

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

January 10, 2020

**Somerset and Westbrook Elementary Schools Boundary Process
Frequently Asked Questions**

Question:

Do you expect the appeal of the Upcounty Boundary Process to affect the Somerset and Westbrook Elementary Schools boundary process?

The Board of Education adopted a resolution on November 26, 2019 to conduct a boundary study to address overutilization at Somerset Elementary School beginning in the winter of the 2019–2020 school year with action to be taken in November 2020. Based on the resolution, MCPS staff have commenced with the boundary study process for Somerset and Westbrook elementary schools. The resolution can be found at the following link: [https://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BJBHEU483050/\\$file/03.01%20Boundary%20Somerset%20Westbrook%20ES%20191126%20ADOPTED.pdf](https://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/mcpsmd/Board.nsf/files/BJBHEU483050/$file/03.01%20Boundary%20Somerset%20Westbrook%20ES%20191126%20ADOPTED.pdf)

Question:

Regarding staffing, will Westbrook Elementary School be given an opportunity to consider hiring any Somerset Elementary School teachers whose positions may be eliminated with their downsizing?

There is a process through the Office of Human Resources and Development that will be followed for teachers that will be involuntarily transferred due to the boundary change.

Question:

Do principals have any say in this decision or process?

The boundary study process is guided by the Board of Education's Policy FAA Educational Facilities Planning. As indicated in the policy, the superintendent will provide a recommendation to the Board of Education and, ultimately, it is the Board of Education that will approve any boundary reassignment.

Question:

How will funding for the school be impacted by the transfer of students? For example, will Westbrook Elementary School receive enough money to support the new students? Will Somerset Elementary School be at risk of being underfunded because of loss of enrollment?

The operating budget for schools is adjusted each year based on the number of students projected as well as any special programs that are needed to support them.

Question:

Are survey results shared with the community?

The results for the survey/s will be shared at the Public Information Meeting #2, currently scheduled on February 27th as well as available online and included in the boundary study report to be published in the summer of 2020.

Question:

Will the Board of Education decide on adoption of recommendations before the November 2020 election?

Election Day is scheduled for Tuesday, November 3, 2020. Board of Education action occurs at the end of November.

Question:

How do you account for who is a walker and who isn't?

Policy EEA Student Transportation, outlines the walking distance for each level of school. For elementary school students, that distance is one mile. However, MCPS Department of Transportation evaluates each address and assigns students as either walkers or bus riders depending on the distance as well as other factors such as presence of sidewalks, crossing guards, highways, or geographic features.

Question:

Why does Westbrook Elementary School have steadily decreasing enrollment from 2019 to 2026? *Enrollment at Westbrook Elementary School is currently projected to decrease by 16 students over the six-year planning period. Declining enrollment can be caused by numerous factors including families remaining in neighborhoods after their students age out of the school level or system. Also, the county live birth data has been declining for many years which has resulted in smaller kindergarten populations in general. When the kindergarten class is smaller than the 5th grade class, the enrollment usually declines the following year.*

Question:

What is in the mid July report (boundary study report)?

The report released in the summer will contain a summary of the boundary study process, an analysis of the staff developed options, and results of the survey/s.

Question:

What is the typical grandfathering policy for an elementary boundary reassignment?

Typically, rising Grade 5 students recommended to be reassigned would be allowed to remain at their current school of attendance. All other grades (kindergarten through Grade 4 students) would be reassigned.

Question:

How is this process different than the Districtwide Boundary Analysis?

The Somerset and Westbrook Elementary Schools Boundary Study process is being conducted specifically to address the overutilization at Somerset Elementary School with an adjacent school that has available capacity—Westbrook Elementary School. This process, different than an analysis, will culminate with a recommendation for reassignment by the superintendent of schools and ultimately a decision for reassignment by the Board of Education, scheduled for November 2020. The Districtwide Boundary Analysis is a comprehensive assessment of MCPS boundaries which is looking at a variety of data points. Information on the Districtwide Boundary Analysis can be found at the following site:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/publicinfo/boundary-analysis/>