POLICY BOARD OF EDUCATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Related Entries: ABA, ABC, ABC-RA, ACA, ACD, ACG, ACG-RA, ACG-RB, DNA, ECM, ECM-RA, FAA-RA, JEE, JEE-RA

Responsible Office: Division of District Operations; Division of Facilities Management

Educational Facilities Planning

A. PURPOSE

To affirm the Montgomery County Board of Education's commitment to continuing to provide high-quality facilities that support the educational programming needed to ensure that every Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) student is well-prepared for success consistent with the Board's core values of Learning, Relationships, Respect, Excellence, and Equity

To establish an educational facilities planning process that effectively anticipates MCPS educational facility needs and establishes a framework for making equitable and fiscally responsible facility decisions in an uncertain future, while considering instructional program priorities, physical condition of the schools, and the impact of under- or overutilized facilities on the educational program

To promote public understanding of MCPS educational facilities planning processes and provide opportunities for stakeholders to engage in, inform, and respond to those processes

To coordinate MCPS facilities planning processes with those of other units of local governments and municipalities in Montgomery County

B. BACKGROUND

Educational facilities planning is essential to identify the infrastructure needed to ensure success for every student. The Board has primary responsibility to plan for educational facilities that sustain high-quality MCPS educational programs while effectively responding to changes in student enrollment, educational programming, and physical plant infrastructure.

C. ISSUE

1. MCPS is among the largest school systems in the country in terms of enrollment. MCPS serves a county that encompasses approximately 500 square miles, and is made up of communities of varying population density, ranging from rural to urban. Montgomery County has experienced continuing development of commercial and residential centers, as well as significant changes in its transportation infrastructure over the past few decades – all of which impact student enrollment.

2. The ability of school facilities to meet the needs of educational programming changes over time. The Board is continuously challenged to provide appropriate spaces for educational programming and services and to maintain safe, secure, and healthy learning and working environments for students and staff, while responding to aging structures and building systems at a reasonable cost.

   MCPS endeavors to maintain all school facilities at consistently high operational levels to maximize the life-span of existing physical plant assets through the coordinated scheduling of building system maintenance, repairs, and replacements. While building codes and advances in construction technology have vastly increased the expected life span of structures and building systems built or installed over time, the Board requires an educational facilities planning process to determine when maintenance is no longer viable for an educational facility or its component building systems, and systemic replacement or a major capital project is required to keep current with educational programming.

3. The fundamental goal of educational facilities planning is to provide a sound educational environment amid changing student enrollment, variations in the geographic distribution of students across schools, and the effects of racial, ethnic, and other socioeconomic and demographic diversity on educational programming. Enrollment changes are driven by a wide variety of factors including the strength of the economy and employment rates; policies set by federal, state, and local governments; fluctuations in the housing market driven by residential development and other changes in land use patterns; shifting trends in household composition; fluctuating birth rates; realignment of school boundaries; and movement within and into the school system from other parts of the United States and the world.

D. POSITION

The Board requires an educational facilities planning process that includes the following elements: ongoing analyses of student enrollment projections, physical condition of educational facilities and building systems; stakeholder engagement and input into facility decision-making; and 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.

This policy guides the educational facilities planning process in an efficient and fiscally responsible way to meet the varied educational needs of MCPS students with consideration of environmental sustainability. The process is designed to promote public understanding of MCPS educational facilities planning processes and ensure that there are opportunities for input from parents/guardians, students, staff, community members and organizations, local government agencies, and municipalities.

1. Facility planning starts with an analysis of student enrollment projections; educational program requirements; facility utilization rates; school site size; capacity calculations; the impact of county planning as well as trends in development, land use, transportation, and housing patterns; and Facilities Condition Index as described in section D.1.c below.

    a) Student enrollment projections take into consideration shifting demographics, while projected educational program requirements take into consideration existing and new program offerings.

    b) School site size and capacity calculations comply with established guidelines adopted as part of the Board review of the superintendent of schools' recommended Capital Improvements Program.

    c) The Facilities 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.

    d) The Capital Improvements Program decision-making framework approach is used to identify and provide a basis for prioritizing options responsive to changing facility needs. A schedule of county-wide systemic replacement projects and major capital projects at specific schools shall be adopted and revised as appropriate as part of the Board review of the superintendent of schools' recommended Capital Improvements Program based on the analysis described above. These options may include –

        (1) county-wide 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.

e) Facility planning also includes analyses of non-capital strategies to address capacity requirements and facility needs, which may include, as appropriate–

(1) adjustments of capacity through non-capital strategies to increase enrollment at under-capacity schools and/or incentivize transfers from over-capacity schools, which may include, but are not limited to –

(a) boundary changes, or

(b) geographic student choice assignment plans (such as consortia); and/or

(2) school closures and/or consolidations in the event of declining enrollment levels.

2. Such analyses inform the Capital Improvements Program, which is the mechanism through which the Board requests funding from the Montgomery County Council and the state of Maryland for county-wide systemic replacement projects and major capital projects.

a) The six-year Capital Improvement Programs includes the following elements:

(1) Data on enrollment projections, educational programming, available school capacity county-wide, and facility utilization levels

(2) Proposed county-wide systemic replacement projects as set forth in section D.1.e)(1)

(3) Proposed new facilities and major capital projects as set forth in section D.1.e)(2)

b) The Educational Facilities Master Plan is prepared by the superintendent of schools each June and summarizes all decisions by the Montgomery County Council on requests submitted in the Capital Improvements Program.

3. Longer-term planning: The Board utilizes a longer-term (i.e., beyond the six-year Capital Improvements Program interval) scenario planning framework to inform the development of the Capital Improvements Program and identify facility options that allow MCPS to innovate and align with advances in pedagogy and educational programming; and are responsive to enrollment projections, facility utilization rates, physical condition of schools, and analyses of available school capacity and nontraditional sites.

4. As permitted by overall district facility and capacity requirements, holding facilities may be designated for the purpose of temporarily relocating student populations to facilitate major capital projects.

E. STAKEHOLDER INPUT

1. The superintendent of schools shall direct staff to develop options for selecting sites for new schools, changing school boundaries, establishing geographic student choice assignment plans, closing or consolidating schools, and such other facility-related issues as identified by the superintendent of schools.

2. Staff-developed options put forward for community input will reflect a range of approaches to advance each of the factors set forth in section G below and provide a rationale that demonstrates the extent to which any option advances each of those factors.

3. In accordance with Board Policy ABA, *Community Involvement,* the superintendent of schools shall direct staff to seek input for the purpose of advising the superintendent regarding the impact on the community of staff-developed options, as follows:

   a) The superintendent of schools shall direct staff to seek input from multiple stakeholders, and to engage in efforts to obtain broad representation from affected communities

   b) The superintendent of schools will direct staff to conduct broad outreach using multiple strategies for obtaining community input which may vary according to the nature, size, and scope of the project. These community outreach strategies may include, but are not limited to, systemwide committees, focus groups, task forces, work groups, roundtable discussion groups, surveys, technologically-facilitated communications, and/or other planning sessions, such as charrettes that are designed for collaboration among all interested or impacted parties and provides information and feedback to staff.

4. After gathering feedback through the stakeholder process, the superintendent of schools develops recommendations to be presented to the Board along with a summary of stakeholder input. Recommendations of the superintendent of schools are made available to the public, affected school communities, and other stakeholders as appropriate.

F. BOARD OF EDUCATION DELIBERATIONS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Based on further analysis of the factors considered through the stakeholder input process, the Board may, by majority vote, identify one or more alternatives to the superintendent of schools' recommendations. Alternatives put forward by the Board will advance one or more of the factors set forth in section G below. Staff will develop options consistent with the alternatives identified.

2. The Board will allow time to hold public hearings and solicit written testimony on the recommendations of the superintendent of schools and Board identified alternatives for site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, or school closings or consolidations.

3. The Board has the discretion to adopt minor modifications to the superintendent of schools' recommendation(s) or Board-identified alternatives if, by a majority vote, the Board has determined that such action will not have a significant impact on an option for site selection, school boundaries, geographic student choice assignment plans, or school closings or consolidations that has received public review.

4. The Board may approve a different and/or condensed process and time schedule, developed by the superintendent of schools and in accordance with applicable state or county requirements, for making recommendations to the Board regarding the capital improvements program and the facility planning activities listed above, including but not limited to selecting sites for new schools, changing school boundaries, establishing geographic student choice assignment plans, and closing or consolidating in the event that the Board determines that unusual circumstances exist.

G. FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED

1. When developing recommendations for the Board, the superintendent of schools will provide a rationale for each recommendation that demonstrates the extent to which any recommendation advances the factors below. While each of the factors will be considered, it may not be feasible to reconcile each and every recommendation with each and every factor.

2. Factors to be considered in selecting sites for new schools, changing school boundaries, or establishing geographic student choice assignment plans

   a) Demographic characteristics of student population

      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 in alignment with Board Policy ACD, *Quality Integrated Education*. 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.

   b) Geography

      In accordance with MCPS' emphasis on community involvement in schools, options should, unless otherwise required, take into account the geographic proximity of communities to schools, as well as articulation, traffic, and transportation patterns and topography. 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 as possible. Student reassignments should consider recent boundary or geographic student choice assignment plan changes, and/or school closings and consolidations that may have affected the same students.

   d) Facility utilization

      School boundary and geographic 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.

3. Site selection

In addition to the foregoing factors, when evaluating potential new school sites, including nontraditional sites and those acquired through dedication or purchase and placed in the Board's inventory, the following factors should be considered: the geographic location relative to existing and future student populations and existing schools; size in acreage; topography and other environmental characteristics; availability of utilities; physical condition; availability and timing to acquire, and cost to acquire, if private property.

4. Facility design

   Educational facility designs shall consider community input and provide for a healthy, safe, and secure environment, in alignment with principles of environmental stewardship, and consistent with current educational program needs as well as anticipated future program needs.

5. The process for closing and consolidating schools shall meet the requirements of Maryland law and the provisions of this policy.

H. DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. The educational facilities planning process will deliver high quality educational facilities to all students by –

   a) identifying the infrastructure and other available options necessary,

   b) responding to current and projected conditions,

   c) incorporating the input of parents/guardians, students, as appropriate, staff, and the community and,

   d) taking a balanced approach to decisions to maintain, upgrade, renovate, or replace building systems and facilities.

2. The Board expects all recommendations and decision making regarding selecting sites for new schools, changing school boundaries, establishing geographic student choice assignment plans, or closing or consolidating schools, to take into account the equity implications of Board Policy ACA, *Nondiscrimination, Equity, and Cultural Proficiency*.

3. Over time, facility planning processes will create increased opportunities for students to attend schools where they may attain the significant educational benefits of the broad diversity of students in Montgomery County.

4. The superintendent of schools will develop regulations with stakeholder input to guide implementation of this policy.

I. REVIEW AND REPORTING

1. The annual June publication of the Educational Facilities Master Plan will constitute the official reporting on facility planning processes and actions taken during the year by the Board and approved by the Montgomery County Council, and will include the enrollment and utilization of each school, approved projects to sustain MCPS educational facilities in good condition, and/or schools and sites that may be involved in future activities to adjust capacity through major capital projects or other non-capital strategies.

2. The superintendent of schools will monitor, evaluate, and report to the Board the outcome of the processes and their alignment with the policy.

3. This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Board policy review process.

Related Sources: *Code of Maryland Regulations* §13A.01.05.07 and §13A.02.09.01-.03

Policy History: Adopted by Resolution No. 257-86, April 28, 1986; amended by Resolution No. 271-87, May 12, 1987; amended by Resolution No. 831-93, November 22, 1993; amended by Resolution No. 679-95, October 10, 1995; amended by Resolution No. 581-99 September 14, 1999; updated office titles June 1, 2000; updated November 4, 2003; amended by Resolution No. 268-05, May 23, 2005; amended by Resolution No. 282-14, June 17, 2014; amended by Resolution No.436-18, September 24, 2018; amended by Resolution No. 425-25, September 25, 2025.

Note: Tenets of Board Policy FKB, *Sustaining and Modernizing MCPS Facilities*, were incorporated into Resolution No.436-18, amendments to this policy, and Policy FKB was rescinded upon adoption of amended Board Policy FAA on September 24, 2018.

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) mcpsinterpretingservices@mcpsmd.org, or MCPSInterpretingServices@mcpsmd.org.

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