

REGULATION **MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Related Entries: ABA, ABC, ABC-RA, ACA, ACD, ACG, ACG-RA, ACG-RB, DNA, ECM, ECM-RA, FAA, JEE, JEE-RA
Responsible Office: Division of District Operations

Educational Facilities Planning

I. PURPOSE

To implement the Montgomery County Board of Education (Board) Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*

To set forth processes for the development of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the Educational Facilities Master Plan (Master Plan), and noncapital strategies to address capacity requirements and facility needs, to include site selection, school boundaries, regional student choice assignment plans, and school closures and/or consolidations

II. BACKGROUND

As set forth in Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*, the components of educational facilities planning include –

- A. ongoing analyses of student enrollment projections and the physical condition of educational facilities and building systems;
- B. stakeholder engagement and input into facility decision making; and
- C. a decision-making framework that generates responsive options and leads to equitable and fiscally responsible and educationally sound decisions, in compliance with all local, state, and federal requirements, taking into account the equity implications of Board Policy, ACA, *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. *Adjacent schools* are, at a minimum, schools with catchment areas that are contiguous.

- B. The *Capital Budget* is the annual budget adopted for capital project appropriations.
- C. The *Capital Improvements Program (CIP)* is a comprehensive six-year spending plan for capital improvements. The CIP focuses on the acquisition, planning, construction, and maintenance of public-school facilities, including countywide systemic replacement projects and major capital projects. The CIP is reviewed and approved through a biennial process that takes effect for the six-year period that begins in each odd-numbered fiscal year. For even-numbered fiscal years, amendments are considered to the adopted CIP for changes needed in the second year of the six-year CIP period.
- D. *Civic groups* are civic, homeowner, neighborhood, or citizen associations listed with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) or Montgomery Regional Service Centers.
- E. *Cluster* is a geographic grouping of schools within a defined attendance area that includes a high school and the elementary and middle schools that send students to that high school. In some circumstances, MCPS elementary schools have split articulation patterns to middle schools, and some middle schools have split articulation patterns to high schools in one or more clusters.
- F. *Consortium* is a grouping of high schools or middle schools within proximity to one another that provides students the opportunity to express their preferences for attending one of the schools based on a specific instructional program or emphasis.
- G. *Facility design* encompasses all the planning and design processes that lead up to construction of a school facility. In order of events, the milestones of facility design are as follows:
 1. Educational specifications describe the spaces needed to support the instructional program and guide the architect in developing the building layout and design.
 2. Feasibility study determines the scope and estimated cost of a project, but does not develop a detailed design of the facility.
 3. Schematic design is part of the initial design phase that evaluates and develops concepts into a preliminary plan for the school.
 4. The preliminary plan defines the general scope, scale, functional relationship, traffic flow, and cost of project components. The conceptual design conveys a clear and comprehensive image of the intended facility

improvements, including conceptual organization of exterior and interior spaces; usage of interior and exterior materials; and selection of structural, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical system concepts. The preliminary plan is presented to the Board for approval.

5. Design development is the phase of the design process that refines the architectural plans and develops the infrastructure of the project, including mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
 6. Construction documents provide the details of construction that are incorporated into the drawings and specifications for use as contract documents to construct the facility.
- H. *Regional student choice assignment plans* identify the geographic area(s) wherein students may express a preference for a school assignment, based on program offerings or emphasis. These geographic areas may include areas known as “base areas,” where students may be guaranteed attendance at the school under certain criteria or within the student’s region.
- I. *Parent Teacher (Student) Associations (PT(S)As)* are member groups of the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations, Inc. (MCCPTA). Also, in the absence of a PT(S)A, an organization of parents/guardians, teachers, and students that operate at a school in lieu of a PT(S)A.
- J. *Stakeholder Engagement*, for the purposes of Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*, and this regulation, refers to processes designed to seek input to inform the superintendent of schools and the Board regarding the impact of facility-planning options by engaging a broad variety of stakeholders, including but not limited to parents/guardians, students, staff, community members and organizations, and local government agencies, in accordance with Board Policy ABA, *Community Engagement*, and Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*.

IV. FACILITIES PLANNING ANALYSES

The facilities planning process starts with the following:

- A. *Student Enrollment Projections*
1. Student enrollment projections are developed in coordination with the Montgomery County Planning Department’s county population forecast and other relevant planning sources.

2. Each fall, enrollment projections for each school are developed for a six-year period. Long-range forecasts project enrollment to the subsequent 10th and 15th year. The units of analysis for long-range forecasts are secondary school level, and the cluster or consortium level for elementary schools.
3. By April of each year, revisions to school enrollment projections for the next school year are developed to refine the projections and to reflect any changes in service areas, programs, or staffing.
4. The student enrollment projection methodology utilized is provided in an appendix to the CIP and Master Plan documents.
5. *Preferred ranges of enrollment* for schools includes all students attending a school.
 - a) The preferred ranges of enrollment for schools are —
 - (1) 450 to 750 students in elementary schools,
 - (2) 750 to 1,200 students in middle schools, and
 - (3) 1,600 to 2,400 students in high schools.
 - (4) Enrollment in special and alternative program centers may differ from the above ranges and generally is lower.
 - b) The preferred ranges of enrollment are considered when planning new schools or when recommending changes to existing schools. Departures from the preferred ranges may occur if circumstances warrant.
6. *School demographic profile and facility profile*
 - a) School demographic profile includes the racial/ethnic composition of a school's student population, the percentage of students participating in the Free and Reduced-price Meals System (FARMS) and English Language Development (ELD) programs, and school mobility rates.
 - b) *Facility Profiles* include room use by program and facility characteristics such as square footage, site size, year of opening, adjacency to parks, and number of relocatable classrooms.

B. *Educational Program Requirements*

1. MCPS staff members in the Division of Facilities Management will work closely with educational program staff members in the Division of School Leadership and Improvement and the Division of Teaching and Learning to identify facility requirements for educational programs.
2. Projected program requirements take into account the effect of class-size changes and other relevant factors, such as existing, new, and proposed changes to educational programs.

C. *Program Capacity Calculations*

1. Program capacity refers to the number of students that can be accommodated in a facility based on the educational programs at the facility. The MCPS program capacity is calculated as the product of the number of classrooms, also referred to as teaching stations, in a school and the student-to-classroom ratio for each grade and program in each classroom.
2. Student-to-classroom ratios should not be confused with staffing ratios that are determined through the annual operating budget process.
3. Unless otherwise specified by Board action, the *program capacity* and the associated student-to-classroom ration guidelines are as follows:

Student-to-Teaching Station Ratio Guidelines

<i>Level</i>	<i>Student-to-Classroom Ratios</i>
Head Start & prekindergarten	40:1 (2 sessions per day)
Head Start & prekindergarten	20:1 (1 session per day)
Grades K-2—Base Tier, Tier 1	22:1
Grades K-2—Tier 2, Tier 3	19:1
Grades 3-5—Base Tier, Tier 1	24:1
Grades 3-5—Tier 2, Tier 3	22:1
Grades: 6-8 Middle School	25:1 ^a
Grades: 9-12 High School	25:1 ^b
K-12 Special Education Services	8:1
Prekindergarten Special Education, ELD, Alternative Programs	See “c” below

Elementary School “Specials” (Art, Music, etc.)	0:1 (See “d” below)
Base Tier, Tier 1 Specials Quantity	3 (see “e” below)
Tier 2, Tier 3 Specials Quantity	4 (see “e” below)
Additional Specials for Elementary Schools with enrollment over 700 students	+1 (see “f” below)
Additional Specials for Elementary Schools that are a Community Schools	+1 (see “g” below)

- a) 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).
- b) Program capacity is adjusted at the high school level to account for scheduling constraints. The regular classroom capacity of 25 is multiplied by .90 to reflect the optimal utilization of a high school facility (equivalent of 22.5 students per classroom).
- c) Prekindergarten special education, ELD, alternative programs, and other special programs may require classroom ratios different from those listed.
- d) “Specials” are teaching stations that do not carry any capacity at the elementary school level. These classroom-sized spaces typically house classes such as Art, Music, etc. They do not carry capacity, as students rotate through these spaces as part of their instructional schedule.
- e) Base Tier and Tier 1 elementary schools will be allotted three teaching stations, or classroom-sized spaces, that do not carry capacity. Tier 2 and Tier 3 elementary schools will be allotted four teaching stations that do not carry capacity. Tier 2 and Tier 3 schools are typically higher impacted schools that have more sets of services than Base Tier and Tier 1 schools.
- f) Elementary schools that have an enrollment of 700 students or more will receive an additional Specials teaching station, or one more classroom-sized space, that does not carry capacity. Most schools of this size have more than 1.0 FTE Art teacher and 1.0 FTE Music teacher, therefore needing an additional teaching station.
- g) Elementary schools that are community schools will receive an

additional Specials teaching station, or classroom-sized space that does not carry capacity. This is to reflect the additional sets of services these schools have at their buildings that wouldn't be able to fit into an office-sized space.

- D. *Facility utilization* refers to an analysis of current and projected student enrollment as compared to program capacity, state-rated capacity, and preferred ranges of enrollment.
 - 1. A school is considered to be underutilized if the facility utilization rate is less than 80 percent.
 - 2. A school is considered to be overutilized if the facility utilization rate is more than 100 percent.
 - 3. 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.
 - a) In the case of overutilization, an effort to evaluate the long-range need for permanent space is made prior to planning for new construction.
 - b) Underutilization of facilities also is evaluated in the context of long-range enrollment projections.
 - 4. Relocatable classrooms may be used on an interim basis to provide program space for enrollment growth until permanent capacity is available.
 - 5. Relocatable classrooms also may be used to enable child-care programs to be housed in schools, and may be used to accommodate other complementary uses. Relocatable classrooms should have health and safety standards that are comparable to other MCPS classrooms.
- E. *State-rated Capacity (SRC)* is defined by the state of Maryland as the number of students who can be accommodated in a school, based on the product of state-determined student-to-classroom ratios and the number of teaching stations in a school. SRC is used by the state to determine state budget eligibility for capital projects. SRCs are provided for schools in appendices to the CIP and the Master Plan.
- F. *School site size* is the acreage desired to accommodate the full instructional

program, as follows:

1. Elementary schools—a preferred usable site size of 7.5 acres that is capable of fitting the instructional program, including site requirements. The 7.5 acres standard is based on an ideal leveled site, and the size may vary depending on site shapes, surrounding site constraints, limitations on available site sizes in the geographic area, density of population, and planning considerations.
 2. Middle schools—a preferred usable site size of 15.5 acres that is capable of fitting the instructional program, including site requirements. The 15.5 acres standard is based on an ideal leveled site, and the size may vary depending on site shapes, surrounding site constraints, limitations on available site sizes in the geographic area, density of population, and planning considerations.
 3. High schools—a minimum preferred site size of 35 acres that is capable of fitting the instructional program, including site requirements. The 35 acres standard is based on an ideal leveled site, and the size may vary depending on site shapes, surrounding site constraints, limitations on available site sizes in the geographic area, density of population, and planning considerations.
- G. The *Facility Condition Index (FCI)* quantifies the depleted life and value of a facility’s primary building systems, such as roofs, walls, windows, and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC). The FCI is used to evaluate a building’s overall condition; one of the factors that can influence the learning and working experience. MCPS will establish an FCI baseline in the 2025-2026 calendar year. Once the baseline year has been completed, periodic FCI updates will occur on a recurring basis. Those updates will be made available publicly.

V. CLUSTER COMMENTS

- A. In June of each year, cluster representatives may submit to the superintendent of schools any facility-based concerns, priorities, or proposals that they have identified for their schools, in consultation with local PT(S)A leadership, principals, and the community.
- B. Cluster comments are to be considered in the development of facilities recommendations made by the superintendent of schools in the CIP.

VI. FACILITY PLANNING DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

- A. Each year, after new student enrollment projections are developed and other analyses set forth above are completed, and taking into account cluster comments, MCPS staff identifies and prioritizes projects to address evolving facility needs. The CIP decision-making framework will incorporate multiple factors to ensure equitable and effective investment of resources. Together, these criteria provide a framework for making informed, transparent, and strategic decisions about capital investments across the school system. Key factors include The following:
 1. The Facility Condition Index: the physical condition of a building and its major systems as defined above.
 2. Educational Adequacy: The extent to which the facility supports modern instructional practices and program requirements.
 3. Enhanced Student Needs: The unique requirements of student populations, including specialized programs and support services.
 4. Facility Utilization: Enrollment projections as compared to program capacity.
- B. Once priorities have been established, staff shall determine the best option for responding to facility needs and capacity requirements, as set forth in Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*. Options for responding to facility needs and capacity requirements may include—
 1. countywide systemic replacement projects required to sustain schools in good condition and extend their useful life, such as replacement of heating, ventilation, air conditioning and mechanical systems, roofs, and numerous other building and infrastructure projects; and
 2. major capital projects, which include facility-specific projects to add capacity; renovate, renew, adapt, repurpose, or replace existing facilities; or reuse or upgrade existing space in other facilities as appropriate. Such project options also include construction of new facilities or additions to existing facilities.
- B. Options for responding to facility needs and capacity requirements also may include, as appropriate, adjustments of capacity through noncapital strategies to increase enrollment at under-capacity schools and/or encourage transfers from over-capacity schools, which may include, but are not limited to—
 1. boundary changes, or

2. regional student choice assignment plans; and/or
 3. school closures and/or consolidations.
- C. The decision-making framework also may include consideration of architect selection, facility design, and other facility-related issues, as identified by the superintendent of schools.

VII. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

- A. In the fall of each year, the superintendent of schools publishes recommendations for an annual Capital Budget and a six-year CIP or amendments to the previously adopted CIP.
- B. In addition, recommendations for site selection, school boundaries, regional student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, and any other facility-planning recommendations identified by the superintendent of schools as requiring more time for public review, may be released.
- C. The six-year CIP includes the following:
1. Standards for Board review and action:
 - a) Preferred range of school enrollments
 - b) Program capacity and facility utilization calculations
 - c) School-site size
 2. Background information on the student enrollment projection methodology
 3. Current student enrollment figures, school demographic profiles, and facility profiles
 4. Program capacity and facility utilization analyses
 5. Elementary, middle, and high school enrollment projections for each of the next six years and long-range projections for the 10th and 15th year for middle and high schools
 6. Recommended actions, such as changes in school capacities, new facilities, major capital projects, program locations, and/or the service area of the

schools.

7. A schedule of countywide systemic projects by category, major capital projects at specific schools, and new facilities as identified in chapter 1 of the CIP and the Master Plan.
 8. A line item summary of Capital Budget appropriation recommendations by the superintendent of schools
- D. Supplements to the CIP may be published to provide more information on issues when deemed advisable by the superintendent of schools
 - E. The superintendent of schools' recommended CIP is posted on the MCPS website. CIP documents are made available to Board members and Board staff, MCPS executive staff, the MCCPTA president and area MCCPTA vice presidents, and cluster coordinators. In addition, notification of the CIP's publication and availability online is sent to principals, PT(S)A leadership, municipalities, and civic groups. This notification includes the Board schedule for work sessions, public hearings, and action on the CIP.
 - F. The Board timeline for review and action on the CIP consists of one or more work sessions and one or more hearings in early to mid-November, and action in mid to late November of each year. (See Section XI.B. for the public hearing process and Section XII for the annual calendar.)
 - G. The superintendent of schools' recommendations on any deferred planning issues and/or amendments to the CIP are made in mid-February. The Board timeline for these items consists of one or more work sessions and one or more public hearings in February/March, and action by April. If necessary, the timeline for deferred planning issues may be modified by the superintendent of schools to allow more time for stakeholder engagement processes.
 - H. In cases where the Board determines an unusual circumstance exists, the superintendent of schools may develop an alternative time schedule to make recommendations regarding the CIP, facility-planning activities, site selection, school boundaries, regional student choice assignment plans, or school closures and/or consolidations.
 - I. After review and Board action, the Board-requested CIP, including official Project Description Forms (PDFs) for all requested capital projects, is submitted to the Montgomery County Council (County Council) and the Montgomery County Executive for their review and for County Council action. The Board-requested

CIP also is sent to M-NCPPC for information purposes.

- J. The county executive's recommendations are forwarded to the County Council on January 15 for inclusion in the overall county CIP. The County Council timeline for review and action on the Board-requested CIP is from February to May.
- K. The County Council adopts the biennial six-year CIP, and amendments to the CIP, in late May.

VIII. EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES MASTER PLAN (MASTER PLAN)

- A. By July of each year, the superintendent of schools publishes a summary of all County Council-adopted capital and Board-adopted noncapital strategies to address capacity requirements and facility needs. This document, the Educational Facilities Master Plan (hereafter referred to as Master Plan), is required under the rules and regulations of the State Public School Construction Program.
 - 1. The Master Plan incorporates the projected impact of all capital projects approved for funding by the County Council and any noncapital strategies to address capacity requirements and facility needs approved by the Board.
 - 2. Similar to the CIP, the Master Plan includes the following:
 - a) The following standards:
 - (1) Preferred range of school enrollments
 - (2) Program capacity and facility utilization calculations
 - (3) School-site size
 - b) Background information on the enrollment projection methodology.
 - c) Current student enrollment figures, school demographic profiles, and facility profiles.
 - d) Program capacity and facility utilization calculations.
 - e) Elementary, middle, and high school enrollment projections for each of the next six years, and long-range projections for the 10th and 15th years for middle and high schools. This information reflects projections made the previous fall with an updated one-year

projection in the spring, and any changes in projected enrollment that result from boundary changes, regional student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, or other changes that are adopted by the Board.

- f) County Council-adopted PDFs for all capital projects with schedules, estimated costs, and funding sources

IX. LONGER-TERM PLANNING

- A. MCPS uses a longer-term (i.e., beyond the six-year CIP interval) scenario planning framework to inform the development of the CIP and further allow MCPS to be forward-thinking and identify facility options that align with advances in pedagogy and be innovative in its approaches to educational programming as well as class-size changes, use of nontraditional sites, and other relevant approaches.
- B. This longer-term scenario planning framework explores growth management at the regional or cluster level, considering four growth management scenarios that could impact facility planning:
 - 1. High enrollment growth
 - 2. Moderate/low enrollment growth
 - 3. No enrollment growth
 - 4. Declining enrollment
- C. For any scenario, the analysis then determines the degree to which a school or set of schools is or may become, in the future, overutilized, or underutilized. Options generated from these analyses then suggest longer-term approaches that may include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1. Changes to the delivery, location, or number of programs; enrollment practices and class sizes; grade-level configurations; or master schedules
 - 2. Additions to physical capacity
 - 3. Consideration of nontraditional sites or nontraditional uses of existing sites

- D. Tapping into the wealth of experience and knowledge that members of the Montgomery County community have regarding long-term facility planning issues and strategies, the superintendent of schools has established a Facilities Advisory Committee to advise MCPS on a wide variety of topics related to the community's vision for school facilities and planning that are outside the six-year CIP time frame but that may require attention in the 10–15-year time frame and beyond. The superintendent of schools appoints the members of the Facilities Advisory Committee, with input from community stakeholders.

X. GUIDELINES FOR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES FOR SPECIFIED FACILITIES-RELATED ISSUES

A. Stakeholder Engagement Guidelines

1. Stakeholder involvement is especially critical to the success of the following MCPS facility-related planning processes:
 - a) Site selection for new schools
 - b) School boundaries
 - c) Regional student choice assignment plans
 - d) School closures and/or consolidations
 - e) Facility design
 - f) Other facility-related issues as identified by the superintendent of schools
2. Consistent with Board Policy ABA, *Community Engagement*, and Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*, MCPS will seek stakeholder engagement for the purpose of advising the superintendent of schools regarding the impact on the community of staff-developed facility-related options for the processes specified in Section V.A.1.
 - a) The superintendent of schools will publicize opportunities to provide input and direct staff to seek –
 - (1) input from multiple stakeholders,
 - (2) broad representation from affected communities, and
 - (3) a variety of viewpoints.

- b) The primary stakeholders in the planning process are parents/guardians, staff, and students in affected communities. Additional stakeholders may include representatives of MCCPTA, local PT(S)As, or other parent/guardian or student groups, along with representatives of MCPS employees, affected municipalities, local government agencies, civic groups, and other countywide organizations, as appropriate.
 - c) Staff will conduct broad outreach using multiple strategies for obtaining stakeholder engagement.
 - (1) Stakeholder engagement strategies may vary, as appropriate, according to the nature, size, and scope of the process.
 - (2) Stakeholder engagement strategies may include, but are not limited to, systemwide committees or advisory groups, focus groups, task forces, work groups, roundtable discussion groups, surveys, technologically facilitated communications, and/or other public-planning sessions, such as charrettes that are designed for collaboration, among all interested or impacted parties and provides information and feedback to staff.
 - (3) At any point, the superintendent of schools may direct MCPS staff to use a public forum, survey, or technologically facilitated communication in conjunction with or in lieu of other methods.
- B. Additional Guidelines for Developing Options for School Boundaries and Regional Student Choice Assignment Plans
- 1. Prior to the development of specific options to be put forward for stakeholder engagement, the superintendent of schools recommends to the Board the potential scope of changes to school boundaries and/or regional student choice assignment plans in terms of the geographical area(s) of the county that are potentially impacted.
 - 2. The superintendent of schools develops recommendations for the scope through a multi-step process, which considers first the minimum unit of analysis that could address the immediate concern, then considers the maximum extent of the potentially affected geographic area(s) that may

need to be considered to effectively address the four factors established in Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*.

- a) Typically, the potential scope of a change of school boundaries and/or a regional student choice assignment plan in response to a capital project recommendation that is anticipated to have a limited effect on a school's enrollment (e.g., an addition that increases the school's capacity by less than 20 percent or a minor alteration of an attendance area) may be addressed by the consideration of options that impact only the cluster in which the school is located as well as any immediately adjacent schools outside the cluster.
 - b) Concerns potentially affecting broader communities may require the scope to extend to the consideration of options involving communities in adjacent clusters.
3. The superintendent of schools will identify potentially affected communities prior to making recommendations to the Board regarding the scope of facility-related efforts.
 4. Once the Board establishes the scope of changes of school boundaries and/or regional student choice assignment plans that are under consideration, MCPS staff develop a range of options for stakeholder engagement, based on the four factors below, as set forth in Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*, and provides a rationale that demonstrates the extent to which any option advances each of these four factors:
 - a) Demographic characteristics of student populations

Pursuant to Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*, analyses of options take into account the impact of various options on the overall populations of affected schools. Options should especially strive to create a diverse student body in each of the affected schools, aligned with Board Policy ACD, *Quality Integrated Education*. This means that a key consideration is significant disparity in the demographic characteristics between schools in the affected geographic areas that cannot be justified by any other factor. Demographic data showing the impact of various options include the following: racial/ethnic composition of the student population, the socioeconomic composition of the student population, the level of English language learners, and other reliable demographic indicators and participation in specific

educational programs. Options should also take into consideration the intersection between and among these categories of demographic data.

b) Geography

In accordance with MCPS's emphasis on family engagement in schools, options should, unless otherwise required, take into account the geographic proximity of communities to schools as well as articulation, traffic, transportation patterns (including public transit), and topography. As part of this analysis, walking access to the school and transportation distances should be considered. In addition, options should consider, at a minimum, not only schools within a high school cluster but also other adjacent schools.

c) Stability of school assignments over time

Options should result in stable assignments for as long a period of time as possible. Student reassignments should consider recent boundary or regional student choice assignment plan changes and/or school closings and consolidations that may have affected the same students.

d) Facility utilization

School boundary and regional student choice assignment plans should result in facility utilizations in the 80 percent to 100 percent efficient range over the long term, whenever possible. Shared use of a facility by more than one cluster may be the most feasible facility plan in some cases, taking into consideration the impact of the resulting articulation pattern on the community. Plans should be fiscally responsible to minimize capital and operating costs whenever feasible.

5. At the conclusion of the stakeholder engagement phase, MCPS staff will prepare a report for the superintendent of schools that will include, but not limited to, a summary of the stakeholder engagement processes utilized, staff-developed options, and stakeholder feedback.
6. In addition, as appropriate, the superintendent of schools may consider any individual PT(S)A position papers.

7. When developing recommendations for the Board, the superintendent of schools provides a rationale for each recommendation that demonstrates the extent to which it feasibly and reasonably advances the factors above in Section X.B.2 and X.B.4. While each of the factors is considered, it may not be feasible to reconcile each and every recommendation with each and every factor.
8. These guidelines also may be applied to other facility-related issues that are identified by the superintendent of schools, as appropriate.

C. Additional Guidelines for Developing Options for New School Sites

The following factors are considered, in addition to those established in Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*, when evaluating potential new school sites, including those acquired through dedication or purchase and placed in the Board's inventory:

1. The geographic location relative to existing and future student populations and existing schools
2. Size in acreage
3. Topography and other environmental characteristics
4. Availability of utilities
5. Physical condition
6. Availability and timing to acquire
7. Cost to acquire if private property

D. Facility Design

Educational facility designs provide for a healthy, safe, and secure environment, in alignment with the principles of environmental stewardship and consistent with current educational program needs and anticipated future program needs. Stakeholder engagement is sought at key milestones in the processes leading to the construction of new schools, or additions to existing schools, as follows:

1. Educational specifications describe the spaces needed to support the instructional program and guide the architect in developing the building layout and design. Educational specifications for proposed projects are

developed by MCPS capital planning staff, in collaboration with instructional program staff and principals and staff from affected schools.

2. Design options are developed by the selected architect(s) who evaluates the educational specifications and uses them to create preliminary designs. Stakeholder engagement is gathered as follows:
 - a) MCPS staff engage in broad outreach using multiple strategies for obtaining stakeholder engagement on the facility design of capital projects.
 - b) Representatives of civic groups; municipal and county government (including Montgomery County Planning Department and Montgomery County Parks Department); and adjacent property owners, if any, may provide input into the designs of new schools and additions or major capital projects for existing schools.
3. A preliminary plan, which includes the preliminary design, is presented to the Board for approval.

XI. SCHOOL CLOSURES AND CONSOLIDATION

- A. Pursuant to the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), 13A.02.09, MCPS and the Board shall, at a minimum, consider the impact of any school closure on the following factors:
 1. Student enrollment trends;
 2. Age or condition of school buildings;
 3. Transportation;
 4. Educational programs;
 5. Racial composition of student body;
 6. Financial considerations;
 7. Student relocation;
 8. Impact on community in geographic attendance area for school proposed to be closed and school, or schools, to which students will be relocating.

- B. Additional Factors -
- C. MCPS will ensure that community engagement occurs in alignment with section X.(A)(2) of this regulation. Community engagement shall include a public hearing(s) schedule and notice, as determined by the Board.

XII. BOARD ACTION ON SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS' RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. The Board holds one or more work sessions to review the superintendent of schools' recommendations, as referenced in Section VII above.
 - 1. The Board may request, by majority vote, that the superintendent of schools develop alternative recommendations for site selection, school boundaries, regional student choice assignment plans, or school closures and/or consolidations of schools.
 - 2. Any significant modification to the superintendent of schools' recommendation requires an alternative that is supported by a majority of Board members. Any modification that impacts any or all of a school community that has not previously been included in the superintendent of schools' recommendation should be considered a significant modification. Alternatives put forward by the Board will advance one or more of the factors set forth in Section G of Board Policy FAA, *Educational Facilities Planning*.
 - 3. Recommendations from the superintendent of schools and Board-requested alternatives are subject to a public hearing prior to final Board action. When an alternative is identified by the Board at any work session, a public hearing must be held following that work session to receive public comment on the alternative.
 - 4. The Board has the discretion to adopt minor modifications to the superintendent of schools' recommendation or Board-requested alternative(s) if this action will not have a significant impact on a plan that has received public review. Alternatives will not be considered after a Board work session without adequate notification and opportunity for comment by the affected communities.
- B. Board Public Hearing Process: CIP, Boundary, Site Selection, and Choice Decisions

1. Public hearings are conducted annually following publication of the superintendent of schools' CIP recommendations. In addition, public hearings are conducted prior to actions affecting site selection, school boundaries, and regional student choice assignment plans.
 - a) Public hearings are conducted in November following publication of the superintendent of schools' recommended Capital Budget and six-year CIP.
 - b) Public hearings also may be conducted in late February or March for any superintendent of schools' recommendations not previously subject to public hearings.
 - c) Public hearings also may be conducted at other times during the year if the Board determines an unusual circumstance exists and the superintendent of schools has developed a different and/or condensed schedule for making recommendations.
2. In addition to other avenues of engagement, community members have opportunities to provide input to the superintendent of schools and the Board through written correspondence, public comments, and public testimony.
3. Written comments from the community are accepted at any point but, in order to be considered, comments must reach the Board at least 48 hours before action is scheduled by the Board.
4. The Board office is responsible for scheduling those interested in testifying at public hearings.
 - a) For CIP hearings, students and municipalities shall be accorded the opportunity to testify first.
 - b) Elected officials are given the courtesy of being placed on the agenda at the time of their choice.

XIII. CALENDAR

The facilities planning process is conducted according to the Montgomery County biennial CIP process and adheres to the following calendar, adjusted annually to account for holidays and other anomalies.

MCPS staff members meet with MCCPTA area vice presidents, cluster coordinators, and PT(S)A representatives to exchange information about the adopted CIP and consider issues for the upcoming CIP or amendments to the CIP.	Summer
The County Council adopts Spending Affordability Guidelines for the new CIP cycle, based on debt affordability.	Early-October of odd numbered fiscal years
MCPS staff members present enrollment trends and planning issues to the Board.	Fall
The superintendent of schools publishes and sends to the Board any recommendations for site selection, school boundaries, regional student choice assignment plans, school closings and/or consolidations, or other facility-related issues requiring more time for public review.	Fall
The superintendent of schools publishes and presents to the Board recommendations for the annual Capital Budget and the six-year CIP or amendments to the CIP. The Board may hold a work session in conjunction with this presentation where Board members may suggest alternatives.	Fall
The Board holds one or more work sessions on the CIP and to consider alternatives to the superintendent of schools' recommended site selection, school boundaries, regional student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, or other facility-related issues.	Early to mid-November
The Board holds one or more public hearings on the recommended CIP and site selection, school boundaries, regional student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, and other facility-related recommendations. When an alternative is identified by the Board at any work session, a public hearing must be held following that work session to receive public comment on the alternative.	Mid November
The Board acts on Capital Budget, CIP, amendments, any site selection, school boundaries, regional student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, or other facility-related issues.	Mid- to Late November
The county executive and County Council receive Board-requested capital budget and CIP for review.	December 1

The county executive transmits recommended Capital Budget and the CIP or amendments to County Council.	January 15
The County Council holds public hearings on the CIP.	February - March
The County Council reviews Board-requested and county-executive-recommended Capital Budget and CIP.	March - April
The superintendent of schools' recommendations on any deferred planning issues, site selection, school boundaries, regional student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, other facility-related issues, and/or recommended amendment(s) to the CIP are published for Board review, if needed.	Mid-February*
The Board holds one or more work sessions and identifies any alternatives to site selection, school boundaries, regional student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, or other facility-related recommendations, if needed.	February/ early-to mid-March*
The Board holds one or more public hearings if needed and if any alternatives are identified by the Board.	Late-February
The Board acts on deferred CIP recommendations and/or site selection, school boundaries, regional student choice assignment plans, school closures and/or consolidations, or other facility-related issues, if needed.	April
The County Council approves six-year Capital Budget and CIP.	Late-May
Cluster PT(S)A representatives submit comments to the superintendent of schools about issues affecting their schools for the upcoming CIP or amendments to the CIP.	June
The superintendent of schools publishes a summary of all actions to date affecting schools (Master Plan) and identifies future needs.	July

*If necessary, the timeline for deferred planning issues may be modified to allow more time for stakeholder engagement processes to take place.

Related Sources: *Code of Maryland Regulations* §13A.01.05.07 and §13A.02.09.01-.03; *Charter of Montgomery County, Maryland*, Section 305; *Montgomery County Code*, Chapter 20, Article X, §§20-55 through 20-58

Regulation History: Interim Regulation, June 1, 2005; revised March 21, 2006; revised October 17, 2006; revised June 8, 2008; revised June 6, 2015; revised October 11, 2017; revised May 2, 2019; revised September 24, 2026.

MCPS NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) prohibits illegal discrimination based on race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, nationality, religion, immigration status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, family structure/parental status, marital status, age, ability (cognitive, social/emotional, and physical), poverty and socioeconomic status, language, or other legally or constitutionally protected attributes or affiliations. Discrimination undermines our community's long-standing efforts to create, foster, and promote equity, inclusion, and acceptance for all. The Board prohibits the use of language and/or the display of images and symbols that promote hate and can be reasonably expected to cause substantial disruption to school or district operations or activities. For more information, please review Montgomery County Board of Education Policy ACA, *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*. This Policy affirms the Board's belief that each and every student matters, and in particular, that educational outcomes should never be predictable by any individual's actual or perceived personal characteristics. The Policy also recognizes that equity requires proactive steps to identify and redress implicit biases, practices that have an unjustified disparate impact, and structural and institutional barriers that impede equality of educational or employment opportunities. MCPS also provides equal access to the Boy/Girl Scouts and other designated youth groups.*

It is the policy of the state of Maryland that all public and publicly funded schools and school programs operate in compliance with:

- (1) Title VI of the federal *Civil Rights Act of 1964*; and
- (2) Title 26, Subtitle 7 of the Education Article of the Maryland Code, which states that public and publicly funded schools and programs may not
 - (a) discriminate against a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability;
 - (b) refuse enrollment of a prospective student, expel a current student, or withhold privileges from a current student, a prospective student, or the parent or guardian of a current or prospective student because of an individual's race, ethnicity, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability; or
 - (c) discipline, invoke a penalty against, or take any other retaliatory action against a student or parent or guardian of a student who files a complaint alleging that the program or school discriminated against the student, regardless of the outcome of the complaint.**

Please note that contact information and federal, state, or local content requirements may change between editions of this document and shall supersede the statements and references contained in this version. Please see the online version for the most up-to-date information at www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/info/nondiscrimination.

For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS students***	For inquiries or complaints about discrimination against MCPS staff***
Director of Student Conduct and Appeals Division of Equity and Organizational Development 850 Hungerford Drive, Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-3215 SWC@mcpsmd.org	Human Resource Compliance Officer Division of Human Resources and Talent Management Department of Compliance and Investigations 15 West Gude Drive, Suite B400, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-2888 DCI@mcpsmd.org
For student requests for accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	For staff requests for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act
Section 504 Coordinator Division of Specialized Support Services, Department of School Counseling 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 170, Rockville, MD 20850 240-987-8031 504@mcpsmd.org	ADA Compliance Coordinator Division of Human Resources and Talent Management Department of Compliance and Investigations 15 West Gude Drive, Suite B400, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-2888 DCI@mcpsmd.org
For inquiries or complaints about sex discrimination under Title IX, including sexual harassment, against students or staff***	
Title IX Coordinator Division of Equity and Organizational Development, Department of Student Conduct and Appeals 850 Hungerford Drive, Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20850 240-740-3215 TitleIX@mcpsmd.org	

*This notification complies with the federal *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, as amended.

**This notification complies with the *Code of Maryland Regulations Section 13A.01.07*.

***Discrimination complaints may be filed with other agencies, such as the following: U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Baltimore Field Office, GH Fallon Federal Building, 31 Hopkins Plaza, Suite 1432, Baltimore, MD 21201, 1-800-669-4000, 1-800-669-6820 (TTY); Maryland Commission on Civil Rights (MCCR), William Donald Schaefer Tower, 6 Saint Paul Street, Suite 900, Baltimore, MD 21202, 410-767-8600, 1-800-637-6247, mccr@maryland.gov; Agency Equity Officer, Office of Equity Assurance and Compliance, Office of the Deputy State Superintendent of Operations, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201-2595, oeac.msde@maryland.gov; or U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), 61 Forsyth St. S.W., Suite 19T10, Atlanta, GA 30303, 404-974-9406 and TDD: 800-877-8339, OCR.Atlanta@ed.gov, 1-800-421-3481, 1-800-877-8339 (TDD), OCR@ed.gov, or www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html.

This document is available, upon request, in languages other than English and in an alternate format under the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, by contacting the MCPS Office of Communications at 240-740-2837, 1-800-735-2258 (Maryland Relay), or PIO@mcpsmd.org. Individuals who need sign language interpretation or cued speech transliteration may contact the MCPS Office of Interpreting Services at 240-740-1800, 301-637-2958 (VP) mcpainterpretingservices@mcpsmd.org, or MCPSInterpretingServices@mcpsmd.org.