


Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

November 16, 2015

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Larry A. Bowers, Interim Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Tri-cluster Roundtable Discussion Group for the Gaithersburg, Col. Zadok Magruder, and Thomas S. Wootton Clusters

Elementary school enrollment growth in the Gaithersburg Cluster has resulted in several schools exceeding their program capacities. In the 2014–2015 school year, a Gaithersburg Cluster Elementary School Capacity Study was conducted to determine whether additions to cluster schools could address projected space deficits. The results of the capacity study were compared to the building of a new elementary school.

In reviewing the results of the capacity study it was found that much of the growth in two schools, Rosemont and Washington Grove elementary schools, is attributed to large amounts of new housing being constructed in the Crown development—served by Rosemont Elementary School—and the Shady Grove Sector Plan—mostly served by Washington Grove Elementary School. These areas of additional growth will significantly compound the capacity shortages in Gaithersburg Cluster schools. Therefore, it was determined that a broader look at available capacity in two adjacent clusters—Col. Zadok Magruder and Thomas S. Wootton—would be beneficial prior to recommending any capital projects.

WHEREAS, Enrollment levels at Gaithersburg Cluster elementary schools significantly exceed the capacities at several cluster schools; and

WHEREAS, A Gaithersburg Cluster Elementary School Capacity Study was conducted during the 2014–2015 school year and evaluated the ability to add capacity to the schools, and this approach was compared to the option of opening a new elementary school; and

WHEREAS, The Col. Zadok Magruder and Thomas S. Wootton clusters are adjacent to the Gaithersburg Cluster and have available capacity at various school levels, as well as a number of elementary schools that are below the desired minimum enrollment size of 450 students; and

WHEREAS, On October 15, 2015, the interim superintendent of schools submitted a recommendation to the Board of Education to conduct a Tri-cluster Roundtable Discussion Group process—to include the Gaithersburg, Col. Zadok Magruder and Thomas S Wootton clusters—in a review of approaches for relieving overutilization in the Gaithersburg Cluster elementary schools prior to recommending capital projects; and

WHEREAS, On November 5, 2015, the Board of Education conducted a work session to consider the interim superintendent's recommendation to conduct a Tri-cluster Roundtable Discussion Group; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Education conducted public hearings on November 9 and 12, 2015, in accordance with Board of Education Policy FAA, *Long-range Educational Facilities Planning*, and Montgomery County Public Schools Regulation FAA-RA, *Long-range Educational Facilities Planning*, on the interim superintendent's recommendation; now therefore be it

Resolved, That a Tri-cluster Roundtable Discussion Group be conducted beginning in December 2015 and concluding in February 2016; and be it further

Resolved, That the Tri-cluster Roundtable Discussion Group include five representatives each from the Gaithersburg, Col. Zadok Magruder, and Thomas S. Wootton clusters; and be it further

Resolved, That the Tri-cluster Roundtable Discussion Group consider general approaches to relieve Gaithersburg Cluster elementary schools of overutilization; and be it further

Resolved, That the Tri-cluster Roundtable Discussion Group send a report that includes member evaluations of a range of approaches to the interim superintendent of schools and members of the Board of Education by the end of February 2016; and be it further

Resolved, That following receipt of the Roundtable Discussion Group report the interim superintendent of schools will make recommendations that addresses overutilization of Gaithersburg Cluster elementary schools, including any capital projects to be included as part of the *FY 2017–2022 Capital Improvements Program*.

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