

# Chapter 3

## Facility Planning Objectives

### MCPS Vision, Mission, and Core Values

The FY 2025 Capital Budget and the FY 2025–2030 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) is closely aligned with the core values outlined in the MCPS Strategic Plan. The strategic plan states that MCPS is committed to educating our students so that academic success is not predictable by race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, language proficiency, or disability. We will continue to strive until all gaps have been eliminated for all groups. Our students will graduate with deep academic knowledge and become prepared for tomorrow’s complex world and workplace. Our work is guided by the following five core values:

- Learning
- Relationships
- Respect
- Excellence
- Equity

More information regarding the MCPS Strategic Plan is available on the MCPS website at the following link: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/campaigns/Strategic-Planning-FY22-25/>.

In addition to the strategic planning framework, Board of Education Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning* and MCPS Regulation FAA-RA, *Educational Facilities Planning* and the Capital Improvement Priorities, listed below, guide the development of the CIP.

### Capital Improvement Priorities

1. Compliance Projects
2. Capital Maintenance Projects
3. Capacity Projects
4. Major Capital Projects
5. System Infrastructure Projects
6. Technology Modernization Project

Setting priorities is important in times of fiscal constraints. The CIP includes funding for capital projects in all priority areas and represents a balanced approach to address the many needs of the school system. A brief description of the type of projects included in each priority area follows:

- Priority #1—Compliance Projects. This includes funding to address mandates, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), asbestos abatement, fire safety upgrades, stormwater discharge, water quality management, and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) requirements. These projects must be completed in a timely fashion to comply with laws and regulations.
- Priority #2—Capital Maintenance. This includes funding countywide projects that maintain school facilities in good condition so that they are safe, secure, and comfortable learning environments. In addition, capital projects

in this area preserve school assets and can avert more costly repairs or replacements in the future.

- Priority #3—Capacity Projects. This includes funding for new schools and additions so facilities can operate within capacity.
- Priority #4—Major Capital Projects. Funding in this area is important to sustain and upgrade building systems and address programmatic and capacity needs in schools.
- Priority #5—System Infrastructure. Funding in this area provides for facilities important to the operation of schools, including transportation depots, maintenance depots, the warehouse, and the upgrading of food services equipment.
- Priority #6—Technology Modernization. Funding in this area enables periodic upgrades to computers and technology that support student learning with up-to-date technologies.

### Educational Facilities Planning Policy Guidance

On September 24, 2018, the Board of Education adopted revisions to Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning that requires the superintendent of schools to include a review of certain guidelines involved in facility planning activities in the CIP recommendations each fall. The four guidelines include preferred range of enrollment, school capacity calculations, desired facility utilization levels, and school site size. Including the guidelines as part of the superintendent’s CIP recommendations allows the community an opportunity to provide testimony to the Board of Education on the guidelines and any proposed changes to the guidelines.

See Appendix Q for BOE Policy FAA and MCPS Regulation FAA-RA.

### Preferred Range of Enrollment

The preferred range of enrollment for schools includes all students attending a school. The preferred ranges of enrollment for schools are:

- 450 to 750 students in elementary schools
- 750 to 1,200 students in middle schools
- 1,600 to 2,400 students in high schools

Enrollment in special and alternative program centers may differ from the above ranges and generally is lower.

The preferred range of enrollment is taken into consideration when planning new schools or when existing schools need changes. Departures from the preferred ranges may occur if circumstances warrant.

## School Capacity Calculations

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 determined through the annual operating budget process. Program capacity is based on the current classroom ratios shown below:

Head Start and prekindergarten—2 sessions	40:1
Head Start and prekindergarten—1 session	20:1
Grade K—full-day	22:1
Grade K—reduced class size	18:1
Grades 1–2—reduced class size	18:1
Grades 1–5 Elementary	23:1
Grades 6–8 Middle	25:1 <sup>a</sup>
Grades 9–12 High	25:1 <sup>b</sup>
Special Education, ESOL, Alternative Programs <sup>c</sup>	

<sup>a</sup>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).

<sup>b</sup>Program capacity is adjusted at the high school level to account for scheduling constraints. The regular classroom capacity of 25 is multiplied by .9 to reflect the optimal utilization of a high school facility (equivalent to 22.5 students per classroom).

<sup>c</sup>Special Education, ESOL, alternative programs, and other special programs may require classroom ratios different from those listed.

## School Facility Utilization

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 (over 100 percent), a boundary study, non-capital 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.

## School Site Size

School Site Size is the minimum acreage desired to accommodate the full instructional program, as follows:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## Facility Planning Objectives

Adequate and up-to-date school facilities form the physical infrastructure needed to pursue MCPS goals and priorities. Long-range facility plans, as reflected in this CIP, justify the programming and construction of construction projects. Facility planning and capital programming activities are closely coordinated with educational program delivery approaches. In addition, an emphasis is placed on the inclusion of stakeholders in facility planning processes. Six objectives guide the facilities planning process and development of each CIP. These objectives are outlined below, with the remainder of this chapter dedicated to providing information on planning for each objective.

OBJECTIVE 1: Implement facility plans that support the continuous improvement of educational programs in the school system

OBJECTIVE 2: Meet long-term and interim space needs

OBJECTIVE 3: Sustain and upgrade facilities

OBJECTIVE 4: Provide schools that are environmentally safe, secure, functionally efficient, and comfortable

OBJECTIVE 5: Support multipurpose use of schools

OBJECTIVE 6: Meet space needs of special education programs

## OBJECTIVE 1: Implement Facility Plans that Support the Continuous Improvement of Educational Programs in the School System

As the school system focuses program initiatives to improve student performance, facility plans are developed to address the space needs and facility requirements of schools. Implementing school system educational priorities that require more classroom and support space continues to be a challenge, particularly over the past 30 years of steady enrollment growth. With continued student enrollment at the secondary schools, the school system will continue to be challenged to provide adequate capacity. Several educational program initiatives have required more classroom and support space. These initiatives include the reduction in class sizes in Grades K–2 for the schools most heavily affected by poverty and English language deficiency (called “focus schools”), as well as the increased number of Community Schools and Title I schools. Creative uses of existing space in schools, modifications to existing classrooms, and placement of relocatable classrooms are all used to accommodate the additional staff needed to implement these initiatives. At schools with capital improvements in the facility planning or architectural planning phase, additional classrooms are provided to accommodate these initiatives. These initiatives are described in further detail in the following paragraphs.

<b>2023–2024 Focus and Title I Schools</b>	
<b>Elementary Schools</b>	
<b>Arcola</b> Lucy V. Barnsley <b>*Bel Pre (K–2)</b> <b>Brookhaven</b> <b>Brown Station</b> <b>Burnt Mills</b> Burtonsville <b>Cannon Road</b> Clearspring <b>Clopper Mill</b> <b>*Cresthaven (3–5)</b> <b>Capt. James E. Daly</b> Dr. Charles R. Drew East Silver Spring <b>Fairland</b> Fields Road <b>Flower Hill</b> Forest Knolls Fox Chapel <b>Gaithersburg</b> <b>Galway</b> <b>Georgian Forest</b> Germantown Glen Haven Glenallan Goshen Great Seneca Creek <b>Greencastle</b> <b>Harmony Hills</b> <b>Highland</b> Highland View <b>Jackson Road</b> <b>Kemp Mill</b> <b>Lake Seneca</b> <b>JoAnn Leleck at Broad Acres</b>	Maryvale Thurgood Marshall S. Christa McAuliffe Meadow Hall Mill Creek Towne <b>*Montgomery Knolls (HS–2)</b> <b>*New Hampshire Estates (HS–2)</b> <b>*Roscoe R. Nix (K–2)</b> <b>*Oak View (3–5)</b> William T. Page <b>*Pine Crest (3–5)</b> <b>*Piney Branch (3–5)</b> Judith A. Resnik Sally K. Ride Rock View <b>Rolling Terrace</b> <b>Rosemont</b> Sequoyah <b>Sargent Shriver</b> Flora M. Singer <b>South Lake</b> <b>Stedwick</b> <b>*Strathmore (3–5)</b> Strawberry Knoll <b>Summit Hall</b> <b>Harriet R. Tubman</b> <b>Twinbrook</b> <b>Viers Mill</b> <b>Washington Grove</b> Waters Landing <b>Watkins Mill</b> <b>Weller Road</b> <b>Wheaton Woods</b> <b>Whetstone</b>
<b>Middle Schools</b>	
<b>Forest Oak</b> <b>Francis Scott Key</b> <b>Montgomery Village</b>	<b>Odessa Shannon</b> <b>White Oak</b>
All schools in this table are receiving additional staff to reduce class sizes in Grades K–2 except for the Grades 3–5 schools and the middle schools. *These schools are paired, either Grades K–2 or Grades 3–5. Schools in <b>bold</b> are also Title I schools in the 2022–2023 school year.	

### **Class Size Reductions**

In the 2000–2001 school year, the Board of Education began a three-year initiative to reduce class sizes in the primary grades as a key component of the Early Success Performance Plan. Over a three-year period, class size in Grades K–2 in the focus schools most heavily impacted by poverty and

language deficiency were reduced for the full instructional day to an average of 17 students per teacher in Grades 1–2 and 15 students per teacher in full-day kindergarten. Reducing class sizes in Grades K–2 had a dramatic impact on utilization levels in elementary schools, creating the need for additional classrooms to accommodate the increased number of teaching positions. Beginning in FY 2012, the staffing guidelines for the focus schools increased to an average of 18 students per teacher in Grades K–2. Some schools also receive staffing to reduce class sizes in the upper grades. These schools are listed in the Focus and Title 1 Schools table.

### **Head Start and Prekindergarten Programs**

The Bridge to Excellence in Public Schools Act of 2002 requires that all eligible children “shall be admitted free of charge to publicly funded prekindergarten programs” established by the Board of Education. These programs are located yearly, based on need in the community and transportation travel times. The locations are shown in Appendix L. The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, House Bill 1300 passed in 2020, was vetoed by the governor, and then became law following a veto override in the Maryland General Assembly 2021 session. The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future Act (House Bill 1372), updated portions of House Bill 1300, passed in February 2021. These two pieces of legislation are considered landmark generational pieces of education reform in the state of Maryland and, with respect to prekindergarten, will expand and increase access through a mixed delivery system, including both public and private programs. Additional information can be found at the following MCPS website: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/blueprint/>.

### **Signature and Academy Programs**

Many high schools have developed and implemented signature and/or academy programs that integrate a specific focus or distinguishing theme with skills, concepts, and instructional strategies into some portion of a school’s curriculum. Some of these programs are school-wide programs, while others are structured as a special program offering at the school. The theme or focus becomes the vehicle for teaching the traditional high school curriculum in a fresh, interesting, and challenging way. Some schools also have created themed academies to engage students through a small learning community approach, and to raise student engagement and achievement by matching programs with student interests. Some of these programs require specialized classrooms or laboratories to support the delivery of the educational program. High schools may require facility modifications to accommodate signature or academy programs either through a major capital project or through countywide capital projects.

### **Information Technologies**

MCPS has a strong commitment to prepare today’s students for life in the 21st century and to ensure a technologically literate citizenry and an internationally competitive work force. Board of Education Policy IS, Educational Technology, strives to ensure that educational technology is appropriately

and equitably integrated into instruction and management to increase student learning, enhance the teaching process, and improve the operation of the school system.

The Technology Modernization Project provides the needed technology updates and computers in every school. Funds included in this project update schools' technology hardware, software, and network infrastructure. Up-to-date technology enhances student learning through access to online information and the latest instructional software. MCPS plans a multiyear effort to provide all students with access to mobile computers and a cloud-based learning platform that enhances creativity and collaboration in the classroom. These technologies also are critical for implementing online testing and learning.

## OBJECTIVE 2: Meet Long-term and Interim Space Needs

Montgomery County has demonstrated a strong commitment to providing sufficient school facilities. New schools, as well as numerous additions to existing schools have been constructed to accommodate the growth in enrollment. This year, MCPS operates a total of 211 school facilities, including: 137 elementary schools, 40 middle schools, and 25 high schools; 1 career and technology high school; 5 special schools; 1 alternative education center with two satellite centers; and 2 Early Childhood Learning Centers.

### Long-term Space Needs

A continued commitment to capital projects for the next six-years is necessary to address space needs. This year's preliminary September 30th enrollment is 160,770 students. Enrollment is projected to be 167,543 students by the 2029–2030 school year. The CIP identifies where space shortages are projected to occur and how the school system plans to address them. Due to the high level of school utilization throughout the school system, there may be some opportunities to address school space shortages through boundary changes among existing schools. However, additions to existing schools, the opening of new schools, and other major capital projects at schools will continue to be important strategies to address space needs. For a summary of approved capital projects, see the table in Chapter 1, labeled *Superintendent's Recommended FY 2025 Capital Budget and the FY 2025–2030 Capital Improvements Program Summary Table*.

To develop long-term space plans for schools, there is an annual review of the space available at schools to compare enrollment projections with program capacity in the sixth year of the CIP planning period. When the enrollment exceeds the program capacity of a school, several strategies may be considered to address the overutilization of a school. These strategies include:

- Determine if space is available at adjacent or nearby schools and reassign students to a school(s) with space available;
- Consider an addition at the school to accommodate the enrollment if possible. If the school cannot be expanded to accommodate the projected enrollment, additions could be considered at nearby schools and students would be

reassigned to these schools. For a classroom addition to be considered for funding at an individual school, the following thresholds need to be met:

- Elementary school—the enrollment needs to exceed capacity by four classrooms or more (a minimum of 92 seats) in the sixth year of the CIP period
- Middle school—enrollment needs to exceed capacity by six classrooms or more (a minimum of 150 seats) in the sixth year of the CIP period
- High school—enrollment needs to exceed capacity by eight classrooms or more (a minimum of 200 seats) in the sixth year of the CIP period
- Consider the opening of a new school if reassignments and increasing capacity of existing schools is not sufficient to address the projected enrollment. Expanding schools to their maximum core capacity is considered before the opening of a new school.
  - A new elementary school may be considered if the cluster-wide deficit of space exceeds 500–600 seats.
  - A new middle school may be considered if deficits of space exceed 800 seats in one or more clusters.
  - For a new high school, the deficit would need to exceed approximately 1600 seats in one or more clusters.
- The impact of school utilization on the county's Growth and Infrastructure Policy is also reviewed.
- To address growing enrollment in the county, the Superintendent's Recommended FY 2025 Capital Budget and the FY 2025–2030 CIP includes funds for two new schools that are listed below:
  - Reopening of Charles W. Woodward High School (opens August 2027)
  - Crown High School (opens August 2027)

In addition to new school openings, classroom addition projects and major capital projects are planned to address overutilization at schools. Planning and/or construction funds are planned for several classroom addition projects as part of the *Superintendent's Recommended FY 2025 Capital Budget and the 2025–2030 CIP*. All capital projects are listed on the following table, along with the number of additional classrooms and the completion dates.

### Number of Additional Rooms Planned—Capital Projects

School	Number of Rooms Planned*	Completion Date
Greencastle ES (Addition)	10	8/25
Silver Spring International MS (Addition)	5	8/25
Highland View ES (Addition)	8	8/27
James Hubert Blake HS (Addition)	16	8/28
Mill Creek Town ES (Addition)	12	8/28
Paint Branch HS (Addition)	14	8/28

\*The number of rooms includes classrooms that are being added with new construction. These rooms include teaching stations that are counted in capacity as well as teaching stations in the elementary schools that are not counted in the capacity (art, music, and the dual purpose room), October 2023.

## Interim Space Needs

The use of relocatable classrooms on a short-term basis has proven to be successful in providing schools the space necessary to deliver educational programs. Relocatable classrooms provide an interim learning environment for students until permanent capacity can be constructed. Relocatable classrooms also enable the school system to avoid significant capital investment where building needs are only short term. The number of relocatable classrooms in use grew dramatically as program initiatives described under Objective 1 were implemented and enrollment increased. The number of relocatable classrooms declined between 2005 and 2008 as enrollment plateaued and capacity projects opened. However, with enrollment increases since 2008, the number of relocatable classrooms started to increase. See Appendix H for the list of relocatable classrooms in use for the 2023–2024 school year.

## Non-Capital Actions

On March 28, 2023, the Board of Education approved the boundary study scope to create the service area for the re-opening of Charles W. Woodward High School. The scope of the boundary study includes the following high schools: Bethesda Chevy-Chase, Montgomery Blair, Albert Einstein, Walter Johnson, John F. Kennedy, Northwood, Wheaton, and Walt Whitman. The scope also includes the following middle schools: Argyle, Eastern, A. Mario Loiederman, Newport Mill, North Bethesda, Parkland, Thomas W. Pyle, Odessa Shannon, Silver Creek, Silver Spring International, Sligo, Takoma Park, Tilden, and Westland. No elementary schools are included in the boundary study. Information regarding this boundary study is available on the MCPS website at the following link: [www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/WoodwardHSBoundaryStudy.aspx/](http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/WoodwardHSBoundaryStudy.aspx/).

As part of the recommended FY 2025–2030 CIP, the completion date for the Northwood High School project is delayed one-year due to an extension of the construction timeline. As a result of Northwood High School remaining at Charles W. Woodward High School, its holding facility, for one additional year, the recommended completion date for the re-opening of Charles W. Woodward High school is August 2027. A recommendation to adjust the timeline of the approved boundary study to align with the opening of Charles W. Woodward High School will be presented as part of the Board of Education’s worksessions on the FY 2025-2030 CIP.

## OBJECTIVE 3: Sustain and Upgrade Facilities

The Board of Education, superintendent of schools, and school community recognize the necessity to maintain schools in good condition through a range of activities that includes routine daily maintenance to the systematic replacement of building systems. A number of capital projects provide funds for systematic life-cycle asset replacement, including the Roof Replacement Program, the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Program, and the Planned Life Cycle Asset Replacement (PLAR) Program. Because schools built or

modernized since 1985 are generally of higher construction quality than schools built prior to 1985, it is possible to extend the useful life through a high level of maintenance and replacement of building systems. In the coming years, more funds will be directed to major capital projects that sustain and upgrade facilities in good condition for longer periods than has been feasible in the past.

The Board of Education, superintendent of schools, and school community also recognize that even well-maintained facilities eventually reach the end of their useful life span and require upgrade to the infrastructure building systems and the need to address programmatic needs. The school system developed a new system to assess all schools utilizing the Key Facilities Indicators (KFI) to identify schools for a possible Major Capital Project (MCP). Once a school is identified, the scope for the project will be determined based on the individual building system and programmatic and capacity needs for each school. The following table identifies schools that have been approved for a Major Capital Project with planning and/or construction funding included in the Major Capital Projects—Elementary or Major Capital Projects—Secondary projects. The chart below also includes new school projects, as well as replacement projects for existing schools.

### Number of Rooms Planned New, Replacement, and Major Capital Projects

School	Number of Rooms Planned*	Completion Date
Woodlin ES (MCP)	34	1/24
Neelsville MS (MCP)	47	8/24
Poolesville HS (MCP)	67	8/24
Burtonsville ES (Replacement)	47	8/26
JoAnn Leleck ES at Broad Acres (Replacement)	49	8/26
Crown High School (New)	106	8/27
Damascus HS (MCP)	108	8/27
Northwood HS (Replacement)	107	8/27
Charles W. Woodward HS (Reopening)	105	8/27
Eastern MS (MCP)	52	8/28
Col. Zadok Magruder HS (MCP)	96	8/29
Thomas S. Wootton HS (MCP)	105	8/29

The number of rooms includes classrooms that are being added with new construction. These rooms include teaching stations that are counted in capacity as well as teaching stations in the elementary schools that are not counted in the capacity (art, music, and dual purpose rooms), October 2023

## **OBJECTIVE 4: Provide Schools that Are Environmentally Safe, Secure, Functionally Efficient, and Comfortable**

To maintain and extend the useful life of school facilities, MCPS follows a continuum of activities that begins the first day a new school is opened. Funding for maintenance activities is found in both the capital and operating budgets. A level of effort funding is provided in both budgets for building maintenance and systemic renovations.

MCPS has many projects designed to meet the capital maintenance needs of schools across the county. These countywide projects are described in Chapter 5. Countywide projects address environmental issues, safety and security, and major building system maintenance in schools. These projects require an assessment of each school relative to the needs of other schools and include scheduled major repairs and replacement activities. The assessment process for most of the countywide projects is carried out through an annual review that involves a team of maintenance professionals, school principals, and consultants. On some projects, local, state, and federal mandates affect the scope and cost of the effort required.

MCPS has deepened its commitment to sustainability and conservation of resources in the design and operation of all facilities by adopting an update to Policy ECA, “Energy Conservation” and renaming it “Sustainability.” This revised policy sets a target for an 80% reduction of greenhouse gases by 2027 and 100% by 2035, aligning with the county target for greenhouse gas reductions, and other areas of long-term sustainability. The new policy also deepens the MCPS commitment to environmental stewardship and environmental educational leadership through curriculum and will expand work by the School Energy and Recycling Team (SERT) Program to promote efficient and responsible energy use and active recycling in all schools. The SERT Program strives to significantly reduce energy consumption and to increase recycling systemwide by providing training and education; incentives, recognition, and award programs for conservation; accessible energy and recycling data; individual school programs for energy and environmental investigation-based learning opportunities; and conservation operations and procedures. SERT staff works with students, teachers, staff, and the community to practice environmental stewardship and to develop strategies to reduce the carbon footprint of MCPS.

MCPS has implemented measures to reduce the environmental impact of its buildings through a comprehensive revision of its construction design guidelines. Beginning in 2006, schools were designed utilizing the practices from the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system of the United States Green Building Council. Great Seneca Creek Elementary School, which opened in September 2006, was the first public school in Maryland to be “gold” certified under the LEED rating system for green buildings. From FY 2007 through FY 2019, all new schools were designed to achieve a LEED

for Schools “silver” certification. Smaller green technology and conservation pilots were introduced at several schools to provide a healthy and effective learning environment for students and staff. Beginning in FY 2020, schools are being designed utilizing the Green Globes rating system for green building design.

## **OBJECTIVE 5: Support Multipurpose Use of Schools**

MCPS recognizes the role schools play as centers of community activity and affiliation. The school system supports multipurpose use of its schools, especially in regard to uses that complement the educational program. Multipurpose uses of schools that promote family and community partnerships also are of great importance. Compatible uses of schools are factored into the facility planning process whenever possible. A prime example of compatible uses in schools is the leasing of available space in elementary schools to childcare providers. Most of the elementary schools in the system provide space for childcare providers through a mixture of full-day centers and before and after school services.

The Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Capital Budget includes several projects to provide services in county schools. In the Child Care in Schools Project, DHHS funds the construction of childcare classrooms in schools undergoing major construction or renovation. MCPS oversees the construction of the childcare classrooms while DHHS arranges for the lease of the childcare classroom to a private childcare provider.

Linkages to Learning, a collaborative program between the school system, DHHS, and private community providers, addresses the complex social and mental health needs of an increasingly diverse and economically impacted population in Montgomery County. In order to address possible barriers to learning, a variety of mental health, social, and educational support services are brought together at Linkages to Learning sites. In addition, services are provided at the School Health Services Center at Rocking Horse Road. The long-range plan is to expand the Linkages to Learning programs to additional schools throughout the county.

Since fall 1997, Linkages to Learning/School-based Health Centers (SBHC) have been providing enhanced health resources to students and their families. In response to the County Council Health and Human Services Committee request for a plan to expand SBHCs to additional school sites, the DHHS convened the School-based Health Centers Interagency Planning Group. The planning group was an interagency group that developed selection criteria to rank schools and a timeline for constructing new SBHCs at school sites.

In spring 2006, the School Based Wellness Center Planning Group (SBWCPG) convened. The planning group was charged with describing the services that would be offered at wellness centers at high schools and to identify criteria and a decision-making process for prioritizing school sites for wellness centers. As a result of the work of the planning

group, High School Wellness Centers (HSWC) have opened at several high schools.

As part of the adopted FY 2023 operating budget and also the adopted FY 2023 Capital Budget and FY 2023–2028 Capital Improvements Program, the County Council approved the implementation of an interim phase for HSWCs at high schools currently without this program. The interim phase, called Bridges to Wellness, provided mental health and positive youth development components of the HSWC model at all schools that currently do not have a HSWC.

Information regarding all DHHS programs at schools can be found in each Cluster of Chapter 4, within the Facility Characteristics of Schools Table.

Kingsview Middle School in Germantown adjoins a county-operated community center. The community center is a 23,000 square foot building that contains a gymnasium, social hall, arts room, game room, and exercise room, as well as administrative offices, common areas, and conference spaces. The center is structurally integrated with the middle school building but has a separate and distinct main entry. An outdoor pool and bathhouse also are located on the site as a separate facility, consisting of the following: 50-meter lap pool, leisure pool, wading pool for toddlers, and common lounging areas. Other opportunities to collocate schools with compatible uses will be pursued in the future as land for new school sites becomes more limited.

Community use of school facilities is another important way in which schools serve their communities. Outside of the instructional day, schools are used for a wide range of community activities. The Interagency Coordinating Board (ICB) for Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) manages school use, collects fees for most community uses of schools, and maintains an Enterprise Fund to pay for the cost of utilizing schools after school hours. Among the largest users of schools are childcare providers, county recreation groups, sports groups, and religious groups.

## **OBJECTIVE 6: Meet Special Education Program Space Needs**

The Maryland State Department of Education established a target for local school systems to address the need for students receiving special education services in the general education environment. The Fiscal Year 2024 proposed target requires 71 percent of students to receive special education services in the general education environment. As a result of this mandate, the Department of Special Education Services (DSES) and the Division of Prekindergarten, Special Programs, and Related Services (DPSPRS), in collaboration with the Department of Facilities Management and the Office of School Support and Well-Being, plan and coordinate the identification of services sites and locations to address the diverse needs of students receiving special education services. This process is designed to ensure the delivery of special education services to the

maximum extent appropriate in the school the student would attend if nondisabled.

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) chooses locations for special education services by focusing on the delivery of services in the student's home school or in the school, cluster, or region of the county closest to where the student resides.

The percentage of students who receive special education services in their home school has increased each year since 1998. The following model guides facility planning:

- Special education Home School Model services are offered in all elementary schools to students in Grades kindergarten–5.
- Learning and Academic Disabilities and transition services are provided in all secondary schools for students in grades 6-12.

The following regional services are available to students as appropriate:

- Augmentative and Alternative Communication Services
- Autism Spectrum Disorders Services
- Autism Resource Services
- Autism Connections Services
- Bridge Services
- Prekindergarten and Elementary Physical Disabilities Services
- Elementary Learning Center
- Extensions Services
- Enhanced Social Emotional Special Education Services (E-SESES)
- Twice Exceptional 2e Services
- Infants and Toddlers Program
- Learning for Independence (LFI) Services
- Preschool Education Program (PEP)
- Prekindergarten Language Classes
- School/Community-based (SCB) Services
- Social Emotional Special Education Services (SESES)
- Longview and Stephen Knolls schools
- Carl Sandburg Learning Center
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
- Preschool Vision Class
- John L. Gildner Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents
- Rock Terrace School

## **Birth through 5 Years of Age Special Education Growth**

The Montgomery County Infants and Toddlers Program provides services to children with developmental delays from birth to three years of age or until the start of the school year after turning four under the Extended Individualized Family Service Plan. These services are provided in natural environments, such as home, childcare, or other community settings. Growth in the Infants and Toddlers Program has resulted in the location of five centers throughout the county.

MCPS provides a continuum of special education services for children ages three through five. Preschool Education Program

(PEP) services range from consultative and itinerant services for children in community-based childcare settings and preschools to itinerant instruction at home for medically fragile children. Classroom environments are provided for children who need a comprehensive approach to their learning needs in part or full-day classes.

Providing prekindergarten special education services in the least restrictive environment (LRE) is a challenge because of the limited number of general education prekindergarten classrooms and services available in MCPS. The Office of Special Education and the Division of Title 1, Early Childhood Services, and Recovery Funds DSES and the Division of Early Childhood Programs and Services (DECPS) collaborate to collocate general and special education preschool classes to provide additional LRE inclusive part and full-day opportunities to prekindergarten students. MCPS also is focused on increasing the number of locations where nondisabled community peers are invited to learn alongside students receiving special education services in a prekindergarten classroom.