

Facility Utilization and School Boundary Study

Superintendent's Recommendation

Mr. Michael A. Watson
Chief Operating Officer

Mrs. Kimberly Howe
Director of Capital Planning

February 3, 2026



Board of Education Policy & Regulation JCAA: School Boundary Realignment

Policy

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.

Regulation

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.

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.



Goals & Objectives of the Study

St. Mary's County Public Schools Priorities for the Study

- 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

Community - Key Takeaways

- High Responses Rate from People Likely to be Affected
- Importance on Safety and Security
- Quality Programs and Opportunities for All
- Affecting the Fewest Families and Keeping Kids From the Same Neighborhoods Together
- Better Funded Teachers, District Transportation, and More Extracurricular Opportunities
- Off-site and Programs and Specialty/Magnet Programs Have Strong Support
- Consider Pre-K at All Elementary Schools or at High Schools



Elementary School Recommendation – Superintendent

Short Term Recommendation:

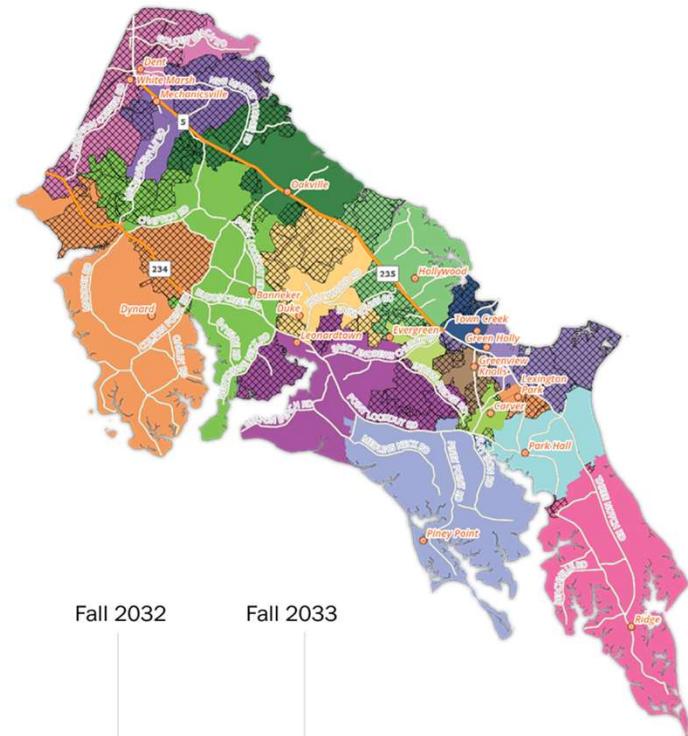
No action – 2026/27 school year

Accept CannonDesign recommendation to monitor enrollment demographics with a plan to follow through with **Option 3**, closing White Marsh E.S. (WMES) and balancing utilization of all elementary schools for implementation for the 2028/29 school year. A determination of closing would be required no later than March 2028.

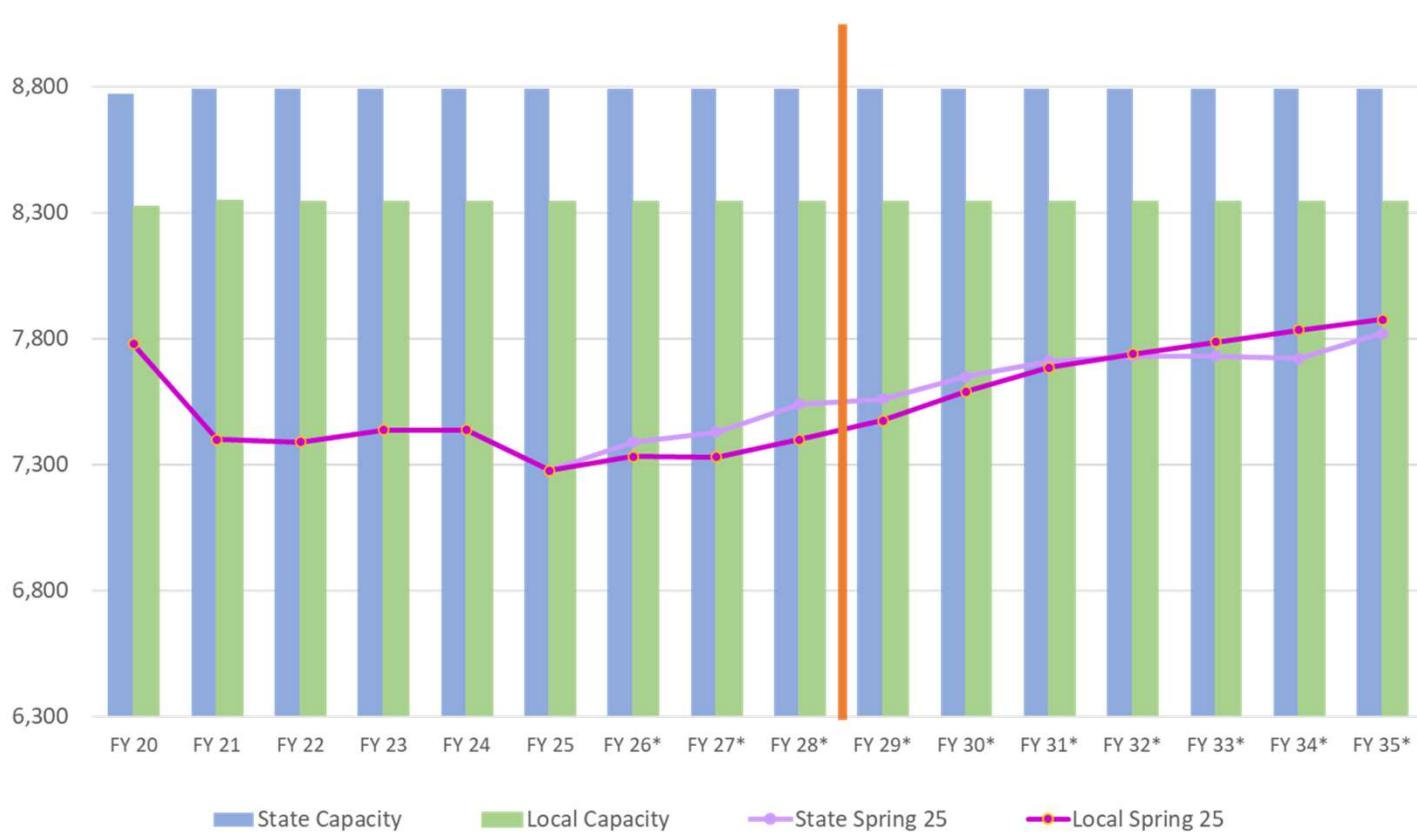
Long Term Recommendation:

Accept CannonDesign recommendation to monitor enrollment demographics with a plan to follow through with **Option 3**.

	Fall 2026	Fall 2027	Fall 2028	Fall 2029	Fall 2030	Fall 2031	Fall 2032	Fall 2033
Tracking Enrollment								
Option #3 – Close White Marsh ES and Balance Utilization								



Elementary School Recommendation – Superintendent



School Name	Current Utilization	Option 3 Utilization
Banneker	95%	87%
Carver	87%	91%
Dent	88%	94%
Duke	81%	88%
Dynard	87%	87%
Evergreen	104%	86%
Green Holly	90%	93%
Greenview Knolls	64%	92%
Hollywood	84%	89%
Leonardtown	77%	78%
Lexington Park	76%	89%
Mechanicsville	88%	88%
Oakville	81%	93%
Park Hall	102%	93%
Piney Point	75%	77%
Ridge	78%	77%
Town Creek	80%	86%
White Marsh	98%	0%



Middle School Recommendation - Superintendent

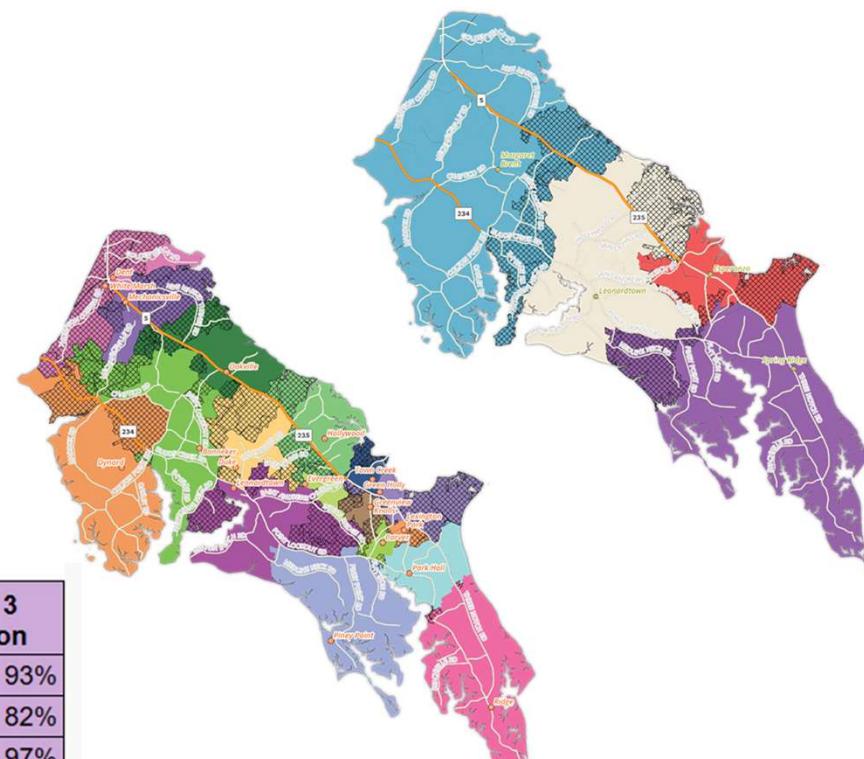
Short Term Recommendation:

No action - 2026/27 school year

Current utilization is within appropriate ranges and middle school redistricting should align with elementary school feeder patterns.

Long Term Recommendation:

If elementary school redistricting is required, accept CannonDesign recommendation and community input to realign elementary and middle school feeder patterns to avoid splits.



School Name	Current Utilization	Option 1 Utilization	Option 2A Utilization	Option 2B Utilization	Option 3 Utilization
Esperanza	94%	95%	88%	88%	93%
Leonardtown	96%	83%	79%	91%	82%
Margaret Brent	83%	97%	103%	91%	97%
Spring Ridge	82%	80%	84%	84%	84%



High School Recommendation - Superintendent

Short Term Recommendation:

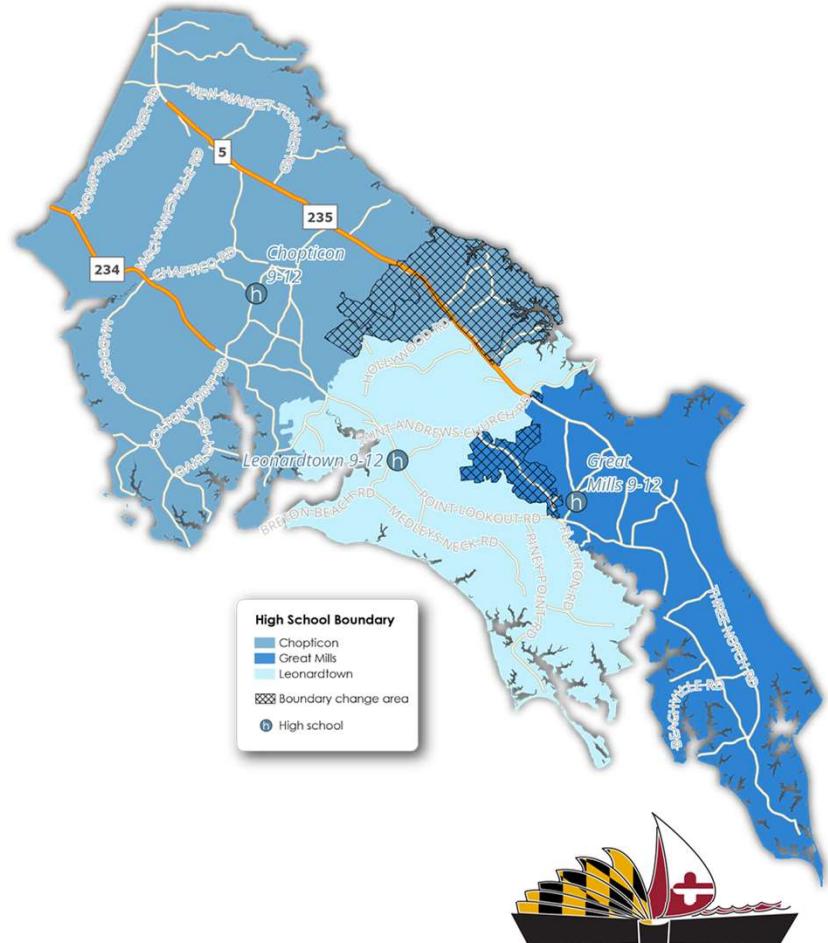
Action – Proposed Version 1.1A with phasing to begin 2026/27 school year

Redistricting from Leonardtown H.S. (LHS) to Chopticon H.S. (CHS) and Great Mills H.S. (GMHS)

Accept a modified version of CannonDesign option #1 to address high school utilization across all three high schools for phased implementation starting with the 2026/27 school year. This plan moves 352 current high school students. The proposed phase plan is based on current middle school students.

Long Term Recommendation:

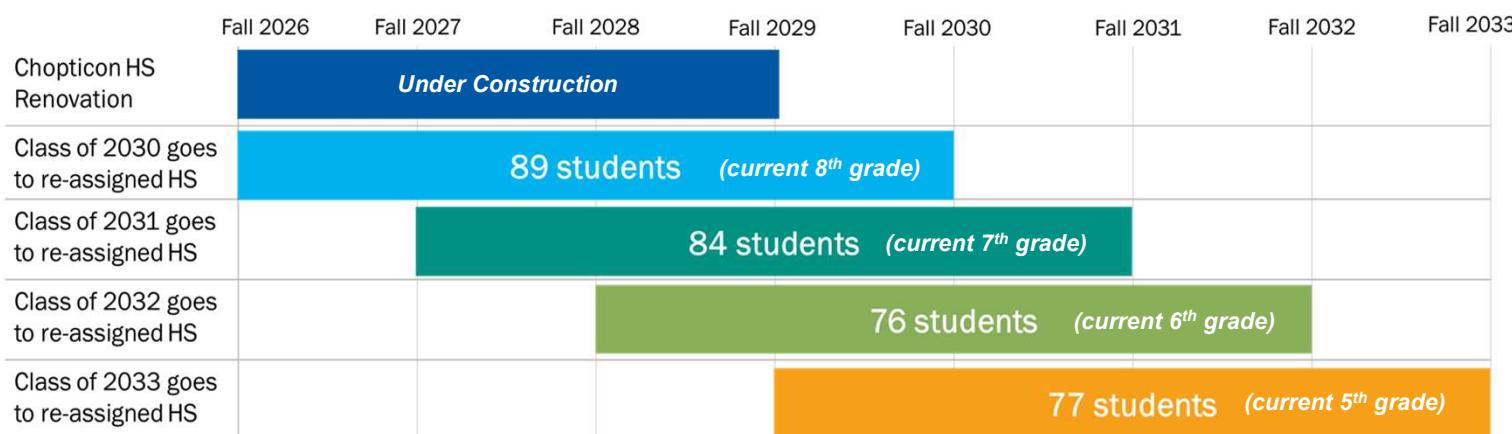
Will need to continue monitoring enrollment trends and work with the State and County Commissioners on solutions to funding a fourth high school if enrollment increases. A fourth high school would require an additional 900 new students over a five-year period.



High School Recommendation - Superintendent

School	State Rated Capacity	State Rated Capacity & Relocs	Current Geocoded Students (High School)	Version 1.1A Estimated Enrollment (High School)	Estimated Change in Enrollment	Current Utilization	Option 1.1A Utilization	Estimated Change in Utilization
Chopticon H.S.	1,695	1,745	1,517	1,802	285	89%	106%	17%
Great Mills H.S.	1,695	1,720	1,705	1,756	51	101%	104%	3%
Leonardtown H.S.	1,695	2,070	2,088	1,736	(352)	123%	102%	(21%)

Proposed Phasing Plan Starting With Current 8th Grade Students For The 2026/27 School Year



St. Mary's County Adequate Public Facilities 116% SRC



High School Recommendation - Superintendent

Year 0
(SY25-26)

Class of '29 , '28, '27, '26

Existing Zoning HS

Year 1
(SY26-27)

Class of '30
24 to GMHS
65 to CHS

Class of '29, '28, '27

New Zoning HS

Year 2
(SY27-28)

Add current 8th grade

Class of '30, '31
+19 to GMHS
+65 to CHS

Add current 7th grade

Class of '29, '28

Year 3
(SY28-29)

Class of '32, '31, '30
+15 to GMHS
+61 to CHS

Add current 6th grade

Class of
'29

Year 4
(SY29-30)

Class of '33, '32, '31, '30
+18 to GMHS
+ 59 to CHS

Full Implementation
Add current 5th grade



High School Recommendation - Superintendent

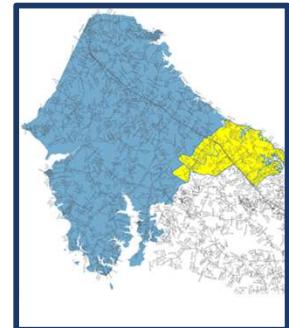
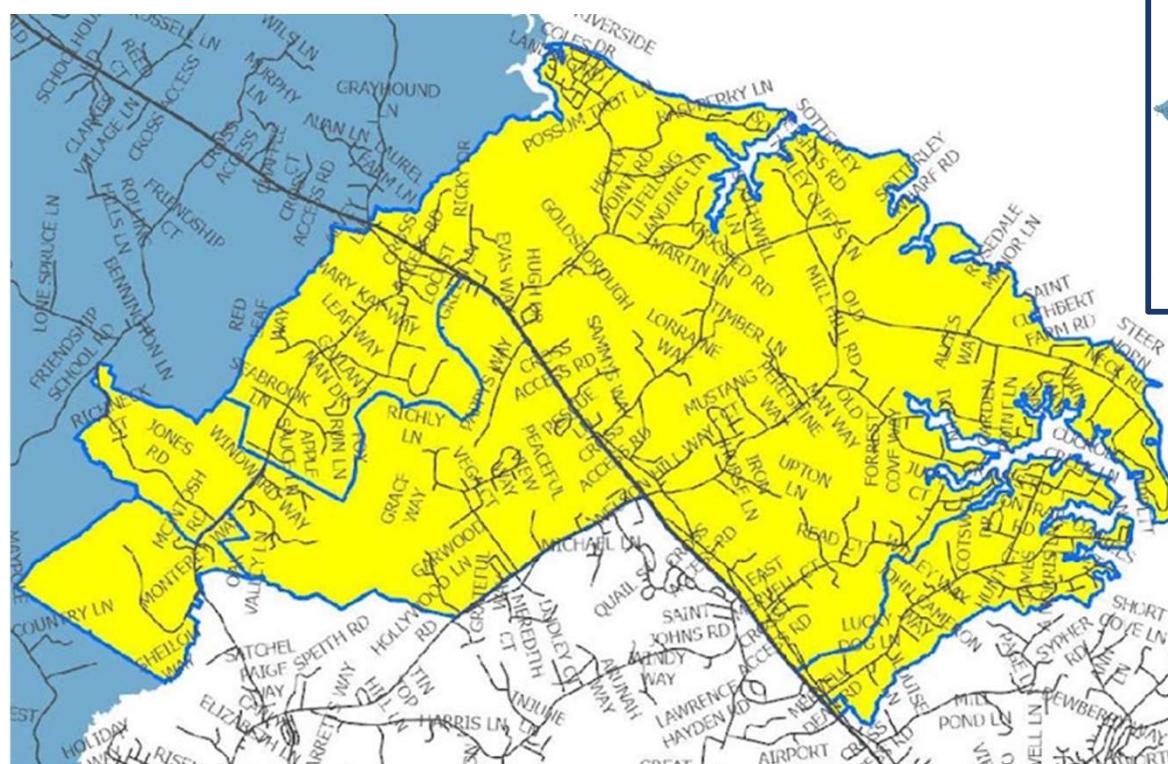
Areas Reassigned

From Leonardtown High School to Chopticon High School

Northbound Maryland Route 235 (Three Notch Road) from and the intersection of Mervel Dean Road and Airport View Road to the intersection of Sotterly Road, including all auxiliary roads, drives, courts, and lanes.

North side of Maryland Route 245 (Hollywood Road) from the intersection of Maryland Route 235 (Three Notch Road) to and including Barnsby Lane and all auxiliary roads, drives, courts and lanes.

North and southbound Maryland Route 235 (Three Notch Road) from the intersection of South Sandgates Road to Maryland Route 245 (Hollywood Road), including all auxiliary roads, drives, courts, and lanes, including McIntosh Road from Clover Hill Road to Burnt Mill Road.

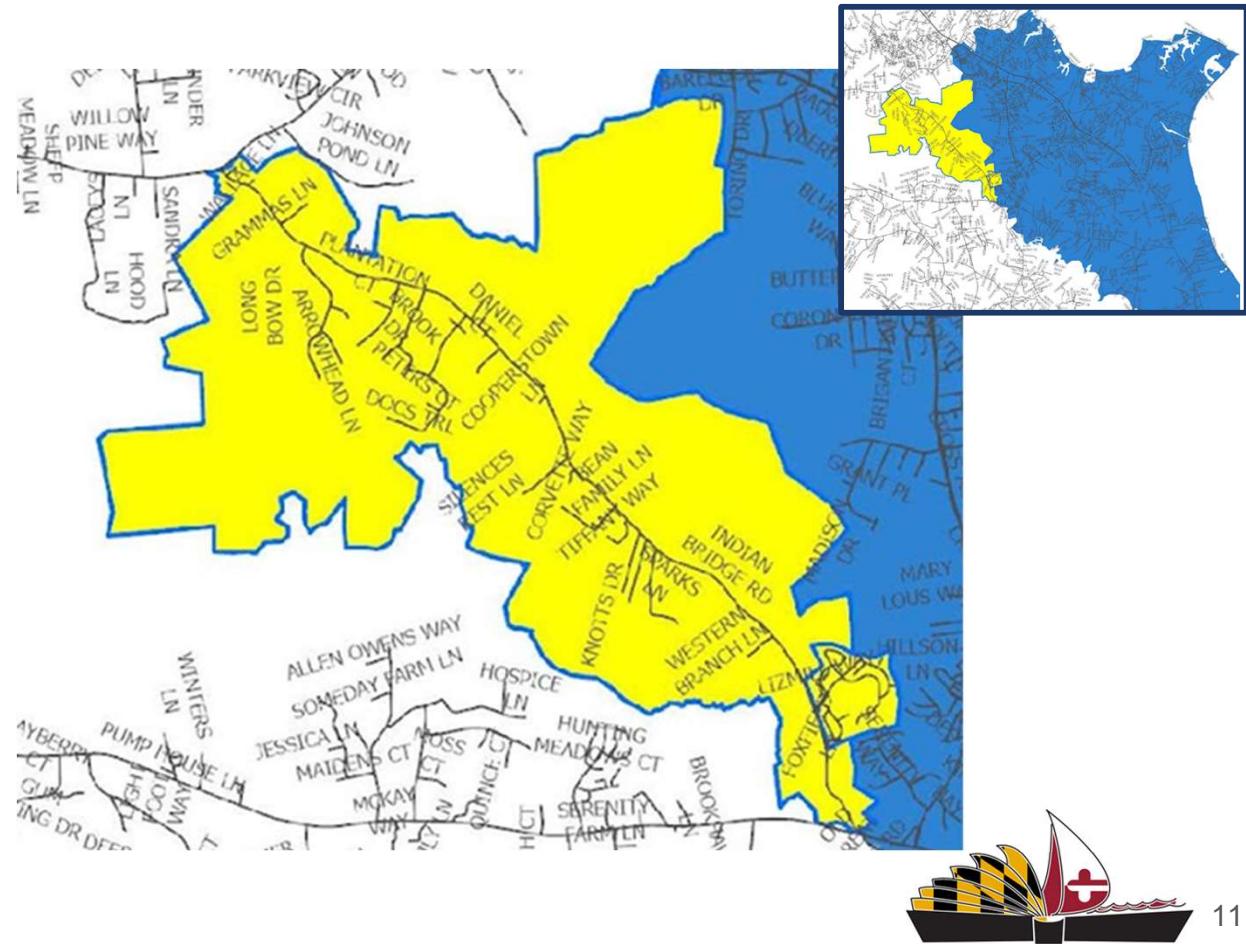


High School Recommendation - Superintendent

Areas Reassigned

From Leonardtown High School to Great Mills High School

Indian Bridge Road (Maryland Route 471) from the Intersection of Maryland Route 4 (St. Andrew's Church Road) to Maryland Route 5 (Point Lookout Road), including all auxiliary roads, drives, courts, and lanes.



High School Recommendation - Superintendent

Areas Reassigned

From Leonardtown High School to Great Mills High School

Eastbound Maryland Route 4 (Patuxent Beach Road) from the intersection of Maryland Route 235 (Three Notch Road) to and including Oak Drive. Old Pine Court from the intersection of Maryland Route 235 (Three Notch Road) and all auxiliary roads, drives, courts, and lanes.

This move addresses the fact that there is no longer an exit from Oak Drive to Maryland Route 4 (Patuxent Beach Road).



Transportation

Current Regular Bus Routes Involved:

9 bus routes for LHS area affected by district change to CHS (only 2 full routes)

3 bus routes for LHS area affected by district change to GMHS (only 1 full route)

Some items to take into consideration:

- All High Schools start at 8:00am and end at 2:45pm. This is the busiest time frame and currently there is no extra bus availability
- Many high school students do not ride buses to and from school. There are student drivers and students that carpool. Many high school students do not ride the buses in the afternoon as they are participating in athletics or afterschool programs.
- Timing of approval of any decision and the amount of time required to complete new bus routes



Transportation

Scenario - Utilizing Shuttles between schools during the phased transition

- Buses servicing the redistricted areas will pick up both the students going to the new districted school (CHS or GMHS) and the students who were grandfathered and elected to remain at LHS.
- Buses transport all students to the new districted school (CHS or GMHS) or LHS approximately 10 to 15 minutes earlier than normal. Grandfathered students will be transported back to Leonardtown High School.
- In the afternoon the route buses would pick up and CHS and GMHS and then pickup students at LHS or a shuttle bus would pickup students at LHS and transport students to CHS and GMHS to ride route buses home. CHS and GMHS route buses for the redistricted areas would have to wait until the transfer bus arrives before they can depart to transport home.

Cost Estimate:

Mileage - \$70,000, Time- \$25,000 Total = \$95,000

Mileage - \$20,000, Time \$25,000 Total = \$45,000

Positives:

- This process can remain in place for the entire 3 years of transition
- Does not increase the need for buses or school bus drivers
- Eliminates the need to have to readjust these specific routes each year based upon who “Opts in”
- Routes are not affected by students who may or may not ride the bus on any given day
- Better efficiency and use of school buses and drivers

Challenges:

- Managing the transfer process
- School staff would need to be involved
- Extra time in the morning and delay getting students home in the afternoon



Transportation

Scenario - New Contracts

- 3 (possibly 4) new temporary bus contracts for CHS area - depends on the amount of time for each route
- Travel time will be a factor
- 1 new temporary bus contract for GMHS area
- Each bus contract without PVA at minimums is \$75,000 - estimated cost: \$300,000 plus PVA (if provided)

Positives:

- Dedicated buses for each school

Challenges:

- Finding buses and drivers to cover the routes
- Cost

Scenario - Combination of rerouting and possible elementary school time change

- Readjusting routes at LHS and CHS with the goal to free up buses to cover the double busing - unknown if buses will be available
- Possible adjustment to the Greenview Knolls Elementary School bell times to free up buses

Positives:

- Would not increase the need for buses or drivers

Challenges

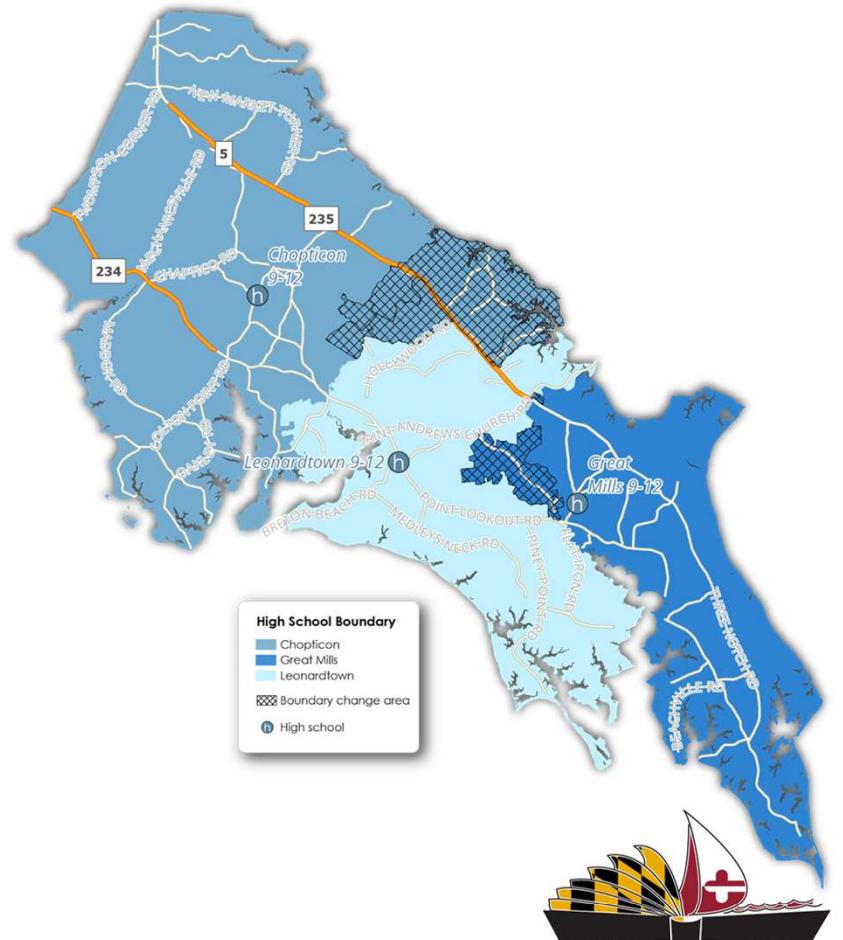
- Time consuming process – unable to complete prior to approval deadline
- Unable to estimate cost right now



High School Recommendation - Superintendent

Considerations

- Future student transfers will be subject to approval based on Board of Education Policy JE, Admission of Transfer Students.
- Requests for existing high school students to attend the new school that they are zoned should be approved. Transportation is subject to final approval by the Board of Education.
- Academic programs at each school may be reviewed for changes in location or offering at all three schools.
- Phasing the high school plan starting in the 2026/27 school year with current rising 8th graders. Implementation will continue with future rising middle school students until full implementation.
- Current 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students for the 2025/26 school year will be considered for continuation at their current school, with a determination if transportation will be provided, subject to Board of Education final approval.
- School start times or bus arrival times will be reviewed and finalized as a result of the approval process and establishment of new bus routes.



Find My School

To assist families in determining if they are included in the proposed redistricting areas, the consultant has provided a geographic information tool that will provide the current and proposed high school assignment.

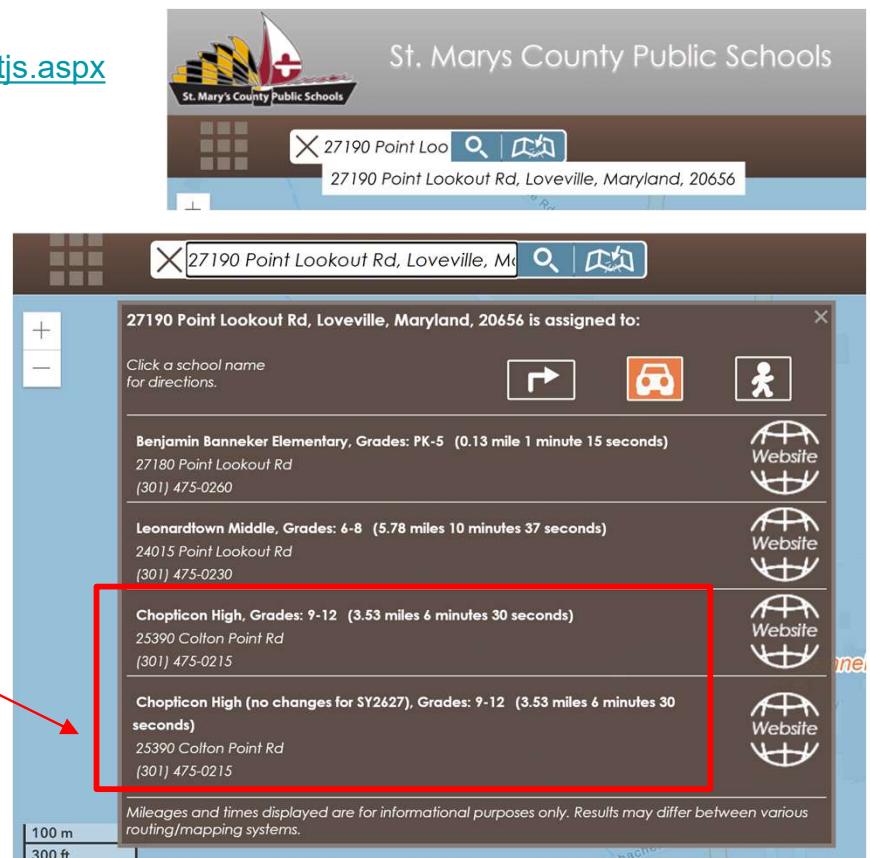
The link for the address is: <https://smcps.gismapsonline.com/schools/defaultjs.aspx> or you can use the QR code:



Steps:

1. Enter the house number, street address, and city in the white box and hit return or click on the search icon.
2. The full GIS address will appear below the white box. Click on the address.
3. Information regarding the school assignments will be displayed. For the high schools only: the existing and recommended boundaries will both be displayed if the area is included in the recommendation.

Note: address used in example is a Board of Education building



St. Marys County Public Schools

27190 Point Lookout Rd, Loveville, Maryland, 20656

27190 Point Lookout Rd, Loveville, Maryland, 20656 is assigned to:

Click a school name for directions.

School	Grades	Mileage
Benjamin Banneker Elementary	PK-5	0.13 mile 1 minute 15 seconds
27180 Point Lookout Rd		
(301) 475-0260		
Leonardtown Middle	6-8	5.78 miles 10 minutes 37 seconds
24015 Point Lookout Rd		
(301) 475-0230		
Chopticon High	9-12	3.53 miles 6 minutes 30 seconds
25390 Colton Point Rd		
(301) 475-0215		
Chopticon High (no changes for SY2627)	9-12	3.53 miles 6 minutes 30 seconds
25390 Colton Point Rd		
(301) 475-0215		

Mileages and times displayed are for informational purposes only. Results may differ between various routing/mapping systems.

Timeline & Next Steps

Feb 4, 2026
BOE Meeting

BOE Work session with CannonDesign and staff to review Superintendent's recommended plan and provide feedback for possible revisions prior to the public hearing

Mar 18, 2026
BOE Meeting

BOE finalizes school boundary proposal and determines timeline for implementation

Feb 18, 2026
BOE Meeting - Public Hearing

Board of Education public hearing on the redistricting proposal(s) for community feedback

Apr 2026

Families impacted by boundary changes notified by the school system by April 30, 2026

Mar 4, 2026
BOE Meeting

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



Public Hearing – February 18, 2026

In Person 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 Hearing Location

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

Mailed Written Testimony

St. Mary's County Public Schools
Superintendent's Office
23160 Moakley Street, Suite 109
Leonardtown, Maryland 20650

Written testimony can also be submitted to the Board of Education Secretary after completing in person public comment.

Emailed Written Testimony

Emails should be sent to: boe@smcps.org



Discussion & Direction for the Public Hearing

