


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

November 16, 2015

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Larry A. Bowers, Interim Superintendent of Schools 

Subject: Walter Johnson Cluster Roundtable Discussion Group

The Walter Johnson Cluster has experienced large enrollment increases during the past eight years, primarily driven by the sale of homes to younger families. Also, new development in the cluster has played a role, although by a significantly smaller amount than demographic changes in existing communities. In the future, the cluster will see substantial amounts of new housing associated with the adopted White Flint Sector Plan and the two new sector plans now getting under way—Rock Spring and White Flint II. In addition, the large WMAL property has been sold and will be redeveloped with new housing.

To address the large enrollment in Walter Johnson Cluster schools, three of the elementary schools have been expanded, either as part of revitalization/expansion projects or as classroom additions. The three remaining elementary schools and two middle schools will be expanded in the coming years. By the 2021–2022 school year, all of the elementary schools in the cluster will have a capacity for more than 700 students, and both middle schools will have capacity for 1,200 students. At the high school level, enrollment is projected to significantly exceed the 2,335 student capacity of Walter Johnson High School.

WHEREAS, Enrollment levels at Walter Johnson Cluster elementary schools and middle schools are quickly reaching existing school capacities and the planned increased capacities of schools; and

WHEREAS, Enrollment projections for Walter Johnson High School indicate approximately 3,000 students by the end of the six-year forecast and no facility solution has yet to be determined; and

WHEREAS, A large amount of new housing development is occurring in the Walter Johnson Cluster, and more will follow as the adopted White Flint Sector Plan builds out and new sector plans under development, Rock Spring and White Flint II, come to fruition; and

WHEREAS, On October 15, 2015, the interim superintendent of schools submitted a recommendation to the Board of Education to conduct a Walter Johnson Cluster Roundtable Discussion Group process to consider facility options to address near-term and long-term enrollment increases in the Walter Johnson Cluster; and

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

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

Resolved, That a Walter Johnson Roundtable Discussion Group be conducted in spring 2016 to include representatives from each of the Walter Johnson Cluster schools and the Walter Johnson cluster coordinators; and be it further

Resolved, That the Walter Johnson Cluster Roundtable Discussion Group considers general approaches to addressing near-term and long-term enrollment increases at cluster elementary schools, middle schools, and the high school; and be it further

Resolved, That approaches to be considered may include use of closed schools in the cluster, including four former elementary schools—Ayrlawn, Alta Vista, Kensington, and Montrose—and the former Charles W. Woodward High School; and be it further

Resolved, That the Walter Johnson Cluster Roundtable Discussion Group limits its review of approaches to the Walter Johnson Cluster; and be it further

Resolved, That the Walter Johnson Cluster Roundtable Discussion Group is not to consider specific boundary changes as part of its process; and be it further

Resolved, That the Walter Johnson Cluster Roundtable Discussion Group submits a report that includes member evaluations of a range of approaches to the interim superintendent of schools and members of the Board of Education by June 2016.