

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 and approved by the Board, to advise and comment on capacity needs and attendance area adjustment recommendations developed by staff.
- B. Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) – Procedures to ensure that 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 – The sum of the ways that people are both alike and different. The dimensions of diversity include race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic condition.
- E. Equitable – Just or fair; different from equal in that equality connotes equal treatment, which may be insufficient for equitable access and outcomes.

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- F. Extended Emergency – A severe or long-term situation that affects an individual school, multiple schools, or the entire school system. An extended emergency is normally one in which the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), the HCPSS Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) or the Howard County Emergency Operations Plan is activated.
- 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 Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) – A multi-hazard approach for HCPSS that addresses preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation to:
1. An emergency, including a violent or traumatic event on school grounds, during school hours, or during a school-sponsored activity.
 2. Events in the community that affect normal school operations.
- J. Howard County Emergency Operations Plan – A countywide emergency management system incorporating all aspects of pre-emergency preparedness and post-emergency response, recovery, and mitigation.
- K. Inclusive – Securing the educational benefits of diversity for all students through active, intentional, and ongoing engagement.
- L. Long-Range Enrollment – Each school’s student population projections for the upcoming 10 years.
- M. 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.
- N. Program Capacity – The number of students that can be reasonably accommodated in a school, based on the permanent 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.

- O. Projections – Estimated student enrollment for future school years.
- P. 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.
- Q. School Attendance Area – Geographic area from which a school’s students are drawn.
- R. Target Utilization – Enrollment between 90% and 110% utilization of the program capacity of a school facility.
- S. Utilization – The comparison of a 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 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. An unforeseen circumstance necessitates an adjustment to promote efficiency or provide for the welfare of students.
- B. The Board, Superintendent/Designee and the AAC will consider the impact of the following factors in the 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 in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics.
 - 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 indicators, when applicable.

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.
8. 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.

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, the Superintendent/Designee and/or the AAC.

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 Superintendent/Designee will determine whether the conditions exist that require school attendance area adjustments and will recommend that the Board appoint 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 and Construction Programs
 - Policy 6070 Discontinuation of School Use
 - Policy 9000 Student Residency Eligibility Enrollment Assignment
- C. Relevant Data Sources
- D. Other

VIII. History

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

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS

Effective: January 26, 2017

I. Definitions

Within the context of these implementation procedures, the following definitions apply:

- A. Integrated Modular Units – Modular classrooms or buildings that are permanently installed at a school and included in the program capacity of a school.
- B. Projection Methodology – Procedure to develop student enrollment projections that includes, but is not limited to historical cohort survival ratios, birth rates, new housing units, housing resales, apartment turnover and net migration.
- C. Relocatable(s) – Prefabricated, stand-alone buildings providing temporary capacity for a school and that are excluded from program capacity.

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 schedule is adjusted annually to account for holidays and other anomalies. The development and consideration of proposed school attendance area adjustment plans will take place in the following manner:

- A. Year 1 - 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.
- B. Year 1 - 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.
- C. Year 1 - June
The Superintendent/Designee presents projections, attendance area considerations and planning issues to the Board and interested citizens.

If the Board approves the appointment of an AAC, 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.

- D. Year 1 - June/July
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.
- E. Year 1 - July/August
With assistance from the Office of School Planning, the AAC will review attendance area adjustments, consider citizen feedback and make a committee recommendation to the Superintendent.
- F. Year 1 - July/August
The Office of School Planning will advise the Superintendent on capacity needs for the upcoming budget process during capital budget preparations.
- G. Year 1 - September
The Office of School Planning will facilitate regional meetings regarding proposed attendance area adjustments, including the plans refined by the AAC.
- H. Year 1 - October
After receipt of input from the AAC and the public, the Superintendent will propose attendance area adjustments and goals (e.g., to facilitate a balanced utilization, open a new school, etc.) to the Board.
- I. Year 1 - October/November
Board public hearing(s), work session(s) and adoption of attendance area adjustments.
- J. Year 1 - 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.
- K. Year 1 - December – Year 2 - 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.

- L. Year 2 - January
Capital Budget review by the Board.
- M. Year 2 - May
Capital Budget review and approval by County Council.
- N. Year 2 - August
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 more than two consecutive AAC's.
- B. The AAC, after receiving training, will work in collaboration with the Office of School Planning staff and the Superintendent/Designee to refine the attendance area adjustment plan through a review and comments process. The basis for the review will be enrollment projections, the Policy 6010 Standards set forth in Section IV.B., and the attendance area adjustment goals set by the Superintendent.
- C. The AAC will take public input in the form of reviews and comments. The AAC will review public input and provide comments to the staff. Staff will modify the attendance area adjustment plans as appropriate based on the AAC comments.

- D. Attendance areas plans refined by the AAC will be presented at one or more regional meetings for additional citizen comment. Further refinement to the AAC's plan may be necessary prior to forwarding it to the Superintendent for review.
- E. AAC members may be asked to participate during the meeting in which staff presents the attendance area adjustment recommendations as well as in one or more work sessions to assist the Board in its deliberations.

IV. History

ADOPTED: April 28, 2005

REVIEWED: July 1, 2011

MODIFIED:

REVISED: January 26, 2017

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