

# FCPS Community Meetings to Discuss School Boundaries

## All in-person and virtual community meetings

### Board Priority:

#### Enrollment and Capacity

*Using student enrollment projections, balance available capacity and maximize efficient and effective use of school facilities for capacity utilization and program needs while eliminating or preventing the establishment of split feeders, whenever possible*

As schools grapple with overcrowding, uneven enrollment, and the challenges of population growth, addressing these issues becomes essential to ensure efficient and effective use of facilities. Through the insights of community members and direct excerpts from community meetings, this analysis explores the complexities of enrollment and capacity as it pertains to the boundary review. The following themes were identified around the participants' discussions of enrollment and capacity.

#### Overcrowding and Limited Space

Many schools are experiencing overcrowding, causing concerns about available classroom space, student experience, and resources. Community members emphasized the need to balance enrollment numbers to prevent excessive class sizes and logistical challenges.

- "Trailers at schools are a problem."
- "Overcrowded schools."
- "Class crowding in some elementary schools (e.g., Waynewood)."
- "Underfilled/overcrowded schools."
- "Stable community schools in which all students can access the programs they need without a long commute or dangerous walk."
- "Some schools have trailers, others have empty classrooms."
- "Avoid schools being overcrowded"
- "Enrollment capacity - In some cases, not enough lockers, issues with sports equity in competition amongst teams."
- "Consider school capacity and enrollment data; let us know ASAP which schools are overcrowded/underutilized."

- “Less use of modules (temp spaces/trailers).”

## Split Feeder Concerns

Split feeder patterns create unpredictability in school enrollment, leading to fluctuating capacity levels. Community members stressed the importance of maintaining school pyramids to create a more stable student distribution.

- “ Split feeders should be minimized as much as possible.”
- “Maintaining pyramids that already meet goals, re: no split feeders, successful pyramids, good capacity, etc.”
- “Avoid split feeders – students should attend middle/high schools together.”
- “Does a student have a real chance of staying with an ES/MS/HS track that is shared by peers/friends?”
- “Boundary adjustments be focused on reducing split feeders and minimizing travel/transportation time.”
- “How can we connect families in multiple pyramids when schools are split feeders?”
- “Proximity to school, split feeders are a challenge when talking about student friendships and community (especially at the MS level)”
- “Split feeders are also of great concern for loss of cohort.”

## Transition Planning

Concerns arose about the transition process, particularly for students close to completing their schooling at one level. Community members stressed the importance of a clear “grandfathering” policy to mitigate disruption.

- “What is the implementation timeline, transition rollout plan, grandfathering?”
- “Ensure the least disruptive transition for students.”
- “Grandfathering procedures for siblings and ensuring consistency for kids.”
- “ Shifting 6th grade to middle school, adjusting programming (AAP centers, AP vs IB, special needs) - which ones and how? “
- “If we move 6th grade to middle school, please staff the math more appropriately.”
- “Moving 6th grade to middle school is a good idea.”
- “Adding 6th grade to middle school seems like a good idea—makes middle school more of a place and less of a transition.”

- "How gradual is the rollout? Phase-in plan needed."
- "Allowing siblings to stay in the same schools should be part of the transition plan."

## School Capacity

Some schools are significantly over-enrolled, while others have excess capacity. Parents urged the district to balance student populations more effectively to optimize learning environments.

- "It would be helpful to have a map that shows over-enrolled and under-enrolled schools for future meetings and their boundaries."
- "Housing density must meet school capacity + And have to be interconnected."
- "Unless there's a huge issue (e.g., 60% capacity vs. 100% capacity), don't change."
- "Bring advocacy and awareness to zone developers/planning needs to take into consideration school capacity."
- "The planning team should reevaluate and more of an equity lens... too many examples of wealthier areas having more resources. Dunn Loring is projected to turn into an elementary school, but the schools around it are under-enrolled"
- "School capacity [data] - currently my elementary school student is in portable trailers"
- "Expanding school capacity instead of building new school or changing boundary to address overcrowding issues."
- "Focus on data, and look at how boundaries impact over-enrolled schools vs. under-performing schools (why are they over-enrolled?)"

## Impact of Future Growth and Development on Enrollment

Parents and community members raised concerns about the impact of new housing developments on school capacity, urging planners to anticipate future growth and avoid overcrowding.

- "Boundaries have changed, but due to only doing small pieces, other issues (Fort Hunt ES attendance island, under enrollment at Lewis HS, etc.) have been created."
- "Enrollment capacity—specifically expected growth; what's the target?"

- “Data from the municipality regarding growth projections should be considered.”
- “FCPS is not considering substantial growth in areas like Herndon.”
- “FCPS must consider residential development—current assumptions suggest almost no additional students due to residential growth.”
- “Make sure growth trends are factored into planning.”
- “Planned developments – look at data of upcoming planned developments.”
- “Take into account development density instead of current population density.”