

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

PRESENTATION ON ASSESSING FACILITY UTILIZATION AND BALANCING SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

AND

DECISION ON GUIDING PRINCIPLES

DECEMBER 21, 2020

Background Information:

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) has recently seen an increase in enrollment after multiple years of relatively flat enrollment. Much of this growth has been seen in schools located in the Bel Air area; however, it is also expanding into other areas of the County's growth envelope. Harford County has an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO); if a school is at or is projected to reach 110% of the state rated capacity in the next three years, preliminary plans for subdivisions with more than five lots cannot be approved. Presently, four elementary schools and one middle school are at, or above, the threshold to trigger APFO restrictions on new development.

The Board of Education (BOE) approved the contract with FLO Analytics at the board meeting held on August 10, 2020. FLO Analytics will complete a comprehensive review of our existing facility capacities and develop efficient economical solutions to balance enrollment and meet the growing needs of HCPS. Throughout the process, the team will request input from parents/guardians, students, staff, community members, County and local municipal planning departments, and other stakeholders.

Discussion:

HCPS has started the initial steps in the process with FLO Analytics and their subcontractor Bloom. An oversight team consisting of HCPS leadership has been developed to direct the process; the kickoff meeting was held on October 7, 2020. After the new year, the project will be added to the HCPS website; and phone and online community surveys will be conducted as the initial community outreach step. FLO analytics will begin developing options based on the information collected. Through this process, an advisory team made up of HCPS leadership, parents, and principals will review boundaries and program configuration options through a series of working meetings.

As an initial step in the balancing enrollment study, Bloom, the planning firm supporting the community engagement component of the study, interviewed 16 HCPS central office staff members. Based on these conversations, a draft of the guiding principles for the project was developed. These core considerations will serve as guard rails for the executive and advisory teams as they weigh various scenarios and attendance area changes.

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the Board of Education accept the presentation and approve the Guiding Principles for Assessing Facility Utilization and Balancing School Enrollment.

INTRODUCTION

As an initial step in the balancing enrollment study, Bloom, the planning firm supporting the community engagement component of the study, interviewed 16 HCPS central office staff. The guiding principles outlined below were drafted based on these conversations. Once finalized, these core considerations will serve as guard rails for the executive and advisory teams as they weigh various scenarios and attendance area changes.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Implement a **transparent and inclusive boundary review process** that fosters the widespread and ongoing engagement of Harford county's families and community members.
2. Take a **district-wide perspective** by considering the full scope of individual school capacities and student population projections to **balance enrollment**.
3. Operate in the best interest of students by prioritizing **equitable access to safe, high-quality educational environments** for all.
4. Consider the **accessibility of regional programs and signature academic programs** and **the long-term needs of special populations** (e.g., students with special needs, early learners, etc.) with each decision.
5. Maintain neighborhood schools that **optimize proximity to home, prioritize safe, walkable passages** to and from school, and take into account the boundaries of existing and planned **community** developments.
6. Consider **transportation impacts** and work towards limiting the amount of time required on a bus to 45 minutes or less.
7. Optimize **operational efficiency** and ensure the **sustainable allocation of district resources** with each decision.