FCPS Community Meetings to Discuss School Boundaries

All in-person and virtual community meetings

Board Priority:

Access to Programming

Ensure equitable access to programs and facilities, and consider impact on school programs and populations

In the recent community meetings, participants highlighted the critical need to ensure equitable access to academic and extracurricular programming across schools. Key discussions centered around the importance of (1) unequal access to specialized programming, (2) transportation barriers to program access, (3) socioeconomic and racial disparities in programming access, (4) concerns about disrupting student stability, (5) need for equitable investment in facilities and resources. The following analysis outlines these major themes and supporting insights from community input.

Unequal Access to Specialized Programs

Many community members expressed frustration over the unequal distribution of specialized programs, such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and language immersion. The lack of these programs in certain schools creates disparities in student opportunities and contributes to educational inequities.

Supporting Quotes:
- "All HS (high schools) don't have the same options and should. Boundaries should offer all options."
- "Some students that go to MV went to Sandburg and don't have the IB middle years program → harder to jump into IB."
- "Expand IB/AP offerings."
- "What advanced academic programs are offered in the area? At each school? Why isn't everything offered at all schools?"
- "Equity of programs."
- "How will special programs be allotted or changed in Title I schools to build up population (Spanish immersion, AAP)?"

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Transportation Barriers to Program Access

A major concern raised was how long bus rides and lack of reliable transportation prevent students from accessing the programming they need. Many parents believe that programming should be more evenly distributed across schools to reduce excessive commute times.

Supporting Quotes:
- "Length of bus ride because they're needing to go beyond their zone."
- "More equal access to programming or better transportation to centers with that programming (Spanish immersion; IB; AAP)."
- "Transportation barriers prevent students from participating in after-school programs."
- "Walt Whitman late bus grant is really important to do extracurriculars → equitable access to resources."
- "Some parents are okay with long bus rides, but others are not."
- "Students are losing time in transit use."
- "Make sure all students have access to programming without long commutes."
- "Can after-school programs be built up in elementary schools? Building in middle school now for sports."

Socioeconomic and Racial Disparities in Programming Access

Concerns were raised that boundary adjustments could reinforce existing socioeconomic divides, potentially isolating lower-income communities from essential programming and resources.

Supporting Quotes:
- "Afraid that lower-income neighborhoods will all be linked together and lose access to all resources + people."
- "Equitable mix of students + resources; maintain diversity."
- "Does a student have a real chance of staying with an ES/MS/HS track that is shared by peers/friends?"
- "Ensure Region 3 gets the same resources as other regions."
- "Why do some schools receive more funding for enrichment and others do not?"
- "Community populations sometimes overwhelm specific schools (with programs - autism, medical needs, other programs)."
- "One school with CPI-trained staff; all students that need that program are expected to find a way to get there."

- "How well will the transition to new boundaries work? Will they grandfather students? Ensure least disruptive transition."

Concerns About Disrupting Student Stability

Community members voiced concerns about how boundary changes could disrupt students' academic experiences, social networks, and access to established educational tracks.

Supporting Quotes:
- "We don't want to change locations of currently enrolled students."
- "Concerned about the transition plan - how will the kids in the middle of the process be protected?"
- "Will students be able to finish their programs if they are moved?"
- "Keeping students within familiar peer groups is critical."
- "Grandfathering procedures for siblings and ensuring consistency for kids. Will draft rules include these procedures?"
- "Busing issues may limit student participation in after-school programs."
- "Will students have continuity in specialized programs if moved?"
- "Need to consider social/emotional well-being of students having to move to different schools and make new friend groups."

Need for Equitable Investment in Facilities and Resources

Participants repeatedly called for more consistent investment in school facilities and instructional resources, so that every school offers comparable opportunities for students.

Supporting Quotes:
- "Need programming to be roughly equivalent everywhere."
- "Ensuring staff retention + support."
- "Make sure schools have academics/programs."
- "How are programs distributed throughout the community? Who decides where these programs go (location)?"
- "What funds are associated with this, will we be considering investment in any construction, as well as maintenance?"
- "Balance income-based families equally per area."
- "If every school is equitable in student count, then more funds can be used for programs."
- "FCPS is not equitable across the county. There should be standards."

- "If we reduce class sizes, we think this will be a key component in having a good mass effect & community impact."

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