

# Report Brief

Over the last decade, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) has seen an increase in enrollment. The combination of continued growth and discussions regarding equity within the school district has prompted an assessment of current school boundaries to ensure that MCPS can continue to provide high-quality facilities that support the educational programming needed to reinforce MCPS's core values of Learning, Relationships, Respect, Excellence, and Equity.

MCPS has already taken several steps to adapt its educational facility planning and capital budget processes to the county's changing demographics and land use environment. These proactive measures have resulted in some of the highest educational attainment rates in the United States. However, differences in facility utilization, diversity, and proximity across the county means that students have varying experiences of school quality across the district. Over the course of the last decade, MCPS has seen an increase in enrollment due to shifting demographic trends. This demographic growth has presented challenges to maintaining an equitable school system. Additionally, as highlighted by the most recent enrollment projections, Montgomery County expects a steady increase in public school enrollment by 2027, with much of the growth projected to take place between 2019 and 2024. Due to efforts to address increasing enrollment, as well as promote equity and diversity within the school system, the Board of Education (BOE) adopted a resolution in January 2019 and directed the Superintendent to review the existing school boundaries.

This Interim Report has been shaped through the data analysis, benchmarking, and community engagement conducted since Fall 2019. **Section I: Introduction, Context, and Analysis of Existing Conditions** of the report opens with introductory context about MCPS as a school system, underlying conditions in Montgomery County, and the current conditions out of which this report arises. From there, the report covers the range of data analysis conducted thus far, structured around the four factors laid out in Policy FAA, which guide long-range facilities planning in MCPS: assignment stability, utilization, diversity, and proximity. Along with data analysis, the report outlines the approach to and key findings from benchmarking as a part of this process. **Section II: Community Engagement** details the community engagement process and shares insights from the first stage of engagement activities. This section will be expanded upon in the final report to reflect engagement activities from Phase 2.

A third section, **Section III: Deeper Analysis—How do the Lenses Intersect?** will be added to the final report at the conclusion of the Districtwide Boundary Analysis. This will focus on the intersections between the four lenses at the core of this analysis.

This study will become a foundational document and critical data resource for future work as MCPS continues its facility planning and capital budget processes going forward.

# Report Overview

The Districtwide Boundary Analysis seeks to understand the degree to which current school boundaries in Montgomery County further MCPS's objectives to facilitate equitable and optimal outcomes in facility use, student diversity within schools, student proximity to schools, and stability of student assignments. The study builds upon MCPS's engagement efforts from Spring 2019 and continues to involve community members to further understand the spectrum of challenges towards creating more meaningfully integrated, diverse, accessible, and culturally responsive schools within the district.

## Goals of the Districtwide Boundary Analysis

This boundary analysis seeks to understand the degree to which the current school boundaries:

- facilitate equitable use of facilities
- support optimal facility utilization in terms of program capacity and enrollment in schools
- optimize student diversity
- further the four factors in Policy FAA for consideration in educational facility planning: student demographics, geography, stability of assignments over time, and facility utilization.

This study will provide an analytical assessment and a summary of the community engagement process. It will not make recommendations on potential boundary revisions.

## Analytical Lenses

The study's focus areas serve as lenses through which a comprehensive understanding of existing school boundaries will be defined. They include:



In addition to these four analytical lenses, this study will consider the interrelatedness of the above factors in the Final Report.

## Section Overview

The two major components of the study are guided by the key principles identified below:

### 1. Data Analysis:

- Contextualize analyses to issues raised through engagement activities
- Eliminate data and research bias by comparing findings to other relevant school districts
- Understand trade-offs through comprehensive modeling

### 2. Community Engagement:

- Utilize innovative communication and outreach strategies to maximize participation from all corners of the county
- Foster an inclusive environment at all engagement activities to ensure that people from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds feel welcomed
- Encourage participation through carefully crafted workshop-style activities
- Share analytical findings through various mediums that demystify data analyses and ensure tangible outcomes from engagement activities
- Create a feedback loop through reporting and online input

## Districtwide Boundary Analysis Process

This document represents the Interim Report for the MCPS Districtwide Boundary Analysis, which concludes Phase 1.

### Fall and Winter 2019

**Phase 1**  
Data Analysis,  
Community Awareness,  
Ideas Gathering

**Data Analysis &  
Benchmarking  
Community Engagement**

### Winter and Spring 2020

**Phase 2**  
Testing Ideas and  
Metrics

**Data Analysis  
Community Engagement**

### May - June 2020

**Phase 3**  
Final Report and  
Presentation

**Phase 1** began in Fall 2019. Its focus has been to analyze the existing conditions, increase community awareness, and further understand stakeholders' perspectives on MCPS school utilization, diversity, proximity, and assignment stability. Activities have included:

- Establishing existing conditions analysis to fully understand school boundaries through the focus area lenses
- Benchmarking MCPS against other school districts to contextualize data and research findings
- Engaging community members and capturing feedback through public workshops, focus groups, interviews, and online comments
- Reporting back on data analysis and community engagement through the Interim Report

The public workshops and targeted outreach informed and shaped the data analysis process (see **Section II, Community Engagement** starting on **page 354** for more detail).

**Phase 2** begins in March 2020 and will conclude by the end of May 2020. Activities will include:

- Data analysis that addresses the interrelatedness of the focus area lenses and considers the opportunities and trade-offs when considering the optimization of each lens.
- Continued engagement through public workshops, focus groups, interviews, and online comments, particularly through the use of an interactive tool that allows users to understand the interrelatedness of the focus area lenses and to test ideas.

**Phase 3** concludes the Districtwide Boundary Analysis at the end of June 2020 and will provide a final Report to the Board of Education that considers the findings of Phase 1 and Phase 2.

## Interim Report Structure

This Interim Report has been shaped through the data analysis, benchmarking, and community engagement conducted since Fall 2019. The structure of the interim report is as follows:

**Section I: Introduction, Context, and Analysis of Existing Conditions:** This first section covers a range of analysis about the existing conditions of school boundaries in MCPS, adapting the four key considerations from Policy FAA as our four major lenses of inquiry (utilization, diversity, proximity, and assignment stability). It also covers benchmarking, comparing MCPS to six other school districts around the country.

**Section II: Community Engagement:** The second section explains our approach to community engagement, its impact on our data analysis, and the insights we have drawn from the engagement process through regional meetings, small group meetings, interviews, and virtual engagement. This section will be expanded in the final report to reflect phase 2 community engagement insights.

**Section III: Deeper Analysis—How do the Lenses Intersect?:** The final report, Section III will bring all the lenses into conversation with one another, in a deeper analysis of the interrelatedness of utilization, diversity, proximity, and assignment stability. This section will be added as part of the final report to the BOE.

An extensive amount of data is analyzed in this report –both from data sets and written and verbal feedback from community and stakeholder engagement. While this report offers general context related to the history of MCPS and the growth of Montgomery County, this is only a small piece of the scope of this work. The consultant team has made efforts to reach stakeholders and community members who reflect the diversity of Montgomery County, and this work will continue in Phase 2 of the analysis. See the **Community Engagement Overview on page 352** for more on the engagement strategies in Phase 1 of this analysis.

## For Further Exploration

The Interim Report presents an initial analysis of both data and community engagement. However, due to the limitations of the project scope, there are areas that are not covered at length in this report but may be of interest to many readers. The table below provides a breakdown of topics that fall beyond the scope of this analysis, but may provide helpful context, along with a selection of resources for further exploration. See the **Further Reading on page 406** for a more extensive list of resources to deepen your exploration of these and other areas of interest.

Topics	Resources
Student performance and achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maryland State Report Card (link: <a href="https://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/">https://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/</a>)</li> <li>MCPS Annual Report (<a href="https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/annualreport/">https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/annualreport/</a>)</li> <li>MCPS Equity Accountability Model (<a href="https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/data/LAR-charts/Equity-Accountability-Model-Achievement.html">https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/data/LAR-charts/Equity-Accountability-Model-Achievement.html</a>)</li> </ul>
School choice, magnet, and consortia programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Montgomery County Public Schools: Study of Choice and Special Academic Programs, 2016. (Link: <a href="https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/info/choice/ChoiceStudyReport-Version2-20160307.pdf">https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/info/choice/ChoiceStudyReport-Version2-20160307.pdf</a>)</li> </ul>
Education policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For information about federal education policies, see U.S. Department of Education (link: <a href="https://www.ed.gov/">https://www.ed.gov/</a>)</li> <li>For information about state-level education policies, see Maryland Department of Education (link: <a href="http://www.marylandpublicschools.org">http://www.marylandpublicschools.org</a>)</li> </ul>
Educational facilities planning (including capital budgets, planned renovations and additions, and more)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board of Education Requested FY 2021 Capital Budget and FY 2021-2026 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)</li> <li>Present and past budgets and CIP plans archived at: <a href="https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/cipmaster.aspx">https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/cipmaster.aspx</a></li> <li>Educational Key Facilities Indicator (KFI): <a href="https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/kfi/">https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/kfi/</a></li> </ul>
Montgomery County Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Montgomery County Planning –inventory of master plans</li> <li>Montgomery County Trends (January 2019)</li> <li>Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS)</li> </ul>
Boundary Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current and past MCPS boundary studies: <a href="https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/boundary.aspx">https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/boundary.aspx</a></li> </ul>