

FCPS Community Meetings to Discuss School Boundaries

All in-person community meetings

This document summarizes the key data and insights that community members identified under Question 2 regarding school boundary changes, along with direct excerpts from their discussions.

Question 2:

Based on your experience as a parent/caregiver and/or community member, what are some important data or insights we should consider?

Enrollment and Capacity Planning

Many community members emphasized the importance of accurate enrollment data to ensure schools are neither over nor under capacity. Concerns were raised about classroom sizes, future student population trends, and whether resources would be appropriately distributed. Families want assurances that schools will have adequate staffing, infrastructure, and programming to accommodate projected growth.

- "Class sizes / projected enrollments – make sure schools aren't under/over capacity."
- "Are there schools operating above capacity at this time?"
- "Projected enrollment numbers of students - are more people moving away or in, new construction."
- "Build-outs of schools based on projected population growth, focusing funding towards overcrowded schools."
- "Building capacity."
- "Consider school capacity and enrollment data; let us know ASAP which schools are overcrowded/underutilized."
- "Enrollment and enrollment trends, for example, new condos. Make sure data is accurate."
- "We would like transparency on the methodology used to create the scenarios."

Proximity and Transportation

Many parents stressed that students should attend schools close to home to minimize long commute times and transportation challenges. Concerns were raised about bus routes, walkability, and how new boundaries might force students into longer or less safe commutes. Community members want policies that prioritize reasonable travel distances and improve safety measures for students commuting to school.

- "Proximity is important. Please keep that a focus of the process."
- "Better bus routes - less passing of other schools, shorter rides/distance to stops."
- "Time on bus—traffic and bus patterns."
- "Students should not have to cross major highways to reach their schools safely."
- "Some students have extremely long commutes despite living closer to other schools."
- "Concerns about lack of sidewalks impacting walkability."
- "Walking or biking options specifically for high-school in the boundary."
- "Early transportation times for kids because of long bus rides → impact on student performance, lack of sleep, mental health/well-being."

Equitable Access to Programs and Resources

Families expressed frustration over disparities in access to specialized programs, such as language immersion, gifted programs, and career pathways. Some felt that students should not have to move schools to access certain programs, but rather that programs should be expanded to all schools. Ensuring equal distribution of educational opportunities remains a key concern for many parents.

- "Access to programming – can you move language immersion programs or other programs before moving people who purchased homes with boundary lines?"
- "Programming is not the same at all schools offered (some schools but is at others)."
- "Ensure that ESOL students and special education programs are evenly distributed."
- "More equal access to programming or better transportation to centers with that programming (Spanish immersion; IB; AAP)."
- "Advanced academic programs should be available in all schools."
- "Access and availability to advanced programs."

- "What makes a school 'good'? Balance faculty/teacher credential metrics across schools."
- "Equity of accessibility to programs. Bring the programs to the schools and students, not moving students TO the programs."

Community and Stability Considerations

Many families expressed concern about how frequent boundary changes disrupt students' social and academic stability. Parents worry about children being separated from their established peer groups and the impact of school transitions on mental health. They emphasized the need for policies that maintain continuity and minimize unnecessary disruptions.

- "Keeping communities together."
- "Grandfather kids of secondary or elementary schools to avoid disruption."
- "Do not move existing 7–12th graders."
- "Concern for military children looking for stability – moving schools will uproot them."
- "Concerns about selling homes and moving if boundary anxiety is high and negatively impacts child mental health."
- "People bought/rent homes in specific areas to stay for specific reasons (i.e., buying a home to be with the autism program to be close to school)."
- "Desire to maintain school pyramids so that students move together from elementary to middle to high school."
- "Ensure that underrepresented communities have a voice in decision-making."

Home Values and Economic Impact

Some community members voiced concerns about how boundary changes could impact property values and neighborhood stability. Parents who purchased homes based on school assignments worry about financial losses and shifting school reputations. They called for greater transparency about how boundary changes will impact home values and the local economy.

- "People move into certain areas to attend certain schools/greatly impacts home values."
- "Home values can change with boundary lines."
- "Impact on property values and economy based on rezoning, with a shift out of public school into private school."

- "Return on investment on property values + tangible & intangible student success."
- "Concerned that boundary changes could concentrate low-income students in certain schools."
- "Afraid that lower-income neighborhoods will all be linked together and lose access to all resources + people."
- "Grandfathering options should be considered for students who are close to finishing at their current school."
- "We want transparency and hope the school board will take the opportunity to be clear and open."