the development of recommended projects in the FY 2027 Capital Budget and the FY 2027–2032 CIP. This chapter includes a table summarizing the recommended FY 2027–2032 CIP.

Chapter 2, *The Planning Environment*, describes the demographic, economic, and enrollment trends in Montgomery County that form the context for reviewing facility plans and addressing system needs.

Chapter 3, *Facility Planning Objectives*, outlines six facility planning objectives that guide the school system as it moves to accommodate enrollment growth and program changes. The objectives are discussed and placed in the context of the recommended CIP.

Chapter 4, *Recommended Actions and Planning Issues*, is arranged by high school cluster and high school consortium. This chapter provides tables with enrollment projections, school demographic profiles, facility room use, capacity data, and other facility information. Planning issues are identified and recommended actions are discussed.

Chapter 5, *Countywide Projects*, provides a brief summary description of the CIP projects that are programmed to meet the needs of schools across the county. These projects (countywide projects) involve multi-year plans with different schools scheduled each year.

Several appendices, at the end of the document, contain information on a variety of topics including enrollment, state-rated capacities, Board of Education policies, project schedules, available school sites, closed schools and their current uses, relocatable classroom placements, and color maps for each cluster. Also included are maps for identifying Board of Education, council manic, and legislative election districts. It is important to note that this is a planning document for the school system as a whole and while cluster organization is used for presentation of information, planning decisions often cross cluster boundaries to meet program and facility needs for students.