

Appendix Q

FAA

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: Chief Operating Officer

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 Key Facilities Indicators 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) Key Facilities Indicators are facility characteristics that influence the learning and working experience, such as safety, security, and accessibility requirements; indoor environment conditions; program and space relationships; building quality; as well as infrastructure and asset data, and other relevant characteristics.
 - d) The Key Facilities Indicators 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, 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.

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.

**Based on the recently adopted Policy FAA,
this regulation is under review.**

FAA-RA

REGULATION MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: ABA, ABC, ACD, CFA, DNA, FAA, FKB, JEE, JEE-RA
Responsible Office: Chief Operating Officer

Long-range Educational Facilities Planning

I. PURPOSE

To implement the Montgomery County Board of Education (Board) Policy FAA, *Long-range Educational Facilities Planning*, by addressing changing enrollment patterns and supporting high-quality educational programs through the provision of appropriately utilized, functional, and modern facilities

II. BACKGROUND

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is one of the largest school systems in the country, with an enrollment that is constantly changing. Montgomery County is increasingly diverse, creating a student population with varying educational needs. MCPS' success depends in part on appropriately utilized, functional, and modern facilities, as well as a facility planning process, based on rigorous analyses, that takes into account best educational practices, the changing needs of the community, and fiscal realities, to produce the physical learning environment necessary for an excellent educational system.

The components of long-range educational facilities planning include the following: facilities planning guidelines; the facility planning process; the Capital Improvements Program (CIP), and Educational Facilities Master Plan (Master Plan); community involvement processes; and the calendar for facilities planning activities.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. The *Capital Budget* is the annual budget adopted for capital project appropriations.
- B. The *Capital Improvements Program (CIP)* is a comprehensive six-year spending plan for capital improvements. The CIP focuses on the acquisition, construction, revitalization/expansion, and maintenance of public school facilities. 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

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years, amendments are considered to the adopted CIP for changes needed in the second year of the six-year CIP period.

- C. *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.
- D. *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.
- E. *Community involvement*, for the purposes of Board Policy FAA, *Long-range Educational Facilities Planning*, and this regulation, refers to processes designed to obtain input by engaging a broad variety of stakeholders and to utilize opportunities for input from the public and relevant staff members, in accordance with Board Policy ABA, *Community Involvement*.
- F. *Consortium* is a grouping of high schools or middle schools within proximity to one another that provides students the opportunity to express their preference 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:
 1. Educational specifications—a description of spaces needed to support the instructional program and guide the architect in development of 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—the initial design phase that evaluates and develops concepts into a preliminary design for the school. When it is complete, it is presented to the Board for approval.
 4. Design development—this phase of design refines the architecture and develops the infrastructure of the project including mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
 5. 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.

IV. FACILITIES PLANNING GUIDELINES

The following calculations and analyses are developed as part of the facilities planning process.

- A. *Enrollment Forecasts* are the basis for evaluating school space needs and initiating planning activities.
 - 1. Enrollment forecasts are developed in coordination with the Montgomery County Planning Department’s county population forecast and other relevant planning sources.
 - 2. Each fall, enrollment forecasts for each school are developed for a six-year period. Long-term forecasts project enrollment to the subsequent 10th and 15th year. The units of analysis for long-term forecasts are secondary school level, and the cluster or consortium level for elementary schools.
 - 3. On or about March 1, revisions to school enrollment forecasts for the next school year are developed to refine the forecast and to reflect any changes in service areas or programs.
 - 4. The enrollment forecast methodology utilized is provided in an appendix to the CIP and Master Plan documents.
- B. *Preferred Range of Enrollment* for schools includes all students attending a school.
 - 1. The preferred ranges of enrollment for schools are—
 - a) 450 to 750 students in elementary schools,

- b) 750 to 1,200 students in middle schools, and
 - c) 1,600 to 2,400 students in high schools.
 - d) Enrollment in special and alternative program centers may differ from the above ranges and generally is lower.
2. The preferred range of enrollment is considered when planning new schools or when changes are made to existing schools. Departures from the preferred ranges may occur if circumstances warrant.
- C. *School Demographic Profile and Facility Profile*
- 1. *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 for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs, and school mobility rates.
 - 2. *Facility Profile* includes room use by program and facility characteristics such as square footage, site size, year of opening, adjacency to parks, and number of relocatable classrooms.
- D. *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.
- E. *Program Capacity and Facility Utilization* are calculated as follows:
- 1. Unless otherwise specified by Board action, the *program capacity* of a facility is determined by the space requirements of the educational programs in the facility and student-to-classroom ratios. These ratios should not be confused with staffing ratios that are determined through the annual operating budget process.

Ratio Guidelines

Level	Student-to-Classroom Ratios
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 6-12 Secondary Grades: 6-8 Middle School Grades: 9-12 High School	25:1 ^a 25:1 ^b
Special Education, ESOL, 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, ESOL, alternative programs, and other special programs may require classroom ratios different from those listed.
2. 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. If a school is projected to be underutilized (less than 80 percent) or overutilized (more than 100 percent), then a boundary study, noncapital action, or a capital project may be considered. Whether a school meets the preferred range of enrollment also is considered. In the case of overutilization, an effort to judge the long-term need for permanent space is made prior to planning for new construction. Underutilization of facilities also is evaluated in the context of long-term enrollment forecasts.
 3. Relocatable classrooms may be used on an interim basis to provide program space for enrollment growth until permanent capacity is available. 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.

- F. *School Site Size* is the minimum acreage desired to accommodate the full instructional program, as follows:
1. Elementary schools—a minimum useable site size of 7.5 acres that is capable of fitting the instructional program, including site requirements. The 7.5 acres is based on an ideal leveled site, and the size may vary depending on site shapes and surrounding site constraints.
 2. Middle schools—a minimum useable site size of 15.5 acres that is capable of fitting the instructional program, including site requirements. The 15.5 acres is based on an ideal leveled site, and the size may vary depending on site shapes and surrounding site constraints.
 3. High schools—a minimum useable site size of 35 acres that is capable of fitting the instructional program, including site requirements. The 35 acres is based on an ideal leveled site, and the size may vary depending on site shapes and surrounding site constraints.
- G. *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 funded through the Public School Construction Program administered by the Interagency Committee for Public School Construction. SRCs are provided for schools in appendices to the CIP and the Master Plan.

V. GUIDELINES FOR FACILITY PLANNING: EVALUATING UTILIZATION OF FACILITIES

- A. By November 1 each year, after new enrollment forecasts are developed, the projected utilization levels of all facilities are evaluated and incorporated into the superintendent of schools' CIP recommendations. The effect of class size changes and other relevant factors, such as proposed educational program changes, including prekindergarten programs, special education programs, ESOL programs, or grade level reorganizations also is evaluated. For schools that are projected to have insufficient capacity, excess capacity, or other facility issues, the superintendent of schools may recommend—
1. a capital project,
 2. a noncapital action such as convening a roundtable discussion group, boundary change, geographic student choice assignment plan, school pairing, facility sharing, closing/consolidation, or any other similar action,

3. no action, or
4. deferral pending further study of enrollment or other factors.

B. Facility recommendations made by the superintendent of schools include consideration of educational program impacts. As part of the process of developing facility plans, MCPS staff members will work closely with appropriate program staff members to identify program requirements for facility plans. Modifications to the facility will adhere to the requirements of the *Americans with Disabilities Act*.

VI. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

A. CIP

1. On or about November 1 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. Boundary change or geographic student choice assignment plan recommendations, and any other facility planning recommendations identified by the superintendent of schools as requiring more time for public review, are released by mid-October.
2. The six-year CIP includes the following:
 - a) Standards for Board review and action:
 - (1) Preferred range of school enrollments
 - (2) Program capacity and facility utilization calculations
 - (3) School site size
 - b) Background information on the enrollment forecasting methodology
 - c) Current enrollment figures, school demographic profiles, and facility profiles
 - d) School enrollment forecasts for each of the next six years and long-term forecasts for the 10th and 15th year

- e) A listing of recommended actions, such as changes in school capacities, new schools, revitalizations/expansions, program locations, and/or the service area of the schools. Supplements to the CIP may be published to provide more information on issues when deemed advisable by the superintendent of schools
 - f) A line item summary of Capital Budget appropriation recommendations of the superintendent of schools
3. The superintendent of schools' recommended CIP is posted on the MCPS website. Copies of the document are provided 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.
 4. 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 IX.E. for the public hearing process and Section X for the annual calendar.)
 5. 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 late February to mid-March, and action in late March. If necessary, the timeline for deferred planning issues may be modified by the superintendent of schools to allow more time for community input processes.
 6. In cases where the Board determines an unusual circumstance exists, the superintendent of schools may develop an alternative time schedule for making recommendations regarding the CIP, facility planning activities, school boundary changes, or geographic student choice assignment plans.
 7. After review and Board action, the Board-requested CIP—including official Project Description Forms (PDFs) for all requested capital projects—is submitted to the County Council and county executive for their review and for County Council action. The Board-requested CIP also is sent for information purposes to M-NCPPC, the Maryland State Department of Education, and the State Interagency Coordinating Committee.

8. The county executive's recommendations are forwarded to the County Council in mid-January 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.
9. The County Council adopts the biennial six-year CIP, and amendments to the CIP, in late May.

B. Master Plan

By June 30 of each year, the superintendent of schools publishes a summary of all County Council-adopted capital and Board-adopted non-capital facilities actions. This document, the Educational Facilities 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 facilities actions 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 forecasting methodology
 - c) Current enrollment figures, school demographic profiles, and facility profiles
 - d) Program capacity and facility utilization calculations

- e) School enrollment forecasts for each of the next six years, and long-term forecasts for the 10th and 15th years. 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, or other changes adopted by the Board
- f) County Council-adopted PDFs for all capital projects with schedules, estimated costs, and funding sources

VII. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROCESSES

A. Community Involvement

School and community involvement in MCPS facility planning is important to the success of the plans. Stakeholders and interested members of the community have several opportunities for input in facilities planning through processes that are in accordance with Board Policy ABA, *Community Involvement*.

1. Parents/guardians, staff, and students are the primary stakeholders in the planning process. MCCPTA, local PT(S)As, or other parent/guardian or student representatives along with appropriate MCPS staff members are involved in the following planning processes:
 - a) Site selection for new schools
 - b) Facility design (architect selection and architectural design) for new schools, additions, or revitalizations/expansions of existing schools
 - c) School boundary changes and geographic student choice assignment plans
 - d) Facility-related focus groups, task forces, work groups, advisory committees, and roundtable discussion groups
 - e) School closures and consolidations
2. Additionally, MCPS employees, municipalities, local government agencies, civic groups, and countywide organizations may contribute to planning processes.

B. Cluster Comments

1. In June, 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.
2. Cluster comments are to be considered in the development of facilities recommendations made by the superintendent of schools in the CIP.

C. Community Involvement Methods

The superintendent of schools will solicit community input on school facility-related issues, including boundary changes and geographic student choice assignment plans, through any one or more of the following methods: focus groups, task forces, work groups, advisory committees, roundtable discussion groups, public forums, surveys, and/or technologically facilitated communications.

1. Focus groups, task forces, work groups, advisory committees (committees) or roundtable discussion groups (roundtables):
 - a) The superintendent of schools develops a charge for the focus group, task force, work group, advisory committee, or roundtable to follow:
 - (1) If the facility-related issue involves a boundary change or geographic student choice assignment plan, the superintendent of schools shall ensure that the potentially affected areas are represented on any focus group, task force, work group, advisory committee, or roundtable and that there are outreach efforts to promote racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity within the group.
 - (2) If the facility-related issue involves site selection for a new school, the superintendent of schools shall ensure that civic groups with candidate sites in their area and appropriate municipal, county government, and Montgomery County Planning Department and Montgomery County Parks Department staff have an opportunity to participate.

- b) Except as otherwise provided herein, the focus group, task force, work group, advisory committee or roundtable members identify criteria to assist staff in the development of approaches to address the facility-related issue. The superintendent of schools and the Board also will consider these criteria in their review of approaches to address the facility-related issue.
 - c) MCPS staff members will develop a range of approaches for the focus group, task force, work group, advisory committee, or roundtable to consider, with the number of approaches dependent on the nature of the facility-related issue. However, the total number of approaches developed for the group usually will not exceed 10.
 - d) Representatives, who are liaisons between the focus group, task force, work group, advisory committee, or roundtable, and the community they represent share relevant information with their community through PT(S)A meetings, and other forums, such as civic group meetings, as appropriate. Input received from the community is then presented by representatives at subsequent meetings. Community input also is factored into evaluations of approaches by representatives and in optional PT(S)A or cluster position papers.
 - e) The focus group, task force, work group, advisory committee or roundtable develops a report for the superintendent of schools that includes evaluations of the approaches by members. For selection of a new school site, members will identify the most favorably scored site and the second most favorably scored site based on the evaluation criteria. In addition, as appropriate, the superintendent of schools will consider any individual PT(S)A or cluster position papers. Unless otherwise provided herein, the criteria developed at the outset of the process are the basis for assessing the approaches.
2. Public forums, surveys, and technologically facilitated communications:
- a) At any point in the process the superintendent of schools may direct MCPS staff and/or any facility-related focus group, task force, work group, advisory committee, or roundtable to use a public forum, survey, or technologically facilitated communication to obtain community input in conjunction with or in lieu of other methods for community input.

- b) If the facility-related issue involves a boundary change or geographic student choice assignment plan, the superintendent of schools shall ensure that the potentially affected areas are notified of the public forum, survey, or technologically facilitated communication and have an opportunity to participate.
- c) If the facility-related issue involves site selection for a new school, the superintendent of schools shall notify civic groups with candidate sites in their area; and appropriate municipal, county government, and Montgomery County Planning Department and Montgomery County Parks Department staff and provide an opportunity to participate.

VIII. SPECIFIC EVALUATION CRITERIA

A. School Boundary Changes and Geographic Student Choice Assignment Plans

The following factors are considered when evaluating changes to school boundaries and in geographic student choice assignment plans:

- 1. Facility Utilization
 - a) School boundary and geographic student choice assignment plans should result in facility utilizations in the 80 percent to 100 percent efficient range whenever possible.
 - b) Plans should be fiscally responsible to minimize capital and operating costs whenever feasible. The geographic scope of the studies should be broad enough to realize economies in costs and provide long-range plans to address facility issues while preserving as much stability in school assignments as possible.
 - c) Shared use of a facility by more than one cluster may be the most feasible facility plan in some cases. In these cases, it is desirable for 25 percent or more of articulating enrollment to move on to each of the assigned upper-level schools.
- 2. Demographic Characteristics of Student Population
 - a) School boundary and geographic student choice assignment plans should consider the impact of various options on the overall populations of affected schools. A school population consists of students assigned from a specific geographic attendance area.

- b) Where reasonable, school boundaries or geographic student choice assignment plans should promote the creation of a diverse student body in each of the affected schools. Data showing the impact of various options include the following factors:
 - (1) The racial/ethnic composition of the student population
 - (2) The socioeconomic composition of the student population as measured by participation in the federal FARMS program
 - (3) The level of English language learners as measured by enrollment in the ESOL program
 - (4) Other reliable demographic indicators, such as the mix of single family and multiple family dwellings, student mobility rates, and special education participation also may be considered where applicable and appropriate
3. Geographic Proximity of Communities to Schools
- a) In most cases, the geographic scope of elementary school and middle school boundary studies and geographic student choice assignment plan studies should be limited to the high school cluster area. For high schools, more than one high school may be studied.
 - b) In accordance with MCPS' emphasis on community involvement in schools, boundary and student choice area plans should give consideration to the creation of service areas that are, as much as practical, made up of contiguous communities surrounding the school. Walking access to the school should be maximized and transportation distances minimized when other factors do not require otherwise.
4. Stability of School Assignments over Time
- a) Boundaries and student choice assignment plans should result in stable assignments for as long a period as possible.

- b) 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.

B. Selection of Sites for New Schools

When MCPS projections indicate a new school is required in the six-year CIP, the following factors are considered 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

C. Architect Selection and Facility Design

The following factors are considered when selecting an architect and evaluating facility design for classroom additions, revitalization/expansion for existing schools, and new school construction:

- 1. Educational specifications for school buildings as developed by MCPS staff members in consultation with instructional program staff and school-based administrators
- 2. Input from school administrators, school staff, and PT(S)A representatives in selection of an architect
- 3. Input from adjacent property owners, if any

D. School Closures and Consolidations

The requirements of Maryland law are followed when evaluating school closures and consolidations.

IX. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS RECOMMENDATION AND BOARD ACTION

- A. The superintendent of schools develops recommendations on the six-year CIP after considering staff advice, any input from PT(S)A cluster position papers or comments, task forces, work groups, advisory committees, roundtable reports, option or approach evaluations, public forums, surveys, and/or input from other organizations and individuals through avenues of community input.
- B. The recommendations of the superintendent of schools are published no later than November 1, depending on the nature of the facility issues. Some recommendations may be published in mid-October or mid-February when necessary depending on the nature of the facility issues. In addition, recommendations may be made at other times of the year if the Board determines that an unusual circumstance exists that warrants a condensed schedule for recommendations and Board review and action.
- C. Recommendations of the superintendent of schools are posted to the MCPS website, and affected school principals and PT(S)As are notified of their availability and the process for Board review and action.
- D. The Board holds one or more work sessions to review the superintendent of schools' recommendations. The Board may request by majority vote that alternatives to the superintendent of schools' recommendation for boundary changes, geographic student choice assignment plans, or closures or consolidations of schools be developed for Board consideration. 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.
 - 1. 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.

2. 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.

E. 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 school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, and closure or consolidation of schools.
 - 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 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.
 - d) The PT(S)A cluster coordinators and/or PT(S)A area vice presidents in consultation with the PT(S)A presidents 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.
 - e) Civic groups, municipalities, and countywide organizations also may testify at public hearings.
 - f) Individuals also may present public comments to the Board.
 - g) The Board office is responsible for scheduling those interested in testifying at public hearings.

2. In addition to other avenues of input, community members have opportunities to provide input to the superintendent of schools and the Board through written correspondence and public testimony. 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.

X. CALENDAR

The long-range facilities planning process is conducted according to the county’s 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 the adopted CIP and consider issues for the upcoming CIP or amendments to the CIP.	Summer
MCPS staff members present enrollment trends and planning issues to the Board.	Mid-October
County Council adopts Spending Affordability Guidelines for the new CIP cycle, based on debt affordability.	Early-October of odd numbered fiscal years
Superintendent of schools publishes and sends to the Board any recommendations for school boundary, geographic student choice assignment plans, or other facility-related issues requiring more time for public review.	Mid-October
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.	By November 1
Board holds one or more work sessions on the CIP and to consider alternatives to the superintendent of schools’ recommended boundary changes, geographic student choice assignment plans, or other facility-related issues.	Early- to mid-November
Board holds one or more public hearings on the recommended CIP and boundary, geographic student choice assignment plans, 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
Board acts on Capital Budget, CIP, amendments, and any boundary changes, geographic student choice assignment plans, or other facility-related issues.	Late November

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County executive and County Council receive Board-requested capital budget and CIP for review.	December 1
County executive transmits recommended Capital Budget and CIP or amendments to County Council.	January 15
County Council holds public hearings on CIP.	February - March
County Council reviews Board requested and county executive recommended Capital Budget and CIP.	March - April
Superintendent of schools' recommendations on any deferred planning issues, boundary changes, geographic student choice assignment plans, and other facility-related issues, and/or recommended amendment(s) to the CIP are published for Board review, if needed.	Mid-February*
Board holds one or more work sessions and identifies any alternatives to boundary changes, or geographic student choice assignment plans, or other facility-related recommendations, if needed.	Late-February/ early- to mid- March*
Board holds one or more public hearings if needed and if any alternatives are identified by the Board.	Late- February/early- to mid-March*
Board acts on deferred CIP recommendations and/or boundary changes, geographic student choice assignment plans or other facility-related issues, if needed.	Late-March*
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
Superintendent of schools publishes a summary of all actions to date affecting schools (Educational Facilities Master Plan) and identifies future needs.	By June 30

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

Related Source: *Code of Maryland Regulations* 13A.02.09.01

Regulation History: Interim Regulation, June 1, 2005; revised March 21, 2006; revised October 17, 2006; revised June 8, 2008; revised June 6, 2015; revised October 11, 2017.