PGCPS Comprehensive School Boundary Initiative

Draft Scenarios Report Summary
Spring 2021

Authors & Acknowledgments

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The 1,157 community members who participated in the Virtual Community Conversations in January, 2021

Boundary Advisory Committee (BAC)

An internal working group comprised of PGCPS leadership

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What is the Comprehensive Boundary Initiative?

The Comprehensive School Boundary Initiative is an effort to analyze current school boundaries, feeder patterns and program locations in PGCPS. Drawing on this analysis and on insights from a thorough community engagement process, the initiative will develop scenarios for updated school boundaries. These scenarios will seek to address the school system's larger academic and financial objectives, including balancing facility utilization throughout the County and populating new and expanded school facilities.

The Boundary Initiative is being conducted by a consultant team led by WXY Studio, working in close partnership with PGCPS staff and the Boundary Advisory Committee. The Boundary Initiative process began in the Fall of 2020 and will conclude by February 2022. Potential boundary changes will be phased in beginning School Year 2022-23.

Learn more at: https://www.pgcps.org/boundary
En español: https://www.pgcps.org/es/boundary

This initiative will:

1 **Conduct a comprehensive analysis of school boundaries, feeder patterns, and program locations**

2 **Develop & refine three draft boundary scenarios with community and stakeholder input**

3 **Culminate in the CEO offering recommended boundary changes to the Prince George's County Board of Education for their approval**

Project Timeline

Pre-Scenario Engagement

January 2021

Introduced the Comprehensive Boundary Initiative and shared data related to district challenges.

Five virtual meetings were held to inform the public and to better understand the community's priorities related to school boundaries.

Draft Scenario Development

January-April 2021

Three draft scenarios developed for new school boundaries in PGCPS.

These scenarios are presented in this report and will be further developed with community input during Post-Scenario Engagement.

Post-Scenario Engagement

April-October 2021

This phase of engagement will focus on gathering public input to the three draft scenarios presented in this report.

Based on community feedback, we will refine the draft scenarios, and narrow down to one approach for the final scenario.

Final Scenario Development

October 2021-February 2022

During this phase we will develop a final boundary scenario, incorporating community input gathered during Post-Scenario Engagement and continued analysis.

This phase will culminate in the Boundary Approval Process, where the proposed boundaries will be presented to the CEO, who will present them to the Board of Education.

Executive Summary

Report Overview

Many schools in PGCPS are over enrolled, while others are under enrolled--and these challenges are expected to increase in the coming years. To ensure that PGCPS students have the highest quality educational experiences and make the best use of the district's facilities, it is important to adjust school boundaries to better balance enrollment across the district's schools.

PGCPS has grown rapidly in recent years, and enrollment growth is expected to continue. Since 2014, enrollment increased from 125,000 to 136,000 students. Total enrollment is expected to reach nearly 143,300 by 2024. For many years, PGCPS has seen challenges with balancing school enrollment across the County, with some schools operating under capacity, and others over capacity, with more students enrolled than available seats.

The district has 12 planned capacity projects that will add 9,000 new seats by school year 2026-27 to meet the demands of the growing student population. While these added seats will help meet the demand of the district's growth, capacity projects alone are not enough to address the district's objectives.

In 2020, the district began the Comprehensive Boundary Initiative, led by a consultant team headed by WXY Studio. Drawing on original analysis and insights from a thorough community engagement process, the initiative will develop scenarios for updated school boundaries in PGCPS. These scenarios will seek to address the school system's larger academic and financial objectives, including balancing facility utilization throughout the County and populating new and expanded school facilities. The initiative will also look to support other objectives, including maximizing the number of students learning in quality facilities, preserving or improving distance traveled to school, and shifting middle schools to a 6th-8th grade model throughout the district.

This report presents the findings from the first phase of data analysis and community engagement. It then presents three draft scenarios, each of which offers an approach to adjusting school boundaries in PGCPS, including draft maps depicting these potential boundary options.

The release of this report will be followed by a second phase of public engagement and refinement of the draft scenarios. A final boundary proposal will be developed and presented as part of the boundary approval process, which is anticipated to take place in winter 2021-22.

Community Engagement Process

Community engagement is an integral part of this initiative. The insights, priorities, and perspectives of PGCPS parents, students, staff, and other community members will inform every aspect of the process. Phase 1 of Community Engagement took place in January 2021. The objectives were:

- Inform the public about the boundary initiative and how they can be involved
- Provide context and introduce concepts that will allow the public to meaningfully engage moving forward
- Understand community members' priorities as they relate to school boundaries

This phase of engagement included the launching of the project website, an online comment form, targeted outreach throughout the district, and a series of five virtual public meetings.

A total of 1,157 participants took part in the public meetings—including three regional meetings (North, Central, and South County) and two area wide meetings conducted in Spanish.

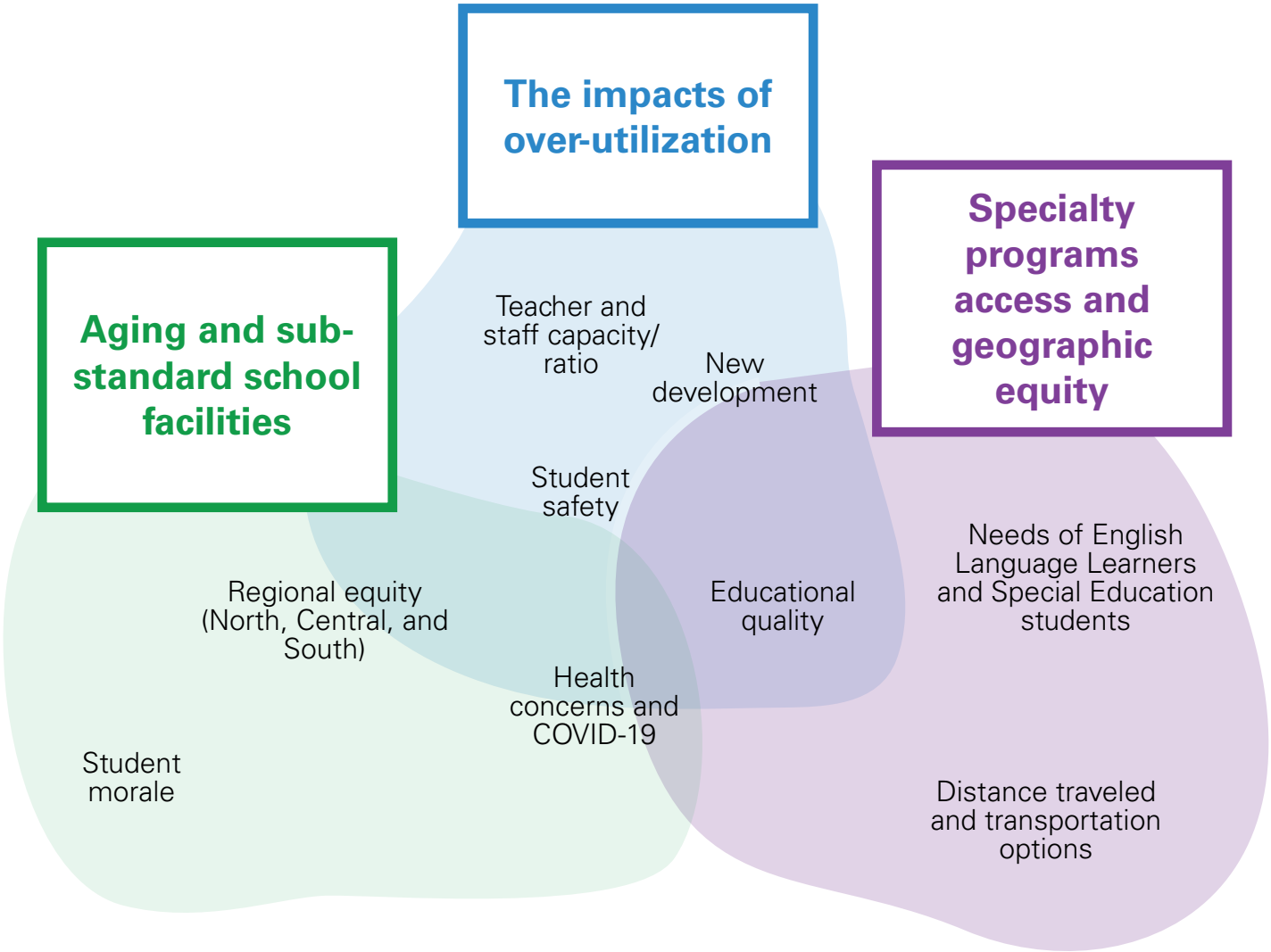
Meeting participants were asked to rate their priorities with regard to key factors being considered in this initiative. Across all meetings, the priority ranked first most often was Aging School Facilities. Addressing Over-utilization was the next most highly ranked priority, followed by Specialty Programs.

Three key sets of themes emerged as strong priorities for participants during facilitated breakout room conversations:

- **Theme 1: The impacts of over-utilization**: concerns about over-utilization include diminished academic quality in over-crowded classrooms and schools, concerns about safety, and newfound concerns related to health in light of COVID-19. Participant concerns also include the use of trailers, and challenges for teachers and staff to manage over-utilized facilities.
- **Theme 2: Aging and sub-standard school facilities**: participants stressed the impact of aging school facilities on student morale and educational experience, as well as health concerns in light of COVID-19.
- **Theme 3: Specialty program access and geographic equity**: many participants expressed concern about the locations of specialty programs. Other participants expressed frustration at the difficulty of applying to/gaining acceptance into these programs. There was also interest in expanding the capacity of Special Education and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) programs.

Note: this boundary initiative will not be changing boundaries for specialty programs or adding/removing specialty programs. However, draft boundary scenarios will measure the impacts on existing specialty programs.

The insights gained from community engagement informed the analysis and the approach to developing the three draft scenarios presented in this report, including the development of a draft scenario (Scenario 3) focused on addressing concerns about school facility conditions, and the emphasis on balancing utilization across all draft scenarios.



Draft Scenarios

This report presents three draft boundary scenarios, developed based on the school system's priorities, community priorities and input from Phase 1 Community Engagement, and original analysis conducted by the consultant team. All three draft scenarios are designed to address the key factors of utilization and capacity, distance to school, and facility condition, while measuring impacts to assignment stability and specialty programs and services. Each scenario also looks to further the district's primary and secondary priorities, outlined in the Methodology section starting on **page 64** of the full report.

The three draft scenarios are:

Draft Scenario 1: Address Utilization Extremes and Minimize Rezonings

This scenario places the greatest importance among the three on minimizing the amount of change and disruption for student assignment. In order to stay under a lower assignment stability threshold, this scenario focuses on addressing utilization extremes in the district (i.e. highly over-utilized or under-utilized schools). In order to stay within the lower assignment stability threshold, this scenario includes temporary classrooms as part of school capacity, as opposed to trying to minimize temporary capacity.

Draft Scenario 2: Improve Utilization as Widely as Possible

This scenario is the most ambitious in terms of optimizing utilization across the district. Draft Scenario 2 has the highest threshold for assignment stability, meaning more students are rezoned in order to achieve these objectives. This scenario also seeks to reduce temporary classrooms as much as possible.

Draft Scenario 3: Maximize the Students Attending School in Updated Facilities

During Phase 1 Community Engagement, improving school facility conditions was ranked the highest priority most often by participants. This scenario seeks to respond to this community priority by maximizing the number of students assigned to newer and higher quality facilities. While boundary changes can be a limited tool to improve school facility conditions, this model uses two strategies to optimize school facilities: first, it presents the greatest amount of school consolidations, with a focus on closing schools in the worst condition and rezoning students to newer facilities nearby. Second, it reduces the number of temporary classrooms used around the district to improve the quality of students' learning environments, prioritizing only preserving the temporary classrooms in the best condition.

Draft Scenario Outcomes

The draft scenarios show that strong improvements can be made to utilization across PGCPS, while staying within reasonable parameters for assignment stability, and pursuing other district objectives. The three draft scenarios each present distinct pros and cons in their approach and their outcomes. Together, they present a range of possibilities for adjusting school boundaries in PGCPS.

Each draft scenario has a different upper limit for the percentage of students rezoned, and this is reflected in the outcomes for assignment stability.

- Draft Scenario 1 rezones 11% of students overall. Draft Scenario 3 rezones 12% of students, and includes many more elementary school consolidations than Scenario 1. Draft Scenario 2 rezones the highest percentage of students, at 14%.

- Across all scenarios, the school level with the highest degree of rezoning is MS/K-8, due largely to grade realignment, which moves all 6th graders to middle schools, as well as the three new middle schools opening in the district.

All three scenarios improve utilization rates across the district. The different approaches and goals of each scenario lead to different outcomes with regard to utilization.

- Draft Scenario 2 attempts to make as many improvements as possible to utilization widely across the district, resulting in the highest number of schools overall within the optimal utilization range of 80-95%, and the fewest number of highly over- or under-utilized schools. Draft Scenario 2 increases the total number of optimally utilized schools across the district the most, from 50 to 73 schools.

- By focusing on the utilization extremes, Draft Scenario 1 decreases the number of very over- or under-utilized schools from 13 to 5. This draft scenario also decreases the total range of utilization rates the most, from 81 percentage points to 64. However, because it has a lower threshold for assignment stability, the number of schools in the 80-95% target utilization range decreases slightly from 50 to 48 schools.

- Because of its focus on consolidating older, under-utilized schools, Draft Scenario 3 is able to increase the number of schools in the target utilization range from 50 to 57. However, 11 schools remain very over- or under-utilized (more than double the amount in each of the other scenarios). That said, Draft Scenario 3 improves utilization while eliminating all temp classrooms that are leased or in poor or fair condition. This means there is less capacity overall, and the capacity that remains is of higher quality.

All three scenarios are able to maintain or improve overall distances to school for non-walkers. All scenarios result in only minor decreases in the rate of students living in walk zones, despite grade realignment and consolidations.

- All three scenarios result in boundaries that maintain or slightly decrease the overall average distance traveled to school, with Scenario 1 decreasing overall distances the most from 2.94 miles to 2.88 miles.

- All three scenarios result in slight decreases in distance traveled for high school students, and slight increases in distance traveled for elementary and middle school students. These minimal impacts to distance traveled suggest that the boundary changes, by and large, do not result in longer bus trips and related costs for the district and students and families.

- Due to the grade realignment of 6th graders and the opening of new schools, the proportion of students living in walk zones decreases somewhat in all three draft scenarios. In all models, over 80% of this increase is due to special circumstances including grade realignment, school openings, and school consolidations.

The draft scenarios attempt to improve facility conditions in PGCPS by reducing temp classrooms in use, sending more students to CIP Cycle 3-4 schools, and closing older, under-utilized schools. Each scenario improves facility conditions according to the metrics used, with the greatest success being in the reduction of temp classrooms.

- All three draft scenarios reduce the percentage of students attending CIP Cycle 0-2 schools (schools in the lowest rated condition, prioritized for renovation or replacement) and increase the percentage of students attending CIP Cycle 3-4 schools (schools in the highest rated condition, at lowest priority for renovation). The greatest impact across all scenarios was at the middle school level, largely due to the planned new school construction and consolidations at this level. With its focus on facility conditions, Draft Scenario 3 decreases the number of students attending school in lower quality facilities (CIP Cycle 0-2) the most, from 47% to 44%.

- Draft Scenario 3 reduces temps by the greatest degree, reducing the total number in use to 146, well under half the current amount. All of the temp classrooms that remain in use in this scenario are those in good or new condition.

- Draft Scenario 3 has the most elementary school consolidations, with nine schools selected as candidates for consolidation. In accordance with this scenario's goals, facility age and condition were weighted more strongly in this scenario as compared to the others. By consolidating more schools, this scenario results in fewer facilities to manage and improve overall, which may allow for more resources to be allocated to updating remaining facilities. Schools with smaller facilities were prioritized for school consolidations in this and other scenarios to allow for a more efficient use of resources to improve and maintain schools.

- By focusing on lowering utilization at the most highly over-utilized schools, Draft Scenario 1 also reduces temps considerably (from 403 to 202). This figure includes temps in a range of conditions (including poor condition and leased temps).

The Draft Scenarios

1 2 3

Draft Scenario 1

Address Utilization Extremes and Minimize Rezonings

Address the most severe instances of over- and under-utilization.

Create assignment stability and minimize disruption by redistricting as few students as possible.

Draft Scenario 2

Improve Utilization as Widely as Possible

Optimize utilization as widely as possible.

Reduce the number of temporary classrooms in use, particularly those in poor condition.

Consolidate elementary schools as needed, prioritizing school consolidations that balance utilization.

Draft Scenario 3

Maximize the Students Attending School in Updated Facilities

Ensure as many students as possible attend school in the newest/ most updated facilities.

Remove the need for all temporary classrooms aside from those rated in good condition.

Direct students and resources to newer facilities by consolidating under-utilized schools, prioritizing schools in the lowest rated condition.

Comparing the Draft Scenarios

The tables on the following pages provide an overview of the three Draft Scenarios. They allow us to compare the impacts of the draft scenarios to one another, and to the current conditions in the school system.

The tables share results for a set of key metrics, grouped by four core factors: utilization, assignment stability, distance to school, and facility conditions. Each presents the data for the school system today, followed by Draft Scenarios 1-3.

For more information about how the draft scenarios were developed, and about the key factors being measured, please see the Draft Scenarios Report (page 70).

Draft Scenario Results Matrix

Scenario	Utilization	Assignment Stability	Distance to School	Facility Conditions
Current	• 50 schools in target utilization range • 13 schools very over- or under-utilized	No change in assignments	Average distance to school: 2.94 mi	• 397 temp classrooms needed • 53% of students in CIP Cycle 3-4
1	**✚ Moderately better** • 48 schools in 80-95% target utilization range • 5 very over- or under-utilized schools	**∽ Moderate change** • 11% of students rezoned • 2 consolidated ES	**⭘ Minimal change** Average distance to school: 2.88 mi	**✚ Moderately better** • 202 temp classrooms needed • 56% of students in CIP Cycle 3-4
2	**★ Significantly better** • 73 schools in 80-95% target utilization range • 4 very over- or under-utilized schools	**━ Significant change** • 14% of students rezoned • 6 consolidated ES	**⭘ Minimal change** Average distance to school: 2.94 mi	**★ Moderately better** • 252 temp classrooms needed (only new, good, fair condition) • 55% of students in CIP Cycle 3-4
3	**✚ Moderately better** • 57 schools in 80-95% target utilization range • 11 very over- or under-utilized schools	**∽ Moderate change** • 12% of students rezoned • 9 consolidated ES	**⭘ Minimal change** Average distance to school 2.93 mi	**★ Significantly better** • 146 temp classrooms needed (only new and good condition) • 56% of students in CIP Cycle 3-4

Summary Table

Utilization	Current	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Utilization, with Temp Classrooms*				
Schools in 80-95% utilization range	50 (30%)	48 (29%)	73 (45%)	57 (36%)
Maximum utilization (overall)	126%	119%	120%	129%
Minimum utilization (overall)	45%	55%	49%	48%

Assignment Stability		Percent	Percent	Percent
Total students rezoned		11%	14%	12%
ES students rezoned***		10%	14%	11%
MS students rezoned***		17%	20%	19%
HS students rezoned***		7%	9%	7%

Distance to School**	Current	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Average distance to school	2.94 mi	2.88 mi	2.94 mi	2.93 mi
ES students	1.88 mi	1.91 mi	1.96 mi	2.03 mi
MS students	2.98 mi	3.03 mi	3.13 mi	3.09 mi
HS students	4.19 mi	3.97 mi	4.02 mi	3.99 mi
Students in walk zone	36%	35%	34%	34%

Facility Conditions	Current	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
% of students in CIP Cycle 0-2****	47%	45%	46%	44%
% of students in CIP Cycle 3-4****	53%	56%	55%	56%
Temp classrooms needed	397	202	252	146
School Consolidations		3	7	10
		Adelphi ES, Potomac Landing ES, Isaac J Gourdine MS	Adelphi ES, Potomac Landing ES, Baden ES, Concord ES, Pointer Ridge ES, Rose Valley ES, Isaac J Gourdine MS	Adelphi ES, Potomac Landing ES, Bradbury Heights ES, Francis T. Evans ES, J. Frank Dent ES, Mattaponi ES, Pointer Ridge ES, Rose Valley ES, Woodmore ES, Isaac J Gourdine MS

* *See page 115 of the Draft Scenarios Report for data and discussion about state rated capacity (SRC) utilization.*

** *Distances for comprehensive education pupils living outside of a walk zone only.*

*** *Reassignment excludes grade levels in their last year of a school level: 5th, 8th, and 12th graders.*

**** *CIP Cycle 0-2 schools are prioritized most highly for renovation or replacement. CIP Cycle 3-4 schools are the newest schools with the highest rated facility conditions.*

What is in the full report?

Who is the report for?

The Draft Boundary Scenario Report is written for all members of the PGCPS community: students, parents and guardians, grandparents, teachers, principals, staff members, local residents……in other words, the report is for you!

How to read the report

The report is divided into six sections:

Introduction: provides an overview of the boundary initiative process and goals, and also includes an explanation of Key Concepts (on the following pages) that defines some of the terms you will see used throughout the report.

Engagement Process: describes the community engagement process from Phase 1, key themes and findings from this engagement, and how this process went on to inform the development of the draft boundary scenarios seen in this report.

Data Analysis: shares context about the school system, focusing on the past, present, and future conditions of school boundaries and facilities in PGCPS. This includes data analysis shared at the Community Conversations in January 2021.

Methodology: outlines how we developed the three boundary scenarios you will find in this report.

Draft Boundary Scenarios: shares the three draft boundary scenarios, developed through engagement, data analysis, and modeling.

Appendix: includes additional material for those who want to dive deeper, including data tables, maps, and a glossary of terms.

Report Objectives

1 **Summarize the comprehensive boundary initiative process and analysis so far.**

2 **Explain the methodology used to develop the draft scenarios.**

3 **Present three draft scenarios, including a discussion of the pros and cons of each.**