FCPS Community Meetings to Discuss School Boundaries

All in-person and virtual community meetings

Board Priority:

Transportation

Provide for walking and bussing safety, limit transportation times and ensure efficient transportation routes with attendance areas

As communities assess changes to school boundaries, transportation emerges as a key factor influencing students' access to education, participation in programs, and overall well-being. Below is an overview of the topics and themes discussed by participants in the community sessions, using community insights and direct quotes from meeting notes.

Concerns About Long Commutes and Bus Rides

Many parents and community members expressed concerns about long bus rides, which can negatively impact students' well-being, sleep, and ability to participate in extracurricular activities. There were strong opinions about reducing transportation time for elementary school students in particular.

Sample Quotes:

- "We want short bus times."
- "Transportation – don't want children on the bus forever or miss bus."
- "Length of bus ride because they're needing to go beyond their zone."
- "Minimizing travel time—especially for elementary schools."
- "Students are losing time in transit use."
- "Transportation to & from school. In areas of overpopulation, when buses are full, students are left behind waiting for a late bus arrival."
- "Less bussing needed, shorter routes, fewer buses."
- "Kids stay in the school closest to their home (walkability if possible)."

Transportation Infrastructure and Safety Issues

Concerns were raised about unsafe walking routes, the availability of sidewalks, and the need for better planning to ensure safe commuting options for students. Traffic congestion and poor bus routes were also highlighted.

Sample Quotes:

- "Traffic → Walking and busing safety. Assessments done to determine if walking vs. busing is safer."
- "High school drivers avoiding major roads (66, Beltway) is key to safety."
- "Is Fairfax County addressing sidewalk issues? Also dangerous bus stop locations (Telegraph Road)."
- "Respect natural boundaries – major roads like Beltway/Gallows Rd. → make it unsafe to walk or bike to school → again, impact participation in school activities."
- "Considering walking/ bus rides/ and long kiss and rides. Safety of the students during arrival/ dismissal."
- "Transportation because limited sidewalks and options without buses."
- "Better bus routes - less passing of other schools, shorter rides/distance to stops."
- "Safety! Avoid trailers & crossing busy roads."
- "Bus route safety: Are they on major thoroughfares?"

Equity in Transportation and Access to Schools

Community members pointed out that some students face greater transportation burdens than others due to inequitable school assignments. Ensuring fair access to nearby schools and specialty programs was a recurring concern.

Sample Quotes:

- "Proximity due to community integration, allows after school activity, easier transportation."
- "How do we make sure that our schools are diverse? Example - Rt 1 has more lower-income families, and right now we are bussing children across the corridor to ensure diversity. How do we support the communities and not bus children for the sake of diversity, and how do we balance that."
- "Access to specialty programs is limited."
- "Most pressing points: Ensuring equity in transportation, services, facilities for students and staff"

FCPS Boundary Review
Community Sessions Input (all in-person and virtual meetings)

- "Programming offered at each school not equitable."
- "Shift AAP programs to more schools instead of rezoning."
- "Transportation time not high priority."
- "Transportation - ensuring students have a reasonable ride to school."
- "Students & families want to feel like they are in a synchronous community."

Bus Availability and Capacity Challenges

Overcrowded buses, students being left behind due to full buses, and inconsistent bus schedules were major concerns. Parents expressed frustration over transportation logistics that lead to tardiness and absenteeism.

Sample Quotes:

- "Transportation to & from school. In areas of overpopulation, when buses are full, students are left behind waiting for a late bus arrival."
- "Audubon Community Mobile Homes students are marked absent or late for bus late arrivals being at over-capacity."
- "Travel times (Insufficient bus capacity and re-routing of overcrowded buses"
- "Transportation → Metric used to measure times? → Consideration of bus availabilities"