

August 7, 2025

AAC Meeting

Scheduled August 7, 2025 5:30PM to 7:30PM

Summary

Mr. Hejazi opened the first Attendance Area Committee (AAC) meeting for the HCPSS 2025 redistricting project by outlining the committee's role in evaluating redistricting scenarios based on Policy 6010, which prioritizes facility utilization, community stability, and demographic considerations. Mr. Hejazi, Mr. Lubeley, and Ms. Bubenko explained the data-driven process of enrollment projections and school capacities. The three specific scenarios from the Boundary Review Report developed to address overutilization at Centennial Lane and Bryant Woods elementary schools by shifting populations to adjacent underutilized schools were presented and reviewed. Mr. Hejazi, Ms. Ahn, Mr. Lubeley, Ms. Patel, Ms. Seriki, Ms. Lohin, and Ms. Pantano engaged in a discussion about the proposed scenarios, policy considerations, and the impact on students and communities, raising questions about walk zones, Title I schools, new developments, and the committee's influence on the final recommendations to the Superintendent and Board of Education. The meeting ended at 7:23PM

Meeting Notes

- **Meeting Introduction and Goals of the Attendance Area Committee (AAC)** Mr. Hejazi initiated the first meeting of the AAC, acknowledging prior delays and the committee's readiness to proceed. He emphasized that the process is governed by Policy 6010, which outlines the circumstances and methods for redistricting. The primary goal of the AAC is to evaluate the existing 3 scenarios and provide recommendations to the superintendent, ensuring these align with policy guidelines for eventual consideration by the Board.
- **Data Driving the Redistricting Process** Mr. Hejazi explained that enrollment projections are a crucial data point in the redistricting process. These projections are developed by the Howard County Public School System at the school level and incorporate various factors such as historical cohort survival rates, birth rates for kindergarten students, apartment turnovers, home resales, new home constructions, and out-of-district student movements. The projections are then fed into the "building block" polygons, which, combined with school capacities, are used by staff to create scenarios.
- **Policy 6010 and Key Considerations for Redistricting** Mr. Hejazi highlighted Policy 6010 as the foundational policy for the redistricting process, detailing key sections such as Section III standards B, which addresses facility utilization, community stability, and demographic characteristics of the student population. This includes ensuring efficient use of capacity, considering long-term enrollment, fiscal responsibility, equitable impact on students (walkers/bus service), addressing regional programs, and maintaining school facility conditions.

The policy also emphasizes keeping student groups together from elementary to high school, maintaining contiguous communities, and avoiding frequent redistricting for the same areas. Demographic characteristics such as ethnic and racial makeup, socioeconomic composition, academic performance, and distribution of English language learners are also taken into account.

- **Enrollment Projections and School Capacities** Mr. Hejazi described the continuous nature of enrollment projection updates, noting that factors like COVID, construction changes, and economic shifts influence these projections. The process begins with official enrollment projections from September 30th, data is added from historical cohort survival rates, birth rates, and housing data. These projections forecast student populations for the next 10 years, informing redistricting decisions. School capacities are also calculated based on square footage of classrooms and common spaces, with details available in the 2025 Educational Facilities Master Plan.
- **Rationale for School Selection in Current Redistricting Project** Mr. Hejazi explained that Centennial Lane and Bryant Woods elementary schools were selected for the current redistricting project due to persistent overutilization projected through 2035. Adjacent schools with underutilized capacity, such as Clemens Crossing, Longfellow, Running Brook, and Swansfield, are included to absorb some of the population from Centennial Lane and Bryant Woods. Middle schools like Wild Lake, Harper's Choice, and Burleigh Manor, and high schools like Centennial and Wild Lake, are also part of the project because their feeder patterns are affected by the elementary school changes.
- **Review of Proposed Scenarios and Their Impact** Mr. Hejazi presented three scenarios, comparing each to the current boundaries and analyzing their projected impact on school utilization through 2035. Scenario 1 proposes shifting populations from Centennial Lane and Bryant Woods to Longfellow, Swansfield, Running Brook, and Clemens Crossing, which would significantly reduce overutilization at Centennial Lane and Bryant Woods without pushing other schools over 100% capacity. Scenario 2 is a variation of Scenario 1, involving a swap of areas between Longfellow and Centennial Lane and Harper's Choice and Wild Lake, also solving overutilization for Bryant Woods and improving Centennial Lane's utilization compared to Scenario 1. Scenario 3 takes a different approach, extending Swansfield through Bryant Woods, which resolves Bryant Woods' overutilization but offers less relief for Centennial Lane Elementary School.
- **Addressing Walk Zones and Student Impact** Mr. Hejazi discussed the impact of redistricting on walk zones, explaining that while walk zones cover a large portion of each school's attendance area, it's difficult to meet utilization targets within scope without impacting students who currently walk to school. He noted that to solve overutilization, some walking students might need to be reassigned to different schools, or feeder patterns might become smaller, potentially separating elementary school friends in middle school.
- **Online Commenting Site and Map Tool** Mr. Hejazi introduced an online commenting site accessible to the public and committee members, allowing users to view and compare

boundaries for different scenarios and levels of schools. This tool enables users to zoom in, type addresses, and analyze numbers and comparisons, providing detailed information about the proposed changes.

- **Discussion on Scenario Options and Policy 6010** Ms. Ahn raised a question about why only certain northern schools were considered for redistricting, specifically inquiring about Hollifield Station ES and its projected increased available capacity. Mr. Hejazi clarified that the committee is working with the three established scenarios. He explained that while Policy 6010 doesn't explicitly limit consideration to adjacent schools, Board decisions are usually sensible, indicating that moving students across vast distances might not be practical. Mr. Lubeley added that the AAC's role is to provide recommendations to inform the superintendent's proposal, which could include recommendations to expand the scope area.
- **Northern Schools and Polygon 97** Mr. Lubeley addressed the possibility of including northern schools in the redistricting, stating that the current scope defined by the Board of Education does not include them and that they currently lack the necessary capacity. Enrollment projections indicate future capacity is anticipated. Mr. Hejazi added that moving Polygon 97, which is currently mostly surrounded by the St. John's Lane attendance area, to Hollifield Station would expand the project's scope, leading to more schools requiring redistricting.
- **Recommendations Outside Current Scenarios** Ms. Ahn inquired if recommendations outside the three presented scenarios are allowed. Mr. Lubeley clarified that recommendations like those concerning northern schools are outside the current Board-defined scope and there is no guarantee the Superintendent or Board would accept them without a public announcement. However, the AAC committee can still discuss and propose such recommendations.
- **Postponing Redistricting and Elementary-Only Redistricting** Ms. Patel asked about recommending postponing redistricting for Centennial Lane for one to two years to leverage future anticipated capacity in northern schools. Mr. Hejazi confirmed that the group's recommendations can be anything they choose, but they must be tied to the existing policy. Ms. Patel also asked about the possibility of redistricting only elementary schools, to which Mr. Hejazi replied that it is a possibility, and they are analyzing the feeds for such a scenario, but historically, the Board has leaned against creating small feeds.
- **Walk Zones** Ms. Pantano sought clarification on the hashed areas on the maps, which Mr. Hejazi confirmed represent combined walk zones for elementary, middle, and high schools. He noted that users can view walk zones for specific school levels on the online site.
- **Title I Schools and Student Resources** Ms. Seriki raised a concern about Bryant Woods being a Title I school and the potential redistricting of their students to non-Title I schools, questioning what resources would be in place for those students. Mr. Hejazi confirmed that Bryant Woods would continue to receive its funding. Mr. Lubeley acknowledged this as a valid question, stating that some services might follow students but not all, and they would look into the matter further to provide a more defined answer.

- **New Developments and Enrollment Projections** Ms. Lohin questioned whether upcoming new developments, specifically Polygon 2138, were fully reflected in the enrollment projections, as the numbers for Bryant Woods did not seem to change significantly despite anticipated new students. Mr. Hejazi explained that data comes from County Planning and Zoning Department, and if a project is permitted and/or under construction, the data is likely included, but the type of development might not historically yield many students. Ms. Bubenko confirmed that they use county development data and apply historical and recent yield rates, offering to investigate Polygon 2138 specifically. Mr. Lubeley added that multiple factors influence projections, and other factors could be negating increases from new developments.
- **Committee's Final Product and Recommendation Process** Ms. Ahn asked about the committee's final product and how recommendations would be submitted to the superintendent. Mr. Hejazi explained that the committee needs to reach a consensus on each scenario and document any suggested alternatives, tying them to specific policy items. Mr. Lubeley clarified that the committee's recommendations are not a brand-new plan but rather comments for the Superintendent to consider when developing his proposal for the Board of Education. The Superintendent typically presents one proposal to the Board, though they are not strictly limited to one.
- **Board of Education's Process** Ms. Pantano asked about the Board of Education's process after receiving the superintendent's proposal. Mr. Lubeley explained that the Board's process involves extensive discussion, additional public testimony, and work sessions. Ms. Bubenko noted that the Board has not in the recent past approved an exact plan from the Superintendent and that the current redistricting scope is smaller than previous ones. She also mentioned new public hearing requirements for changes in areas proposed for reassignment are outlined in the policy. The Board could approve one of the existing three scenarios or the Superintendent's proposal, create and approve a new plan, approve part of a plan or defer some/all boundary changes to a later year. This process is not limited to only the three scope-based scenarios in the Boundary Review document.
- **Impact of Committee Feedback** Ms. Patel questioned if the committee's feedback truly makes a difference, given community dissatisfaction with the scenarios. Mr. Hejazi affirmed that feedback from both the committee and the community is crucial for helping the Superintendent improve the process, as schools are overcrowded and solutions are needed. Mr. Lubeley emphasized that if plans are not liked, it is beneficial to explain why, as this provides actionable insights.
- **Submitting Comments and Recommendations** Ms. Ahn asked about the timing and method for submitting feedback, including reasons for disliking scenarios and suggestions for improvement. Mr. Hejazi recommended submitting comments via email, particularly those tied to specific policies, to ensure proper documentation. Mr. Lubeley added that committee comments should be directed to Mr. Hejazi and not submitted through the general community survey to avoid being lost.

- **Polygon Data and Enrollment Projections** Ms. Pantano inquired about the methodology for deriving student numbers in each polygon, particularly for Polygon 132, where elementary school enrollment appeared disproportionately high compared to middle and high school. Mr. Lubeley explained that numbers start with existing enrollment and projections are based on the educational facility master plan's methodology, including cohort survival. Ms. Bubenko clarified that polygon reports are available online with numbers under ten redacted for privacy. She also explained that different neighborhoods may have different family demographics and that projected numbers account for anticipated growth and new housing.
- **Special Education Services** Ms. Seriki asked if the Board considered students receiving special education services in the demographics for the scenarios. Ms. Bubenko stated that while special education percentages are not typically reported in redistricting plans, there is a robust transition plan for students with IEP or 504 requirements when boundaries change. Mr. Lubeley added that funds for special education students follow the student if they move.
- **Exemption Discussion Timing and Process** Mr. Lubeley indicated that it would be helpful if exemptions were discussed at the beginning of the Board process rather than at the end, as had been the case in prior redistricting projects. This change aims to improve the overall process by considering exemptions like military, rising sixth graders, and others the Board may consider early on.
- **Busing and Exemption Cost Information** Ms. Patel asked if the AAC committee could receive cost estimates for various scenarios, including busing walkers, double busing, and exemptions for specific student groups (IEP, 504, fifth, eighth, eleventh, and twelfth graders). Mr. Hejazi explained that busing costs are complex and cannot be determined until redistricting is finalized and a plan is adopted, as bus routes depend on new stops and service requirements.
- **Title I School Capacity Policy** Ms. Patel inquired if Title I schools' capacity is capped at 90%. Mr. Lubeley clarified that no specific Board policy caps the capacity for Title I schools, although past Boards of education have taken this into consideration, it is not a hard-defined policy.
- **Alternative to changing middle and high school boundaries** Would reassigning more elementary students and avoiding any change at the middle or high school level could help improve feeds?
- **Student Exemption Data and Sharing Restrictions** Ms. Ahn asked if data on the number of exempted students by polygon was available, particularly for rising sixth, ninth, eleventh, and twelfth graders. Ms. Bubenko stated that only rising twelfth graders are guaranteed exemptions from redistricting, while other exemptions are decided during the Board of Education's portion of the boundary review process. Ms. Bubenko confirmed that they have data on the number of students per grade by polygon but cannot share it if a polygon has fewer than ten students due to data policy rules, which means the data would be redacted.
- **Meeting Conclusion and Appreciation** Mr. Hejazi thanked participants for following the rules and not speaking over each other, encouraging them to explore the online maps for detailed information on scenarios, numbers, and boundaries. Mr. Lubeley echoed the appreciation,

thanking everyone for their valuable feedback as part of the AAC, assuring them that their input would be considered by the Superintendent and the Board of education.

- **Individuals in attendance:** Mr. Hejazi (Citygate GIS), Mr. Lubeley (HCPSS), Ms. Bubenko (HCPSS), Mr. Downes (HCPSS), Ms. Seriki, Ms. Pantano, Ms. Stevens-Morrison, Ms. Lohin, Ms. Ahn, Ms. Patel, Mr. Cogdell, Ms. Buisch, and Ms. Emman. Additionally, there were several members of the public that attended for parts of the meeting.