
5. Glossary

ACD (policy): (*Policy ACD: Quality Integrated Education*) An MCPS policy that establishes guidelines for school integration, first adopted in 1983. The policy seeks to ensure equitable educational outcomes in an increasingly diverse school system, and mandates the BOE to evaluate diversity in MCPS schools on an annual basis, and determine programmatic and resourcing needs accordingly. The policy can be accessed online at: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/acd.pdf>.

Assignment stability: Stability of school assignments over time is one of four factors outlined by Policy FAA to be considered in educational facility planning. MCPS attempts to minimize the number of times the same student(s) are impacted by reassignments leading to changing schools within a particular level of school. The policy states: “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.”

Base school (also called home school): The school a student is assigned to, based on their residential address and school attendance boundaries.

Boundary study: The BOE’s process for studying specific boundaries and considering a formal change. Boundary studies involve geographically-specific research of boundary options, within a certain scope set by the superintendent of schools. This research includes an analysis of factors such as travel time and traffic patterns, current and projected enrollment, and the articulation patterns of affected schools. Through a boundary study, MCPS staff develop boundary options to be considered by the BOE.

Capacity: The number of students who can be accommodated in the building, based on an allocation of space for different grades and types of programs.

Capital Improvements Master Plan (CIP): A six-year master plan for capital improvements in Montgomery County Public Schools. This plan is the mechanism through which the Board of Education requests funding from the County Council and the State of Maryland for county-wide and major planning projects. The most recent CIP plan covers fiscal years 2021-2026 and can be accessed online at: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/cipmaster.aspx>

Choice programs: Through school choice programs, students in MCPS may apply districtwide to be a part of specialized programs at schools other than their base school. Choice programs are offered at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. They include competitive academic magnet programs, specialized academic programs (arts, science, communications, etc.), language immersion programs, the International Baccalaureate (IB), and others. Depending on the program, students may be admitted through a lottery process, an application process, and/or based on past academic achievement.

Cluster: The geographic grouping of schools within a defined attendance area that includes a high school and the elementary and middle schools which send students to that high school.

Consortium (*plural: consortia*): Unlike a cluster, a consortium contains multiple high schools. Students residing within the geographic boundaries of the consortia enroll in a lottery to attend a school other than their base school. Assignment in the consortia lottery is based on student choice, sibling link, school capacity, and socio-economic factors. Students living within the geographic boundaries of the consortia are guaranteed a seat at their assigned home school and may enroll in the lottery to attend a school other than their home school. Students living outside of the geographic boundaries of the consortia may also enroll in a lottery to attend a school within the consortia, but they are not

guaranteed a spot at any consortia school.

COSA (Change of School Assignment): A student may apply for a school transfer through COSA due to unique hardship, a family move (valid for the remainder of the current school year), or siblings (i.e. to attend the same school as an older sibling enrolled at a school other than their home school). Students who transfer schools through COSA are not provided with transportation by MCPS. Read more about COSA at <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/transfers/>.

Dissimilarity: A way to measure, statistically, how different one factor (i.e. a school) is from a group of its peers within a particular geographic area. In this report, dissimilarity provides a way to rate how unlike one school is from the average of that school and its five nearest neighbors. Looking at the five nearest schools to each school can be instructive to show whether a given school is an outlier relative to its neighbors, or better understand trends in a given area. Dissimilarity is expressed as a value between 0 and 1 – where 1 is the most dissimilar.

Diversity: The range of differences between individuals, including aspects of identity, culture, ability, gender and sexuality, and more. While diversity is complex and carries many meanings, this analysis focuses on the three primary markers of diversity that MCPS draws upon in facilities planning: race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, and English language proficiency.

Downcounty Consortium (DCC): The Downcounty Consortium (DCC) is comprised of Montgomery Blair, Albert Einstein, John F. Kennedy, Northwood, and Wheaton high schools. Students entering high school participate in a choice process to rank, in order of preference, their choice of high school based on academy program. School assignments are made using a computerized lottery process that considers base school, sibling link, available space, and

socioeconomic status.

EEA (Policy): The policy that established guidelines related to district-provided transportation in MCPS, including establishing walk zone standards, and emphasizes the safety of students in district-provided transportation. (Policy available online at: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/eea.pdf>)

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) enrollment: The English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) enrollment is the percentage of students eligible for ESOL services, divided by the official total student enrollment.

Enrollment: The number of students enrolled in school as of the start of the school year. Total enrollment refers to total students countywide.

Ever-FARMS: The Ever-FARMS rate is a measure of students who are or ever have been enrolled in the FARMS (Free and Reduced-price Meals System) during their time in MCPS, from pre-Kindergarten on. A wide body of research has shown that FARMS is a good proxy measure for the concentration of low-income students within a school (see National Center for Education Statistics). Ever-FARMS provides a more complete picture of socio-economic levels than whether a student is currently FARMS eligible as it accounts for minor changes in need over time, enrollment trends across grade levels, and concerns related to social stigma and reporting. *See "FARMS" for more information about the FARMS program.*

Equity: The fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement of all people or students, which recognizes and works to eliminate the barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. "The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in the provision of effective

opportunities to all groups.” (source: University of Houston).¹

Equity Initiatives Unit: Housed within MCPS, the purpose of this unit “is to support, coach, consult, and collaborate with schools and offices to design and implement efforts to address equity and cultural competency.” They work with MCPS employees to address the racial achievement gap in the school system. (Link: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/clusteradmin/equity/howweare.aspx>)

FAA (Policy): Policy FAA is the Educational Facilities Planning policy of the Montgomery County Board of Education adopted in 1986. The policy seeks to establish standards and procedures for long range educational facilities planning, and to this day it governs the Board’s planning and decision-making related to school facilities, including school construction, boundary changes, and assignment patterns. FAA establishes the four factors to be considered when developing facility and assignment recommendations, including school boundaries: demographic characteristics of the student population, geography, stability of school assignments over time, and facility utilization. (Note: No, FAA is not an acronym! All Board of Education policies are titled with a series of letters. Policy FAA falls under “Section F” of MCPS policies, “Facilities Development”; sub-section FA, “Facility Development Goals”). Policy FAA can be accessed online at: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/faa.pdf>.

FAA-RA (Regulation): Policy FAA-RA established the processes to implement Policy FAA. This includes the development of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFP), and non-capital strategies including school site selection, boundaries,

geographic student choice assignment plans, and school closures/consolidations. This policy offers guidelines for developing and considering both capital and non-capital strategies, as well as for the implementation of the four key considerations outlined in Policy FAA. Policy FAA-RA can be accessed online at: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/faara.pdf>.

Facility Utilization: The total number of students divided by program capacity. Program capacity is calculated based on available seats, adjusted for optimal utilization. MCPS aims for schools to be utilized between 80-100% of school capacity.

FARMS: The Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) is a federal program to lower or waive the cost of cafeteria lunches in public schools. Students may qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on household size and income. They may also qualify if they are receiving Food Supplement Program or Temporary Cash Assistance benefits. Families must apply every year to determine if they are eligible for FARMS. A wide body of research has shown that FARMS is a good proxy measure for the concentration of low-income students within a school (see National Center for Education Statistics). The FARMS rate is the percentage of students in the county or a given school that are enrolled in FARMS, divided by total students.

Feeder school: A school that sends its students to another school for the next grade level (e.g., a middle school that feeds a high school by sending its eighth graders to the high school for ninth grade). Most schools “feed” 100 percent of their students to the same school. Those in which the population goes on to more than one school are shown in the profiles of each school.

Island Assignment: A geographically non-contiguous school attendance area (broken up into two or more parts). MCPS has drawn non-contiguous school service areas for a variety of

¹ “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Terms.” n.d. University of Houston Center for Diversity and Inclusion. https://www.uh.edu/cdi/diversity_education/resources/pdf/terms.pdf.

reasons over the course of its history.

KFI (Key Facility Indicator): KFI's are the components of school facilities that help to provide MCPS a summary of the facility's overall condition. KFI's allow MCPS to rate and benchmark the quality of schools' major infrastructural elements against industry standards. KFI's are one measure that informs the school system's capital planning process.

Middle School Magnet Consortium (MSMC): The Middle School Magnet Consortium (MSMC) is comprised of Argyle, A. Mario Loiederman, and Parkland middle schools. MSMC students entering middle school participate in a choice process to rank, in order of preference, their choice of middle school based on magnet program. Rising Grade 6 and 7 students from outside the consortium also may enter the lottery process. School assignments are made by using a computerized lottery process that considers sibling link, available space, and socioeconomic status.

Northeast Consortium (NEC): The Northeast Consortium (NEC) is comprised of James Hubert Blake, Paint Branch, and Springbrook high schools. NEC students entering high school participate in a choice process to rank, in order of preference, their choice of high school based on signature program. School assignments are made by using a computerized lottery process that considers base school, sibling link, available space, and socioeconomic status.

Paired schools: In some cases, MCPS has created paired schools to address shifting enrollment needs and better integrate communities at the elementary level. In paired schools, students attend both a primary (kindergarten-2nd grade) and secondary (3rd-5th grade) elementary school, allowing for adjustments to enrollment across more schools.

Proximity: This has to do with how close or far

students live from school. Proximity is one of the key lenses in this report, and it corresponds to the consideration under Policy FAA of geography. Under this consideration, the BOE policy encourages a continued commitment to community schools, with an emphasis on students attending schools close to their place of residence.

Relocatable classrooms (commonly called portables): Mobile classrooms used as a short-term strategy by MCPS to accommodate overcrowding in schools, while necessary capital improvements are taking place.

Special Education (SPED) enrollment: The Special Education (SPED) enrollment is the percentage of students eligible for special education services, divided by the official total student enrollment.

Student/Instructional Staff Ratio: The Student/Instructional Staff Ratio is calculated by dividing the weighted enrollment, by the number of instructional staff. Weighted enrollment includes full-day kindergarten enrollment plus 1/2 times pre-K enrollment plus enrollment in Grades 1-12. Instructional staff is determined as all school-based instructional Full-time Equivalent positions (includes staff under the Teachers, Other Professional, and Instructional Support categories).

Split articulations: This refers to elementary or middle schools where not all students attend the same secondary school. 26 elementary and six middle schools in MCPS have split articulations.

Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP): The SSP is a policy put in place to ensure that public facilities and infrastructure in Montgomery County systems are keeping pace with county growth and development. The SSP assesses whether there is adequate public facilities present to support new residential subdivisions, including schools. The SSP calls for annual tests of school capacity and utilization. As a result of the annual

school test, parts of the county may be placed on a development moratorium (or, a temporary halt on residential development) to prevent further school overcrowding. The SSP is updated every four years, with the next review and update due in 2020.

Title I: A federal funding program intended to address achievement gaps in schools with high economic needs. This funding goes toward supplemental academic programs and other services and support. Title I schools in MCPS receive technical assistance from an instructional specialist, additional teaching professionals/ paraeducators, the Extended Learning Opportunities Summer Adventures in Learning program (ELO-SAIL), and family involvement funds. Title I falls under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015.