SCHOOL BOUNDARY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SBAC)
Policy Recommendations 1st Reading Revisions

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Title

SCHOOL BOUNDARY ~~ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SBAC)~~ REALIGNMENT

Policy Statement

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide for the realignment of school district boundaries as a result of new school construction, increased capacity or overcrowding at existing schools, budgetary constraints/efficiencies, emergencies, or closing existing schools.

Policy Statement

II. Policy Statement

Section 4-109 (c) of the Education Article, Maryland Annotated Code provides that:

With the advice of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education of St. Mary's County (the Board) shall determine the geographic attendance area for each school established under this section.

~~In accordance with 13A.02.09 of the Code of Maryland Regulations, St. Mary's County Public Schools hereby adopts the following policy to be applied to the redistricting and closing of schools.~~

Policy Statement (cont'd.)

1. The Board has the primary responsibility to ~~provide school facilities that address changing enrollment patterns and that sustain high quality educational programs and equitable educational opportunities in a way that meets its instructional expectations~~ ~~assure~~ ensure high quality educational programs at the most efficient level of cost effectiveness through optimum use of facilities. The Superintendent shall develop procedures for the continuous evaluation of the school system to determine any necessary modifications based on the type of redistricting required. The procedure shall ~~assure~~ ensure fair notice and an opportunity for comment to all members of the community. ~~The Board fulfills this responsibility through the facilities planning process. The academic achievement of all students in a safe and orderly learning environment through partnership with our community is of primary importance to the Superintendent of Schools and the Board. Enrollment in St. Mary's County is not static. The fundamental basis of this policy is to provide a sound educational environment for a changing and growing community. The number of students, their geographic distribution, and demographic characteristics of this population are all a concern for the public school system. Enrollment changes are driven by factors including birth rates, movement in admissions, and withdrawals from the school system.~~

Policy Statement (cont'd.)

2. ~~The Board, upon the advice of the Superintendent of Schools, must address underutilized or overcrowded conditions in existing schools, the closing or opening of a school, and the impact of residential development which may require the redistricting of certain school sites. At those times, the Board's primary basis for judgment must be equity of educational opportunities for all students rather than the personal desires of any one group. The Board and the Superintendent of Schools shall hold a public hearing to hear suggestions and reactions from the community prior to the final decision. The Superintendent of Schools will prepare student enrollment projections annually and report to the Board any need for redistricting. The Superintendent of Schools will charge a committee to develop and recommend boundary proposals for redistricting and/or school closings.~~

Policy Statement (cont'd.)

3. ~~In the event of an emergency, the decision to redistrict a school because of extenuating circumstances cannot be dependent upon the advice of the committee because immediate and temporary action must be taken.~~
4. ~~The Superintendent of Schools has the authority and responsibility to recommend redistricting when needed to the Board.~~
5. ~~The Superintendent of Schools may request a longer study period based on the anticipated number of schools possibly impacted.~~

Policy Statement (cont'd.)

~~The Superintendent of Schools annually evaluates the need for redistricting, using the following timeline and procedure:~~

The Superintendent of Schools will implement and ensure communication to the community a redistricting timeline that will allow for development and approval of plans, including the use of consultants, with new school assignment notification to the students affected by the new boundary plans no later than April 30th of the school year prior to redistricting taking place. Community involvement in the plan development process will be completed through an advisory committee that includes representatives, as approved by the Superintendent of Schools, from the areas being considered for boundary changes.

Policy Statement (cont'd.)

- ~~June – Refine five-year enrollment projections by school and grade. Prepare preliminary recommendations regarding the need for redistricting.~~
- ~~July – Assess school building capacities and utilization rates (enrollment measured against school building capacities). Identify schools over capacity and those exceptionally under local rated capacity, with and without relocatables. In years when redistricting has been determined to be required, staff will begin developing proposed redistricting plans.~~
- ~~October – Assess September 30 enrollment data and confirm that the need for redistricting exists. If redistricting is required, the School Boundary Advisory Committee will be charged to review and provide comments on boundary proposals and/or school closings.~~
- ~~November/December – The committee chair(s) will present recommended boundary proposals to the Superintendent of Schools. Upon approval, the Superintendent of Schools will present recommended boundary proposals to the Board.~~
- ~~January – The Board holds a public hearing regarding the recommended boundary proposals.~~
- ~~February – Present final boundary plans to the Board for final approval.~~
- ~~March/April – Distribute to parents the final school assignment for students affected by the new boundary plans.~~

Definitions

I. Definitions

N/A

Expectations for Evaluation, Review, and Updates

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~~The School Boundary Advisory Committee will meet as enrollment projections indicate the necessity for boundary realignment.~~

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated according to the Board's review schedule and/or as federal and state laws and regulations change.

Policy Statement (cont'd.)

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- The Board has the primary responsibility to ensure high quality educational programs at the most efficient level of cost effectiveness through optimum use of facilities. The Superintendent shall develop procedures for the continuous evaluation of the school system to determine any necessary modifications based on the type of redistricting required. The procedure shall ensure fair notice and an opportunity for comment to all members of the community.

- The Superintendent of Schools will implement and ensure communication to the community a redistricting timeline that will allow for development and approval of plans, including the use of consultants, with new school assignment notification to the students affected by the new boundary plans no later than April 30th of the school year prior to redistricting taking place. Community involvement in the plan development process will be completed through an advisory committee that includes representatives, as approved by the Superintendent of Schools, from the areas being considered for boundary changes.

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Questions/Comments

