

Facility Utilization and School Boundary Study Frequently Asked Questions

Mr. Michael A. Watson
Division of Supporting Services

Mrs. Kimberly Howe, Director
Department of Capital Planning

October 28, 2025



Agenda

Mike Watson, Presenter

Welcome & Introductions: Dr. Smith, Superintendent of Schools

Rules of the Evening: Mike Watson, Chief Operating Officer

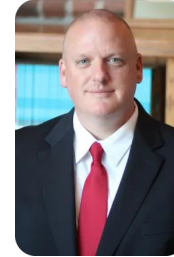
Presentation Format

Presentation Panel

- Mike Watson, Chief Operating Officer, Co-Chair
- Kimberly Howe, Director of Capital Planning, Co-Chair
- Dr. J.R. Beavers, Deputy Superintendent of Schools
- Tammy McCourt, Deputy Superintendent of Fiscal & Supporting Services

Closing Remarks: Dr. Smith, Superintendent of Schools

Additional Questions, if time permits



Mike Watson
Chief Operating Officer



Kimberly Howe
Director, Capital Planning



Dr. J.R. Beavers
Deputy Superintendent
of Schools



Tammy McCourt
Deputy Superintendent
Fiscal and Supporting
Services



Kia St. Louis
Cannon Design



Rules of the Evening

- This meeting is a presentation by school staff answering questions from the community as part of the community engagement to-date.
- Based on the work completed to-date, some questions might not be able to be answered at this time.
- This meeting is not a public comment opportunity.
- Staff and the consultant will answer questions through the presentation.
- The questions have been collected from a variety of sources and have been organized into categories.
- At the completion of the presentation, if there are additional questions that have not been included in the presentation, staff are available at the table below the stage to collect questions. If time allows, additional questions may be answered by the panel. If time does not allow, staff will respond to the email address listed on the card.

We ask that you:

- **Be open to different points of view**
- **Be respectful of others**



What Is The Expected Outcome?

- Complete a detailed analysis of available functional space in all facilities.
- Examine and recommend facility utilization options and school boundary change options that maximize services and/or efficiencies and increase opportunities for student success.
- Examine and provide fiscal and operational impacts for all recommendations.
- Engage and receive input from the community through community forums, survey's, comments and feedback through emails, presentation of recommendations, and a public hearing.
- Consideration and approval of final decisions by the Board of Education for implementation for the 2026-27 school year.



- School Board
- Administration
- School Boundary Realignment Committee
- Community Forums & Surveys
- Planning Team



Will the recommendations and data be provided to the community in sufficient time for parents to review and be able to respond?

Community Forum #2 Possible Recommendations

November 12, 2025, 2 sessions - 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM George Washington Carver Elementary School

November 13, 2025, 2 sessions - 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM Chopticon High School

November 14, 2025, 2 sessions - 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM Dr. James A. Forrest Career & Technology Center

Registration is open and will close on November 7, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.
<https://www.smcps.org/offices/supporting-services/redistricting/events-surveys#forum2>

Community Survey #2 – open November 17 – December 5, 2025

Wednesday



4pm - 6pm Session
Wednesday, November 12th
Redistricting: Community Forum #2
Participant Registration

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12TH, 2025

REGISTER FOR THE 4PM-6PM TIME SLOT

Hosted at:

George Washington Carver Elementary School
46155 Carver School Blvd
Lexington Park, Maryland 20653



7pm - 9pm Session
Wednesday, November 12th
Redistricting: Community Forum #2
Participant Registration

Thursday



4pm - 6pm Session
Thursday, November 13th
Redistricting: Community Forum #2
Participant Registration

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH, 2025

REGISTER FOR THE 4PM-6PM TIME SLOT

Hosted at:

Chopticon High School
23390 Colton Point Road
Morgantown, Maryland 20660



7pm - 9pm Session
Thursday, November 13th
Redistricting: Community Forum #2
Participant Registration

Friday



4pm - 6pm Session
Friday, November 14th
Redistricting: Community Forum #2
Participant Registration

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH, 2025

REGISTER FOR THE 4PM-6PM TIME SLOT

Hosted at:

Dr. James A. Forrest Career & Technology Center
24005 Point Lookout Rd.
Leonardtown, Maryland 20650



7pm - 9pm Session
Friday, November 14th
Redistricting: Community Forum #2
Participant Registration



What Drives Redistricting?

- Redistricting is required when there are shifts in enrollment at individual schools.
- Shifts can occur from migration within the community and increasing or declining enrollment.
- The only way to avoid having to redistrict is to have no growth or migration within the county.
- Existing communities will “age out”, causing declining enrollment as students pass through the school system and the population ages. Regrowth occurs when new families move into the community with school age students.
- New construction might not yield new residents to the county. Many families will use new developments as an opportunity to upgrade from their existing home.
- When redistricting is required, the geographic areas where boundaries align will be the areas considered for redistricting.
- Given the rural nature of the majority of the county, great distances between housing and schools exists, while the development district has very dense housing. This results in varying size school boundary areas from small to large.



What Are The Proposed Plans?

What is the complete list of all possible actions being considered?

Cannon has reviewed the information from Community Forum #1 and Community Survey #1, building utilization, enrollment and projections, financial and county growth data, and is developing possible plans to be presented at the Community Forum #2 on November 12 – 14, 2025. No plans are finalized at this time.

Based on recorded Board of Education meetings, it appears decisions or assumptions were already made before a consultant was hired. What decisions have already been made?

No plans were developed prior to Cannon beginning their work and no decisions have been made. The school system, on an annual basis reviews the enrollment and capacity data for consideration of potential boundary changes. Based on building utilization, capital plans, and financial considerations, it was determined that this year a facility utilization study needed to be completed to develop short- and long-term recommendations.



Why Are We Completing the Study?

What is the problem the school system is trying to solve with redistricting?

- Effective and efficient use of capital resources in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Optimized use of our facilities.
- Maximize opportunities for student achievement and allow for the delivery of the best instructional program possible within available facility and financial resources.
- Relieve Overcrowding.

What alternatives were considered before deciding on redistricting and why were those alternatives rejected?

- Additions to schools or construction of new schools.
- Insufficient enrollment to support State and Local funding for new construction.
- To be eligible for State funding a district must have 50% of the student population of a new school in existing schools (overcrowding) and must have the remaining 50% of the student population of the new school by the time it is finished construction (at capacity when opened).

New School Construction Metrics				
	Capacity	State Share	Local Share	Total Cost
Elementary	644	21,525,000	20,499,000	42,024,000
Middle	1,100	29,046,000	27,659,000	56,705,000
High	1,695	60,107,000	58,352,000	118,459,000



Enrollment and Capacity by School Level

Kimberly Howe, Presenter

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, enrollment in public school has declined across the county, state and country. The projections are indicating that as a result of an upturn in live births and return of the workforce to in person, there is a trend developing for increased elementary school enrollment starting in FY 28. Five years later, the cohort will begin transition to middle school in FY 32 and high school in FY 35.

	Actual Enrollment						Projected Enrollment									
	FY'20 2019-20	FY'21 2020-21	FY'22 2021-22	FY'23 2022-23	FY'24 2023-24	FY'25 2024-25	FY'26 2025-26	FY'27 2026-27	FY'28 2027-28	FY'29 2028-29	FY'30 2029-30	FY'31 2030-31	FY'32 2031-32	FY'33 2032-33	FY'34 2033-34	FY'35 2034-35
Elementary Schools																
Total PreK-5	8,132	7,591	7,655	7,801	7,903	7,755	7,752	7,750	7,819	7,894	8,010	8,105	8,159	8,207	8,253	8,296
State Rated Capacity	8,771	8,791	8,791	8,791	8,791	8,791	8,791	8,791	8,791	8,791	8,791	8,791	8,791	8,791	8,791	8,791
Available Capacity +/-	640	1,200	1,137	990	888	1,036	1,039	1,041	972	897	781	686	632	584	538	495
Total Middle	4,123	4,076	3,994	3,922	3,828	3,765	3,760	3,870	3,817	3,755	3,662	3,661	3,709	3,796	3,862	3,889
State Rated Capacity	4,147	4,147	4,167	4,187	4,207	4,207	4,207	4,207	4,207	4,207	4,207	4,207	4,207	4,207	4,207	4,207
Available Capacity +/-	24	71	173	265	379	442	447	337	390	452	545	546	498	411	345	318
Total High	5,236	5,248	5,392	5,500	5,441	5,341	5,115	5,073	5,067	5,100	5,094	5,034	4,942	4,888	4,944	5,035
State Rated Capacity	5,085	5,085	5,085	5,085	5,085	5,085	5,085	5,085	5,085	5,085	5,085	5,085	5,085	5,085	5,085	5,085
Available Capacity +/-	(151)	(163)	(307)	(415)	(356)	(256)	(30)	12	18	(15)	(9)	51	143	197	141	50



New School Construction

The school system receives 58% of funding for school construction from the State. For new schools, the State requires that 50% of the student population for the new school must be in place at existing schools (overcrowding) when planning is approved. By the completion of the project several years later, the State requires that the remaining 50% of the student population be in place at the time of opening (at capacity).

Based on current enrollment and projections, the school system does not have a need for any new schools.

Existing and Proposed	State Rated Capacity	Enrollment & Projections										
		FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031	FY 2032	FY 2033	FY 2034	FY 2035
		Actual 2024-25	Year 1 2025-26	Year 2 2026-27	Year 3 2027-28	Year 4 2028-29	Year 5 2029-30	Year 6 2030-31	Year 7 2031-32	Year 8 2032-33	Year 9 2033-34	Year 10 2034-35
Existing Elementary School	8,791	<u>7,755</u>	<u>7,752</u>	<u>7,750</u>	<u>7,819</u>	<u>7,894</u>	<u>8,010</u>	<u>8,105</u>	<u>8,159</u>	<u>8,207</u>	<u>8,253</u>	<u>8,296</u>
Difference +/-		1,036	1,039	1,041	972	897	781	686	632	584	538	495
New Elementary School: There is no need for a new elementary school in the next ten years												
Existing Middle School	4,207	<u>3,765</u>	<u>3,760</u>	<u>3,870</u>	<u>3,817</u>	<u>3,755</u>	<u>3,662</u>	<u>3,661</u>	<u>3,709</u>	<u>3,796</u>	<u>3,862</u>	<u>3,889</u>
Difference +/-		442	447	337	390	452	545	546	498	411	345	318
New Middle School: There is no need for a new middle school in the next ten years												
Existing High School	5,085	<u>5,341</u>	<u>5,115</u>	<u>5,073</u>	<u>5,067</u>	<u>5,100</u>	<u>5,094</u>	<u>5,034</u>	<u>4,942</u>	<u>4,888</u>	<u>4,944</u>	<u>5,035</u>
Difference +/-		(256)	(30)	12	18	(15)	(9)	51	143	197	141	50
New High School: There is no justification for a new high school in the next ten years												
Per State Regulations, before we can ask for planning and design approval, we need 50% of the student population in place (600 students) and the remaining 50% (600 students) by the time construction is completed. This is for a smaller 1,200 capacity high school.												



What was the criteria for selection? What is the cost of this service?

- Services were procured in accordance with MD State Procurement Laws & Board of Education Policies
- Request for Proposals was placed on eMaryland Marketplace Advantage
- Four Proposals were received – technical proposals were evaluated in accordance with the requirements of the request for proposals
- Technical proposals were evaluated and ranked prior to price proposal evaluation
 - Lump sum fee of \$199,860
 - Value Added Services (contingency) of \$48,045
 - Additional meetings, forums, survey, and data toolkit & dashboard

How is the consulting firm able to understand community concerns and stance if the questions being asked are not aligned with some parent's concerns?

Based on experience and national best practices, the project survey questions are designed to effectively solicit meaningful feedback about community values and priorities, particularly as it relates to trade offs associated with redistricting and school assignment policies. Understanding that a survey lasting more than 15 minutes may deter some stakeholders, an optional open-ended feedback questions allows individuals to share specific ideas not covered in the questions, which many SMCPs community members took advantage of.



Consultant

What qualifications and experience does the consultant have with redistricting similar to the work being accomplished in St. Mary's County?

Over the past six years, the same members of CannonDesign's SMCPS team have completed seven similar projects across the country.

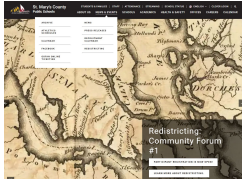
- 2020-21 - Baltimore County systemwide public planning process addressing new schools, attendance boundaries, school replacements and mergers, grade reconfiguration, and prioritized over \$4 billion in capital investments, leading to increased state and local funding.
- 2023 Washoe County NV Facility Modernization Plan addressed redistricting as well as 16 'trade-up' consolidations over the next 15 years.
- Other projects include Salem Public Schools MA, Long Beach USD CA, Pioneer Valley Regional School District MA, El Paso ISD TX, Clark County NV, and a statewide study for the Massachusetts School Building Authority. Additionally, these school planning experts have dozens of other similar projects nationally executed prior to their current employment at CannonDesign and partner firm.



How can we feel confident that the consultant will put our community's interests first, instead of positioning themselves for future profit opportunities with follow-on contracts?

St. Mary's County Public Schools is required by MD State and Local laws and regulations to competitively solicit for consulting, design, and construction services. While Cannon includes design and architectural services as part of their business model, they have not submitted proposals on any prior design projects. They, like all other architectural firms, have the ability to submit for future work in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.

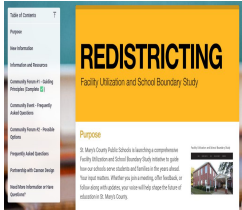




Website

www.smcps.org/redistricting

- 20,000+ hits



Redistricting Smore

<https://secure.smcore.com/n/9w1xv>

- 3,500+ views



Community Forum #1 Survey

- 3,467

Email

redistricting@smcps.org



Facebook

www.facebook.com/smcps.org

- 60,000+ interactions



Youtube

www.youtube.com/@smcps

- Informational Videos



Instagram

www.instagram.com/smcps_md



Press Releases

www.smcps.org/news-events/press-releases

CONTACT US



Summary of Questions so far

- The presentation tonight will provide answers to questions that have been submitted through:
 - Community Forum #1 - Guiding Principles
 - Community Survey #1 - Guiding Principles
 - Redistricting email
 - Community Engagement Team
 - Registration for tonight's event
- The redistricting website, including presentations and videos provides much of this information, however, we wanted to provide a concise location for the information
- A video recording of this event and the slidedeck will be posted on the website in several business days
- Staff has reviewed all of the questions and comments and summarized the questions into categories



What is the school district doing to ensure that all projects that have been approved by the County Planning Commission, Appeals Board, the Town of Leonardtown, and existing PUDs are included in the data analysis?

The County's Department of Land Use & Growth Management (LUGM) is responsible for tracking housing development approvals and build out, with the exception of the Town of Leonardtown projects. LUGM provided information on all approved housing developments, which were incorporated into the analysis by Cannon. The data files included existing and approved residential projects. The Town of Leonardtown provided current and future project information.

What is the source for existing housing and new housing in the concept phase, and how are those numbers determined for each category and phase?

The school system is a member of the County Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) and reviews all residential plans submitted (preliminary and concept) with regards to bus stops. Projects can take several years to transition from preliminary or concept plan approval to final approval and construction.

Example: A recent project approval on Willows Road started in 2007 and received final approval in September 2025. The school system provided Cannon with a list of projects (5 lots or more) for which comments were provided to the TEC for the past three years.



Does the school district incorporate students attending public, parochial, private and homeschooling into their analysis?

The school system annually tracks the total number of students enrolled in public, private, and home school. based on public and private school summarized grade level enrollment information received from the Maryland State Department of Education. Home school student information is available through the school system. Data on individual students and their location within the county is not provided. During redistricting, these students are not included in the geographic location analysis for this reason.

How can the school district guarantee that decisions are not being made based on protecting high end communities with the ability to move to remain in their desired districts?

The data analysis being completed does not factor in property value or financial resources. Criteria being utilized addresses:

- Effective and efficient use of capital resources in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Optimized use of our facilities.
- Maximize opportunities for student achievement and allow for the delivery of the best instructional program possible within available facility and financial resources.
- Relieve Overcrowding.



Will the plans include consideration for property values diminishing as a result of high school redistricting?

The intended result of this work will be the development of optimized use of our facilities to include potential closures and boundary realignment recommendations of our twenty-seven (27) existing school buildings that maximizes opportunities for student achievement and allows for the delivery of the best instructional program possible within the available facility and financial resources. The study will not include an analysis of property values.

In consideration of the proposed plans, the school system believes that public education is not an expense, it is an investment in our students and our community.



What factors impact enrollment projections?

Enrollment projections are completed utilizing an industry standard cohort survival ratio. It captures the historic enrollment patterns of a cohort of students as they pass from one grade to the next. Birth rate information is utilized to project enrollment for Kindergarten and first grade. The school system completes cohort survival ratio analysis utilizing multiple years to incorporate changes in both increases and decreases in actual enrollment to complete 10 years of enrollment projections. The first five years of the projection are the most accurate and are utilized by many local and State agencies for decision making. The birth rate data is provided by the Maryland Department of Health & Hygiene Vital Statistics.

If federal jobs are being eliminated in the area, and yearly births are declining, what information is being used that indicates that student enrollment will increase in the next 10 years?

The current five-year plans show a decrease in school enrollment and are a factor in why redistricting is being studied. The 6-to-10-year data does show the potential for growth to begin occurring at a slow rate starting in FY 2029, which will need to be monitored. This growth can be attributed to an increase in the projected birth rate and proposed new housing. This is a statewide and national trend at this time.



Why were schools that are now underutilized built in areas that could not sustain enrollment? Was this not forecasted/projected when they were built and how will this be prevented in the future?

Prior to the 1940's, St. Mary's County public education was provided through small and one room school houses. With the construction of the Naval Base that started in the early 1940's and 1950's, St. Mary's County saw a tremendous increase in population based on construction workers and their families coming to the county. Many school sites were donated by local landowners to support the growth.

In the late 1960's and 1970's additional schools were built to address desegregation in the county. All of the school construction that has occurred since the 1990's has been built in growth districts. Suitable land for new schools in the development area is becoming very difficult to find based on commercial and residential growth. The school system purchased a 65 acre site for the next elementary school just outside of the Great Mills corridor.

Historic School Capacity

School	Original	Addition	Addition	Addition	Addition	Addition	State	Local	Total SF
Great Mills H.S.	1945	1955	1968	1984	1997		1,695	1,695	216,625
Benjamin Banneker E.S. & ECC	1951	1959	1975	1983	1997	2003	590	552	83,032
Mechanicsville E.S.	1951	1960	1979				284	270	40,095
Lexington Park E.S.	1953	1987	2003				507	479	56,000
Leonardtown E.S.	1954	1960	1962	1976	1999	2008	611	583	67,847
Ridge E.S.	1956	1965	1976	1997	2004		246	232	32,537
White Marsh E.S.	1956	1970	1978	1999			238	226	32,739
Margaret Brent M.S.	1957	1971	1978	2005			1,036	1,036	131,354
Town Creek E.S.	1958	1964	1981	2002	2006		258	244	34,498
Esperanza M.S.	1960	1965	1969	1976	2000		869	869	115,866
Dynard E.S.	1964	1969	1992	2005			463	439	49,200
Park Hall E.S.	1964	1994	2009				519	491	58,831
Chopticon H.S.	1964	1968	1983	2000			1,695	1,695	216,625
Greenview Knolls E.S.	1965	1971	1990	1997	2009		437	411	56,528
Piney Point E.S.	1966	1976	1998	2005			357	333	48,072
Dr. James A. Forrest Career & Tech Ctr	1968	1979	2006				486	486	130,200
Piney Point E.S.	1970	1997	2006				563	531	57,794
Green Holly E.S.	1973	1985	1989	1992			536	508	57,925
Spring Ridge M.S.	1974	2016					1,103	1,103	109,837
Leonardtown M.S.	1975						1,019	1,019	104,750
Leonardtown H.S.	1978	2002					1,695	1,695	223,727
Lettie Marshall Dent E.S.	1980	1992	2025				512	486	57,820
Hollywood E.S.	1993						512	486	57,565
George Washington Carver E.S.	2006						507	479	61,385
Chesapeake Public Charter (E.S./M.S.)	2007	2019	2021	2022			540	540	71,000
Evergreen E.S.	2009						647	615	74,227
Captain Walter Francis Duke E.S.	2015						644	618	77,572



Historic School Capacity

School	Original Construction	Addition	Addition	Addition	Addition	Addition	State Capacity	Local Capacity	Total SF
High Schools									
Great Mills H.S.	1945	1955	1968	1984	1997		1,695	1,695	216,625
Chopticon H.S.	1964	1968	1983	2000			1,695	1,695	216,625
Leonardtown H.S.	1978	2002					1,695	1,695	223,727
Middle Schools									
Margaret Brent M.S.	1957	1971	1978	2005			1,036	1,036	131,354
Esperanza M.S.	1960	1965	1969	1976	2000		869	869	115,866
Spring Ridge M.S.	1974	2016					1,103	1,103	109,837
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How does class size differ from building capacity?

Capacity for a building is determined by the Interagency Commission on School Construction standards, which reflect the design standards required for each classroom for educational sufficiency.

The class size is based on square footage requirements and allows for a dedicated planning period at the secondary level for each classroom.

Class size is the number of students assigned to each teacher (elementary) and program session at the secondary level.



INTERAGENCY COMMISSION ON SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION STATE RATED CAPACITY (SRC) CALCULATION WORKSHEET

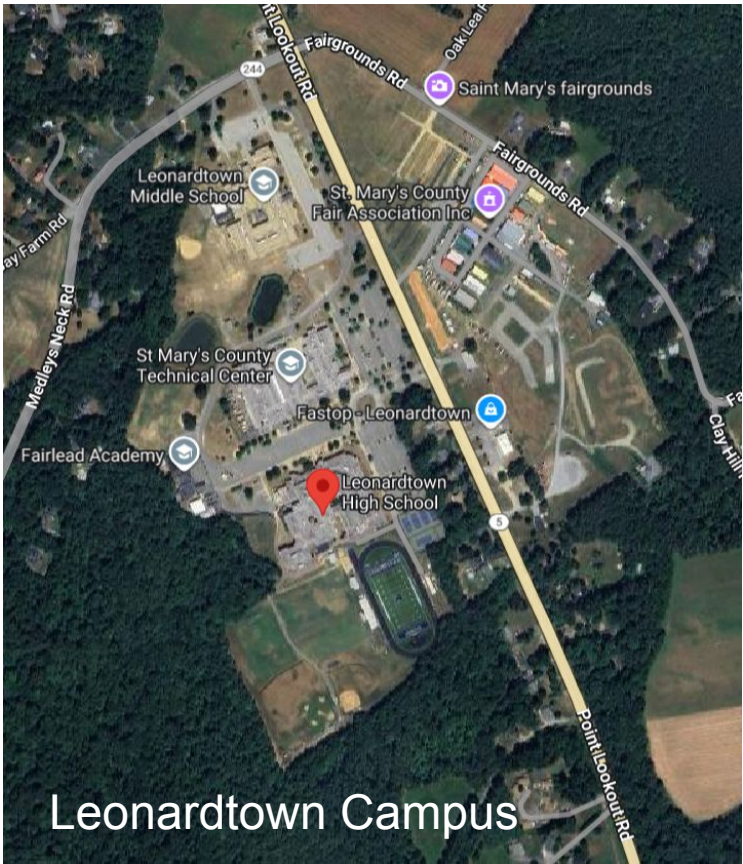
LEA: _____
School Name: _____
PSC No: _____
Current SRC: _____
Proposed SRC: _____

Submitted: mm/dd/yy
Revised: mm/dd/yy
Submitted by Initials

Populate the cells in **RED** and change to **BLACK** when complete.

Type of Room	# of Rooms	100%	85%	Total
PreK/HS/EEEP	_____	20	NA	20.00
Kindergarten	_____	22	NA	22.00
Regular (Elem)	_____	23	NA	23.00
Alternative (Elem)	_____	10	NA	10.00
Special Ed	_____	10	NA	10.00
Regular (Sec)	_____	25	21.25	21.25
Gym (Sec)	_____	50	42.50	42.50
Career Tech	_____	20	17.00	17.00
Alternative (Sec)	_____	10	8.5	8.50





Would an addition being put on one of the high schools be a consideration given there is not enough capacity need to warrant a fourth high school?

The school system completed a study in the 1990's to determine optimal school sizes. Each high school was renovated and had an addition to make all three high schools the same size and redistricting occurred to balance each high school. There are many site constraints on the high school sites:

School	Students	Staff	Total
Leonardtown Middle	969	100	1,069
Dr. James A. Forrest Career & Tech Ctr. *	208	44	252
Virtual Academy	0	12	12
Leonardtown High	<u>2,118</u>	<u>155</u>	<u>2,273</u>
	3,295	311	3,606

* per session - not including LHS students

Chopticon High	1,526	140	1,666
Great Mills High	1,697	157	1,854

Could additional charter schools be considered?

Additional charter schools can be considered, however, they are privately run facilities.

Could an elementary school with a low population be utilized as a sixth-grade-only location?

The sixth grade class in FY 25 was 1,252 students. This student population would take our two largest elementary schools to accommodate. In addition, the program space would not meet secondary school sufficiency standards based on the program design as an elementary school. In addition, travel time to transport students to one facility would be significant and add to the transportation costs.

Could sixth graders be kept at the elementary schools?

The facilities are not designed for meeting the educational program requirements of a secondary program. Finding enough space within our existing schools that meets the program requirements and specials would be very challenging.

Will this cause problems for those who will be seniors next year and will it disrupt the course plan previously decided?

There should be no changes to senior course plans.



Why can't we have smaller class sizes?

Staffing is based on funding, student enrollment, and at the secondary level, individual course requests.

The goal for class sizes is under 25 for 3rd - 12th, however, individual class sizes may exceed the goal based on student enrollment, student interest, and staffing.

Class Size Goals:

- Capped at 20 for Pre-K - Required by MSDE
- Goal 20 in grades K-2 - Actual range 17 - 25
- Goal 25 in grades 3-5 - Actual range 12 - 28
- Goal 25 in grades 6-12 - Actual range 15 - 35



Could additional emphasis be placed on career & technology center programs to alleviate crowding at each of the three high schools?

Additional program offerings, including new academies could be examined as a long term solution, however, they are not a short term solution. In 2005-06, the school system began the move of students from Leonardtown High School to the newly created STEM academy at Great Mills High School. This program took several years to build out as students entered into the program at the beginning of a new cohort.

The school system could look at additional opportunities for the future such as a Cyber Security Academy at Chopticon High School. The program would begin with a buildout from Margaret Brent Middle School and feed into Chopticon High School. Building out a new academy does come with expense such as building out appropriate program spaces and development of coursework.



What school programs may be at risk due to a potential reduction in federal funding for public schools in our district?

The majority of federal funding received by the school system is focused on economically challenged students and at this time, there is no indication that there will be a reduction in the funding.

- Title I - provides Title I School Improvement funds
- Title II - provides funds to support teachers and instructional practices in schools
- Title III - provides funds to support students whose home language is not English
- IDEA - provides funds for Special Education for K-12 students, preschool, and infants and toddlers
- Perkins - provides funds for several components including funds for career and technology programs

What is the status of “specials” in the future years?

At this time, there are no plans to reduce the number of programs offered by the school system. In the future, there is a potential to expand to include a Cyber Security Academy.



Given that public schools are required to provide special education at all schools, how will these numbers be determined for both concept and existing housing, and will this be provided at each school?

Special education is offered at the home school as well as at regional program schools based on individual student needs. Capacity is allocated at the regional schools for students with higher intensity needs. The regional school capacity will be accounted for during the redistricting plans.



Will there be changes to the academies or their locations at the high school level?

There is a potential for changes in the academies based on redistricting. This could include new program offerings or shifts in existing locations.

How do the academies affect the capacity utilization at the high schools?

The students attending an academy outside of their home school district will be accounted for during the process, but enrollment is by program request and is subject to change.

Home School	Program Location					
	STEM @ Great Mills HS	GIS @ Leonardtown HS	AVPA @ Chopticon HS	Total In	Total Out	Diff In/Out
Chopticon	10	5		30	15	15
Great Mills		12	16	75	28	47
Leonardtown	65		14	17	79	(62)
Total	75	17	30	122	122	

Will the Fairlead Academy be coming back?

The Fairlead Academy was replaced with a Freshman Academy at each high school and the building on Great Mills Road was returned to the County.



Will German be offered as a language option at Great Mills if Leonardtown students are redistricted there?

Course offerings are reviewed and approved annually, based on student interest and requests, as well as available resources.

Is there an update on whether students transferring from Leonardtown High School to Great Mills High School will be granted access to the STEM program?

Admission into any high school academy is based on application and transcript review.



Will home-school students be provided access to after-school programs including athletics? If so, how will these numbers be determined for both concept and existing housing?

Interscholastic athletics in Maryland are governed by regulations adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education. The first eligibility criterion cited in COMAR 13A.06.03.02 requires students who represent schools in interscholastic athletic programs to be officially registered, enrolled, and attending the school. However, Virtual Academy students are eligible to participate at their school of record.

How might this change affect athletic programs where students have already been playing together with certain teammates and coaches to build a strong team?

Participation in athletic programs each school is based on interest and available capacity in the program. Given the disproportionate number of students at a particular school, it can be challenging to provide equitable opportunities.



2025 Fall Athletics Participation Data

Mike Watson, Presenter

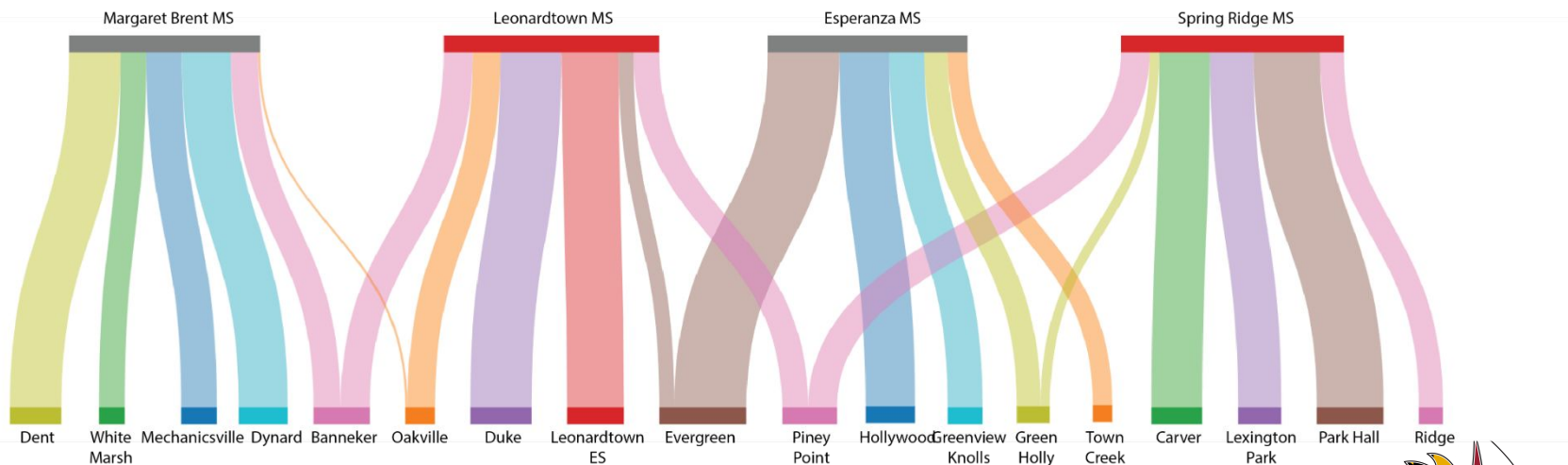
CHS	Tried Out	Made the Team	Did not Make Team	% that did not make the team	GMHS	Tried Out	Made the Team	Did not Make Team	% that did not make the teamt	LHS	Tried Out	Made the Team	Did not Make Team	% that did not make the team
Football	85	85	0	0%	Football	74	72	2	3%	Football	85	83	2	2%
Boys' Soccer	41	41	0	0%	Boys' Soccer	60	44	16	27%	Boys' Soccer	67	42	25	37%
Girls' Soccer	33	33	0	0%	Girls' Soccer	36	31	5	14%	Girls' Soccer	55	41	14	25%
Girls' Volleyball	46	26	20	43%	Girls' Volleyball	53	27	26	49%	Girls' Volleyball	60	32	28	47%
Field Hockey	28	26	2	7%	Field Hockey	35	33	2	6%	Field Hockey	39	34	5	13%
Cross Country	41	41	0	0%	Cross Country	31	31	0	0%	Cross Country	46	46	0	0%
Golf	14	12	2	14%	Golf	14	12	2	14%	Golf	30	16	14	47%
Cheerleading	53	43	10	18%	Cheerleading	44	26	18	41%	Cheerleading	50	42	8	16%
Corollary Sports	9	9	0	0%	Corollary Sports	13	13	0	0%	Corollary Sports	11	11	0%	0%

- Potential balancing for student-athlete interest
- In some sports, 40% - 50% of student-athletes do not make the team
- Historically, this same trend occurs in the winter and spring



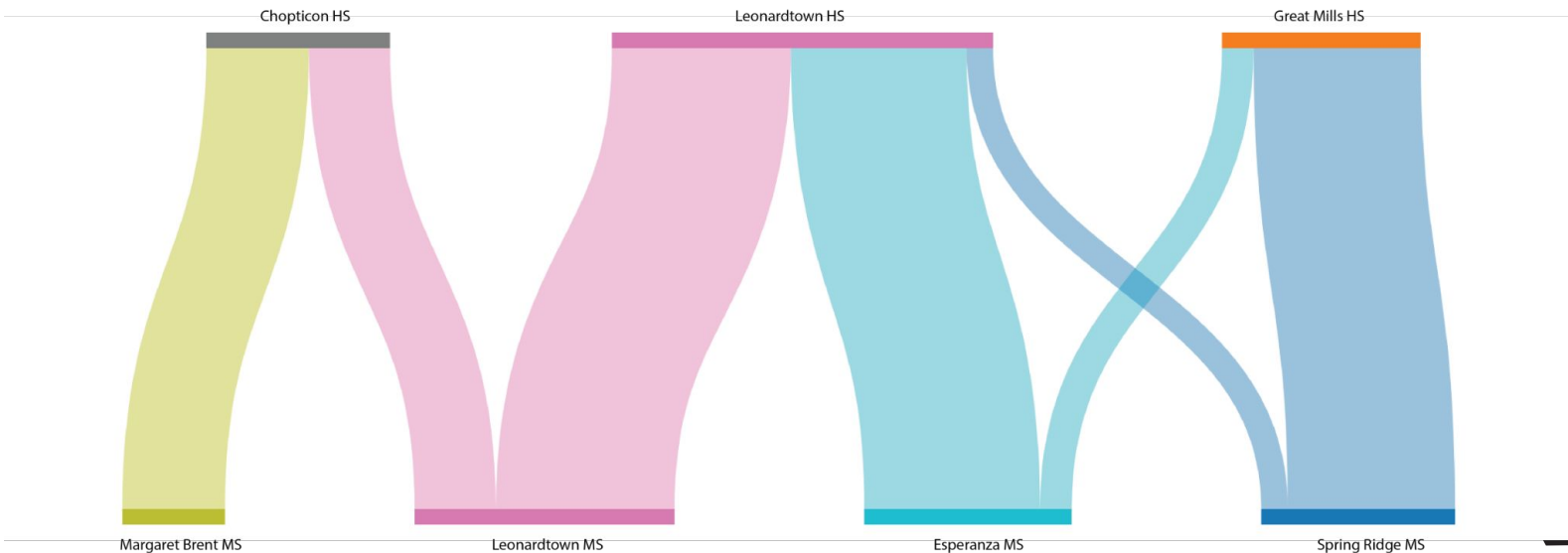
Why are there splits in feeder patterns from elementary, middle and high school?

There are eighteen (18) elementary schools that feed into four (4) middle schools. Given the geography of the county and continued development within the county, the elementary schools have minor splits transitioning from elementary to middle school. Review of the feeder patterns from elementary to middle is part of this review process.



Why are there splits in feeder patterns from elementary, middle and high school?

There are four (4) middle schools that feed into three (3) high schools. Given the geography of the county, continued development, and the size of the schools, the middles schools will always have splits transitioning from middle to high school. While minimizing the splits between middle to high school feeder patterns is part of the review, it will not be possible to resolve all splits.



Are you taking into account traffic patterns? How will the change affect transportation, bus routes, and travel times for students?

Many factors will be taken into consideration during this process including transportation items. Transportation staff are involved and will provide insight to the redistricting committee on how various options will impact bus routes and travel times.

Would you send kids to a school further away because a closer school is more overcrowded?

Circumstances currently exist where students travel further to a school location. It is possible through this process that additional students may have to travel further to their assigned school than what would be their closest school. Students that live on the edge of a current school boundary may experience changes in the travel time to school based on the different options.



Have you considered the impact to 2-home families that live in the same school zones but may reside in different neighborhoods? What are working parents to do who do not have the financial means to move back into the same district as the other parent?

Many dual custody situations already exist where one parent lives inside the school zone and another parent lives outside the school zone and those parents make the necessary arrangements for their children. Redistricting may cause some of those situations to result in being in the same school zone but it may also split the school zone among two parents that may currently be in the same school zone.

Are you considering elementary, middle & high school students riding the same bus?

There are currently no discussions on combining different schools on the same bus run.



If lines are redrawn would students already attending a certain school have to change to another school?

If district boundaries are changed, then students will need to attend the newly assigned school. The exception may be possible grandfathering, which has historically been given for rising 5th, 8th, and 12th grade students, without school system transportation.

Have you considered discontinuing waivers to allow students who are in their current district to attend first?

The school system considers all waiver requests into a school based on the established regulations and procedures.

Will all actions happen next year or will there be a phased approach over several years?

The options will include consideration for different phase in plans, including starting with the 2026-27 school year.



**What flexibility or “opt-out” policies might exist (if any) for families unhappy with new assignments?
Could a student that has already started in a school, finish in that school?**

The decision of the Board of Education will be final and assignment letters will be provided to each family before April 30, 2026. Any waivers or grandfathering granted, will be without transportation.

Will there be a grace period for those students who are in 8th grade and expecting to attend a particular high school?

If redistricting is approved, students would start at their assigned school based on the timeline approved by the Board of Education.



Why doesn't SMPCS offer before & after daycare?

The school system does not have the resources and funding to provide before & after daycare at our schools. The St. Mary's County Department of Recreation and Parks runs a paid before and after care program in our schools. The program location is determined by sufficient interest to make the program financially feasible.

Will there be grandfathering (relative to daycare)?

If grandfathering is approved as part of this process, it will be without transportation.

Will there be transportation provided for daycare (outside of home district)?

The school system is reviewing the current policy regarding transportation from daycare, with an emphasis on discontinuing this service given the financial burden it creates.



Will parents be provided “school choice”? If so, with or without transportation?

The school system does not plan to offer school choice. Also, school choice would be predicated on capacity being available at the requested school.



What is the financial deficit of the school district for the next 5 years based upon flat funding?

Revenues to a school district are driven by the number of students enrolled in St. Mary's County Public Schools, with specific funding provided based on the demographics of those students for pre-kindergarten, economically disadvantaged, special education, multi-lingual, college and career ready, and elementary students in need of additional supplemental instruction. The exact amount per pupil funding program is legislatively determined, per §5 of the Education Article, and may be changed in any year by the General Assembly.

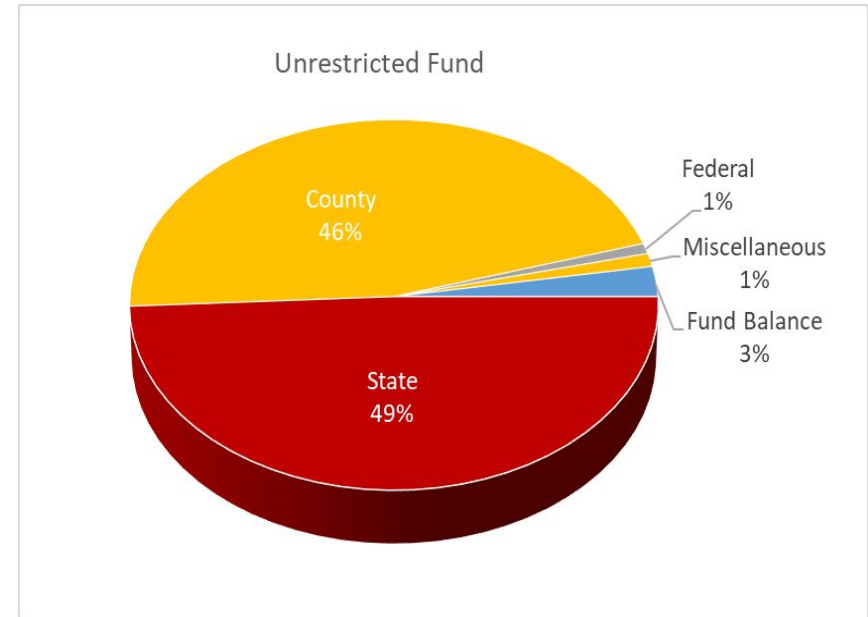
	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	% Change	FY 2027	% Change
Foundation	\$ 8,642	\$ 8,789	\$ 9,226	5%	\$ 9,561	4%
Compensatory Education	\$ 7,519	\$ 7,559	\$ 7,842	4%	\$ 7,786	-1%
Pre-K	\$ 11,594	\$ 13,003	\$ 14,473	11%	\$ 19,950	38%
English Language Learners	\$ 8,642	\$ 8,965	\$ 9,041	1%	\$ 9,148	1%
Special Education	\$ 7,951	\$ 8,701	\$ 9,503	9%	\$ 10,900	15%
Transitional Supplemental Instruction	\$ 680	\$ 522	\$ 356	-32%	\$ -	-100%
College and Career	\$ 567	\$ 569	\$ 586	3%	\$ 596	2%



What is the financial deficit of the school district for the next 5 years based upon flat funding? (continued)

To support our 16,000 students, we employ 2,000 teachers, support staff, and administrators. Salaries and associated benefits, along with our contracted services, which include our bus drivers, make up **93%** of our budget. Providing competitive wages to those educating our students aids in retention of our teachers.

The St. Mary's County Commissioners regularly provide funding support in excess of the legally mandated amount of maintenance of effort. For the current school year, County funding supports 46% of our budget.



How does the closure of schools save the district money if they plan to reallocate these buildings for admin offices and/or recreation buildings?

If this study were to result in the recommendation of a school closure, then the facility could be maintained by the school district for administrative purposes or returned to the County in accordance with State laws.

Closure of a school facility is covered under Education Article, § 5-303, Ann. Code of MD, and COMAR 14.39.02.22. The regulations require:

- Buildings that are no longer utilized for educational or administrative purposes, must be returned to the county
- If there is outstanding State of Maryland bond debt for construction projects completed at the facility, the County may be required to repay the outstanding bond debt

Should a school be closed, the staff would be needed to support those students at another school. However, savings would be recognized in utilities, infrastructure maintenance, and certain staffing reductions, such as the school principal, secretary, nurse, counselor, and building service.



How can parents and the community best help our teachers to have adequate pay and resources to be successful?

We appreciate the community's support of our teachers. The best way for you to help is to be engaged, and follow the budget discussions of the school system, the County, and the State.

The Maryland Blueprint for Education required that teachers salaries be increased to \$60,000 by July 1, 2026, per §6–1009. With the support of the Commissioners of St. Mary's County and the community, we were there by July 1, 2024. Our starting teachers salaries are now at \$61,710.

Local	
Date	Description of Activity
January 8, 2026	Superintendent's 2027 Proposed Budget presented to BOE
January 14, 2026	Board of Education 2027 Budget Work Session
January 21, 2026	2027 Proposed Budget Public Hearing
January 28, 2026	Board of Education budget work session and direction on budget.
February 4, 2026	Board of Education approval of recommended budget for submission to the Commissioners of St. Mary's County.
April 21, 2026	Commissioners of St. Mary's County Public Hearing on Recommended Budget
May 12, 2026	Commissioners of St. Mary's County provide final direction on their operating budget.
May 20, 2026	Board of Education adopts final FY 2027 operating budget.

State	
Date	Description of Activity
January 14, 2026	Legislative Session starts
January 21, 2026	Governor's FY 2027 budget is released
April 6, 2026	State Budget bill to be passed by both Chambers
April 13, 2026	General Assembly Adjournment "Sine Die"

Are there budget allocations for potential increases in transportation or staffing?

Should any grandfathering be granted, it will be without transportation. Therefore, there are no additional budget costs for transportation anticipated as a result of redistricting.

Due to the declining student enrollment, there will be no increase in staff associated with redistricting. Instead, positions will be moved, as and if needed, to follow the realigned student enrollment at the schools.

If the reason for redistricting is budgetary, how big is the scope of the budget shortfall that we're trying to address?

The purpose of this redistricting study is to review facility utilization options and school boundary change options that maximize services and/or efficiencies and increase opportunities for student success. This process is not being driven by a budget shortfall. However, this does support our zero-based budgeting process, whereas every element of the budget is being reviewed to ensure that all tax dollars provided to the school system are used efficiently.



What are ways parents and the community can support the school district when there are less funds for public schools to continue access to quality education for all students in the district?

The best way for you to support the school system is to be aware and engaged by following the budget discussions of the school system, the County, and the State. Much of our local actions are being driven by State decisions. A prime example was the State's decision to support the balancing of their budget by passing a portion of the teacher pension costs to the County Government. The teacher pension cost increases are directly correlated to the State's Maryland Blueprint for Education mandate to increase starting teacher salaries.

Can one consideration be to petition for increasing taxes to support the schools?

The County Commissioners increased the income tax rate to from 3.0% to 3.2% to address the need for additional revenue in January 2025. This was the result of active community support for funding education with the development of the FY 2025 budget. The maximum allowable rate that a county in Maryland can have is 3.3% per §10-106.



Is the school board fearful of the incorporation of Diversity/Equity/Inclusion questions and metrics in the surveys and ultimately the recommendations, and how this will affect federal funding for the school system?

The State's Blueprint for Education funding formula is differentiated for students based on their demographics of Pre-Kindergarten, economically disadvantaged, special education, multilingual, college and career ready, and elementary students in need of additional supplemental instruction. This is separate and distinct from Federal funding. The Federal funding received by the school district is predominantly targeted to our Title schools serving our largest population of economically disadvantaged students. The redistricting questions have no direct impact on Federal funding to the school system.



What commitments are there from the county commissioners that the county's education budget will increase to at least A) match inflation or B) increase funding based on the results of these independent studies?

It is important to note that although the County provides a significant financial support to the school district's budget, 49% of the school's budget comes from State revenue. State law dictates that all per pupil allocation of funding must be wealth equalized. The wealth of the county is driven by the constituents income level and the property values. The wealth of the county is evaluated annually by the State to determine the State's contribution level and required minimum County contribution. Additionally, the change in the number of students enrolled, as well as their demographics, is a significant component of the funding formula. Looking at inflation alone is not an option for revenue determination, but is certainly a significant factor in driving up operating costs. The redistricting study is not being conducted to drive a discussion on increasing funding. The redistricting study is to review facility utilization options and school boundary change options that maximize services and/or efficiencies and increase opportunities for student success. However, this process supports our zero-based budget approach.



How are building utilities paid for? Does this money come from the money attached to each child?

Building utilities, as well as other other building operating and maintenance costs, such as snow removal, building service staff, custodial supplies, grass cutting, etc, are funding out of the Foundation per pupil funding allocation.

Are you able to provide an itemized list detailing the breakout of what the per-child funding is used for within each school and the district?

Teacher salaries and associated benefits are the obvious largest component of the use of the per pupil funding appropriation. However, aside from the items mentioned in the previous question, the funding also is expected to cover the “behind the scenes” needs of the operation of a school district: Safety & Security staff, Maintenance staff in HVAC and Roofing, Computer Technicians, servers, laptops, cyber security infrastructure, property and general liability insurance, bus drivers, buses, and fuel, as well as the instructional needs of textbooks, PSAT, SAT, dual enrollment, musicals, band instruments, and athletics.



How can the community access the data utilized for the redistricting effort?

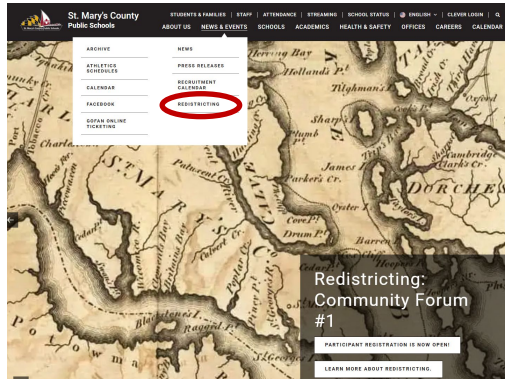
Several days after the plans are presented at Community Forum #2, the data and presentation will be posted to the redistricting website.



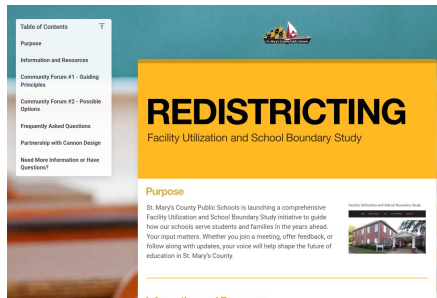
Where Can I find Information?

Kim Howe, Presenter

Website: www.smcps.org/redistricting



SMORE: <https://secure.smcore.com/n/9w1xy>
(each school SMORE will include this link)



Facebook
www.facebook.com/smcps.org



Youtube
www.youtube.com/@smcps



Instagram
www.instagram.com/smcps_md



Press Releases
www.smcps.org/news-events/press-releases



What Can I Find On The Website?

The main source of information will be the dedicated website:

- Home Page
 - Most current information will land on the home page first.
- Events & Surveys
 - Community Forums
 - Community forums require online registration prior to the event given space capacities.
 - Given the interactive nature of the events, adults and high school students may register to participate.
 - Community forums are to develop guiding principles and review and provide feedback on the data and possible options. Opportunities for public comment on the final proposals will be offered in January at a scheduled public hearing.
- Community Surveys
 - Surveys will be used to collect community input on operational and facility options being considered for the Facility Utilization and School Boundary Project.



What Can I Find On The Website?

- Frequently Asked Questions
 - This section will continue to be expanded as the process continues
- Data & Documents
 - Survey results and documents will be added as they become available
 - There are documents on capacity, enrollment, and current boundaries currently posted
- Community Surveys
 - Surveys will be used to collect community input on operational and facility options being considered for the Facility Utilization and School Boundary Project.
- Contact Us
 - Dedicated email: redistricting@smcps.org
- Online Comment portal

↓ What is this Survey?

Community Survey #1 is being conducted as part of the St. Mary's County Public Schools Facility Utilization and School Boundary Study to understand the community's priorities.

↓ Who can participate?

To ensure we have ample space for the interactive forums, preregistration online through the Events and Survey portion of the redistricting website is required. Participants are limited to adults and high school students.

The survey is open to all St. Mary's County residents, including parents, students, employees, community members, and other stakeholders. The survey will be available from September 26, 2025, to October 6, 2025.

→ How will the data be collected?

→ How will the data be used?

→ Why does redistricting happen?

→ Who decides the new boundaries?

→ Will my student have to change schools?

→ What if I don't agree with the plan?

→ When will changes go into effect?

→ What is the Board of Education policy on redistricting?

Online Comment Portal

Redistricting Comments & Questions

Name *

Title First Last Suffix

Email *

Comment or Question *

Submit



Will there be opportunities for revisions after public comment and before final approval?

Written testimony and emails will be accepted after the public comment and before the Board of Education action. However, please allow time for the information to be submitted and reviewed prior to the meeting.

You can find out more about how to submit public comment to the Board of Education by visiting <https://www.smcps.org/news-events/post-template/~board/redistricting/post/what-is-public-comment>

Will final redistricting decisions be announced to the public before incoming freshman orientation typically held in March?

The school system is currently reviewing the plan for Freshmen Orientation for a date closer to the end of the school year.



Board of Education / Policy JCAA: School Boundary Realignment



Book:	Policies
Section:	JC - School Boundary Advisory Committee
Title:	SCHOOL BOUNDARY REALIGNMENT
Code:	JCAA
Status:	Active
Legal:	Maryland Law: Education Article §4-109(c) COMAR 13A.02.09 Other Citations: Administrative Procedures Guide of the Public School Construction Program
Adopted:	September 22, 1999
Last Revised:	July 16, 2025
Last Reviewed:	July 16, 2025
Prior Revised Dates:	June 27, 2007, August 28, 2013

Policy Cross Reference: [EC](#)
Regulation: [JCAAR](#)

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/inefficiencies, emergencies, or closing existing schools.

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.

- 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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Board of Education / Regulation JCAA-R: School Boundary Realignment



Book	Regulations
Section	JC - School Boundary Advisory Committee
Title	SCHOOL BOUNDARY REALIGNMENT
Code	JCAA-R
Status	Active
Adopted	September 22, 1999
Last Revised	July 16, 2025
Last Reviewed	July 16, 2025
Prior Revised Dates	June 27, 2007, August 28, 2013

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The Advisory Committee will be charged with reviewing boundary proposals. The redistricting plans will be prepared by the St. Mary's County Public Schools administrative staff or consultants, incorporating facility, transportation and educational staff members. The plans that are developed will be reviewed and commented on by the Advisory Committee.

The Superintendent of Schools will implement 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 of the school year prior to redistricting taking place.

In the years when boundary adjustments will be considered the Division of Supporting Services will present a redistricting timeline and plan, including a recommendation on an Advisory Committee structure, based on the type of realignment to be completed, to the Superintendent of Schools for approval. The committee shall be co-chaired by the Chief Operating Officer and the Director of Capital Planning.

Attendance at all work sessions shall be required in order to maintain a consistent knowledge-based decision making process by the committee membership. The intent is to provide an informed, fully involved committee membership who share and accurately articulate the decisions of the work group to the community.

Each member participant approved by the Superintendent of Schools shall have one vote. Votes will be taken when a quorum is present. A quorum consists of 51% of the total voting membership.

The Superintendent of Schools will implement 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 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. Recommendations to the Superintendent of Schools shall include alternative solutions with associated budgetary impacts. Committee Recommendations shall consider Board of Education class size goals, enrollment projections, and school capacity issues with and without relocatables.

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January 14, 2026

CannonDesign presents redistricting proposals to the Superintendent for consideration for the 2026-2027 year and beyond

February 4, 2026 BOE Meeting

BOE work session with CannonDesign to review proposals and provide feedback for possible revisions

February 18, 2026 BOE Meeting

BOE public hearing redistricting proposals



March 4, 2026 BOE Meeting

Final presentation by CannonDesign to receive feedback from the BOE for possible revisions

March 18, 2026 BOE Meeting

BOE finalizes school boundaries proposal and determines timeline for implementation

April 2026 BOE Meeting

Families impacted by boundary changes notified by SMCPS



Public Comment Statement

The Board welcomes public input on policies and issues affecting our schools. The Board takes this time to listen and consider, but not to comment. This is not, however, the appropriate forum for negative comments or criticisms of individual staff or students. Concerns about individual staff members that cannot be resolved at the level closest to the situation should be directed to the Superintendent. This Board will not permit comments criticizing individual staff or students since this is outside the scope of public comment.

Additionally, the Board sits as an appellate body in both student and employee appeals. The Board cannot comment on or have prior knowledge of a case that would influence their ability to deliberate. To maintain the ability of the Board to render a fair and unbiased decision, comments regarding individual student or personnel issues cannot be presented at public comment.

Speakers must sign in at the beginning of the meeting. Public comment is limited to 3 minutes per speaker and speakers may not yield their time to someone else. The Board encourages speakers to present written statements to the Board secretary who will distribute copies to all Board members.

Public Comment Hearings

Unless otherwise noted all public hearings will take place in the Board of Education Meeting room, located at 23160 Moakley St., Leonardtown, Maryland 20650.

<https://www.smcps.org/about-us/board-of-education/public-hearings>



St. Mary's County Public Schools believes in planning with the community—not just for it.

This isn't a one-time conversation. It's an ongoing dialogue, and every voice matters.

www.smcps.org/redistricting

