

**BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**DATE:** June 8, 2004

**TO:** **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**FROM:** Dr. J. Hairston, Superintendent

**SUBJECT:** **BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 1280 – BOUNDARY CHANGES**

**ORIGINATOR:** J. Robert Haines, Deputy Superintendent

**RESOURCE**

**PERSON(S):** Rita Fromm, Executive Director, Planning and Support Operations

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board of Education approve revisions to Policy 1280 – Boundary Changes. This is the first reading of this policy

**Background Information:** Policy 1280 – Boundary Changes was originally adopted in October 2001, and has not been revised since that time. The proposed policy revisions would bring the language and current practice into alignment.

Appendix I – Proposed Policy 1280

BOUNDARY CHANGES

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Board of Education recognizes its obligation to provide a uniform system of public schools that is designed to provide quality education and equal educational opportunity for all children. With the advice of the Superintendent, the Board of Education will establish geographical attendance areas for each school. The Board recognizes the importance of community involvement in the educational process.

In order to garner community input at the beginning of the boundary change process, the Board of Education is establishing this framework that provides an opportunity for a school /community-based recommendation to be presented to the Superintendent for specific boundary changes. The following school boundary practices have been established to provide school boundaries that are in the best interest of students.

PROCEDURE

1. During October, the [Department of Assessment and Student Data] **OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING** will analyze the September 30<sup>th</sup> enrollment data from the schools. At an Executive Leadership Team (Superintendent, Deputy Superintendents, Executive Directors of Schools, and the Chief of Staff) meeting in October, the [Department of Assessment and Student Data] **OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING** will identify those schools that exceed state capacity based on their full-time equivalent enrollment, as well as situations where enrollments are exceptionally low. Based on this analysis, the Executive Leadership Team will identify the schools for which boundary changes will be considered.
2. After the presentation to the Executive Leadership Team, the Executive Director of Schools responsible for any school(s) considered for boundary changes will appoint a Boundary Study Committee composed of parents, teachers, administrators, and other representatives from the schools and communities involved. The Boundary Study Committee will review information prepared by the [Department of Assessment and Student Data] **OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING**, gather input from the community, and develop several boundary change options.

3. The Executive Director of Schools will host a community forum in which the boundary change options developed by the Boundary Study Committee will be presented to all members of the community who wish to attend. The public will be informed at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the community forum by school newsletters and community newspapers of the time, date, and location of this community forum. The Boundary Study Committee will work with the individuals and groups at the community forum to receive input and assistance concerning the several boundary change options.
4. Following the community forum, all information and suggestions will be organized and processed by the [Department of Assessment and Student Data] **OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING** for review by the Boundary Study Committee. The Boundary Study Committee will then provide the Executive Director of Schools with the best boundary change option, which the Executive Director of Schools will review, approve, modify, alter, and/or reject.
5. The approved/altered boundary change option will be submitted to the Board of Education as the Superintendent's recommendation. The Superintendent's recommendation will be presented to the Board of Education at least ten (10) calendar days prior to the Board's public hearing on the boundary change. Copies of the Superintendent's recommendation will be sent to each school affected by the boundary change and, upon request, to interested parties. The Board of Education will also receive copies of the proposals considered by the Boundary Study Committee, including any rationales for rejection of a proposal by the Boundary Study Committee.
6. A public hearing on the Superintendent's recommendation will be held by the Board of Education at least ten (10) calendar days prior to final action by the Board on this item.
7. The above steps may be condensed in case of emergency.
8. **WHEN BOUNDARY CHANGES ARE NECESSARY BECAUSE OF CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW SCHOOL, STEPS 2 THROUGH 6 OUTLINED ABOVE MAY BE INITIATED BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE SUPERINTENDENT ANYTIME FOLLOWING FUNDING APPROVAL BY THE STATE AND/OR COUNTY FOR THE PROJECT.**

## **THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE BOUNDARY STUDY COMMITTEE**

The following framework for the Boundary Study Committee, including the organization and duties and the suggestions for possible areas to be considered, are advisory.

### ORGANIZATION AND DUTIES OF THE BOUNDARY STUDY COMMITTEE

The Boundary Study Committee is to develop several boundary change options to be presented to the appropriate Executive Director of Schools for presentation at the community forum. Following the community forum, the Boundary Study Committee will review all information gathered at the community forum. The Boundary Study Committee shall make a recommendation to the Executive Director of Schools of what it considers to be the best boundary change option.

- I. Boundary Study Committee
  - A. Boundary Study Committee Co-Chairpersons
    1. Selected by the Superintendent
    2. Duties
      - a. Chair Boundary Study Committee meetings
      - b. Organize dissemination of information to the affected community
      - c. Co-chair the community forum
      - d. Present the Boundary Study Committee recommendation to the Executive Director of Schools
      - e. Assist the Executive Director of Schools with the presentation of the best boundary change option to the Executive Leadership Team
      - f.
  - B. Recorder
    1. Elected by Boundary Study Committee members at the second meeting
    2. Duties
      - a. Attends all committee meetings
      - b. Takes minutes of committee discussions and actions. (Secretarial assistance and mailing of minutes will be provided by the [Department of Assessment and Student Data] **OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING** staff.)

C. Committee Members

1. Committee members will endeavor to work with the Executive Director of Schools and the [Department of Assessment and Student Data] **OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING** to:
  - a. Receive and review information on the housing developments and neighborhoods included in the study area using maps and data provided by staff
  - b. Serve as representatives of the affected schools and interested individuals from the affected neighborhoods
  - c. Seek input from the interested individuals from the affected neighborhood to identify concerns and preferences
  - d. Provide input to the Boundary Study Committee as a representative of the affected neighborhood, not as an individual
  - e. Provide, where necessary, information from the Boundary Study Committee to interested individuals in the affected neighborhoods
  - f. Identify the various boundary options
    1. Determine which neighborhoods and/or areas should be in the core boundary area to attend each affected school (i.e., the areas which will definitely be included in the attendance area for each affected school).
    2. Determine which neighborhoods and/or areas are considered optional and can be assigned to one or more different schools in the various boundary options.
  - g. Plan, attend, and assist with the facilitation of the community forum
    1. Assist in the preparation and/or dissemination of publicity concerning the community forum
    2. Work with staff to develop handouts which summarize the advantages or disadvantages of each of the boundary options
    3. Help the Boundary Study Committee develop answers to frequently asked questions about the process and the various boundary options.

- 4. Serve as small-group facilitators to answer questions and gather information for the Boundary Study Committee.
- h. Make recommendation to the Executive Director of Schools of the best boundary change option.

II. Executive Director of Schools

- A. Advise the Executive Leadership Team concerning schools which may require boundary adjustments
- B. Schedule meetings with principals, in concert with the [Department of Assessment and Student Data] **OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING**, to provide orientation to the boundary study process
- C. Appoint Boundary Study Committee members
- D. Schedule, attend, and facilitate Boundary Study Committee meetings
- E. Direct the research of the [Department of Assessment and Student Data] **OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING** staff
- F. Coordinate communication throughout the boundary change process
- G. Host the community forum
- H. Present the Boundary Study Committee’s best boundary change option to the Executive Leadership Team

III. School Principals

- A. Identify and contact parents and teachers to serve on the Boundary Study Committee and recommend those individuals to the Executive Director of Schools
  - 1. Seek the advice of the PTA Executive Board to identify parent(s) representatives to be appointed to the Boundary Study Committee
    - a. Parent representatives should have the time to devote to the Boundary Study Committee.
    - b. Parent representatives should represent potentially affected areas and/or neighborhoods.
  - 2. Seek the advice of the school’s Faculty Council to identify teacher[(s)] representative(s) to be appointed to the Boundary Study Committee.
  - 3. Explain to potential parent and teacher representatives the Boundary Study Committee member duties, organization, and time commitment, and obtain that individual’s commitment to actively serve on the Boundary Study Committee before final selection.

- B. Attend, or provide a representative to, the Boundary Study Committee meetings and serve as a technical advisor
  - C. Assist the Boundary Study Committee in communication efforts
    - 1. When requested by the Boundary Study Committee, use the school newsletter or other forms of parent communication to assist in the dissemination of information.
    - 2. Make appropriate presentations to various school-based groups and/or at PTA meetings of information that would be of assistance to the Boundary Study Committee.
    - 3. Be knowledgeable of all Boundary Study Committee activities in order to respond to parent inquiries.
  - D. Remain impartial in assisting the Boundary Study Committee with the determination of options
- IV. [Department of Assessment and Student Data] **OFFICE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING**
- A. Meet with affected principals to provide orientation to the Boundary Study Committee process
    - 1. Review boundary study parameters (extent of relief being sought for each school involved.)
    - 2. Review location of potentially affected neighborhoods
  - B. Work with Executive Director of Schools in planning first Boundary Study Committee meeting
  - C. When requested by the Boundary Study Committee, provide geographic and statistical data as well as other technical assistance
  - D. Organize and process information and report results of the Boundary Study Committee and the community forum
  - E. Review Boundary Study Committee recommendation
  - F. Organize information and data to be presented to the Executive Leadership Team
- V. Baltimore County Public Schools Budget, Physical Facilities, Transportation, and Other Offices
- A. Provide data, input, and feedback to all proposals throughout the process
  - B. Consider the implications of boundary changes when developing budgets, physical facilities, transportation networks, and other services

**SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE CONSIDERATION BY  
THE BOUNDARY STUDY COMMITTEE**

The Baltimore County Public Schools' Belief Statement asserts "improved achievement requires families and communities to be partners in the education process." In order to encourage community support in the educational process, the boundary change process has been revised to garner community input at the initial stages of the boundary setting discussions. The Boundary Study Committee provides a framework to obtain and to refine community input for recommending new school boundaries to the Executive Director of Schools.

In order to prepare for its recommendation to the Executive Director of Schools, the Boundary Study Committee may consider any, all, several, or none of the following topics. These topics are provided only for Committee discussion and to provide a framework to develop the various boundary options. The topics are not intended to represent an exhaustive list of all the topics that could be considered when reviewing boundary changes.

The topics provided below are not meant to be a complete list. It is recognized that some topics of consideration may be mutually exclusive and/or contradictory. The listing of these topics is to provide a numerical reference system, but does not indicate a hierarchy, order of priority, or any implied priority or desirability. The best option recommended by the Boundary Study Committee to the Executive Director of Schools need not satisfy all of the topics listed below.

The final plan adopted by the Board of Education may include any or none of these topics of consideration.

1. Establish and adjust school boundaries throughout the county in a manner which ensures efficient use of available space.
  - A. Identify schools which are overcrowded or underenrolled by comparing the State Capacity of each facility with its full-time equivalent enrollment
  - B. Apply the guideline of 90% (Whenever a school's FTE enrollment reaches 90% of its state capacity, the school is overcrowded." Conversely, by MSDE practice, a school with an FTE enrollment that is 65% or less of its state capacity is considered underutilized.)
  - C. Avoid overcrowding facilities
  - D. Minimize costs



2. Reassign school attendance areas only when other reasonable and educationally sound choices are not immediately available.
  - A. Explore ways of using existing space more efficiently
  - B. Consider annexing certain grades or programs to nearby facilities with spare capacity
  - C. Where possible, use relocatable classrooms to relieve overcrowding due to short-term enrollment increases
  
3. Maintain a commitment to long-range planning decisions.
  - A. Where feasible, maintain the community school concept.
  - B. Attempt to ensure that students attend the schools closest to their homes. Sample options:
    - i. Whenever possible, attempt to keep communities together.
    - ii. In order to serve students at the closest possible school, consider employing a domino effect when locations of available school facilities and student clusters are not contiguous.
    - iii. When establishing boundary lines, attempt to follow natural boundaries, such as railroads, creeks, major highways, election districts, existing school boundaries, and locations of feeder schools.
  - C. Where possible, eliminate existing satellite zones (areas districted to a school that are outside of its community boundary). Sample options:
    - i. Attempt to employ satellite zoning only for special purposes and for a pre-determined time period. (Any satellite zoning plan should designate the contiguous school which will be expected to serve students in the satellite area as soon as circumstances permit.
    - ii. As new subdivisions are approved and overcrowd a school, consider assigning the children from the newly developing neighborhoods to other attendance areas with available space rather than disrupt students from existing neighborhoods. (Realize, however, that this tends to create undesirable satellite areas which are usually served by facilities that are a greater distance away than schools serving established residences.)

4. Relate proposed boundary adjustments to customary student assignment patterns for progression through school.
  - A. Whenever possible, develop boundary change proposals which ensure that feeder school patterns from elementary to middle to high school keep developments, neighborhoods, and communities together
  - B. Where feasible, develop boundary change proposals which ensure that elementary school boundaries do not overlap middle school boundaries, and middle school boundaries do not overlap high school boundaries
  - C. Reassign elementary school students no more than once every 5 years and secondary school students no more than once every 3 years
  - D. Phase in high school redistricting, when possible, beginning with grade 9 students
  - E. Develop options which reflect the diversity of the population within the entire cluster of schools under consideration
  - F. Reject options which foster racial or socioeconomic isolation
  
5. Examine the effects of boundary adjustments on the instructional programs of all schools involved.
  - A. Examine the effect of boundary adjustments on the instructional programs of both the sending and receiving schools
  - B. Adjust enrollment projections by school to assist in staffing, scheduling, and distribution of supplies and materials when boundary changes are implemented
  
6. Develop boundary adjustment proposals that allow students to be transported in the most efficient and feasible manner.
  - A. Maximize the number of students who can walk to school
  - B. Minimize travel time and maximize safety for students who must be transported
  - C. Avoid bussing students past a school which has the same grade levels
  - D. Avoid duplicate bus runs on the same streets for schools with the same grade levels
  - E. Transport toward town centers rather than toward countryside to minimize special trips to school for parents and guardians

7. Come to a consensus on proposed options by prioritizing the needs unique to the situation under study.
  - A. Develop proposals which meet the above criteria to the greatest extent possible
  - B. Recognize that there is not a single scenario which will please everybody
  - C. Keep in mind that decisions approved and implemented by the Board of Education become precedents that may influence decisions made in similar situations for years to come

Policy  
Adopted: 10/23/01  
REVISED:

Board of Education of Baltimore County