



4. Evaluation of School Facilities

FCPS EVALUATION OF FACILITIES AND NEEDS

FCPS has robust systems in place to evaluate school facilities. The Maintenance and Operations Department and Capital Programs Department each have responsibilities for evaluating the facilities. The Chief Operating Officer conducts biweekly project coordination meetings to allow for collaboration between these two departments and others.

The Maintenance and Operations Department provides ongoing evaluation of FCPS facilities with the goal of keeping FCPS facilities clean, safe, and fully functioning as effective learning environments. The department uses a computerized maintenance management system to track the condition of all building systems and equipment, and log work orders. This system provides the basis for the department's preventative maintenance program to keep building assets functioning optimally. The Maintenance and Operations Department's Comprehensive Maintenance Plan, updated and approved by the BOE annually, describes the FCPS strategy for maintaining public school facilities.

The Capital Programs Department prepares the annual 10-year EFMP, including enrollment projections and 6-year CIP, as well as site-specific evaluations and feasibility and limited renovation studies. When a new school opens or enrollments become unbalanced, the Capital Programs Department conducts redistricting studies. The department is also responsible for the review of residential development and other coordination with local planning departments and developers as well as construction management.

Facility Condition Index

One important measure for evaluating the current condition of schools is the Facility Condition Index (FCI), which is the ratio of deferred maintenance costs to the current replacement value. FCI values help Capital Programs Department staff identify buildings for long term planning efforts. FCI scores for individual buildings can be found in the [Comprehensive Maintenance Plan for Educational Facilities](#) on the FCPS website.

Enrollment Projections

Each year, Capital Programs staff prepares 10-year systemwide enrollment projections as well as 10-year projections for each school. These projections are submitted to the MDP for approval and included in the EFMP. The 10-year projections are the basis for determining capacity needs. Once actual enrollments are calculated each September, the next year's projections are revised. The revised projections are used to identify schools that are closed to out of district transfers, determine the next year's staffing needs and prepare the operating budget. See [Chapter 5](#) for the 10-year enrollment projections by school.

Feasibility and Limited Renovation Studies

When schools are identified as needing improvements based on building condition or capacity issues, FCPS completes a feasibility study or limited renovation study. These studies consider all building systems (e.g. plumbing, roofing, windows, flooring, heating and air conditioning, etc.). The existing

spaces are compared to the current programs outlined in FCPS' Educational Specifications. A feasibility study proposes renovations or replacements to bring all building systems up to current standards while a limited renovation study seeks to improve at least five building systems in order to extend the life of the building. The result of a feasibility study is a major construction project that will become part of FCPS' long range Capital Improvement Program. Limited renovation studies result in a package of projects that can be completed over one or more summer breaks using County funding from the systemic project category of the capital budget as well as state capital funds. State regulations require a feasibility study whenever 50 percent or more of the building will be demolished.

Residential Plan Review

FCPS participates in the review of residential and mixed-use developments submitted to the County and municipalities for approval. Capital Programs Department staff submit official comments on preliminary plans, site plans, and improvement plans. Comments typically focus on safe walking routes to schools and adequate access for school bus service. When a development occurs near an existing or future school site, FCPS works to ensure that development impacts are minimized. Finally, where future schools are needed and required for development approval, FCPS works with the developer and local planners to identify an appropriate school site and the conditions by which the site will be transferred to FCPS.

Residential Development Monitoring

In order to stay abreast of Frederick County's fast paced residential development and its impact on changing enrollment patterns, Capital Programs Department staff tracks the progress of residential developments. Staff closely monitors the County's quarterly residential pipeline reports and analyzes the data spatially. Staff also contacts developers and builders directly to understand their quarterly goals for the number and type of dwelling unit construction and their ability to meet or exceed those goals. Capital Programs Department staff records the data for all active residential developments and maintains the data in an electronic dashboard.

Managing Development's Impact on Schools

School sites are often located in residential areas, some of which are still developing. Capital Programs Department staff coordinates with developers to manage the impacts of residential development activities on existing schools as well as future school sites including the developer improvements to school sites that were negotiated through the residential development approval process. These activities include obtaining easements for utility or road work that encroach on school sites, acting as a liaison between the developer and school staff to coordinate timing of disruptive activities, upholding COMAR and BOE policies and regulations, and inspecting improvements completed by developers on BOE property.

School Site Evaluations

Although renovation or replacement of school buildings often increases enrollment capacity, population growth also forces the need for new school sites. Sites may be dedicated or donated by developers or purchased by FCPS as discussed in [Chapters 2](#) and [3](#). Before acquisition, FCPS evaluates proposed school sites using 10 basic criteria:

1. Consistency with land use master plans adopted by Frederick County, Frederick City, and other municipalities and an analysis of population trends
2. Adequate size of the site to meet site development and building code requirements adopted by Frederick County, Frederick City or other municipalities
3. Location of existing and future residential neighborhoods
4. Location of industrial, commercial or employment complexes, present and planned
5. Reasonable vehicular ingress/egress and an adequate public road system in the area
6. Suitability for economical construction of a school building (appropriate topography, soils, and the

- absence of floodplain, whenever possible)
7. Ready or attainable pedestrian access
 8. Reasonable access to public fire, safety, and law enforcement resources
 9. Available public water and sewer service whenever possible
 10. Other criteria as required by the particular level, size, or scope of the project

In all cases, County and municipal guidelines and procedures must be followed. After a future school site is selected, FCPS Capital Programs Department staff submit a detailed site approval report to the Maryland Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) for review and approval.

School Redistricting Planning

The BOE has established policies and procedures that govern changes to attendance areas. Ideally, redistricting should be undertaken as infrequently as possible while still addressing other school system needs such as reducing overcrowding. BOE Policy 200.2 lists factors that the BOE considers when establishing new attendance area boundaries. FCPS policies and procedures for redistricting can be found in [Appendix O](#). Most redistricting studies are associated with the opening of new schools. Occasionally studies are conducted to balance enrollments between adjoining school districts.

In January 2019, FCPS began the Linganore Oakdale Urbana Redistricting Study (LOU Redistricting) to establish new attendance boundaries for the new Sugarloaf ES in the Urbana area and the new Blue Heron ES in the Hamptons West neighborhood of Lake Linganore. Adjustments were also made to adjoining attendance areas and feeder schools to balance enrollments at neighboring schools. The study area included 10 existing elementary schools and the two new schools, five middle schools and three high schools. The BOE approved a two-phase redistricting plan in October 2019. The first phase was implemented in the fall of 2020 and impacted 11 schools. The second phase will be implemented in the fall of 2021 and impacts Blue Heron, Deer Crossing, Liberty, New Market, Oakdale and Spring Ridge elementary schools. Changes in enrollment due to the LOU Redistricting have been incorporated into the 10-year enrollment projections. Redistricting studies will continue to occur primarily in connection with the opening of new schools (see [Chapter 7](#) for planned projects).

The next anticipated redistricting will occur prior to the opening of the Waverley ES replacement. This redistricting will adjust the elementary school attendance area for Waverley and adjacent elementary schools and review the middle and high school feeder pattern as well. Other potential redistricting studies that the BOE may consider are in locations where adjoining schools have unbalanced enrollments based on current or projected enrollment growth and school overcrowding. Candidate projects will be recommended on an annual basis.

STATE ANALYSIS OF FACILITIES

2019 SRC Recalculation

Periodically, FCPS completes a system wide review of the SRC for each school. In the fall of 2018 FCPS completed an evaluation of space usage and recalculation of the SRCs for all elementary, middle, and high schools. These new capacities were approved by the MDP in May 2019 and have been utilized throughout this plan. FCPS will review all SRC again during the 2021-21 school year.

State Sufficiency Standards

In May 2018, The Interagency Commission on School Construction established educational sufficiency standards. As noted in IAC documents, “The purpose of Maryland Public School Facilities Educational Sufficiency Standards (COMAR 13A.01.02.04) is to establish acceptable minimum levels for the physical

attributes, capacity, and educational suitability of existing public K–12 school facilities.³ The application of these standards shall be limited to space and attributes needed to support educational programs and curricula—defined by the Maryland State Board of Education—that are sustainable within the operational budgets of the school systems for staffing, maintenance, and full utilization of the facilities.” The educational facility standards are dynamic and are evaluated and revised as necessary. The most current standards were developed by IAC staff in 2020 and can be found on the IAC website.

State School Assessment Study

The state sufficiency standards are intended for use in the evaluation of existing public school facilities. In 2020, the IAC contracted with Bureau Veritas North America (BVNA) to perform an assessment of the condition and educational sufficiency of all public school facilities in Maryland. BVNA performed an assessment of FCPS schools in spring 2021. The results of that assessment are still being compiled. A final assessment report of all state public school facilities will be published later in 2021, and the IAC will develop a database using the data collected. BVNA is expected to provide projections of “necessary annual funding levels to achieve and maintain specific Statewide average Facility Condition Index (FCI) outcomes.”⁴

3. “Maryland Public School Facilities Educational Sufficiency Standards”, Interagency Commission on School Construction, May 31, 2018 https://iac.mdschoolconstruction.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Md.-Educ.-Sufficiency-Standards_Adopted_180531-1.pdf

4. “State of Maryland Interagency Commission on School Construction Request for Proposals 2018 School Facilities Assessment”, November 14, 2018,