

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION FOR BALANCING ENROLLMENT

October 25, 2021

Background Information:

Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) has recently seen an increase in enrollment after multiple years of relatively flat enrollment. Much of this growth has been seen in schools located in the Bel Air area; however, it is also expanding into other areas of the County's growth envelope. Harford County has an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO); if a school is at or is projected to reach 110% of the state rated capacity in the next three years, preliminary plans for subdivisions with more than five lots cannot be approved. Presently, four (4) elementary schools and one (1) middle school are at, or above, the threshold to trigger APFO restrictions on new development.

The Board of Education (BOE) approved the contract with FLO Analytics at the board meeting held on August 10, 2020, starting the initiation phase (Step 1) of the balancing enrollment process. During the first phase, FLO Analytics collected data and completed a comprehensive review of HCPS' existing facility capacities and enrollments. In January 2021, the assessment phase (Step 2) of the process began. During the assessment phase, phone surveys were conducted by FLO Analytics' subcontractor, Critical Data, to obtain community input on priorities for balancing enrollment. Additionally, an Advisory Team made up of HCPS leadership, parents, and principals was developed to review and refine boundary adjustments. The Advisory Team held two (2) Public Education Forums. On June 23, 2021, the Advisory Team completed their assessment and provided the Superintendent recommendations to balance enrollment with boundary adjustments. This concluded the second phase of the process and started the third phase; the Superintendent Recommendation (Step 3).

Discussion:

Working with Flo Analytics and HCPS staff, the Superintendent evaluated the Advisory Team's recommendations in conjunction with public concerns expressed through public comment at BOE meetings and written communications (e-mail, HCPS web page, etc.). With the goal to impact as few students as possible, the Superintendent developed draft recommendations to balance enrollment and plan for future growth within the County.

On September 14, 2021, the Superintendent released draft recommendations to address overcrowding within HCPS. Three (3) virtual, public engagement forums were held; Wednesday, September 22, 2021, Thursday, September 23, 2021, and Thursday, September 30, 2021. During these forums, the Superintendent presented his draft recommendations to attendees, then participants were broken out into small discussion groups to provide feedback on the changes. Utilizing this feedback, data, and prior public feedback, the recommendations were finalized.

The Superintendent's Final Recommendation to the Board of Education consist of the four (4) major sections listed below.

- 1) Address Middle School Capacity Concerns (Implementation 2022)
- 2) Address Elementary School Capacity Concerns (Implementation 2026)
- 3) Plan for Future Growth
- 4) Policy and Procedure Updates

Superintendent's Recommendation:

The Superintendent of Schools recommends that the Board of Education accept the presentation of the Superintendent's Final Recommendations for Balancing Enrollment.