

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 balance the capacity utilization of all schools. 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 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 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 plans in staff reports.
- 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, age, and national origin.

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- E. Equitable – Just or fair access, opportunities, and supports needed to help students, families, and staff 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. Howard County Emergency Operations Plan – A comprehensive emergency management plan incorporating all aspects of pre-emergency preparedness and post-emergency response, recovery, and mitigation.
 - J. 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.
 - K. Inclusive – Making sure 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.
 - 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. 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. School Attendance Area – Geographic area from which a school’s students are drawn.
- S. Target Utilization – Enrollment between 90% and 110% utilization of the program capacity of a permanent school facility.
- T. 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:
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 utilization.
 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. A unique circumstance that prompts adjustments to promote efficiencies, provide for the welfare of students, or adapt for shifts in program delivery.
- 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.

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, maintain a building's program capacity utilization between 90% and 100%.
 - b. Long-range enrollment, capital plans and capacity needs of school infrastructures (e.g., cafeterias, restrooms and other shared core facilities).
 - c. Fiscal responsibility by minimizing capital and operating costs.
 - d. The number of students that walk or receive bus service and the distance and time based students travel.
 - e. Location of regional programs, maintaining an equitable distribution of programs across the county.
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. 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.
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) regarding the school attendance area adjustment plan(s) submitted by the Superintendent. 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. The Board may also propose alternative plans at any time.
- 6. The Board may consider exemptions for 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.
- 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 citizens of Howard County proposed previously or during the Board's deliberations and vote.

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.
 3. Members of the public may submit 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.

V. Responsibilities

- 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, recommend formation of the AAC. The Superintendent/Designee will assist the AAC in completing its review and comment process.
- C. All AAC meetings are subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act. Staff will take summary notes of the AAC meeting and make these summary notes available to the public.
- 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 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

VIII. History

ADOPTED: April 15, 2004
REVIEWED: July 1, 2011
MODIFIED: November 29, 2018
REVISED: April 28, 2005
 April 16, 2009
 January 26, 2017
EFFECTIVE: November 29, 2018

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS

Effective: November 29, 2018

I. Definitions

Within the context of these implementation procedures, the following definition applies:

Projection – Anticipated student enrollment counts developed using data that includes, but is not limited to historical cohort survival ratios, birth rates, new housing units, housing resales, apartment turnover and net migration.

II. Development and Consideration of School Attendance Area Adjustment Plans

The long-range school facilities planning process is conducted on an annual basis according to the county's and state's capital budget process. The timing, sequence, and/or steps may be adjusted based on budgetary and operational needs, to account for holidays and other considerations. The development and consideration of proposed school attendance area adjustment plans will take place in the following manner:

Determine Proposed Scope:

- A. Calendar Year 1 - June-November
After the presentation of the staff report or after any approval of changes in the attendance areas, the Superintendent and the Board of Education will consult with each other to define the proposed scope (i.e. open a new school only or comprehensive plan for all three levels) of the upcoming year's attendance area adjustments and develop a communication plan. The proposed scope may be adjusted during the review and approval process.

Review and Approval Process:

- B. Calendar Year 2 - January/February
The Office of School Planning will provide the Superintendent with enrollment projections by school annually and develop attendance area considerations per Policy 6010. The considerations will address capacity projects in the capital budget and will be the basis for short- and long-range attendance area plans.
- C. Calendar Year 2 - April
The Office of School Planning will solicit and interview candidates for the potential Attendance Area Committee (AAC) and nominate candidates for appointment by the Superintendent.

- D. Calendar Year 2 - June
The Superintendent/Designee presents projections, attendance area considerations and planning issues to the Board and interested citizens.
- If the Board approves proceeding with attendance area adjustments, the Superintendent will charter such a committee to review proposed attendance area adjustment plans. 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.
- E. Calendar Year 2 - June
If an AAC is created, the Office of School Planning staff will provide training to the AAC. Training will include, but is not limited the following:
1. Review of Policy 6010 and its standards used to establish an attendance area adjustment plan.
 2. Review the AAC's responsibilities in the attendance area adjustment plan process, including training on the Maryland Open Meetings Act.
- F. Calendar Year 2 - June/July
With assistance from the Office of School Planning, the AAC will review any attendance area adjustments in the staff report, and make a committee recommendation to the Superintendent to assist the Superintendent in developing a recommendation to the Board.
- G. Calendar Year 2 - July
The Office of School Planning will facilitate regional meetings to obtain public comment regarding proposed attendance area adjustments. The Office of School Planning will solicit public input through various mechanisms.
- H. Calendar Year 2 - July/August
The Office of School Planning will advise the Superintendent on capacity needs for the upcoming budget process during capital budget preparations.
- I. Calendar Year 2 - August
After receipt of input from the AAC and the public, the Superintendent will propose attendance area adjustments to the Board.
- J. Calendar Year 2 - August-November
Board public hearing(s), work session(s) and adoption of attendance area adjustments.
- K. Calendar Year 2 - December
The Superintendent/Designee and Board will assess the attendance area adjustment process. Modifications to this process will be made, as needed, prior to the beginning of the next attendance area adjustment.

Implementation

- L. Calendar Year 2 - December – Year 3 - January
After the Board has made any final decision(s) regarding attendance area adjustments, the approved attendance area maps are developed, the school locator is updated, and transportation routes are updated. The Superintendent will communicate the Board’s action 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. The Superintendent/Designee will assist school-based administrators and staff with articulating students affected by attendance area adjustments. Principals will communicate attendance area adjustments to the parents of students in areas affected by the Board’s action.
- M. Calendar Year 3 - January
Capital Budget review by the Board.
- N. Calendar Year 3 - May
Capital Budget review and approval by County Council.
- O. Calendar Year 3 –September
Attendance Area Adjustment effective.

III. Attendance Area Committee Make-up and Responsibilities

- A. The AAC shall consist of 10 to 15 members. Consideration will be given to providing representation from each of the Howard County Public School System’s (HCPSS) planning regions. Representation may include, but is not limited to the following:
 - 1. At least one member from the Howard County Association of Student Councils.
 - 2. At least one member from each of the HCPSS six planning regions.
 - 3. At least three, but no more than eight at-large citizen members, with consideration toward identifying members of the community based on the attendance area/planning region(s) affected by the proposed attendance area adjustment.
 - 4. Of those AAC members selected, no more than six members will have been members of a previous AAC.
 - 5. Members may not serve on more than two consecutive AACs.
- B. The AAC, after receiving training, will work in collaboration with the Office of School Planning staff and the Superintendent/Designee to provide feedback on the

proposed attendance area adjustment plans in the staff report. The basis for the review will be enrollment projections and the Policy 6010 Standards set forth in Section IV.B.

IV. History

ADOPTED: April 28, 2005
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