

# FCPS Boundary Review

## Policy 8130 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*

### **In-Person Community Sessions Input: Summary**

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. This report focuses on key themes derived from community feedback: (1) overcrowding in schools, (2) balancing enrollment, (3) addressing split feeders, (4) planning for future population growth, and (5) promoting equitable resource allocation. 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.

## **Themes Related to Enrollment and Capacity**

### 1. Overcrowding in Schools

Overcrowding was identified as a persistent issue in many schools, leading to strained resources, larger class sizes, and difficulties in accommodating all students effectively. Community members highlighted the need for long-term solutions to prevent further overcrowding, such as redistributing students or expanding school facilities. Concerns were also raised about the negative impact of overcrowding on teacher workloads, student experiences, and educational outcomes.

**Why important:** Addressing overcrowding ensures equitable access to resources, promotes a better learning environment, and prevents burnout among educators.

#### **Sample Quotes:**

- “Is there a plan to develop more schools based on new neighborhoods and overcrowded schools?”
- “Build-outs of schools based on projected population growth, focusing funding towards overcrowded schools.”
- “Relieve some pressure on over-capacity schools.”
- “Capacity - enough space in school buildings → avoid overcrowding in schools & student/teacher ratio is appropriate.”

- “FCPS should present where the school enrollment is unbalanced vs. off balance.”
- “Annandale: overcrowding & Glasgow Middle School.”
- “How many students should be in a classroom for optimal teaching? Student-teacher ratio matters.”

## 2. Balancing Enrollment Across Schools

Enrollment in schools across the county was repeatedly mentioned, with an emphasis on utilizing available capacity more efficiently. Community members discussed the uneven distribution of students, with some schools underutilized while others face over-enrollment challenges.

**Why important:** Balancing enrollment minimizes resource wastage and ensures every school operates optimally to meet student needs effectively.

### Sample Quotes:

- “Finding a way to level out capacity in a small area (w/in 10 minutes).”
- “More stable enrollment and more even enrollment throughout the district - equitable class sizes.”
- “Enrollment/capacity today and for the future – Baseline metrics used? How will capacity get balanced?”
- “I want to know which schools are underpopulated and which schools are overpopulated.”

## 3. Split Feeders and Community Fragmentation

Split feeders - where students from the same elementary or middle schools are divided across multiple high schools - were a major concern. Many participants noted the negative effects of split feeders, including community fragmentation and disruptions to peer relationships.

**Why important:** Preventing or reducing split feeders was seen as a way to maintain continuity and stronger community ties within the school system.

### Sample Quotes:

- “Biggest scatter happens at high school – prioritize maintaining elementary and middle groups and high school choice.”
- “Keeping kids in their pyramids from elementary to HS.”

- “Do not want to change locations of currently enrolled students.”
- “No more split feeders/attendance islands.”
- “Split feeders—social impact of friends leaving.”
- “Streamlined pyramidal structure—no split feeders.”

## 4. Future Population Growth and Development

Participants stressed the importance of using enrollment projections and data on population growth to anticipate capacity needs. Residential development and demographic trends were seen as key factors influencing enrollment in the coming years. Attendees called for proactive planning to address future overcapacity and prevent resource shortages.

**Why important:** Anticipating future growth ensures schools remain prepared for demographic changes and avoids sudden overcrowding or under-enrollment.

### Sample Quotes:

- “Consider those already overcapacity, including 5/10-year timelines and construction/new developments.”
- “Planned development and future population in the next 5-10 years.”
- “Population shifts - development of the area. Birth rate data.”
- “Rt 1 development will have a huge impact on population, socio-economics, etc.”
- “Planned developments – look at data of upcoming planned developments.”

## 5. Resource Allocation and Equity

Many attendees emphasized the importance of ensuring equitable access to resources, including addressing capacity disparities between schools. Concerns were raised about lower-income and Title I schools potentially losing resources due to boundary changes or enrollment shifts. Ensuring that every school has sufficient facilities, programs, and funding was seen as a priority for capacity planning.

**Why important:** Equitable resource allocation supports all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, and promotes fairness across the district.

### Sample Quotes:

- “Equitable mix of students + resources; maintain diversity.”
- “How will redistribution affect Title I?”

- “Resource support needs to be standard: autism, language barriers, learning differences.”
- “How will special programs be allotted or changed in Title I schools to build up population (Spanish immersion, AAP)?”
- “FCPS is not equitable across the county. There should be standards.”
- “ There should be good schools only, not moving boundaries to inflate scores/underpaying needs”
- “If every school is equitable in student count, then more funds can be used for programs.”
- “If we can keep attendance levels equitable, other programs and transportation issues may get solved.”