

I. Policy Statement

The Board of Education of Howard County, with the advice of the Superintendent, establishes school attendance areas to provide quality, equitable educational opportunities to all students ~~and to while balance~~ balancing the capacity utilization of all schools to meet educational standards. The Board recognizes that school openings, closings, additions, program changes, population growth and other demographic changes may require that school attendance areas be adjusted. The Board also recognizes the value of diverse and inclusive school populations when establishing attendance areas. The Board believes that employees' analyses and recommendations, as well as public advice and comment, are integral to its deliberations and decisions related to school attendance areas.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the conditions and process by which school attendance area adjustments will be developed and adopted.

III. Definitions

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A. Attendance Area Committee (AAC) – Committee comprised of community members appointed by the Superintendent to provide feedback to the Superintendent on the proposed attendance area adjustment considerations in the Feasibility Study.
- B. ~~Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) – Procedures to ensure that the capability exists to continue essential functions during and after an extended emergency.~~
- C. Demographic Characteristics – Features in the composition of a school's population that includes, but is not limited to the racial/ethnic composition of a school's student population, as well as the percentage of students participating in Free and Reduced-Priced Meals (FARMS) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs.
- D. Diversity – Recognizing, accepting, and respecting that individuals come from many different life experiences with various frames of reference and perspectives. While diversity values unique perspectives and individual differences, it also values the commonalities we all share. Diversity includes, but is not limited to race/ethnicity, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion/beliefs, mental and physical ability, disability, age, and national origin.

- E. Equitable – Just or fair access, opportunities, and supports needed to help students, families, and employees reach their full potential by removing barriers to success that individuals face. It does not mean equal or everyone having the same things.
- F. Extended Emergency – A severe or long-term emergency that affects an individual school, multiple schools, or the entire school system.
- G. Feed – The flow of students from one school level to the next.
- H. Free and Reduced-Priced Meals (FARMS) – A federal program available to students whose households meet the federal income eligibility guidelines to receive free or reduced-priced meals.
- I. ~~HCPSS System Level Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) – A multi-hazard approach for the school system to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk to the people, property, and operations of the school system.~~
- J. ~~Howard County Emergency Operations Plan – A comprehensive emergency management plan incorporating all aspects of pre-emergency preparedness and post-emergency response, recovery, and mitigation.~~
- K. Inclusive – Opportunities to ensure that all individuals are engaged participants in the learning environment and community. All students, families and staff members feel valued, respected, appreciated and involved. Individuals see their unique identities reflected in all facets of education including staffing, curriculum, instruction, and activities.~~Making sure all individuals have the opportunity to be engaged participants in the learning environment and community. All students, families, and employees feel valued, respected, appreciated and involved. Individuals see their unique identities reflected in all facets of education including staffing, curriculum, instruction, and activities.~~
- L. Long-Range Enrollment – Each school’s student population projections for the upcoming 10 years.
- M. Permanent School Facility – School building that is constructed with brick, concrete and steel, with a wooden or fabricated steel frame; a lasting structure designed and intended for support, enclosure, shelter or protection of people and for the delivery of instruction. Excluded from this definition are relocatables which are temporary and can be moved to alternative locations.
- N. Planning Region – A geographic area of Howard County made up of one or more schools used by the HCPSS Office of School Planning for long-range planning purposes.

- O. Program Capacity – The number of students that can be reasonably accommodated in a school, based on the permanent school facility (relocatables are excluded) and the educational program offered (pre-kindergarten regional programs are excluded). Program capacity is calculated based at the below rates:
1. Elementary schools: the product of the Board-approved student-to-teacher ratio and the number of teaching stations identified in the capital budget.
 2. Middle schools: 95% of the product of the Board-approved student-to-teacher ratio and the number of teaching stations identified in the capital budget.
 3. High schools: 80% or 85% of the product of the Board-approved student-to-teacher ratio and the number of teaching stations in the capital budget.
- P. Projections – Estimated student enrollment for future school years.
- Q. Regional Program – A countywide educational program located at one or more, but not all schools that is designed to provide a particular type of educational leadership or intervention to students. Regional programs may include, but are not limited to Regional Academic Life Skills, Preschool Program, including Parent-Assisted Learning at Schools, Pre-Kindergarten, Elementary School Model Full-day Pre-Kindergarten, Early Beginnings, Regional Emotional Disabilities, Multiple Intensive Needs Classroom, Junior Reserve Officer Training Course (JROTC) and Elementary School Primary Learner Program.
- R. Relocatables – Prefabricated, stand-alone buildings providing temporary capacity for a school and that are excluded from program capacity.
- S. School Attendance Area – Geographic area from which a school’s students are drawn.
- T. Target Utilization – Enrollment between 90% and ~~100~~100% utilization of the program capacity of a permanent school facility.
- U. Teaching Stations – Rooms that are at least 660 square feet in size and are or could be used for delivery of the educational program. Rooms that are excluded include, but are not limited to, rooms assigned to administrative purposes, regional programs, prekindergarten, special education, cooperative use areas, and elementary related arts.
- V. Utilization – The comparison of a permanent school facility’s program capacity and its enrollment or projected future enrollment.

IV. Standards

- A. The Board will consider school attendance area adjustments whenever one or more of the following conditions exist in accordance with the timeline as outlined in Implementation Procedures in Section II:

1. A new school or addition is scheduled to open.
2. An existing permanent school facility is significantly damaged, deemed unusable, or otherwise scheduled to close.
3. School attendance area projections are outside the ~~target~~ 80-100% capacity utilization range and available capacity exists.
4. The program capacity of a school building is altered by the Board of Education.
- ~~5. The road network(s) within one or more school attendance areas is altered.~~
6. A unique circumstance arising from significant internal or external contributing factors that prompts adjustments to promote efficiencies, provide for the welfare of students, or adapt for shifts in program delivery.

~~B. B. The Board, Superintendent/designee and the AAC will consider the impact of the following factors in the review or development of any school attendance area adjustment plan. While each of these factors will be considered, it may not be feasible to reconcile each and every school attendance area adjustment with each and every factor.~~

The Board, Superintendent/designee and the AAC will consider the impact of the following factors during the review or development of any school attendance area adjustment plan. Capacity utilization will be considered, in addition to these other weighted factors to the greatest extent possible. It may not be feasible to reconcile each and every school attendance area adjustment with each and every factor.

Attendance area adjustment plans are to be developed and evaluated with an analytical approach such as a weighted decision matrix based on the factors identified below.

The four essential factors included in Standard B1 must be addressed and carry a majority of the overall weight. The additional factors listed in Standard B2 should also be considered.

I. Essential Factors, listed in priority order~~1. Facility Utilization. Where reasonable, school attendance area utilization should stay within the target utilization for as long a period of time as possible through the consideration of:~~

- a. Efficient use of available space. ~~For example, by~~ maintaining a building's program capacity utilization between 90% and 100%.
1. Long-range enrollment projections, capital plans and capacity needs of school infrastructures (e.g., cafeterias, restrooms and other shared core facilities).

b2. Equitable distribution of the socioeconomic composition of the school population as measured by participation in the federal FARMS program. School attendance areas should attempt to bring school FARMS participation rates closer to the county average.

a. Feeds that encourage keeping students together from one school to the next avoiding feeds of less than 15% at the receiving school.

II. Additional Factors for consideration

a. The diversity of the student population as defined in Policy 1080.

c. Academic performance of students in both the sending and receiving schools as measured by current standardized testing results.

d. The number of students that walk or receive bus service and the distance and time based students travel.

c. Fiscal responsibility through the most optimized use of by minimizing capital and operating costs to meet educational standards.

d. The level of English learners as measured by enrollment in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program.

~~d. The number of students that walk or receive bus service and the distance and time based students travel.~~

e. Location and utilization of regional programs, maintaining an equitable distribution of programs across the county.

e. Number of students moved, taking into account the correlation between the number of students moved, the outcomes of other standards achieved in Section IV.B. and the length of time those results are expected to be maintained.

x. The condition of school facilities based on state maintenance assessment.

~~2. Community Stability. Where reasonable, school attendance areas should promote a sense of community in both the geographic place (e.g., neighborhood or place in which a student lives) and the promotion of a student from each school level through the consideration of:~~

~~a. Feeds that encourage keeping students together from one school to the next. For example, avoiding feeds of less than 15% at the receiving school.~~

~~b. Maintain contiguous communities or neighborhoods to the greatest extent possible. Areas that are made up of contiguous communities or neighborhoods.~~

- c. ~~Frequency with which any one student is reassigned, making every attempt to not move a student more than once at any school level or the same student more frequently than once every five years.~~

Limit the frequency with which any one geographic area is reassigned, with attempts not to reassign cohorts more than once within a school level.

- 3. ~~Demographic Characteristics of Student Population. Where reasonable, school attendance areas should promote the creation of a diverse and inclusive student body at both the sending and receiving schools through the consideration of:~~
 - a. ~~The racial/ethnic composition of the student population.~~
 - b. ~~The socioeconomic composition of the school population as measured by participation in the federal FARMS program.~~
 - c. ~~Academic performance of students in both the sending and receiving schools as measured by current standardized testing results.~~
 - d. ~~The level of English learners as measured by enrollment in the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program.~~
 - e. ~~Number of students moved, taking into account the correlation between the number of students moved, the outcomes of other standards achieved in Section IV.B. and the length of time those results are expected to be maintained.~~
 - f. Other reliable demographic and diversity indicators, where feasible.

C. Board of Education's Deliberations

- 1. The Superintendent/designee will submit attendance area considerations to the Board for discussion and recommendation.
- 2. If attendance area adjustments are considered under Section IV.A., the Board will notify the public of its decision for the Superintendent to proceed or not to proceed with the formation of the AAC and attendance area adjustment recommendations.
- 3. The Superintendent/designee will submit to the Board attendance area adjustment recommendations, which include data on each of the factors in Section IV.B. for which measurement can be obtained.
- 4. The Board, in accordance with Policy 2040 Public Participation in Meetings of the Board, will hold a public hearing(s) provide opportunities to receive community feedback, in an equitable and inclusive fashion, including but not limited to public hearings and online or paper and pencil surveys through the school system,

regarding the school attendance area adjustment plan(s) ~~submitted by the Superintendent in accordance with the timeline as outlined in Implementation Procedures in Section II. In addition, and as necessary, work session(s) will be scheduled to consider public hearing testimony. The Board may schedule additional hearings and/or work sessions at its discretion.~~

5. The Board may direct the Superintendent to provide additional information and/or develop other alternative plans for its consideration ~~at any time. at least 48 hours prior to the last scheduled public hearing. The Board may also propose alternative plans at any time.~~
6. Attendance area adjustments will not affect rising twelfth grade students. The Board may consider exemptions for students to continue attending schools in an area that is proposed for attendance area adjustments if they are:
 - a. rising fifth, eighth, and eleventh grade students to continue attending schools in an area that is proposed for attendance area adjustments. Attendance area adjustments will not affect rising twelfth grade students.
 - b. students who have been reassigned once already at their school level or once within the last five years provided that they remained registered at the same address during that time.
 - c. students who are on an IEP or 504 plan.
7. The Board will take final action on school attendance area adjustments at a public meeting. The Board reserves the right to adopt or to modify any alternatives and/or recommendations presented to it by the Superintendent/designee or the residents of Howard County ~~proposed previously or during the Board's deliberations and vote. Any modifications must be presented to the public prior to the Board's final approval of any attendance area adjustments.~~

D. Community Input

1. The Superintendent will, ~~when directed by the Board,~~ form an AAC in accordance with the Implementation Procedures of this policy for the purpose of advising the Superintendent during the planning phase of the attendance area adjustment process. ~~In the case of an extended emergency situation, the Superintendent/designee will propose an attendance area adjustment.~~
2. The Board will provide opportunities for public input in accordance with Policy 2040 Public Participation in Meetings of the Board: during the work sessions and Board review process. The timeline is outlined in the Implementation Procedures of this Policy.
3. Student, parent, and community members Members of the public may provide feedback to superintendent/designee to inform a recommendation to board,

including the submission of alternative school attendance area adjustment plans to the Board and/or the Superintendent/designee.

- E. The Board may alter these provisions, upon a majority vote of the Board, when an extended emergency as defined by Policy 3010 Emergency Preparedness and Response occurs or other extraordinary circumstances warrant such an alternation. In the case of an extended emergency situation, the Superintendent/designee will propose an attendance area adjustment for the Board's consideration.

V. Responsibilities

All responsibilities will be accomplished in alignment with the timeline indicated in the Policy 6010-Implementation Procedures

- A. The Superintendent/designee will prepare and provide enrollment projections and attendance area considerations on an annual basis to the Board.
 - B. The Board will determine whether any conditions exist that prompt the consideration of school attendance area adjustments and, when applicable initiate the boundary review process. The Superintendent and the Board of Education will define the proposed scope and identify which standards noted in Section IV A prompted this boundary review for the upcoming year's process, in alignment with the timeline indicated in the Policy 6010-Implementation Procedures.
 - ~~B. The Board will determine whether any conditions exist that prompt the consideration of school attendance area adjustments and, when applicable, recommend formation of the AAC. The Superintendent/designee will assist the AAC in completing its review and comment process.~~
 - X. The Superintendent/designee will obtain student and parent feedback at the school level in an impartial, representative and equitable way from each potentially impacted attendance area, as well as countywide community feedback, ensuring that different viewpoints are considered. Feedback will be provided to the public in aggregated, not identifiable fashion.
- ~~C. All AAC meetings are subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act. Employees~~The Superintendent/Designee will at the minimum take summary notes of the AAC meeting(s) and make these summary notes available to the public to align with requirements of the Maryland Open Meetings Act.
 - X. The Board will hold public hearings, work sessions and approve any changes to school attendance areas in public meetings.
- D. The Superintendent/designee will communicate the Board's action on attendance area adjustments to the principals, PTA presidents and SGA presidents of each affected

school, the president of the PTA Council of Howard County and the chairman of the Community Advisory Council to the Board.

- E. Principals will communicate attendance area adjustments to the parents of students in areas affected by the Board's action.

VI. Delegation of Authority

The Superintendent is authorized to develop appropriate procedures ~~for the implementation of~~ to implement this policy.

VII. References

- A. Legal
 - The Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, Section 4-109, Establishment of Public School
 - Maryland Open Meetings Act
- B. Other Board Policies
 - Policy 2040 Public Participation in Meetings of the Board
 - Policy 2050 Advisory Committees to Staff and Schools
 - Policy 3010 Emergency Preparedness and Response
 - Policy 5200 Pupil Transportation
 - Policy 6000 Site Selection and Acquisition
 - Policy 6020 School Planning/School Construction Programs
 - Policy 6070 Discontinuation of School Use
 - Policy 9000 Student Residency, Eligibility, Enrollment, and Assignment
- C. Relevant Data Sources
- D. Other
 - Policy 6010-Implementation Procedures

VIII. History

ADOPTED: April 15, 2004
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