

FCPS Boundary Review

Policy 8130 Priority: **Other Priorities**

Other priorities included in Policy 8130:

- Maintain relationship with school pyramid groupings.
- Minimize disruption of students' instructional programs.
- Minimize future capital and operational budget costs.
- Minimize use of temporary classrooms and modular units.
- Promote stability by focusing on long-term attendance zone stability.
- Reasonably allow for all students from the adjacent neighborhoods and communities to attend a school, taking into consideration natural and man-made barriers (eg major roads, geographic features).
- Support optimal family involvement

In-Person Community Sessions Input: Themes of Discussions on Other Priorities

Maintain relationship with school pyramid groupings

Maintaining school pyramid groupings is a recurring theme in the boundary review discussions, with strong support for preserving continuity as students progress from elementary to middle and high school within the same pyramid. This continuity fosters stronger social-emotional connections, supports long-term relationship-building among peers, and minimizes disruptions caused by reassignments.

Participants emphasized that keeping students within their existing pyramids reduces the fragmentation of communities and avoids the social and academic challenges associated with split feeders or inconsistent transitions between schools. There was also concern about maintaining access to pyramid-specific programming and activities, such as advanced academics or extracurricular offerings, which are vital for student engagement and equitable access. Ensuring consistency within pyramids not only supports student well-being but also strengthens neighborhood identity and community cohesion.

Why important: Maintaining relationships within school pyramid groupings was considered essential by attendees for fostering community continuity, preserving friendships, and ensuring a smooth academic progression, which ultimately supports students' social-emotional development and academic success.

Sample Quotes

- “Keeping kids in their pyramids from elementary to HS.”

- “Biggest scatter happens at high school – prioritize maintaining elementary and middle groups and high school choice.”
- “Kids need consistency; change every 5 years is not a good idea, could be very disruptive.”
- “Check in with the communities about hopes and dreams.”
- “Want middle → feed HS.”
- “Minimize disruption to communities/neighborhoods.”
- “Maintaining neighborhood groupings should be a main consideration.”
- “Concern for pyramid changing, affecting house value and affordability to go to the “good schools.”
- “Streamlined pyramidal structure—no split feeders.”
- “Student familiarity with current pyramid schools. What is the effect of a change for those kids?”
- “FCPS has divided focus - upper county & MV Pyramid. Concerns for Region 3. This pyramid is receiving less focus and attention. Institutionalization of that - focus on avoiding division and increased equity.”

Minimize disruption of students' instructional programs.

Minimizing disruption to students' instructional programs was a central concern throughout the community sessions. Attendees emphasized the importance of providing stability for students by reducing unnecessary changes to their academic environments. Continuity in instructional programs was highlighted as critical for maintaining academic performance, preserving peer and teacher relationships, and supporting students' social-emotional development.

Many attendees advocated for gradual transitions, such as “grandfathering” current students, to avoid uprooting them mid-way through their educational journeys. Additionally, concerns were raised about the potential for disruptions to access special programs, such as advanced academics, language immersion, or extracurricular activities, if boundary changes were not carefully planned. Overall, minimizing disruptions was seen as a way to protect students' academic and emotional well-being during times of change.

Why important: Minimizing disruptions to students' instructional programs is essential for ensuring their academic success, emotional well-being, and ongoing access to the resources and relationships that foster their growth and development.

Sample Quotes

- “Kids need consistency; change every 5 years is not a good idea, it could be very disruptive.”
- “Do not want to change locations of currently enrolled students.”
- “Students shouldn’t be split up between schools if possible – prioritize consistency.”
- “Minimal disruption to people – send students to adjacent schools.”
- “Grandfathering students & siblings already enrolled in schools so they aren’t impacted.”
- “Ensure least disruptive transition. Consistency is important.”
- “How will the boundary changes specifically impact students requiring more services?”
- “Minimize disruption to communities/neighborhoods.”
- “Concern about anxiety to our kids from being split up from their social groups/community. Anxiety from disruption to current school assignment.”
- “Not socially healthy for kids to split up when you have whole islands that attend the same schools (not later split when moving on to high & middle).”
- “High school attendance zones must remain the same with little disruption.”

Minimize future capital and operational budget costs.

Many attendees advocated for strategies that maximize the use of existing resources and reduce unnecessary expenditures. Key themes included improving the efficiency of current facilities, such as balancing enrollment to avoid overcapacity or underutilization, which helps limit the need for costly new construction or expansions. Some community members also highlighted the importance of avoiding repeated boundary changes, as frequent adjustments increase operational costs and disrupt long-term planning. Additionally, ensuring equitable distribution of resources across schools was seen as a way to prevent budget disparities while supporting all students.

Why important: Minimizing costs is essential to ensure that financial resources are used efficiently to support students’ education, reduce unnecessary expenditures, and sustain the long-term financial health of the district.

Sample Quotes

- “Enrollment capacity – using our resources efficiently and effectively.”
- “What is the plan for increasing program budget to allow for access to programs?”
- “Budget/op costs would possibly be an unintended positive consequence.”
- “Could bring communities closer together while being cost-effective.”
- “Needs-based capital improvement planning.”
- “Reduce operating costs without compromising current offerings throughout the district.”
- “Parents are generally willing to pay more in taxes to ensure quality education and address costs to ensure services for their children.”
- “Existing feeder lines – what needs to make financial sense → does not re-create inequity/silos/firewalls.”
- “Capital Improvement Plan → future building.”
- “Capital improvement plan is incorrect—formulas are vague and inaccurate. Formula to calculate capacity is overstated. Lack of consistent data.”
- “What is the expectation of the impact on the overall FCPS budget with the changes that are made?”
- “Efficiencies of scale – resourcing, budgeting, facilities, transportation, etc.”
- “Update of renovation plan queue/capital improvement schedule/budget completed before review.”
- “Budget cycle - if 2026 budget gets approved in May 2025, how does that affect implementation of the new boundaries?”

Minimize use of temporary classrooms and modular units.

The use of temporary classrooms and modular units was a significant concern, with participants emphasizing the need to reduce reliance on these facilities to address overcrowding. Temporary units were seen as a short-term solution that fails to provide students with the same level of resources, stability, and sense of community as permanent school buildings. Many community members highlighted the inequities created by over-reliance on modular units in certain areas, which often lead to disparities in learning environments. The importance of proactively balancing enrollment and utilizing existing capacity efficiently was emphasized as

a way to eliminate the need for modularity. Participants also stressed that reducing dependence on temporary classrooms would help preserve budget resources and improve students' overall educational experiences.

Why important: Minimizing the use of temporary classrooms provides students with access to equitable, stable, and resource-rich learning environments while promoting better planning for future growth.

Sample Quotes

- "Avoid schools being overcrowded."
- "No more trailers included in school capacity count."
- "Reducing overcrowding – Ensuring there's enough space in the county for all students (without modules)."
- "Stable enrollment and more even enrollment throughout the district - equitable class sizes."
- "Reevaluate center schools \$, incentives to stay."
- "Capacity: Kids in trailers -> How would it [boundary review] consider?"
- "Eliminate temporary buildings/trailers and/or assure that they are truly temporary."
- "Many schools have trailers. More transparency to the community as to where the over and under enrollment problems are."
- "Expansion of the trailers → at what point should consider the expansion of facilities itself."
- "How are we educating parents/communities regarding capacity, etc.? (e.g., trailers don't necessarily mean the school is over capacity)."

Promote stability by focusing on long-term attendance zone stability.

Promoting long-term stability in attendance zones was a recurring topic, with participants expressing the need for boundary changes that minimize frequent disruptions for students, families, and communities. Stability was highlighted as essential for allowing families to plan long-term, maintaining consistent peer and teacher relationships, and reducing the anxiety associated with frequent rezoning. Many participants emphasized the importance of implementing boundary solutions that would remain effective for years, rather than necessitating repeated adjustments due to capacity issues or population shifts. A focus on strategic, data-driven planning was encouraged to create sustainable attendance zones that

align with community needs and projected growth, ensuring fairness and continuity for students.

Why important: Focusing on long-term attendance zone stability reduces disruptions to students' education and relationships, fosters a sense of security for families, and allows for effective planning and resource allocation across the district.

Sample Quotes

- “Kids need consistency; change every 5 years is not a good idea, could be very disruptive.”
- “Stability for kids and families as they change.”
- “Everyone agrees they don’t want to change the schools they’re currently zoned for.”
- “Targeted few changes that are going to stick. Bigger changes.”
- “Lasting effect → won’t change in 4 years again.”
- “Timeline of changes – if announced in January, how do people apply for private in time to get in by fall of next year?”
- “The plan to revisit every 5 years should be reconsidered, as it can lead to multiple changes in district zones for families and individual students.”
- “Outcome: Equitable divide – a leveling, if there is movement in terms of resources.”
- “Minimize disruption to communities/neighborhoods.”
- “What level of feedback will be accepted from the community once a draft plan is released?”
- “Building new schools rather than redistricting existing zones.”

Reasonably allow for all students from the adjacent neighborhoods and communities to attend a school, taking into consideration natural and man-made barriers (eg major roads, geographic features).

The topic of allowing students from adjacent neighborhoods to attend a school was not shared by community members in the sessions, but attendees did discuss the topic of geography and natural barriers.

Community members shared their thoughts on the need to avoid major road crossings or unsafe routes when assigning students to schools, as these barriers create logistical and safety challenges for families. Attendees also emphasized the value of aligning attendance zones with natural geographic boundaries, such as rivers or major highways, to create logical and contiguous groupings that serve communities more effectively.

Why important: Ultimately, creating cohesive attendance zones based on adjacent neighborhoods supports equitable access, safety, and continuity for students and families.

Sample Quotes

- “Respect natural boundaries – major roads like Beltway/Gallows Rd. → make it unsafe to walk or bike to school → again, impact participation in school activities.”
- “Keeping nearby neighborhoods congruent with other natural boundaries.”
- “Keep cohesive community along natural geographic lines (no kids crossing beltway to play w/ friends).”
- “Align with natural boundaries (community and natural).”
- “How are is FCPS working with the County departments of transportation, planning/zoning (too many siloes)?”
- “Safety of the walkers → abusers, traffic (roads & sidewalks safe? No crossing roads & busy intersections).”
- “Is Fairfax County addressing sidewalk issues. Also dangerous bus stop locations (Telegraph Road).”

Support optimal family involvement

Family involvement in the boundary review process was a recurring theme, with participants emphasizing the importance of transparency, communication, and collaboration between the district and the community. Many attendees stressed that families should be provided with clear timelines, opportunities for feedback, and regular updates throughout the process to build trust and ensure their voices are heard. Participants also called for the district to use

multiple engagement methods, such as surveys, community meetings, and online forums, to make participation accessible and inclusive. Parents expressed the need to feel confident that their concerns, particularly those related to student well-being, equity, and stability, were being seriously considered.

Why important: Involving families in the boundary review process fosters trust, improves decision-making by incorporating diverse perspectives, and ensures that the outcomes align with the community's needs and priorities.

Supporting Quotes

- “Where is the opportunity for community engagement w/proposal drafts?”
- “Transparency – Be transparent in decision-making.”
- “Check in with the communities about hopes and dreams.”
- “Transparency - we want to see the data + two-way communication.”
- “Parents/community members appreciate this kind of community involvement.”
- “Keep community involvement consistent.”
- “Who is involved that influences the decision-making? We need someone advocating for the parents/community.”
- “Keep parents/caregivers involved and informed about the steps.”
- “Need ability for easy parent involvement.”
- “If you’re asking us, please keep us involved and have results that are directly related to our input.”
- “How are students involved in the process?”