



# 1. Planning Context

With highly ranked educational programs, Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) is a fundamental part of Frederick County and one factor that makes Frederick County a highly desirable place in which to live. The Department of Capital Programs is charged with long-range planning for public facilities that support the educational program.

## BOARD OF EDUCATION MANDATE

BOE Policy 202.1 requires FCPS to maintain a long-term facilities master plan (see [Appendix Q](#)). It states:

*The Board of Education (Board) will maintain long-term facilities master plans for constructing, renovating and maintaining public school facilities in Frederick County. The master plans shall attempt to balance the need for new seats with the need for renovations to existing buildings. The Board will review these plans annually and adopt a plan after considering public comment. The Board will work cooperatively with the State of Maryland, Frederick County Executive and County Council, and other elected officials to obtain adequate state and local funding and to implement the plans.*

## BOARD OF EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN

The mission of FCPS is to “**Reach** our students with exceptional teaching and caring support, **Challenge** them to achieve their potential, and **Prepare** them for success in a global society.” To this end, FCPS continues to provide opportunities for new and innovative educational programs as well as educational services mandated by the state.



The BOE developed a strategic plan to guide all facets of FCPS operation toward meeting the mission statement. Five aspirational goals were developed and adopted in December 2014 along with correlating priorities. In December 2020, FCPS published the most recent Strategic Plan Annual Update that provided measurable progress updates on the BOE’s goals. The BOE aspirational goals include:

- Aspirational Goal 1: FCPS will equip each and every student to be an empowered learner and an engaged citizen to achieve a positive impact in the local and global community.
- Aspirational Goal 2: FCPS will hire, support, and retain staff who champion individual, professional, and student excellence.
- Aspirational Goal 3: FCPS will pursue and utilize all resources strategically and responsibly to achieve identified outcomes and inspire public confidence.
- Aspirational Goal 4: FCPS will nurture relationships with families and the entire community, sharing responsibility for student success and demonstrating pride in all aspects of our school system.
- Aspirational Goal 5: FCPS will promote a culture fostering wellness and civility for students and staff.

FCPS’ 10-year Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP) speaks directly to these goals by detailing the school facilities’ renovation and capacity needs, outlining the priority school facility planning, construction and systemic project priorities, and identifying potential redistricting studies that support the school facility needs and projects.

## PURPOSE OF THE EFMP

FCPS projects enrollments and identifies facility needs 10 years into the future to allow the time necessary to plan, design and construct new or renovated facilities. Included in this 10-year EFMP is the FY24 FCPS Proposed Capital Budget that serves as the basis for annual capital funding requests to the state and county (see [Appendix A](#)).

Our 10-year EFMP is designed to:

- Inform the community, and state and county officials about FCPS' long-range plans for educational facility improvements.
- Document FCPS' long-range enrollment projections and future facility needs.
- Provide a common point of reference to allow FCPS to coordinate future new educational facility locations with county and municipal officials and coordinate future facility needs and funding requirements with state officials.
- Document FCPS' schedule of major construction, replacement, renovation and maintenance projects.
- Comply with state regulations that require FCPS, and all local educational authorities, to update its EFMP annually.

## EFMP APPROVAL PROCESS

FCPS updates the EFMP each year in accordance with the requirements in the Maryland Public School Construction Program Administrative Procedures Guide (APG). While FCPS prepares its own master plan, it is guided by the state's administrative procedures guide which defines the required content of the plan. The annual EFMP update process includes several steps that help to ensure our facilities' needs and recommendations are as current as possible. These steps are:

**Table 1A: EFMP Process**

1. Update 10-year enrollment projections	March-May
2. Prepare draft EFMP update	March-May
3. Present draft Superintendent's Recommended EFMP to the BOE	June
4. BOE Public Hearing on the draft Superintendent's Recommended EFMP and Capital Budget	June
5. BOE adopts final EFMP and Capital Budget	June
6. Submit EFMP to Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC)	July 1

FCPS submits capital project funding requests (identified in the approved EFMP) to state and county agencies in October and November (see [Appendix A](#)). Individual county and state agencies maintain procedures for evaluating the BOE-approved capital project funding requests (See [Appendix D](#) and [Appendix E](#)). Close cooperation among state, county and FCPS officials is essential to ensure that FCPS successfully updates and executes the EFMP. Public review and comments are encouraged by the BOE during the approval process.

## FUNDING

Funding for major new school construction, additions, and renovations is programmed through the capital budget of the county and state. At the state level, the governor establishes a total funding pool available for major school construction projects. Local jurisdictions, such as Frederick County, then request capital funds in accordance with IAC procedures.

The process involves a review by the Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) staff and approval by the IAC. Capital budget requests are submitted to IAC staff in October. Final capital budget decisions are made in May. Public school construction projects are funded through several programs administered by the IAC, including:

1. *Capital Improvement Program*: Provides State funding for eligible new, replacement, and capital maintenance (or systemic) public school construction projects approved by the Interagency Commission on School Construction. The State's share of an eligible school construction project is periodically reviewed and updated. Currently, the State's share of a school construction project in Frederick County is 65%. The Capital Grant Program for Local School Systems with Significant Enrollment Growth or Relocatable Classrooms (EGRC) was established in 2015 and is distributed through the CIP as supplemental funds to the traditional CIP funds. Frederick County was eligible for EGRC funding in FY21, FY22 and FY23.
2. *Built to Learn Program*: Provides for up to \$2.2 billion in school construction project funding through Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) issued special revenue bonds and provides for management of the projects by MSA. Frederick County will be allocated approximately \$112 million through this program.
3. *Aging School Fund*: Provides State funds to address the needs of aging school buildings. This program was established in 1997. From FY98 to FY21, a little over \$4.8 million for 80 projects have been approved for Frederick County. Another \$182,622 in ASP funding was allocated to Frederick County for FY23.
4. *School Safety Grant Program*: Provides grants to address the need for school security improvements. Established in 2018, the Governor is required to provide an annual allocation of \$10 million for the program beginning in fiscal year 2019. From FY19 to FY22, a total of \$1,617,032 was approved for 26 projects in Frederick County. FY23 funding allocation has not been determined.
5. *Healthy School Facilities Fund*: Provides funds to address health and safety needs in public school facilities.

The level of state funding available to FCPS each year has varied considerably. During the last 20 years, state funding varied from a low of \$14 million in FY2011 to a high of \$25.4 million in FY2023. Over the past five years, state funding has averaged approximately \$18.1 million each year not including the EGRC funds. Over the past three years, FCPS has been awarded an additional \$13.7 million in EGRC funds. [Appendix E](#) outlines State funding priorities.

Frederick County Government also provides funding for major new school construction projects. Sources of County capital funds for school projects are general fund dollars, general fund bonds, impact fees, impact fee bonds and school mitigation fees. School capital projects usually include both state and county funding, although some capital projects may not qualify for state funding and are funded only with county capital funds. The entire amount of eligible state funds for school capital projects are rarely given to the County in one fiscal year. This requires the County government to forward fund the state's share of capital funding to keep the project on schedule. The state's share of the school construction project costs is then reimbursed to the County over several fiscal years.

Each year, the County Executive prepares a 6-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for all county agencies and several independent entities, including FCPS (see [Appendix B](#) for the most recent proposed and approved County CIP for FCPS and [Appendix D](#) for the County's CIP policies). Once the County Executive releases a proposed capital budget in April, the County Council reviews and approves a final capital budget following a public hearing in May or June. The County CIP establishes the funding levels and sources as well as schedules for capital improvement projects. All FCPS capital projects must conform to the requirements of the CIP.

Finally, developers also contribute to new funding for school construction. To meet the requirements of the County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO), a developer has the option to fund the improvements needed to meet the county's APFO standards or to wait until the improvement is funded by the county and/or the state. A few previously approved developments have the option to pay a school mitigation fee to move forward after failing the APFO schools test (see [Chapter 2](#) for additional details). School mitigation fees were allocated to pay, in part, for the addition to Urbana MS in FY16. They were also used to construct the addition to Oakdale in FY20 and will be used to construct the addition to Crestwood MS in FY23. In 2005, the developer of the Linton property agreed to fund the addition to Tuscarora HS in order to meet the county's school adequacy standards. BOE policy 202.7 offers guidelines for considering similar projects in the future (see [Appendix Q](#)).

## RELATED FCPS PROCESSES

### Comprehensive Maintenance Plan

The FCPS Maintenance and Operations Department publishes the [Comprehensive Maintenance Plan for Educational Facilities](#) (CMP). Approved annually by the BOE, this plan establishes a system-wide evaluation of facility conditions and a maintenance management system to increase the life expectancy of building systems.

### Operating Budget

The [operating budget](#) process takes place each year separately from the capital budget process established by this EFMP. Starting in October the BOE discusses priorities and individual departments begin to identify their needs. In December FCPS hosts a community budget forum. The Superintendent releases the recommended operating budget in January, and the BOE holds work sessions to review it. A public hearing on the FCPS operating budget is held in February. Once the BOE approves their operating budget request, it is forwarded to the County Executive for consideration and inclusion in the County Executive's proposed County budget. The County Executive releases a recommended draft operating and capital budget in April, including proposed FCPS funding. If necessary, the BOE adjusts its proposed operating budget in April or May. The final operating budget approved by the BOE and the County Council in May/June goes into effect on July 1.

### Board of Education Policy and Regulations

The EFMP is guided by two other foundational documents that govern the administration of FCPS. These are the [BOE Policies and Regulations](#). These documents cover a wide range of specific instructional and program objectives related to such topics as organizational patterns, staffing ratios, transportation, and redistricting guidelines (see [Appendices N-R](#) for policies and regulations related to the capital program).

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONTEXT

This EFMP is also guided by the goals established in other planning documents prepared by the Frederick County Government, municipalities and the state. While not all these planning documents focus on educational facilities, their goals depend in part on meeting school facility needs. See [Chapter 2](#), [Appendix F](#) and [Appendix G](#) for additional details on comprehensive plans.

### Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

FCPS responded to the closure of public schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic by shifting to a virtual learning environment beginning in March 2020. To prepare for the eventual re-opening of public schools, a staff task force developed strategies to implement a hybrid model of in-person and remote teaching. To support this hybrid model, physical changes to the buildings were required, such as the designation

of an isolation waiting room for students exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, provision of air purifiers and reorganization of classroom furniture to allow for social distancing. Small groups of students were able to return to FCPS school buildings in fall 2020. The full hybrid model was implemented in February 2021, although some parents opted to have their students continue to access their programs virtually. FCPS students returned to school full time for the 2021-22 school year, with a virtual program available for students who chose that option. This structure is anticipated to continue in the 2022-23 school year.

## State of Maryland

### Kirwan Commission and Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act:

The Kirwan Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education was initiated by the State of Maryland in the fall of 2016 to develop recommendations for adequate funding for school programs and policy initiatives to create a competitive educational system. The commission focused on five areas: early childhood education, high-quality and diverse teachers and leaders, college and career readiness pathways, more resources to ensure all students are successful, and governance and accountability. A bill including the policy and funding recommendations of the Kirwan Commission, titled "The Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act", was passed by the Maryland General Assembly in April 2020 but was vetoed by Governor Hogan. The General Assembly overrode the veto in February 2021. House Bill 1372 then revised the Blueprint for Maryland's Future in April 2021 by establishing, in part, the requirement that certain data be collected, funding be allocated for technology improvements, reporting requirements due to the Legislature, and altering certain dates for the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future.

Highlights of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act include:

- Major reforms to high school instruction by requiring that every school system provide access to high quality career and technical education (CTE) programs as well as to early childhood education instruction by requiring the phasing in of full-day prekindergarten for three and four-year old students.
- Expanded annual school-based budget reporting and new definitions and funding formulas for existing programs as well as the new programs created by the Act.
- Establishment of target per pupil foundation amounts ensuring that state and local funds are distributed to schools on a per pupil basis.
- The goal that all public school students will meet the college and career readiness standards before the end of the 10th grade and no later than the time the student graduates.
- Expanded family support services.
- Requirement for the public school system to pay 75% of the tuition for dual enrolled public school students.
- Creation of educator preparation and licensure programs, a career ladder program and leadership training for state and local superintendents, boards of education and lead staff.

### Built to Learn Act:

The Built to Learn Act was passed during the 2020 legislative session but was stopped by the Governor's veto of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act. Once the General Assembly overrode the Governor's veto in 2021, the Built to Learn Act automatically became law. The Built to Learn Act has a significant impact on school construction in Maryland and includes, in part, the following:

- Establishes Prince George's County Public Schools public-private-partnership.
- Establishes the Supplemental Public School Construction Financing Fund, the Supplemental Public School Construction Facilities Fund, and the Public School Facilities Priority Fund as continuing, non-lapsing funds.
- Allows Maryland Stadium Authority to issue up to \$2.2 billion in revenue bonds to fund school construction projects (\$112.2 million for Frederick County) and provides for MSA to manage projects

- Makes design and furniture/equipment funding eligible for State participation.
- Mandates an increase to Enrollment Growth and Relocatable Classroom funding beginning in FY2026.
- Extends the Assessment and Funding Workgroup to December 2021.
- Extends the Healthy School Facility Fund and adds \$40 million dollars in both FY23 and FY24.
- Requires MSDE, IAC and MSA to collaborate with LEAs and community colleges to establish a CTE program or apprenticeship pathways in school building maintenance that will lead to a recognized certificate or credential.

#### State School Sufficiency Standards:

The Interagency Commission on School Construction (IAC) established the Maryland Public School Facilities Educational Sufficiency Standards in May 2018 to provide acceptable minimum levels for the physical attributes, capacity, and educational suitability of existing school buildings. See [Chapter 4](#) for additional details.

#### State Facility Assessment Study:

Following the creation of the Educational Sufficiency Standards, the IAC hired a consultant to evaluate all public school facilities in Maryland as required by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future Act. The study was completed in 2021. The committee voted to delay implementation of changes to school construction funding regulations that are based on the results of the facilities assessment for 2 years. See [Chapter 4](#) for additional details. The IAC is required to review and update the school facility assessment for one-third of the schools in each county annually. In 2022, the IAC will update the assessment of 19 FCPS schools.

#### Maryland "Smart and Sustainable Growth Act" (2009) and "Sustainable Communities Act" (2010):

These state bills and other related legislation directed growth to areas identified as consistent with local comprehensive plans and established requirements for components of comprehensive plans. Tax credits were directed towards rehabilitation of existing communities and a sustainable growth commission was created.

#### A Better Maryland Plan:

The Maryland Department of Planning completed work on this plan in 2019. This plan provides a framework for supporting the economy and environmental stewardship and advocates collaboration among state and local governments. The plan includes the 12 Planning Visions initially adopted in 2009. Some of the plan's objectives include improving collaboration and coordination among state agencies and improving the delivery of programs and services to local jurisdictions.

## County Planning

#### Livable Frederick Master Plan:

The County adopted a new comprehensive plan, Livable Frederick Master Plan (LFMP), in September 2019. The LFMP is a broad, strategic plan that provides a vision for Frederick County's future and goes beyond the traditional focus on land use and development. The LFMP is organized around four themes: Our Community, Our Health, Our Economy, and Our Environment. See [Chapter 2](#) for additional details and excerpts from the plan in [Appendix F](#).

#### Area Plans:

The County began area planning efforts following the adoption of the LFMP. Two studies are underway, including a Sugarloaf Mountain Treasured Landscape Management Plan and a South Frederick Corridors plan. Additional details are found in [Chapter 2](#).

### Zoning Regulations:

The LFMP did not change the official County comprehensive plan map or zoning map which were adopted as part of the 2010 comprehensive planning process and amended in 2012. The maps can be found in [Appendix F](#). It is anticipated that comprehensive plan and zoning map changes will occur as area plans are approved.