

POLICY	BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS AND REDISTRICTING	POLICY 200
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200.0 Policy Statement

The Board of Education (Board) believes in building collaborative relationships between the school system and the community. The Board acknowledges that schools are the foundation of the community and have a lasting impact on its citizens. However, there will be times of enrollment fluctuations and changes to the educational landscape that indicate the need to shift attendance areas, redistrict and even close schools. The Board has the unique responsibility to allocate resources based on various student needs and will consider strategies and solutions and seek high levels of communication and transparency with stakeholders.

200.1 Attendance Areas

- A. The county shall be divided into appropriate school attendance areas by the Board. With the exception of some special programs, students are expected to attend the school assigned based on their primary residence. The Superintendent will prepare regulations concerning attendance areas. If the Superintendent of schools determines that the number of out-of-district students attending child care centers is a significant factor in causing enrollment pressures within a specific school attendance area, the Superintendent shall reassign those out-of-district students before moving students whose permanent residence is within the attendance area. The Superintendent is responsible for making recommendations for attendance area adjustment based on conditions set forth in Board policy and for coordinating community involvement and a communication plan.
- B. The Superintendent has discretion to make minor adjustments to attendance area maps without Board approval under the following conditions where:
 - 1. Attendance area boundary lines divide properties.
 - 2. Maps do not clearly define school assignments of current or future students.

Legal Reference	§ 4-115, Education Article, <i>Annotated Code of Maryland</i>		
	COMAR 13A.02.09 <i>Closing of Schools</i>		
Policy History	Reviewed: 2015, 2016	Adopted: 9/24/03	Revised: 7/13/16

3. Maps may not accurately identify current school assignments due to unforeseen factors.
- C. The Chief Operating Officer will be responsible for updating attendance area maps annually to reflect any changes in boundary maps.
 - D. The Board reserves the right to modify proposals, alternatives or recommendations presented by the Superintendent, Frederick County community members or during Board votes.

200.2 Redistricting

Purpose: To establish conditions under which school attendance boundary adjustments will be developed as well as the procedural and community engagement guidelines the Board will use in decisions that impact attendance areas.

- A. The Board may consider school attendance area adjustments under one or more of the following conditions:
 1. A new school, addition or renovation that adds capacity.
 2. Closure or significant damage of an existing school facility.
 3. Changes to student enrollment numbers or projections that are significantly and consistently outside of state rated capacity.
 4. Program changes that impact a school's state rated capacity.
 5. Any situation that would compel an attendance boundary adjustment to promote student safety and well-being or enhance efficiencies.
- B. The annual presentation of the Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP) to the Board shall include a state rated capacity review that will guide Board decisions in regard to optimal usage of school system facilities. This will also include a status report of the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) and approved residential developments.
- C. The Board shall consider the following factors in developing school attendance area boundaries:
 1. Educational welfare of students.
 2. Frequency of redistricting, with every attempt being made to limit individual student redistricting to not more than once every five years.
 3. Proximity to schools, in order to maximize walkers and minimize distance or time of bus runs.
 4. Student demographics.
 5. Student academic performance.
 6. Operating and capital costs.
 7. Established feeder patterns.
 8. Impact on neighborhoods and communities.
 9. Impact on specialized school programs or a change to school capacity.
 10. Instructional and operational capacity of involved schools.
 11. Any other factor that is unique or pertinent to the proposed redistricting.

It is important to note that the above criteria are not in priority order. While the Board will take all factors into consideration, it may not be possible to incorporate each factor into all adjustments.

D. Redistricting Study Process

1. The Superintendent will provide a scope of work, including defined study area, process and schedule, as well as a community engagement plan for a proposed redistricting study to the Board for review, discussion and approval prior to the commencement of the study.
2. The community engagement plan shall include a variety of engagement strategies emphasizing maximum community involvement and transparency.
3. Following initial data collection, school system staff will engage the school communities involved in the redistricting to present the scope of work, schedule and community engagement plan. Collected data will also be presented to the school communities for review and discussion. Input will be gathered regarding questions and concerns about the proposed redistricting.
4. School system staff will develop a variety of school attendance boundary options utilizing information gathered earlier and factors outlined in Board Policy 200.2(C) above. These options will be presented to the school communities, in accordance with the community engagement plan, for review and comment. The proposed options will be revised and presented to the school communities to prepare an appropriate recommendation for the Superintendent's consideration.
5. The Superintendent will forward redistricting recommendation(s) to the Board, including all pertinent data, information, considered options and details of community engagement.
6. The Board will hold a minimum of one work session and a minimum of one public hearing regarding the proposed school attendance area boundary adjustment(s). The Board acknowledges that public input is a priority.
7. The Board may direct the Superintendent to provide additional information or develop alternative attendance boundary options for the Board's consideration.
8. The Board will have a final public hearing and take final action at a public meeting.
9. Consideration will be given to granting "grandfathering" status to students entering 5th, 8th and 12th grades if space is available.

200.3 School Closing or Consolidation

Purpose: To establish procedural and community engagement guidelines for reorganizing facilities and closing schools in accordance with Maryland law. ¹

When considering closing or consolidating a school, the Board shall direct the Superintendent to examine the feasibility of such action. The Superintendent shall prepare such reports as necessary to describe proposed closing or consolidation ~~to~~ and allow adequate public review and comment.

- A. At a minimum, the following shall be considered when evaluating criteria for closing a school:
 - 1. Student enrollment trends in relation to state rated capacity;
 - 2. Age and/or condition of school buildings;
 - 3. Transportation;
 - 4. Educational programs;
 - 5. Racial composition and levels of poverty of student body;
 - 6. Financial considerations;
 - 7. Student relocation;
 - 8. Impact on community in geographic attendance area for both the proposed closing school and schools impacted by relocating students; and
 - 9. Any other factors the Board deems relevant to rendering its decision.

Prior to acting on a decision to close a school, the Board may, in its discretion, appoint a committee to assist with evaluating the above criteria and making a recommendation to the Board.

B. Procedures for Community Engagement

1. Public Hearing

- a. A public hearing ² shall take place before any final decision by the Board to close a school.
- b. Time limits on the submission of oral and written testimony and data shall be clearly defined in the notification of the public meeting.

2. Adequate Public Notification

- a. In addition to regular electronic and written communication used by FCPS, written notification of all schools being considered for closure shall be advertised in at least two newspapers having general circulation in the geographic attendance areas for the school(s) impacted by closing or relocation of students.
- b. The newspaper notification shall include the procedures to be used by the Board in making a final decision.

¹ COMAR 13A.02.09

² For purposes of this policy, public forum is defined as: "A forum provided to concerned citizens to submit their views, testimony, data and/or concerns to the Board by either commenting publicly or submitting statements in writing."

c. The newspaper notification will be placed at least two weeks prior to any public hearing held by the school system on the proposed closing.

C. The Board shall render its vote publicly and in writing.

1. The final written decision should include the rationale and basis used for a school closure.

2. The written decision shall address the impact of the proposed closing on the factors set forth in Maryland law.³

3. There shall be notification of the final decision by the Board to the community in the geographic attendance area of the school to be closed and the school(s) impacted by the relocation of students.

4. The final decision shall include notification of the right to appeal to the State Board of Education as identified in Maryland law⁴ and Board Policy 105 *Appeal and Hearing Procedures*.

³ COMAR 13A.02.09

⁴ COMAR 13A.02.09