

**I. Policy Statement**

The Board of Education of Howard County, with the advice of the Superintendent, sets school attendance areas in order to provide quality educational opportunities to all students and to promote the balanced and efficient use of school facilities and resources. The Board further recognizes that school openings, additions, program changes, population growth and other demographic changes may require that school attendance areas be adjusted from time to time. The Board believes that staff 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 under and process by which school attendance area adjustments will be developed and adopted.

**III. Definitions**

- A. Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance Chart (Open/Closed) – A chart required by county legislation that lists schools as open or closed based on school capacities and enrollment projections.
- B. Attendance Area Committee (AAC) – Committee comprised of community members appointed by the Superintendent, to advise and comment during the planning phase regarding Capital Budget and redistricting recommendations being developed by staff.
- C. Feed – The percentage of students in the receiving school that come from a sending school of a lower organizational level.
- D. Maximum Target Enrollment – 110% of the program capacity of a school facility.
- E. Minimum Target Enrollment – 90% of the program capacity of a school facility.
- F. Program Capacity – a) Elementary schools: the product of the Board-approved student-to-teacher ratio and the number of teaching stations identified in the capital budget; b) 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; c) 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.

- G. Planning Region – A geographic area of Howard County made up of one or more schools used by the Department of Education for planning purposes.
- H. School Attendance Area – Geographic area from which a school’s students are drawn.
- I. School Attendance Area Projection – An estimate of the number of students within a particular school attendance area.
- J. System-Level Process Requirements – A set of standards for projections, capacities, data displays, identifying schools to be studied and redistricting recommendations to be used by those involved in the redistricting process.

#### **IV. Standards**

- A. The Board of Education may consider school attendance area adjustments whenever one or more of the following conditions exist:
  - 1. A new school or addition is scheduled to open.
  - 2. An existing facility is significantly damaged, lost, or otherwise scheduled to close.
  - 3. School attendance area projections are outside the minimum or maximum target enrollments.
  - 4. The program capacity of a school building is altered.
  - 5. The road network(s) within one or more school attendance areas is altered.
  - 6. An unforeseen circumstance necessitates an adjustment to promote efficiency or provide for the welfare of students.
- B. The following factors will be considered in the development of any school attendance area adjustment plan:
  - 1. Educational welfare of the impacted students in both the sending and receiving schools.
  - 2. Frequency with which students are redistricted. For example, make every attempt to not move a student more than once at any organization level or the same student more frequently than once every five years.
  - 3. Impact on the number of students bused and the distance bused students travel. For example, students who are “non-transported” (walkers) should, where possible, remain walkers.
  - 4. Cost.
  - 5. The demographic makeup and academic performance of students in both the sending and receiving schools.
  - 6. Number of students to be redistricted.
  - 7. Maintenance of feeder patterns. For example, avoiding the establishment of feeds less than 15% where possible.
  - 8. Changes in a school’s program capacity.

9. Impact on specialized or regional programs (e.g., special education, career and technology education, ESOL).
10. Functional and operational capacity of school infrastructures (e.g., cafeterias, restrooms and other shared core facilities).
11. Building utilization. For example, maintaining a target enrollment of a building's program capacity of between 90% and 110% where possible.

While each of these factors will be considered, it may be impractical to reconcile each and every school attendance area adjustment with each and every factor.

C. Board of Education's Deliberations

1. The Superintendent will submit goals in conjunction with feasibility studies for discussion and approval.
2. The Superintendent will submit system-level-process requirements to the Board of Education for approval.
3. The Superintendent will forward redistricting recommendations to the Board of Education. Any recommendation submitted to the Board should include data on each of the factors in § IV.B for which measurement can be obtained.
4. The Board of Education will hold a public hearing(s) and work session(s) regarding the school attendance area adjustment plan(s) submitted by the Superintendent in accordance with Policy 2040, Public Participation in Meetings of the Board. The Board may schedule additional hearings and/or work sessions at its discretion.
5. The Board may direct the Superintendent to develop additional information and/or develop other alternatives for its consideration at any time. The Board also may propose alternatives to a plan at any time.
6. The Board will take final action on school attendance area adjustments at a public meeting. As elected representatives of the community, the Board reserves the right to adopt or to modify any alternatives and/or recommendations presented to it by the Superintendent or the citizens of Howard County proposed previously or during the Board's deliberations and vote.

D. Community Input

1. The AAC will provide public input during the planning phase of the redistricting process.
  - a. Public input will take the form of review and comments. Staff will modify the redistricting plans as appropriate based on the comments.
  - b. Summary notes of the meetings between Staff/AAC will be taken and made available to the public via the Howard County Public School System website.
  - c. AAC members may be asked to participate during the meeting in which staff presents the redistricting recommendations as well as in one or more work sessions to assist the Board of Education in its deliberations.

2. Staff will provide an electronic mail address where the public can send comments and suggestions as well as read the summary notes of the meetings in which staff and the AAC have worked in collaboration to refine the redistricting plans.
  3. The Board of Education will provide opportunities for public input through its hearing process (see §C.2.1.b).
  4. Members of the public may submit school attendance area adjustment plans to either the Superintendent or the Board of Education.
- E. The Board may alter these provisions, upon a majority vote of the Board, when emergency or other extraordinary circumstances warrant such an alteration.

## **V. Compliance**

- A. The Superintendent/designee is responsible for determining whether conditions exist that require school attendance area adjustments and recommending the appointment of the AAC. The Superintendent/designee is also responsible for assisting the AAC in completing its review and comment process.
- B. All meetings in which the AAC participates shall be open to the public and will have summary notes taken. These summary notes will be made available to interested parties.
- C. The Superintendent/designee will prepare enrollment projections on an annual basis and provide those projections in the formats defined in the System-Level Process Requirements to those involved in the redistricting process or those who have an interest in the projections.
- D. The Superintendent/designee shall provide the Board with an annual school attendance area adjustment report that includes student enrollment projections as defined in the System-Level Process Requirements, as well as a recommendation for any school attendance area adjustments and the identification of school attendance areas that may be affected.
- E. Actions taken by the Board with regard to the adjustment of boundary lines shall be communicated by the Superintendent/designee to the principals, PTA presidents and SGA presidents of each public school in Howard County, as well as the president of the PTA Council of Howard County and the chairman of the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Board of Education by the Superintendent/designee. Principals are responsible for communicating this information to parents of students in areas affected by school attendance area adjustments.
- F. The Superintendent's designee will prepare the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance Chart (Open/Closed) in compliance with Policy 6010.

**VI. Delegation of Authority**

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

**VII. References**

- A. Legal  
Education Article, §4-109  
Maryland Open Meetings Act
- B. Other Board Policies  
Policy 2040, Public Participation in Meetings of the Board

**VIII. History**

ADOPTED: April 15, 2004  
REVIEWED: July 1, 2011  
MODIFIED:  
REVISED: April 28, 2005  
April 16, 2009  
EFFECTIVE: April 16, 2009

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS**

Effective: July 1, 2005

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**I. Development and Consideration of School Attendance Area Adjustment Plans**

A. The development and consideration of proposed school attendance area adjustment plans will take place in the following manner:

1. Staff/Attendance Area Committee (AAC)

- a. The Superintendent's designee will solicit and interview candidates and will nominate for appointment by the Superintendent, an Attendance Area Committee consisting of 10 to 12 members. Of those nominated:
  - i. One member of the AAC may be a student.
  - ii. One member may be from each of the school system's six planning regions.
  - iii. Three to six members at large.
  - iv. No more than 6 members will have been members of a previous AAC. Membership may not be concurrent for more than 2 years. Consideration will be given to providing representation from each of the school system's planning regions.
- b. Staff will develop feasibility studies for each project in the capital budget that yields additional student capacity. These feasibility studies will be the basis for short- and long- range redistricting plans.
- c. AAC, after receiving orientation, will work in collaboration with staff to refine the redistricting plans through a review and comments process. The basis for the review will be the System-Level Process Requirements, the Policy 6010 factors, and the redistricting goals set by the Board of Education. The refined plans will be presented at one or more regional meetings for additional public comment. Further refinement may be necessary prior to forwarding the plans to the Superintendent.

2. Superintendent

- a. The Superintendent will apply the System-Level Process Requirements and Policy 6010 factors when reviewing staff's recommendations. Modifications may be made to the staff's recommendations as appropriate.
- b. The Superintendent will forward his recommendations to the Board of Education.

- c. The Superintendent and Board of Education will assess the process at the end of the redistricting cycle. Modification will be made as appropriate prior to the beginning of the next cycle.
- d. The Superintendent/designee will prepare enrollment projections on an annual basis and provide those projections in accordance with the System-Level-Process Requirements. The projections will be made available to the Board of Education and to other interested community members.

## **II. History**

ADOPTED: April 28, 2005

REVIEWED: July 1, 2011

MODIFIED:

REVISED:

EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2005