



Frederick County Public Schools
Board of Education
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AREAS AND REDISTRICTING
Policy 200

A. Policy Purpose

To define the conditions and process by which school attendance areas will be developed, adjusted, and adopted, and to outline the process for closing or consolidating schools.

B. Definitions

1. “Child care center”, for the purposes of this Policy, is defined to mean a facility run by an individual, an agency, or an organization that offers child care services for part or all of any day, at least two (2) days a week.
2. “Specialized programs”, for the purposes of this Policy, is defined to mean programs for students with disabilities whose placements are made through the County Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. These programs include self-contained special education classrooms that are housed in a number of comprehensive school buildings throughout the County.

C. Policy Statement

1. The Board of Education (Board) recognizes the need for an orderly and public process for the determination of school attendance areas. Feedback from the community during the process is essential to providing qualitative data for analysis and evaluation.
2. The Board has a primary responsibility to provide school facilities that address the need of students and sustain high quality educational programs. There will be times of population growth, enrollment fluctuations, opening or closing of schools, and changes to the educational landscape that indicate the need to adjust attendance areas, redistrict, or even close schools. The Board believes in establishing collaborative relationships between the school system and the community to address capacity and utilization impacts across the district.
3. Rooted at the center of any redistricting study conducted by Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) is a focus and emphasis on student well-being. To this end, the Board is committed to ensuring that each and every student is provided a world class education, and empowered to take ownership of their learning so they are ready to achieve a positive impact in the local and global communities. The Board’s commitment also relies on nurturing relationships with families and the community. These relationships support a shared responsibility for and pride in student success and our school system.
4. The Board recognizes redistricting decisions are complicated and difficult, and must be centered on meeting the needs of all students throughout the district.

5. The Board recognizes the value of diverse and inclusive school populations when establishing school attendance areas. To this end, the Board is committed to ensuring students have access to educational excellence and equity and a safe, secure teaching and learning environments at each and every school.

D. Implementation

1. Attendance Areas

- a. The county shall be divided into appropriate school attendance areas by the Board. With the exception of some specialized programs, students are expected to attend the school assigned based on their primary residence.
- b. The Superintendent will prepare regulations concerning attendance areas.
- c. If the Superintendent 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.
- d. 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.
- e. The Superintendent has discretion to make minor adjustments to attendance area maps without Board approval under the following conditions where:
 - i. Attendance area boundary lines divide properties.
 - ii. Maps do not clearly define school assignments of current or future students.
 - iii. Maps may not accurately identify current school assignments due to unforeseen factors.
- f. The Chief Operating Officer will be responsible for updating attendance area maps annually to reflect any changes in boundary maps.
- g. The Board reserves the right to modify proposals, alternatives or recommendations presented by the Superintendent, Frederick County community members, or during Board votes.
- h. Requests for enrollment outside of a designated attendance area may be considered in accordance with [FCPS Regulation 400-15](#), *Out-of-District Enrollment*.

2. Redistricting Process

- a. The Board may consider school attendance area adjustments under one or more of the following conditions:
 - i. Construction of a new school, an addition to, or renovation of an existing school building.
 - ii. Closure or significant damage of an existing school facility.
 - iii. Changes to student enrollment numbers or projections that are outside of the target capacity utilization range of 100-110%.
 - iv. Program changes that impact a school's state rated capacity.

- v. Any situation that would compel an attendance boundary adjustment to promote student safety and well-being, enhance efficiencies, or adapt to shifts in program delivery requirements.
- 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 non-exhaustive list of factors (presented in no particular order of importance) evaluated analytically in developing school attendance area boundaries:
 - i. Efficient use of available capacity across the district;
 - ii. Long-range enrollment projections, capacity needs, and planned capital projects;
 - iii. Fiscal responsibility to minimize capital and operating costs whenever feasible;
 - iv. Proximity to schools in order to maximize walkers and minimize distance or time of bus routes;
 - v. Establish areas that are, as much as practical, made up of contiguous communities;
 - vi. Student demographic characteristics; specifically, socioeconomic composition of each school's student population, number of multilingual learners, and students receiving special education supports. This data is used to help ensure the needed supports are available to students once revised attendance boundaries are enacted;
 - vii. Creating boundaries that keep groups of students together from one school to the next. (e.g., avoid split feeders of less than 15% at the receiving school).

3. **Redistricting Study Process**

- a. 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.
- b. No two redistricting processes are identical, and the community engagement plan should be tailored to meet the needs of the schools in the study area. At a minimum, the community engagement plan will outline the study process, timelines, and planned activities with the community throughout the redistricting process. The community engagement plan may include a variety of engagement strategies emphasizing maximum community involvement and transparency, such as community forums, online presentations, virtual forums, and online surveys. The engagement strategy(ies) to be employed will depend on the particular needs of a redistricting study, which may include strategies not listed here.
- c. A communication concerning the proposed redistricting study and the community engagement plan will be disseminated to the Frederick County community via a Find Out First notification.
- d. Following initial data collection and before an option is developed, 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. Feedback will be gathered regarding questions and concerns about the proposed redistricting.

- e. School system staff will then develop a school attendance boundary option utilizing information and data gathered and the factors outlined above. A proposed option for consideration by the superintendent will be finalized, approved, and presented to the Board. This option, with any directed revisions from the Board, will then be presented to the school communities as a discussion starting point, in accordance with the community engagement plan, for review and comment.
- f. 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.
- g. The Board may direct the Superintendent to provide additional information or develop an alternative attendance boundary option for the Board's consideration.
- h. The Board will have a final public hearing and take final action at a public meeting.
- i. Consideration will be given to granting exemptions to the redistricting decision to students entering 5th, 8th, 11th, and 12th grades if space and staffing is available. Schools that are over capacity may remain restricted from exemptions.

4. **School Closing or Consolidation**

- a. If the superintendent recommends the closing or consolidation of a school, the Board will receive a list of multiple measures for schools for review such as: (1) enrollment, (2) actual square feet per student, (3) facility cost per student, (4) students per staff, and (5) percentage above or below Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) average per level. If the Board wants to consider 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.
- b. At a minimum, the following shall be considered when evaluating criteria for closing a school:
 - i. Student enrollment trends in relation to state rated capacity;
 - ii. Age and/or condition of school buildings;
 - iii. Transportation;
 - iv. Educational programs;
 - v. Racial composition and levels of poverty of student body;
 - vi. Financial considerations;
 - vii. Student relocation;
 - viii. Impact on community in geographic attendance area for both the proposed closing school and schools impacted by relocating students; and
 - ix. Any other factors the Board deems relevant to rendering its decision.
- c. 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.
- d. **Procedures for Community Engagement**
 - i. **Public Hearing**
 - 1. A public hearing shall take place before any final decision by the Board to close a school.
 - 2. Time limits on the submission of oral and written testimony and data shall be clearly defined in the notification of the public meeting.

- ii. Adequate Public Notification
 - 1. 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
 - 2. The newspaper notification shall include the procedures to be used by the Board in making a final decision.
 - 3. The newspaper notification will be placed at least two weeks prior to any public hearing held by the school system on the proposed closing.
 - 4. Staff will also alert the community through Find Out First notifications, and any appropriate social media platforms identified by staff.
- iii. The Board shall render its vote publicly and in writing.
 - 1. Except in emergency circumstances, the decision to close a school shall be announced at least 90 days before the date the school is scheduled to be closed, but not later than April 30 of any school year. An emergency circumstance is one where the decision to close a school because of unforeseen circumstances cannot be announced at least 90 days before the date a school is scheduled to close or before April 30 of any school year.
 - 2. The final written decision should include the rationale and basis used for a school closure.
 - 3. The written decision shall address the impact of the proposed closing on the factors set forth in Maryland law.
 - 4. 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.
 - 5. The final decision shall include notification of the right to appeal to the State Board of Education as identified in Maryland law and [Board Policy 105](#), *Appeal and Hearing Procedures*.

E. Related Information

- 1. **Board Policy**
 - a. [Policy 102](#), *Meetings*
 - b. [Policy 105](#), *Appeal and Hearing Procedures*
 - c. [Policy 108](#), *Unused School System Property*
 - d. [Policy 202](#), *Construction, Renovation and Maintenance*
 - e. [Policy 430](#), *Attendance at Schools*
 - f. [Policy 444](#), *Educational Equity and Excellence*
- 2. **Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)**
 - a. [COMAR 13A.01.05](#), *Appeals to the State Board of Education*
 - b. [COMAR 13A.02.09](#), *Closing of Schools*
 - c. [COMAR 13A.16.01.02](#), *Child Care Centers, Definitions*
- 3. **FCPS Regulations**
 - a. [Regulation 100-02](#), *Redistricting*

- b. [Regulation 400-07, Enrollment Residency Requirements](#)
- c. [Regulation 400-15, Out-of-District Enrollment](#)
- d. [Regulation 444-01, Educational Equity and Excellence](#)

4. **FCPS Resources**

- a. [FCPS Enrollment Website](#)
- b. [Find Your Feeder Area Website](#)
- c. [Out of District \(Attendance\) Area Application Form](#)
- d. [Schools Closed to Out of District Transfers List](#)

5. **Maryland Statutes**

- a. Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 4-109, *Public Schools and Attendance Areas*
- b. Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 4-115, *Land, School Sites, or Buildings Used for School Purposes*

F. Policy History (Maintained by Legal Services)

<i>Responsible Office</i>	Chief Operating Officer
Adoption Dates	09/24/03
Review Dates	2015, 2016, 2020, 2021, 2023, 2024
Revision Dates	09/26/07, 07/13/16, 03/24/21, 03/27/24