

Department of Facilities Management
Division of Capital Planning
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

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Below are frequently asked questions regarding the Clarksburg, Northwest, and Seneca Valley High Schools Boundary Study process. This process also includes an evaluation of the student enrollment patterns and utilization rates at the middle schools in all three clusters. We will continue to update this document as new questions are received. Inappropriate questions that are disrespectful to the school communities are not included in this document.

Question:

When will the new boundaries take effect?

The new boundaries will take effect for the 2020–2021 school year.

Question:

Will senior students be impacted by the change of school assignment?

It is common practice to grandfather students going into the last year of their school. As this boundary study includes both middle and high schools, middle school students who will enter Grade 8 and high school students who will enter Grade 12 in the 2020–2021 school year would be grandfathered. In addition, the superintendent of schools supports that high school students who will enter Grade 11 in the 2020–2021 school year also should be grandfathered to remain at their current school. Therefore, the boundary options will reflect the grandfathering of Grade 8 students at the middle school level and Grade 11 and Grade 12 students at the high school level. The Board of Education, however, has the final approval on the reassignments as well as the grandfathering of students.

Question:

What is the reason to include all Clarksburg area middle schools in this study? This was an amendment to the original plan.

The Board of Education included all middle schools that articulate to Clarksburg, Northwest, and Seneca Valley high schools to evaluate the student enrollment patterns and utilization rates at the middle schools. The Board of Education adopted resolution for the boundary study can be found at the following weblink:

http://gis.mcpsmd.org/boundarystudypdfs/SVHS_BOEAdoptedBoundaryStudy.pdf

Question:

Why was the decision made to not include middle schools that go to multiple high schools such as Lakelands Park Middle School when the neighborhoods may be closer to Northwest and Seneca Valley than those currently included?

The Board of Education included all middle schools that articulate to Clarksburg, Northwest, and Seneca Valley high schools, which includes Lakelands Park Middle School, to evaluate the student enrollment patterns and utilization rates at the middle schools. The Board of Education adopted resolution for the boundary study can be found at the following weblink:

http://gis.mcpsmd.org/boundarystudypdfs/SVHS_BOEAdoptedBoundaryStudy.pdf

Question:

Why isn't the Damascus Cluster included in this boundary study?

Seneca Valley High School was expanded to address the overutilization at Clarksburg and Northwest high schools. As a result of the expansion, a boundary study is required and the scope of the boundary study includes Clarksburg, Northwest, and Seneca Valley high schools, as well as the middle schools in those three clusters. The Board of Education adopted resolution for the boundary study can be found at the following weblink:

http://gis.mcpsmd.org/boundarystudypdfs/SVHS_BOEAdoptedBoundaryStudy.pdf

Question:

Why wasn't Quince Orchard High School included in the boundary study?

Seneca Valley High School was expanded to address the overutilization at Clarksburg and Northwest high schools. As a result of the expansion, a boundary study is required and the scope of the boundary study includes Clarksburg, Northwest, and Seneca Valley high schools, as well as all of the middle schools in those three clusters. The Board of Education adopted resolution for the boundary study can be found at the following weblink:

http://gis.mcpsmd.org/boundarystudypdfs/SVHS_BOEAdoptedBoundaryStudy.pdf

Question:

We live in Germantown and attend school in the Clarksburg cluster, will this change?

The boundary reassignment options are currently being developed and will be presented in early March. The superintendent of schools will release his recommendation in late October 2019, with Board of Education action scheduled for late November 2019.

Question:

Is there a possibility that Hallie Wells Middle School will split articulate to three different high schools?

The Board of Education included all middle schools that articulate to Clarksburg, Northwest, and Seneca Valley high schools to evaluate the student enrollment patterns and utilization rates

at the middle schools. At this time, the boundary options are being developed. Meetings will be held in early March to present the boundary options to the community. The meeting dates can be found at the following weblink:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/UpcountyHSBoundaryStudy.aspx>

Question:

Is split articulation at middle schools considered a best practice?

As a result of student enrollment, it is possible that a middle school is spit articulated between two high schools where one middle school does not provide enough capacity to address the student enrollment, but two middle schools would provide too much capacity within one high school service area.

Question:

Is there a plan to consolidate the entire Clarksburg Village community and reassign to Clarksburg High School instead of Damascus High School?

This boundary study will only affect students living within the Clarksburg, Northwest and Seneca Valley clusters. Students who live within the Damascus Cluster will not be impacted by this boundary study. The Board of Education adopted resolution for the boundary study can be found at the following weblink:

http://gis.mcpsmd.org/boundarystudypdfs/SVHS_BOEAdoptedBoundaryStudy.pdf

Question:

What is the time frame for the six-year planning period mentioned in Dr. Smith's letter?

Dr. Smith's letter referenced in this question is the Board of Education resolution that authorized the boundary study and includes the six-year planning period. The Capital Improvements Program is a six-year planning period. In the case of this boundary study, the six-year planning period is through the 2024-2025 school year.

Question:

When will the results of the study be reported back to the public?

The boundary study report is anticipated to be forwarded to the superintendent of schools and the Board of Education by August 2019. The report will be made available to the public through the following weblink:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/UpcountyHSBoundaryStudy.aspx>

Once the report is published, the superintendent of schools will release his recommendation on the boundary study in mid-October 2019, as part of the FY 2021–2026 Capital Improvements Program. In early November 2019, the Board of Education will begin the review of the recommended Capital Improvements Program including the boundary study recommendation

and will hold worksessions and public hearings. The Board of Education will take action on the Capital Improvements Program and the boundary study in late November 2019.

Question:

Will the Board of Education review applications for exceptions (sports teams, band, etc) where students have established in old school? Will transportation be part of the exception process?

The Board of Education will approve the boundary study in late November 2019, and reassignments will take effect for the 2020–2021 school year. Parents may apply for a Change of School Assignment (COSA) from their home school, based on an established set of criteria. Additional information regarding the COSA process can be found at the following weblink: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/transfers/>

Question:

Why does each high school have different programs?

In a recent study of MCPS career programs, the report found that MCPS needs to develop a “systematic, strategic, structured approach to distribute programs across schools. Programs of study are currently offered unevenly across the district...seemingly without clear intentionality.” In the past, program offerings throughout MCPS were often left to school principals’ discretion rather than responding to a clear system-wide strategy, and autonomy has been given to schools to select courses within those program of study offerings. As a result, MCPS is in the process of establishing specific criteria to determine which programs of study should be scaled up and which should be phased out, based on careful analysis of student demand, labor market projections, and resources, and will be developing a strategy to determine which programs should be offered in each MCPS high school. As MCPS develops new models for high school programming, there will be greater emphasis on equitable distribution of programs across MCPS and opportunities to apply to different programs within regions, so that programs are available to all students.

Question:

Can the various special programs at the three high schools be made consistent? Especially ones with same goals but different names?

All MCPS high schools have strong academic programs and career pathways that provide students with academic, technical, and professional skills to succeed in college and careers. Some programs, such as Advanced Placement (AP), internships, dual credit courses, and computer science pathways, for example, are offered in every MCPS school. Most schools also have specialized programs that are difficult to replicate in all 25 MCPS high schools, often because of cost, facilities, and uniquely trained staff, or because a school has developed a special program on its own. As a result, MCPS is developing regional options and “hubs” for students to attend other high schools for special programs including, but not limited to,

International Baccalaureate (IB), Middle College, construction trades, cybersecurity, health professions, and Project Lead the Way.

Question:

Will students who are enrolled in special programs be impacted by the change of school assignment?

The program offerings at the three high schools will be evaluated and the impact of any reassignment will be considered as part of the implementation of the boundary reassignment and included in the superintendent of schools' recommendation of the boundary study to be released in mid-October 2019.

Question:

Are there plans to increase offerings or to offer an AP capstone or signature program at Seneca Valley High School?

There is a wide array of academic program offerings at Seneca Valley High School. The programs that are/will be offered at Seneca Valley High School are listed in the public information presentation that can be found at the following weblink: http://gis.mcpsmd.org/boundarystudypdfs/SVHS_PresentationPIM1.pdf

Question:

Will the International Baccalaureate program at Seneca Valley High School, like the Career and Technology Education program, be accessible to students not assigned to Seneca Valley High School?

The International Baccalaureate program at Seneca Valley High School will be evaluated to determine if students from outside of the Seneca Valley High School service area can participate in the program.

Question:

What about the possibility of Seneca Valley High School becoming a whole magnet school like Poolesville or Richard Montgomery high schools?

There are no MCPS high schools that are whole magnet schools. Although Poolesville and Richard Montgomery high schools have large application programs, not all students that attend those two schools participate in the magnet programs. The Career and Technology Education program at Seneca Valley High School will incorporate students from Seneca Valley High School, as well as students from outside the school boundary.

Question:

What are the considerations regarding security at such a large populated high school such as Seneca Valley High School?

Montgomery County Public Schools is committed to providing a safe and welcoming learning environment for our students and staff. Security initiatives include closed-circuit television cameras, visitor management systems, and access control systems. Additional information regarding school security can be found at the following weblink:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/security/>

Question:

Some new high schools have seemed to have had additions built relatively quickly. Does the Seneca Valley High School modernization plans include anticipated/planned addition?

The revitalization/expansion project for Seneca Valley High School is being constructed with a capacity of almost 2,600 students. This will be the full build-out of this school, therefore, no future addition is planned for this high school.

Question:

Has MCPS considered an upcounty consortium? How will we find out more information about the programs offered at the schools?

An upcounty consortium is not being considered as part of this boundary study process. The programs that are offered at the three high schools are listed in the public information presentation that can be found at the following weblink:

http://gis.mcpsmd.org/boundarystudypdfs/SVHS_PresentationPIM1.pdf

Question:

How do the schools compare with regard to:

- SAT Scores
- College Acceptance
- What colleges graduates attend

Information regarding specific schools can be found at the following weblink:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/sharedaccountability/glance/>

Question:

Who made the FAA policy? Is it government mandated?

Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning is a Board of Education adopted policy. Additional information on the policy can be found at the following

weblink: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/faa.pdf>

Question:

What criteria will be used to determine the boundaries?

The four factors outlined in Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning, will be considered for the development of the boundary options. These factors are: demographic characteristics of

student population; geography, stability of school assignments over time; and, facility utilization. There is no weighting or priority for these four factors. Additional information on the factors can be found at the following weblink:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/faa.pdf>

Question:

What criteria does MCPS use to determine walk zones for high schools? Please include walk zones on all maps including current boundaries and for options.

In general, a 2-mile walk zone is established for high schools. However, consideration of major highways, natural barriers, etc. are considered when the walk zones are developed. The walk zones for the boundary options will be developed in coordination with the MCPS Department of Transportation. When the boundary options are presented in early-March they will include maps that reflect the developed options and walk zones.

Question:

What is the intent of adding “especially strive” to get demographic diversity if not to weight it differently?

The following language is included in the demographic characteristics of student population factor section of Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning:“Options should especially strive to create a diverse student body in each of the affected schools in alignment with Board Policy ACT, Quality Integrated Education.” For additional information regarding the Board of Education’s approval of the revisions to Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning the following is a weblink to the Board’s work session on this subject:

<https://mcpsmd.swagit.com/play/09252018-504>

Question:

Will the “especially strive” in the demographic characteristic of student population factor focus on equality in Free and Reduced Meals (FARMS) percentages among the schools?

One of the four factors to be considered when developing boundary options is demographic characteristics of student population. Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning, states that the “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.” Additional information on the factors can be found at the following weblink:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/faa.pdf>

Question:

Will the study be expanded to try to keep students from the same community go to the same school?

Geography is one of the four factors that are considered in the development of boundary options. Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning states that geographic factor should “take into account the geographic proximity of communities to schools, as well as articulation, traffic, and transportation patterns and topography.” Additional information on the factors can be found at the following weblink: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/faa.pdf>

Question:

Are the significant homeowners cost of home purchases to locate into an area to attend a particular school being considered?

Pursuant to Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning, the four factors to be considered for the development of the boundary options are: demographic characteristics of student population; geography, stability of school assignments over time; and, facility utilization. Additional information on the factors can be found at the following weblink: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/faa.pdf>

Question:

Why is the relative difference between school quality not one of the criteria?

Pursuant to Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning, the four factors to be considered for the development of the boundary options are: demographic characteristics of student population; geography, stability of school assignments over time; and, facility utilization. There is no weighting or priority of these four factors. Additional information on the factors can be found at the following weblink:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/faa.pdf>

Question:

How are the focus and work groups constructed?

Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning guides the boundary study process. The policy states that “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.” For this boundary study, focus and work groups will not be formed. Stakeholder involvement and engagement will come through scheduled meetings which includes time for questions and feedback, as well as feedback from surveys and online submitted questions. Additional information on the policy can be found at the following weblink:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/faa.pdf>

Question:

Will the county transportation transit options (Ride-on, etc.) and bike lanes be included in ‘geography’?

The “geography” factor used to develop the boundary reassignment options will take into account “the geographic proximity of communities to schools, as well as articulation, traffic, and transportation patterns and topography.” Coordination during the development of boundary reassignment options with the MCPS Department of Transportation staff allows for an evaluation of various transportation impacts.

Question:

Will survey results be available to the public to know that staff evaluation was indeed reflective of the survey results? How is other data obtained from the community ranked with respect to the four factors in the policy?

The survey results will be included as part of the report that is forwarded to the superintendent of schools and the Board of Education. Pursuant to Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning, a rationale for each of the staff-developed option will be provided that explains how each factor is advanced.

Question:

How will you validate the google form response? I am worried some members may submit more than once.

MCPS staff will evaluate the best survey collecting methodology to ensure that responses are validated.

Question:

Can you give a link for the Google Form Survey?

The link to the survey form will be made available once the boundary reassignment options are presented in early-March. The survey will be found at the following weblink:
<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/UpcountyHSBoundaryStudy.aspx>

Question:

What are the deciding factors to determine if a 2nd round of options are needed?

Staff will review and analyze the community feedback as it relates to the four factors used to develop the boundary options as outlined in Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning. Based on that analysis, if any of the four factors were not advanced in the 1st round of developed options, additional options will be considered.

Question:

When you mention the PTAs are stakeholders do you mean PTAs from the three high schools, or from all the ES and MS?

PTAs from the elementary and secondary schools from all three clusters are stakeholders in the boundary study process.

Question:

What is the rationale for removing PTA recommendations from the study?

Previously, PTAs, as part of the boundary study committee, would provide position papers, not recommendations, to be included in the boundary study report. The revised Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning includes the flexibility for “broad outreach using multiple strategies for obtaining community input which may vary according to the nature, size, and scope of the project.” Therefore, for this boundary study, a structured committee will not be formed and while the PTA position papers will not be included in the boundary study report, PTAs may submit those position papers directly to the superintendent of schools and the Board of Education.

Question:

How will MCPS gather opinions from Clarksburg High School, currently without a PTSA?

It is our understanding that the PTSA at Clarksburg High School has been reinstated. In addition, individuals may attend meetings and provide feedback during the boundary study process.

Question:

Will school staff at Clarksburg, Northwest, and Seneca Valley have input into the boundary process?

While separate school staff meetings will not be held during this boundary study process, staff at the elementary and secondary levels within these three cluster can choose to provide feedback.

Question:

How much does the voice of the community play into the boundary decision? Is this a waste of our time?

Community engagement including participation and feedback in the boundary study process is utilized to advise the superintendent of schools regarding the impact on the community of the staff-developed options. Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning outlines stakeholder input in various processes, including the boundary study process. Additional information regarding stakeholder input can be found at the following weblink:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/faa.pdf>

Question:

What is the demographic makeup of the group making the decisions? (Ages, race, gender) and amount of people?

The superintendent of schools makes a recommendation on the boundary reassignments to the Board of Education. The Board of Education approves the boundary reassignments.

Question:

Can the recommendations be disputed and how?

Community members that do not support the boundary recommendation submitted by the superintendent of schools can share their concerns with the Board of Education. The Board of Education, by majority vote, can identify one or more alternatives to the superintendent of schools' recommendations. Additional information on the boundary study process can be found at the following weblink: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/policy/pdf/faa.pdf>

Question:

Since there is no more land for high schools, will you provide input to the Master Plan?

It is current practice that MCPS staff collaborate with staff from Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission on the county's sector/master plans that would impact student enrollment to determine school needs as a result of future planned development.

Question:

Given all the construction near the outlets and beyond are you planning a new upcounty high school?

Currently, MCPS does not have a high school site in the upcounty area. Should additional capacity be needed to address high school enrollment growth in the upcounty area, expansion of existing high schools that have not reached their full build-out will be explored.

Question:

How will the Board of Education's recently approved county-wide boundary study work with this boundary study?

On January 8, 2019, the Board of Education adopted a boundary assessment study to "review school boundaries in light of revised Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning, gather information and data regarding current school boundaries, benchmark with comparable schools systems, and collect community input on the opportunities and challenges related to boundary setting using multiple methods and venues..." The boundary study for Clarksburg, Northwest, and Seneca Valley high schools, as well as an evaluation of the student enrollment patterns and utilization rates at all of the middle schools within the three clusters, will continue as approved by the Board of Education to address the overutilization in both Clarksburg and Northwest high

schools. Additional information regarding the countywide boundary assessment study can be found at the following weblink:

[https://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/B8C2XD77A17C/\\$file/20190108%20ADOPTED%20Rev%20Boundary%20Assessment%20Study-FAA.pdf](https://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/B8C2XD77A17C/$file/20190108%20ADOPTED%20Rev%20Boundary%20Assessment%20Study-FAA.pdf)

Question:

What formula is used for enrollment projections?

The prediction of school enrollment involves the consideration of a wide range of factors. Enrollment history, characteristics of schools, such as the programs offered and changes within school service areas (such as new housing), can influence the projections. Economic activity at the local, regional, and national levels also influences the accuracy of enrollment forecasts. There is no one single formula used as there are multiple factors that influence the enrollment projections and may be different from school to school. Additional information regarding the MCPS enrollment forecasting method can be found at the following weblink:

http://gis.mcpsmd.org/cipmasterpdfs/CIP20_AppendixC.pdf

Question:

When will the presentation slides be available online?

The public information slide presentation is available in English, Spanish and Mandarin at the following weblink:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/UpcountyHSBoundaryStudy.aspx>

Question:

How will the budget cuts affect the Seneca Valley High School program?

The Board of Education's Requested FY 2020 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY 2019–2024 Capital Improvements Program includes additional funding to expand the Career and Technology Education Program at Seneca Valley High School during its revitalization/expansion project. While the county executive did not recommend any additional funding that was included in the Board of Education's request, the Montgomery County Council has not begun its review process. County Council action on the Board of Education's request will occur in late May 2019.

Question:

Will Seneca Valley High School get additional counseling staff in advance of opening in September 2020 to accommodate needs of incoming students (registering)?

Additional counseling staff in advance of the opening of the revitalized/expanded Seneca Valley High School in September 2020 will be evaluated.

Question:

When will the Cabin Branch Elementary School be completed?

The new Clarksburg Cluster Elementary School #9, located in the Cabin Branch development, is scheduled to be completed September 2022.