

Chapter 2

The Planning Environment

Facility plans are developed in a dynamic planning environment, driven by steady school enrollment growth. Since the mid-1980s, when birth rates began to rise and reverse a so-called “baby-bust”, growth has been accompanied by increased diversity, as seen in the wide range of cultures, languages, and racial and ethnic populations in our cosmopolitan county.

Enrollment growth since 2008 had been particularly strong until the COVID-19 health pandemic. In March 2020, MCPS, similar to many school systems around the country, switched from in-person learning, to virtually learning. Nationwide, school systems experienced lower enrollments in the 2020–2021 school year, particularly in the lower grades, as homeschooling and private schools with in-person instruction gained enrollment.

Official September 30th student enrollment was 160,554 for the 2022–2023 school year, an increase of 2,322 students from the 2021–2022 school year. Enrollment grew by 11,775 students from the 2012–2013 to the 2022–2023 school year. Total school system enrollment is projected to increase to 167,238 students by the 2028–2029 school year. This represents a slowdown in growth, due to the continued decline in resident births, resulting in lower kindergarten classes, and the ripple effect as they progress through the system each year, as well as the anomalous 2020–2021 and 2021–2022 school year student enrollments due to the COVID-19 health pandemic.

Community Trends

Population

Montgomery County’s overall population is growing and diversifying. According to U.S. Census Bureau, the county’s total population has increased by 188,720 people, or 21.6

percent since 2000 from 873,341 to 1,062,061 people (April 1, 2020). A significant share of the county’s population increase has resulted from resident live births outnumbering deaths by more than two to one. Since 2000, there have been 275,349 births compared to 121,182 deaths in the county, for a net natural population increase of 154,167 residents, accounting for 84.7 percent of the county’s overall population increase (Maryland Department of Health, 2020).

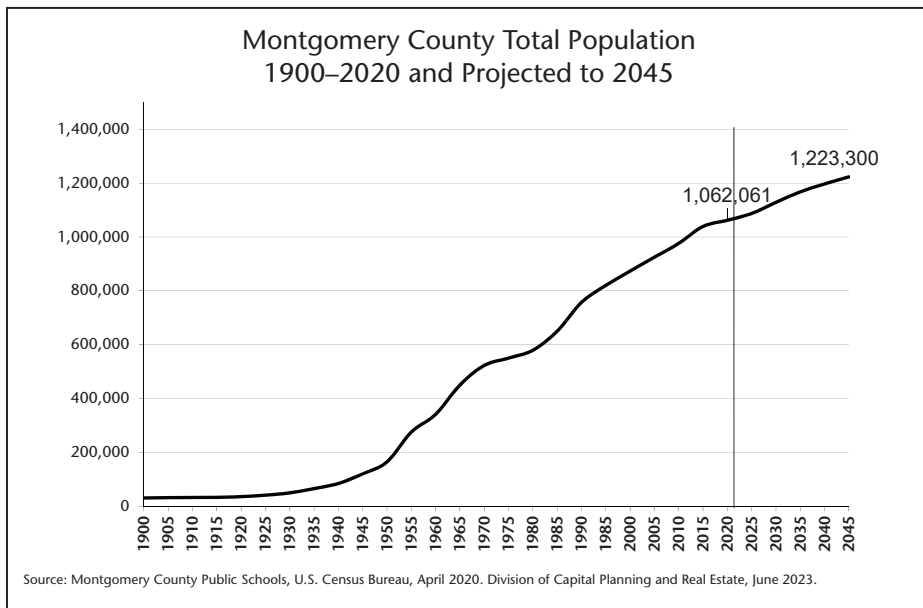
Migration patterns also are contributing to population growth. Between July 2010 and July 2019, international migration has been estimated to contribute 76,972 residents while domestic migration resulted in a loss of 47,953 residents, netting 29,019 new residents (Maryland Department of Planning). The July 2019 estimate of county residents born outside of the United States is approximately 339,400 (U.S. Census Bureau) or approximately one-third of the county’s population.

Montgomery County’s trend toward racial and ethnic diversification mirrors national demographic trends. According to U.S. Census Bureau data, between 2000 and 2018, the county’s White, non-Hispanic population decreased as a percentage of the total population by 16.5 percent to 43.0 percent, while the African American population increased by 3.3 percent, the Asian population increased by 3.2 percent, and the Hispanic population (of any race) increased by 8.4 percent to 19.9 percent. Other categories, such as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Native American, and Alaskan Native and Two or More have a combined increase to 4.6 percent. The U.S. Census Bureau introduced the Two or More category in 2010. Also in 2010, the county measured its first year that racial and ethnic groups other than non-Hispanic Whites accounted for the majority of the county’s population. According to the recently released

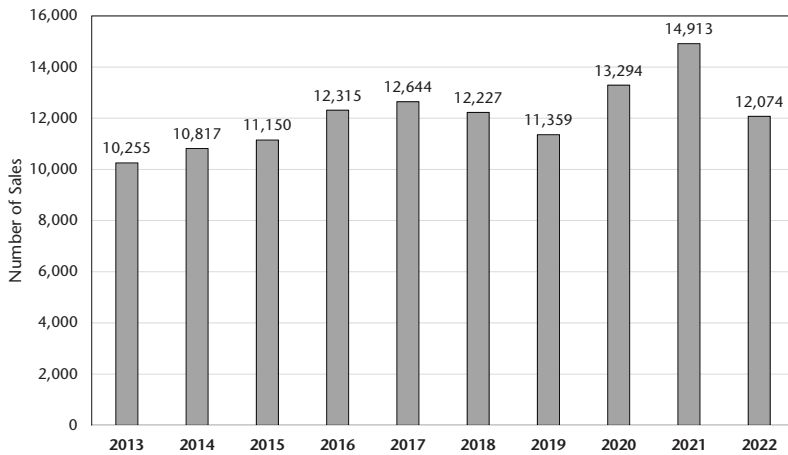
2020 census, 43.1 percent of the population is White, 18.6 percent Black, 15.4 percent Asian, 11.0 percent Other, 11.2 percent Two or More, and 20.5 percent are Hispanic (of any race).

Economy

It has been 14 years since the end of the “Great Recession,” which officially lasted nearly two years, beginning in December 2007 and ending in June 2009. Even after the official end of the recession, the economy remained weak, and job growth was slow for several more years. Compared to other parts of the nation, data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show that Montgomery County fared reasonably well during and after the recession. Whereas national unemployment peaked at approximately



Montgomery County Total Sales of Existing Homes by Year



Sources: Economic Indicators Reports to County Council, Montgomery County Department of Finance, July 2019, Greater Capital Area Association of Realtors, Housing Market Reports 2022

10 percent in 2009, the county’s peak unemployment was 5.7 percent in Fiscal Year (FY) 2010. By FY 2015, the national unemployment rate dropped to 5.7 percent and Montgomery County’s rate to 4.2 percent. The unemployment rate continued to decline in the county and as of December 2019 was 2.4 percent, which was lower than the national unemployment rate of 3.5 percent. The national unemployment rate increased to 14.7 percent as of April 2020, as the COVID-19 health pandemic caused many businesses to shut down during the pandemic. The county unemployment rate in peaked in May 2020 at 9.8 percent, but declined to 3.9 as of August 2022, which is still higher than it was before the COVID-19 health pandemic. (Economic Indicator; Montgomery County Department of Finance, April 2020; Maryland Department of Labor; and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

The Great Recession’s impact and recovery also is evident in the county housing market. In FY 2010, there were 1,056 new residential starts. By FY 2016, residential starts peaked at 5,230 units, and in FY 2019, after two years of lower starts, there were 5,429 units. The recent decline in units was mostly due to fewer multi-family units constructed. During the past 10 fiscal years, the weakest year was FY 2012, in the resale market when 9,206 existing homes sold. In 2020, 13,294 existing homes sold; an increase for the first time since 2017 when sales were 12,644. Prior to the recession, the median sales price of housing experienced a bubble that reached \$444,000 in 2007. That figure dropped to \$340,000 in 2009, but sales prices have gradually risen since, and the median sales price of housing was \$549,000 in 2022, according to the Greater Capital Area Association of Realtors.

The recession’s long-lasting impacts on school system enrollment include the following:

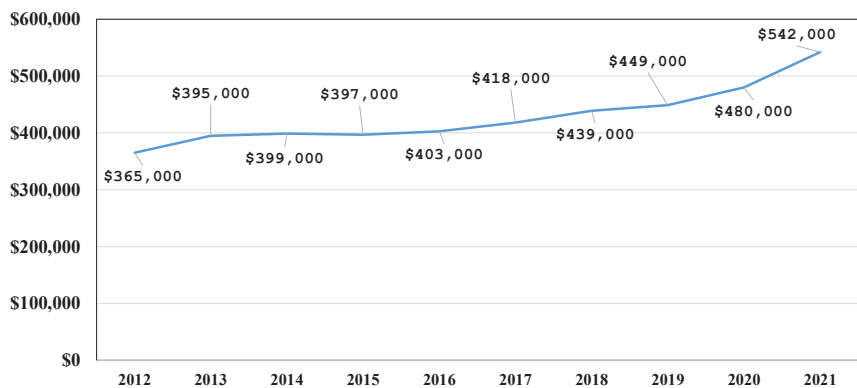
- First, households that experienced job losses in other parts of the country moved to Montgomery County for better job prospects or to share housing with those who live in the county, which put pressure on MCPS enrollment.
- Second, because of reduced opportunities for employment outside the county, there was less out-migration than is typical. Out-migration has moderated enrollment increases in the past by offsetting in-migration. During the recession, net migration to the county increased, raising MCPS enrollment levels.
- Third, decreases in the value of county housing placed many homeowners “under water” in mortgage debt. Consequently, households who might have moved instead remained. This, too, resulted in less out-migration than in-migration.
- Fourth, many families that previously enrolled their children in private schools were forced to rethink this financial expense. There was a marked increase in students enrolling in MCPS from area private schools.

Master Plans & Housing

Traditional suburban residential development is becoming the exception in the county. Subdivisions in the Clarksburg area are among the last greenfield developments to be constructed in the county. A new school cluster formed in Clarksburg in 2006, when Clarksburg High School opened to accommodate these new communities.

In the past, county development characterized by a separation of residential and commercial uses was typical. Today, a desire to mix land uses and concentrate denser development in transit accessible hubs is guiding new master and sector plans. In addition, reduced availability of land for residential

Montgomery County Median Home Sales Prices 2012-2021



Source: Montgomery County Market Trends Reports, Greater Capital Area Association of Realtors

development has spurred infill and redevelopment of older housing and/or other structures. Higher housing densities than seen in the past will characterize the future housing stock and accommodate our growing population. Overall, today's land use planning promotes the urbanization of transportation corridors.

Recently adopted master and sector plans include those for the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro station area and Bethesda Downtown. In 2017, there were two adopted plans: the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills (FG/MH) Sector Plan, and the Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan. The FG/MH plan provides for increased residential density near existing transit stations through rezoning, with the intent to prioritize affordable Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs). The Lyttonsville plan provides for increased residential density near the Lyttonsville Purple Line Station as well as potential redevelopment of Paddington Square. Evaluations on the net effect of students on the school system occurs after development plan approval.

MCPS participates in county and city land use planning to ensure impacts on enrollment are considered and future school sites identified. (See Appendix C for further information on the role of MCPS in land use planning.) Moreover, MCPS monitors housing activity in all school service areas through close coordination with the Montgomery County Planning Department and comparable plan review departments in the cities of Gaithersburg and Rockville. In addition, MCPS collaborates with county agencies to measure the student yield of different types of housing.

County Growth and Infrastructure Policy

The County Growth and Infrastructure Policy (GIP) is the tool the county uses to regulate subdivision approvals, ensuring they are commensurate with the availability of adequate transportation and school facilities. The policy includes an annual test of school adequacy that compares projected school enrollment to school capacity at the elementary, middle, and high school levels in the 25 MCPS school clusters, as well as at each individual school. The school test takes into account capital projects scheduled within the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) timeframe.

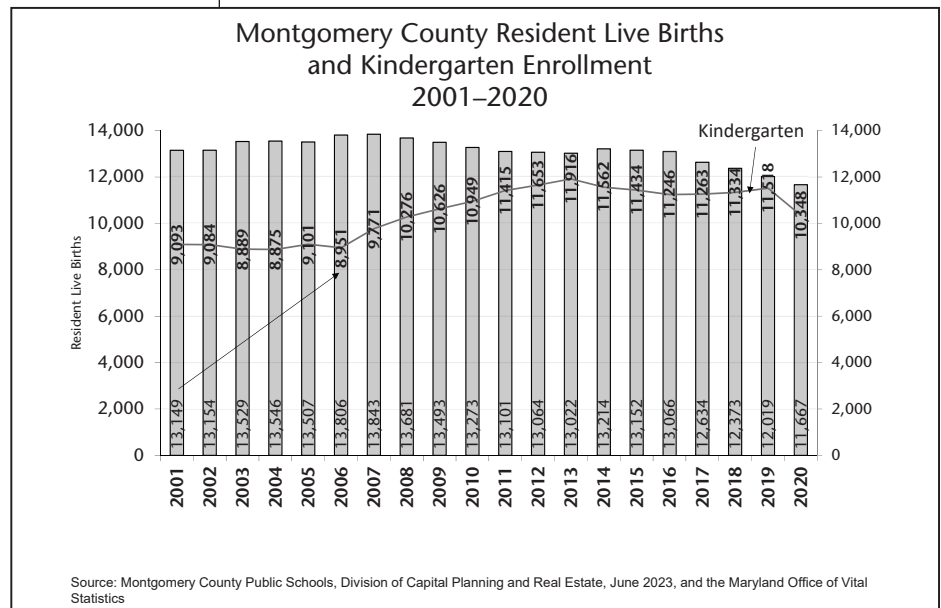
Additional information on the role of MCPS with respect to the County Growth and Infrastructure is in Appendix C. The FY 2024 school test, based on the enrollment projections and capital projects included in the adopted FY 2023–2028 Amended CIP, goes into effect July 1, 2023. For results of the FY 2024 school test see Appendix D.

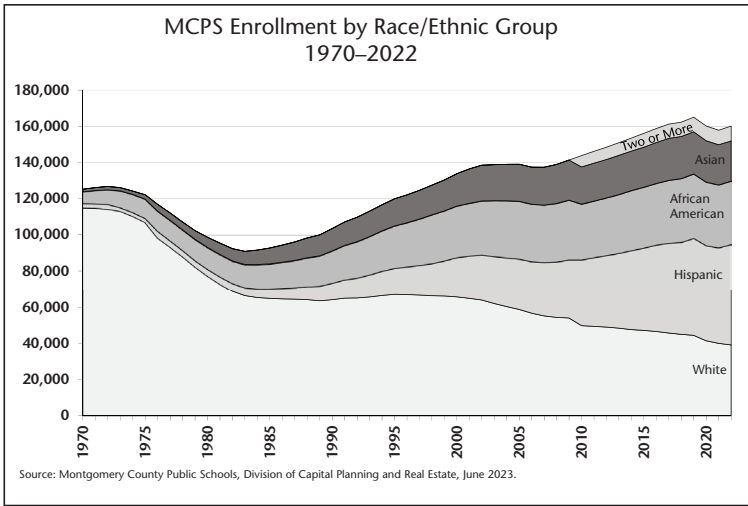
Student Population Trends

The main contributing factors influencing student population include resident live births, the aging of the student population, and migration patterns. A percentage of the babies born to Montgomery County residents in one year show up in MCPS incoming kindergarten classes five years later. This is commonly referred to as a kindergarten capture rate. In both 2000 and 2016, birth figures were just over 13,000, growing, peaking in 2007 at 13,843, and then declining. In 2017, 2018, and 2019, total births were less than 13,000 at 12,634, 12,373, and 12,019, respectively. Births in 2020, the last year available, dropped below 12,000, totaling 11,667 for Montgomery County, continuing the downward trend.

In the 2000–2001 school year, the kindergarten capture rate was 73.9 percent. By the 2006–2007 school year, the rate decreased to 68.1 percent, and had since increased to 87.2 percent for the 2019–2020 school year. The increases were likely due to economic factors as well as changes to all-day kindergarten programs. The 2020–2021 school year kindergarten enrollment was 78.7 percent and considered an anomaly due to the COVID-19 health pandemic. Kindergarten enrollment increased to 83.9 percent in the 2022–2023 school year. Future kindergarten classes will most likely return to approximately 87.0 percent of births five years earlier.

The movement up through the grades by students, termed the “aging of the student population,” is the second driver of enrollment change. When the size of the kindergarten class is different from that of Grade 12, then there is a natural change in total enrollment from one year to the next. The Grade 12 total for the 2021–2022 school year was 11,690, and the kindergarten class for the 2022–2023 school year was 10,602, or a difference between the two grades of 1,088 students. Therefore, in the 2022–2023 school year, 46.9 percent of the one-year change in enrollment increase of 2,320 students was caused by existing students aging up, as Grade 12 students exiting the system were replaced by a smaller group of kindergarten students entering it.

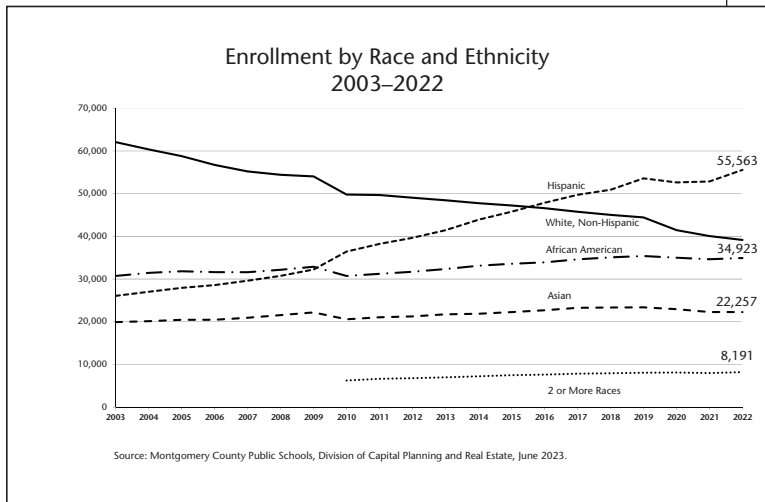




Migration, the third driver of enrollment change, can significantly fluctuate with economic conditions and international events, each of which can be volatile and difficult to predict. Records of MCPS student entries and withdrawals show that there has been a decrease in the in-migration from approximately 12,328 new students from other public school districts in Maryland and throughout the United States, private schools, homeschooling, and from out of the country in the 2010–2011 school year to 9,391 in the 2022–2023 school year. Withdrawals over the same time increased from 10,186 in the 2010–2011 school year to 9,431 in the 2022–2023 school year. There are more students withdrawing to attend other public, private, foreign, or home schools than entering the system in 2022–2023 school year. More students withdrew to attend private schools or chose homeschooling during the COVID-19 health pandemic. Students began to return, as expected, to the system during the 2021–2022 school year, and enrollment has increased overall for the 2022–2023 school year.

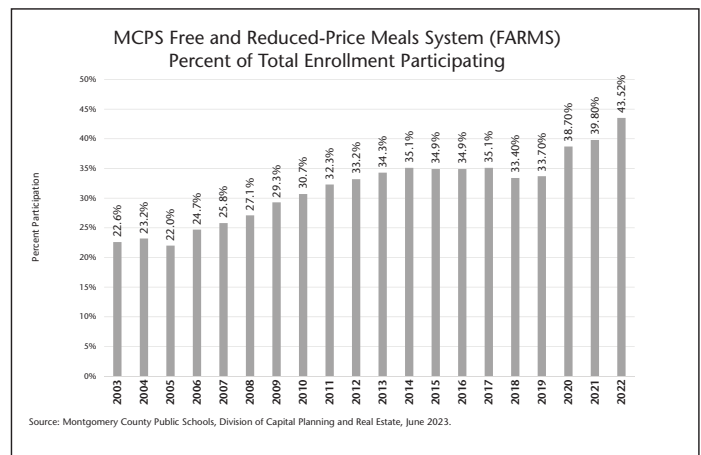
Student Diversity

Records of county resident live births show a levelling off in the numbers of births in each racial/ethnic group. This is in contrast to large declines from 1990 to 2010, in the number of White, non-Hispanic births and large increases in live births of other race/ethnic groups. In 2020, White, non-Hispanic births



were 3,861, African American births were 2,534, Asian births were 1,643, and Hispanic births were 3,558. The general fertility rate for Hispanic women between the ages 15 and 44 is 78.8 (per 1,000) versus 60.5 for African American women, and 53.2 for non-Hispanic White women in the same age range (Vital Statistics, Maryland Department of Health).

Official enrollment for September 30, 2022, was 160,554 students. Of the total enrollment, 21.8 percent of students were African American, 13.9 percent were Asian, 34.6 percent were Hispanic, and 24.4 percent were White, non-Hispanic, and 5.1 percent were Two or More Races. The categories of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaskan Native are each less than five percent of the total enrollment. The accompanying chart illustrates the trend of increasing student diversity since 1970, when the student population was 92 percent White, non-Hispanic. Today, there is no longer a majority racial/ethnic group.



Also shown are enrollments in the four major racial and ethnic groups over the past two decades. It can be seen that the addition of a new category resulted in a dip in enrollment in 2010 in White, non-Hispanic, African American, and Asian students, as some identified with the “Two or More races” category. (See Appendices A-3 and A-4 for trends in enrollment by race and ethnic group.)

Student participation in the federal Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) Program is the school system’s primary measure of student socioeconomic levels. In the 2022–2023 school year, 43.8 percent of students participated in the FARMS Program. There has been an increase of 11,122 students participating in FARMS during the past 10 school years (2013–2014 to 2022–2023).

Student enrollment in the English Language Development (ELD) program is an indicator of student language diversity. As the school system has diversified over time, this percentage has grown. During the 2012–2013 school year, 13.6 percent of students were in the ELD (previously known as ESOL) Program, and that has grown to 18.9 percent for the 2022–2023 school year. Emergent multilingual learners (EML) students in ELD represent approximately 150 countries of origin and speak an

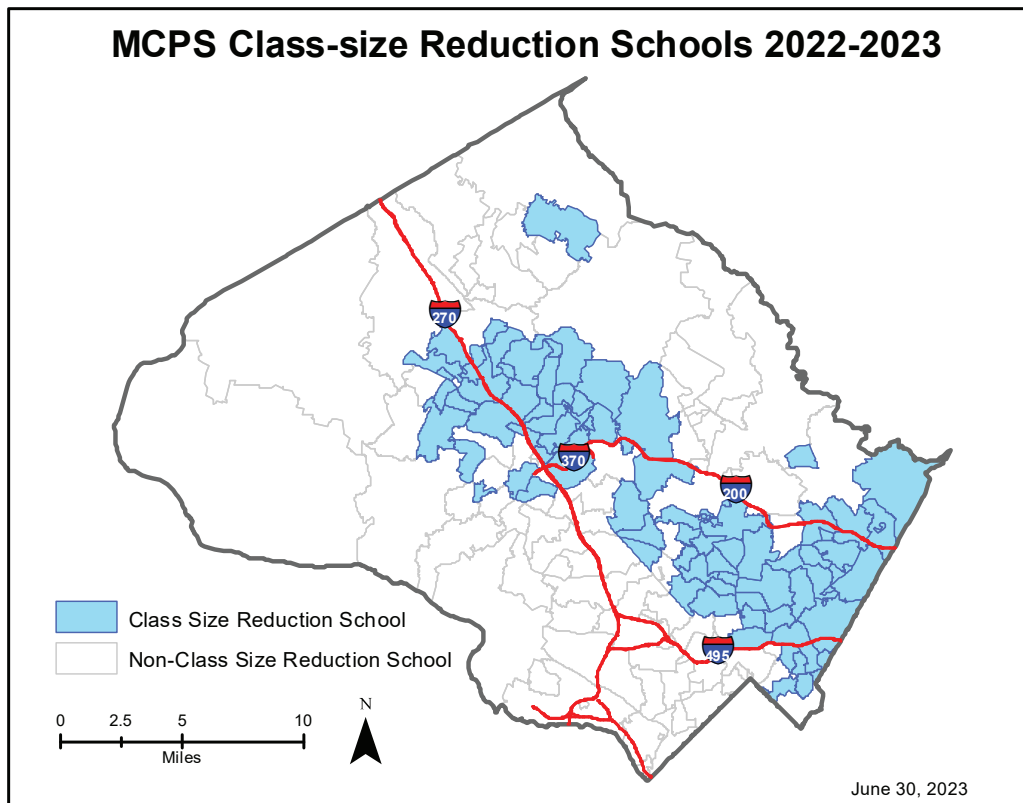
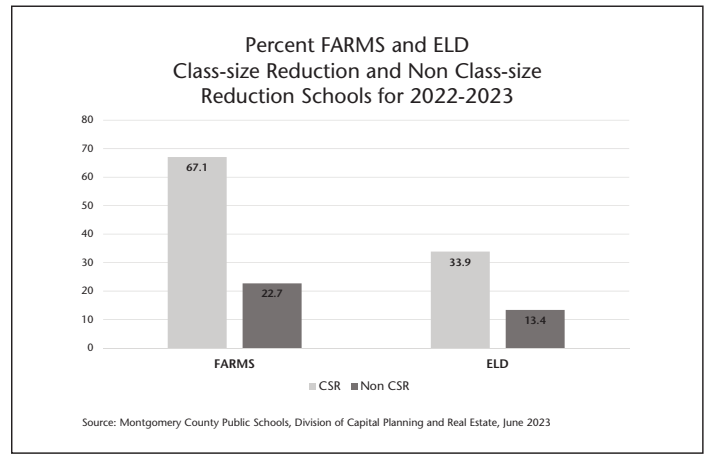
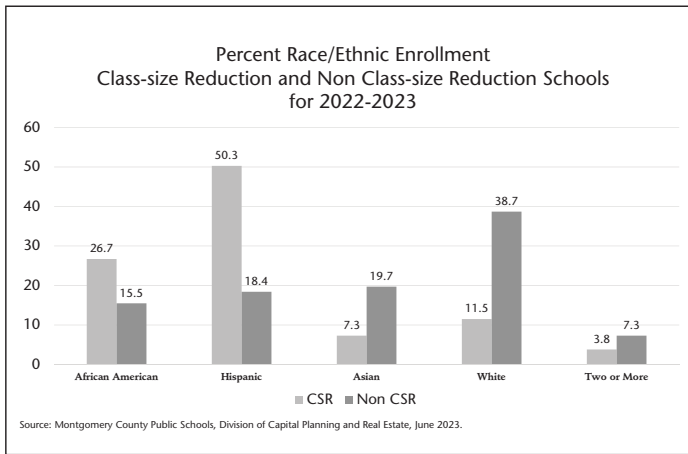
estimated 115 different languages. Although immigration to the United States has been increasing for many years and does contribute program participants, a large proportion of EML students were born in the United States.

Class Size Reduction and Non Class Size Reduction Elementary Schools

For the 2022–2023 school year, there were 69 Class Size Reduction (CSR) elementary schools (including upper schools in the case of paired schools). Class Size Reduction schools include both Title 1 and Focus schools and have reduced class-sizes in order to address student needs and prepare the students for success in later grade levels. The 2022–2023 demographic

composition of CSR and Non CSR schools is compared in the accompanying chart.

At one time, CSR elementary school service areas had little racial and ethnic diversity. The wave of in-migration over the past three decades has transformed these communities and the greatest concentration of student diversity and participation in the FARMS and ELD programs is now found in areas of the county where two conditions exist—major transportation corridors are present and affordable housing is available. In Silver Spring and Wheaton, these conditions are found in communities bordering New Hampshire Avenue, Georgia Avenue, and Columbia Pike. In Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Germantown, these conditions are found in communities bordering I-270 and Route 355. These relatively affordable areas are characterized by apartment communities dating



from the 1980s and earlier, as well as neighborhoods with older townhouses and single-family detached homes. Some of these homes may be occupied by two or more families who share housing costs. In these communities, enrollment growth has been driven by turnover of existing housing units.

MCPS Enrollment Forecast

The school enrollment forecasts are based mainly on county births, aging of the current student population, and migration patterns. As county births increased through 2007, more kindergarten students entered MCPS. The advent of full-day kindergarten, countywide since 2006, also has been a factor in kindergarten enrollment increases. The 2020–2021 kindergarten class was unusually low due to the COVID-19 health pandemic, and therefore considered anomalous. The 2021–2022 kindergarten class was larger than the 2020–2021 school year, but was still smaller than it was between the 2010–2011 and 2019–2020 school years. The 2022–2023 kindergarten class was lower than 2021–2022. The capture rate, however, increased to 84.0 percent.

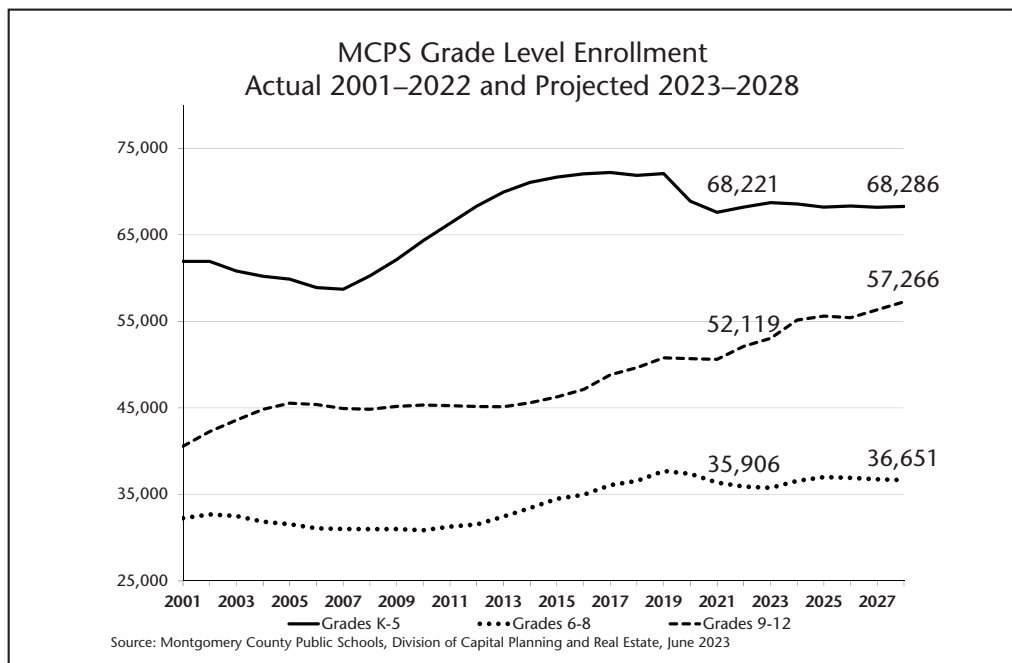
It is anticipated that there will be a return to 87 percent kindergarten capture to births five years earlier over time. However, the decline in resident births will result in a decline in the kindergarten population that in turn will slow the growth of the total enrollment as students age from grade to grade. In addition, the unusually small kindergarten class of the 2020–2021 school year resulted in a smaller than anticipated 1st grade class in the 2022–2023 school year that may to some extent keep enrollment lower through the elementary years during the planning period. Due to a decade of large elementary enrollment increases, MCPS is now experiencing

a period of growth at secondary schools. (See appendices A and B for enrollment projections by grade level and Appendix C-2 for a description of the MCPS enrollment forecasting methodology.)

Summary

The last major period of enrollment increases at MCPS occurred during the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s, when children from the Baby Boom era, born between 1946 and 1964, enrolled in schools. Enrollment from this wave of growth peaked in 1972, at 126,912 students. Thereafter, the so-called Baby Bust era saw births decline and MCPS enrollment decrease to a low of 91,030 students in 1983. Since 1983, a much greater “baby boom” has occurred in the county. During the official Baby Boom years, the highest birth year in Montgomery County was 1963 when there were 8,461 resident births. The current baby boom in the county significantly surpasses this figure with the 5-year resident births averaging approximately 12,352. The factors most contributing to enrollment increases are higher kindergarten capture rates and migration patterns.

Keeping pace with enrollment growth, and accommodating class-size reductions through Title 1 and Focus elementary schools have required a major investment in school facilities. In the 2022–2023 school year, MCPS operated 136 elementary schools, 40 middle schools, 25 high schools, 1 career and technology high school, 1 alternative program with 2 satellite locations, and 5 special program centers. Since 1983, MCPS has opened 36 elementary schools, 19 middle schools, and 6 high schools. During the next six years, additional school capacity will be added through new school openings, major capital projects, and classroom additions.



Chapter 3

Facility Planning Objectives

MCPS Vision, Mission, and Core Values

The Adopted FY 2024 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY 2023–2028 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 ^a
Grades 9–12 High	25:1 ^b
Special Education, ESOL, Alternative Programs ^c	

^aProgram 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).

^bProgram 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).

^cSpecial 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”) and the expansion of full-day kindergarten to all elementary schools in MCPS. 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.

2022–2023 Focus and Title I Schools

Elementary Schools

Arcola Lucy V. Barnsley *Bel Pre (K–2) Brookhaven Brown Station Burnt Mills Burtonsville Cannon Road Clearspring Clopper Mill *Cresthaven (3–5) Capt. James E. Daly Dr. Charles R. Drew East Silver Spring Fairland Fields Road Flower Hill Forest Knolls Fox Chapel Gaithersburg Galway Georgian Forest Germantown Glen Haven Glenallan Goshen Great Seneca Creek Greencastle Harmony Hills Highland Highland View Jackson Road Kemp Mill Lake Seneca JoAnn Leleck at Broad Acres	Maryvale Thurgood Marshall S. Christa McAuliffe Meadow Hall Mill Creek Towne *Montgomery Knolls (HS–2) *New Hampshire Estates (HS–2) *Roscoe R. Nix (K–2) *Oak View (3–5) William T. Page *Pine Crest (3–5) *Piney Branch (3–5) Judith A. Resnik Sally K. Ride Rock View Rolling Terrace Rosemont Sequoyah Sargent Shriver Flora M. Singer South Lake Stedwick *Strathmore (3–5) Strawberry Knoll Summit Hall Harriet R. Tubman Twinbrook Viers Mill Washington Grove Waters Landing Watkins Mill Weller Road Wheaton Woods Whetstone
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Middle Schools

Francis Scott Key Montgomery Village	Odessa Shannon White Oak
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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 **bold** 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 Montgomery County Council added additional funding to the FY 2018 budget to support the expansion of 10 MCPS Head Start classrooms to full school-day programs. With the additional funding from the County Council, 27 of the 34 Head Start classes became full-day programs. 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. Funding capital improvements has been a challenge since 1983 when enrollment began to rise sharply. New schools, as well as numerous additions to existing schools have been constructed to accommodate the growth in enrollment. This year, MCPS operated a total of 210 school facilities, including: 136 elementary schools, 40 middle schools, and 25 high schools; 1 career and technology high school; 5 special education 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 official September 30th enrollment was 160,554 students. Enrollment is projected to be 167,278 students by 2028. 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 *County Council Adopted FY 2024 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY 2023–2028 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 adopted FY 2024 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY 2023–2028 CIP includes funds for four new schools that are listed below:

- Clarksburg Elementary School #9 (opens August 2023)
- Reopening of Charles W. Woodward High School (opens August 2026)
- Crown High School (opens August 2027)
- Bethesda-Chevy Chase/Walter Johnson Clusters Elementary School (opens TBD)

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 adopted FY 2024 Capital Budget and Amendments to the 2023–2028 CIP. All capital projects are listed on the following table, along with the number of rooms in the projects and the completion dates. Prior to requesting funding for a project, facility planning funds are requested to conduct a feasibility study to determine the feasibility, scope, and cost for the project.

Number of Additional Rooms Planned—Capital Projects

School	Number of Rooms Planned*	Completion Date
Parkland MS (Addition)	11	8/23
Clarksburg Elementary School #9 (New)	37	8/23
Dr. Ronald E. McNair ES (Addition)	8	8/23
William T. Page ES (Addition)	16	8/23
Silver Spring International MS (Addition)	5	8/25
Greencastle ES (Addition)	10	8/25
JoAnn Leleck ES at Broad Acres (Replacement)	44	8/25
Northwood HS (Addition)	45	8/26
Charles W. Woodward HS (Reopening)	101	8/26
Crown High School (New)	106	8/27
Burtonsville ES (Replacement)	43	8/27
Highland View ES (Addition)	8	8/27

*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 2022.

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. For the 2022–2023 school year, 417 relocatable classrooms were in use at various schools throughout the county. This number does not include relocatable classrooms used for daycare, to stage construction on site at schools, or relocatables located at holding facilities and other facilities throughout the school system. See Appendix H for the list of relocatable classrooms by school location.

With the implementation of wireless technology and mobile devices at all schools, the need for computer laboratories has decreased. At some schools with space needs, the school system converted some computer laboratories to standard classrooms to deliver the educational programs beginning in the 2013–2014 school year.

Non-Capital Actions

One non-capital action was approved as part of the FY 2024 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY 2023–2028 Capital Improvements Program.

- A boundary study was conducted in spring 2022, to create the service area for the new Clarksburg Elementary School #9. The scope included the following elementary schools—Clarksburg, William B. Gibbs, Jr., Little Bennett, and Wilson Wims elementary schools. No middle or high schools were included in the boundary study. The boundary study report was released summer 2022. The recommendation by the superintendent of schools was released in October 2022, as part of the *Superintendent's Recommended FY 2024 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY2023–2028 Capital Improvements Program*. Board of Education action was on November 17, 2022. Information regarding the boundary action is available on the MCPS website at the following link: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/planning/ClarksburgES9BoundaryStudy.aspx>

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 has developed a new system to assess all schools utilizing the Key Facilities Indicators (KFI) to identify schools for a possible major capital project. Once a school is identified for a major capital project, the scope for the project will be identified based on the individual building system and programmatic and capacity needs for each school. The following table identifies nine schools that have been approved for a major capital project with planning and/or construction funding included in the adopted amended CIP in the Major Capital Projects—Elementary or Major Capital Projects—Secondary projects. Eastern Middle School and Piney Branch Elementary School have been identified as the next two schools to be included for major capital projects. However, only planning

funds have been included in the adopted FY 2023–2028 amended CIP, and therefore, a TBD completion date will be shown until construction funds are approved in a future CIP. Additionally, as part of the adopted FY 2023–2028 CIP, 10 elementary schools and 3 middle schools have been identified for feasibility studies as follows: Belmont, Burning Tree, Cold Spring, Damascus, DuFief, Oakland Terrace, Sherwood, Twinbrook, Whetstone, and Woodfield elementary schools; and Banneker, Gaithersburg, and White Oak middle schools. The intent of the feasibility studies is to identify the scope of the project as noted above and to determine the programmatic, capacity, and building system needs for each school. Once the feasibility studies are complete, a recommendation regarding scope, timeline and funding these projects will be considered in a future CIP.

School	Number of Rooms Planned*	Completion Date
Burnt Mills ES	13	8/23
Stonegate ES	9	8/23
South Lake ES	5	8/23
Woodlin ES	8	1/24
Poolesville HS	15	8/24
Neelsville MS	7	8/24
Damascus HS	34	8/26
Col. Zadok Magruder HS	TBD	8/29
Thomas S. Wootton HS	TBD	8/29
Eastern MS	TBD	TBD
Piney Branch	TBD	TBD

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 2022

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 classroom while DHHS arranges for the lease of the childcare classroom to a private childcare provider. DHHS has requested funds for a Childcare in Schools facilities at Woodlin Elementary School to open as part of the major capital project.

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. Funding is included in the DHHS CIP for the following projects:

Linkages to Learning Projects	Completion Date
Odessa Shannon MS	August 2022
Harriet R. Tubman ES	August 2022
Neelsville Middle School	August 2024
Silver Spring International MS	August 2025

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. Based on the work of the work group, several schools were identified to receive a SBHC. The following table shows the schools that have SBHCs along with the opening date:

SBHC Schools	Opening Date
JoAnn Leleck ES at Broad Acres	1997
Harmony Hills ES	1997
Gaithersburg ES	2005
Summit Hall ES	2008
New Hampshire Estates ES	2009
Rolling Terrace ES	2011
Highland ES	2012
Viers Mill ES	2013
Weller Road ES	2013
South Lake ES	2023

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. The table below shows the schools that have HSWCs and the opening date:

HSWC Schools	Opening Date
Northwood HS	2007
Gaithersburg HS	2013
Watkins Mill HS	2013
Wheaton HS	2016
Seneca Valley HS	2020
John F. Kennedy HS	2022

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 will provide mental health and positive youth development components of the HSWC model at all schools that currently do not have a HSWC by the start of the 2022–2023 school year. FY 2023 funding also provided for the planning and design for the next four High School Wellness Center sites, as well as feasibility planning to scope and sequence remaining schools. FY 2024 funding will provide for the construction of the next four High School Wellness Center sites. The full-scale phase will implement HSWCs at all high schools without HSWCs, approximately four per year over a five year period—FY 2024–2028. Funding for the full-scale phase must be provided in the six-year CIP in order to maintain the above schedule.

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 with disabilities to receive access to services in the general education environment. The Fiscal Year 2024 proposed target requires 71 percent of students with disabilities to receive special education services in the general education environment. As a result of this mandate, the Department of Special Education Services and the Division of Prekindergarten, Special Programs, and Related Services, in collaboration with the Department of Facilities Management and the Office of School Support and Improvement, plan and coordinate the identification of program sites and locations to address the diverse needs of students with disabilities. This process is designed to ensure the delivery of special education services with an emphasis on providing services to the maximum extent appropriate in the school the student would attend if nondisabled.

Montgomery County Public Schools chooses locations for special education programs by focusing on the delivery of services in the student's home school or in the school as close as possible to the student's home. The location of programs enables students with disabilities to receive special education services within the school, cluster, or region of the county where the student resides.

The percentage of students who receive 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 schools for Grades kindergarten–5.
- Learning and Academic Disabilities services and transition services are provided in all secondary schools.
- Special education services are available regionally for students who are recommended for the following services:
 - Augmentative and Alternative Communication Services
 - Autism Spectrum Disorders Services
 - Autism Resource Services
 - Aspergers Services
 - Bridge Services
 - Prekindergarten and Elementary Physical Disabilities Services
 - Elementary Learning Center
 - Extensions Services
 - Gifted and Talented/Learning Disabled (GT/LD) Program
 - Infants and Toddlers Program
 - Learning for Independence (LFI) Program
 - Preschool Education Program (PEP)
 - Prekindergarten Language Classes

- School/Community-based (SCB) Program
- Social Emotional Special Education Services (SESES)
- Longview and Stephen Knolls schools
- Special education services are countywide for students in need of the following programs:
 - Carl Sandburg Learning Center
 - Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
 - GT/LD Program
 - 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, 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.

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. DSES and the Division of Early Childhood Programs and Services (DECPS) collaborate to collocate general and special education preschool classes to provide additional LRE opportunities to prekindergarten students. MCPS also is focused on increasing the number of locations where nondisabled community peers are invited to learn alongside students with disabilities in a prekindergarten classroom.