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INTRODUCTION

Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) is dedicated to providing a quality, comprehensive educational program to address the needs of a diverse student population. Achieving this goal requires deliberate and directed planning, collaboration, engagement, and evaluation.

*The Compass: Our Pathway to Excellence* plots our course toward raising the academic bar, closing gaps based on student groups, and preparing each child for a bright and successful future. The plan helps Team BCPS to prepare each child in BCPS to graduate ready to enter their chosen career, career training, military training, or credit-bearing college coursework. To accomplish this, *The Compass* sets forth the vision, purpose, and core values of Team BCPS and outlines the initiatives, strategies and indicators that will be used to monitor and report progress.

Among the many factors that support the work of the student and the teacher, facilities play an important role. School buildings support instruction by providing spaces appropriate in size and number for the student body and the educational program. Modern building systems allow for advanced use of information technologies, and they provide the essentials of good lighting, clean air, and safety from fire and other hazards. Just as important, school buildings are important civic structures that serve the public for many purposes and reflect the value that a community places on education. Good school facilities communicate to the community’s youngest citizens the confidence it has in their future. *The Compass* contains several initiatives and strategies that directly and indirectly focus on the quality of facilities and facility management.

The purpose of this Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP) is to describe the current and projected demographic, enrollment, and economic context of BCPS’ students; to identify the role of facilities within the vision for the future expressed by the Board of Education (BOE) and the Baltimore County Government through policies, plans, and initiatives; and to outline the current and future facility tasks that will bring these visions to realization.

THE COMPASS

*The Compass* was developed with an awareness of the students and families we serve as well as the supports each student deserves. It reinforces BCPS’ commitment to equity and provides a framework to strengthen its organizational capacity and drive systemic transformation. Baltimore County Public Schools will increase achievement for all students while preparing a variety of pathways to prepare students for career and college, in a safe, orderly, and caring environment for students and staff.

All facets of Team BCPS shaped the development of five strategic plan focus areas:

- Learning, Accountability, and Results
- Safe and Supportive Environment
- High-Performing Workforce and Alignment of Human Capital
- Community Engagement and Partnerships
- Operational Excellence.
For each strategic plan focus area, *The Compass* provides key initiatives and strategies. A number of these address the condition and design of education facilities, demonstrating the importance of school buildings as supporting factors in education. Initiatives and strategies related to facilities include:

Focus Area 2: Safe and Supportive Environment

**Key Initiative 3: Safe and Secure Environments for Learning and Working**

*Strategy 3b: Enhance building security by incorporating hardening strategies that are balanced with physically appealing spaces that are conductive to learning.*

Focus Area 5: Operational Excellence

**Key Initiative 2: Network Capacity Upgrade**

*Strategy 2a: Upgrade the wireless infrastructure in secondary schools to increase capacity.*

*Strategy 2b: Upgrade the wired network at the elementary schools to increase capacity.*

**Key Initiative 3: Improve School Facilities Systemwide**

*Strategy 3a: Assess the existing condition of all school buildings in the system to establish their current status in relationship to condition, enrollment, equity, and capacity.*

*Strategy 3b: Establish the improvements needed to each building to bring it up to an established standard.*

*Strategy 3c: Calculate and track the average age of all school buildings in BCPS.*

**Key Initiative 5: Maintain Schools in a State of Good Repair**

*Strategy 5b: Replace building systems and assets that are past their useful life.*

In addition to *The Compass*, a range of policies concern school facilities. These include the Baltimore County Board of Education and State of Maryland policies on site selection and surplus facilities, capital funding programs, school closures, special education, attendance areas and redistricting, transportation, home schooling, alternative education, and equity to mention the most prominent. These policies are fully described in Appendix A through Appendix P.

**MULTI-YEAR IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR ALL SCHOOLS**

BCPS determined that to address the capital program needs for the future a comprehensive facilities assessment of all schools was necessary. The purpose of the Multi-Year Improvement Plan for All Schools (MYIPAS) was to develop a capital improvement program that maximizes state funding, defines facility priorities with community input; and assesses existing facilities based on the following three factors:
• Enrollment projections, capacity, and utilization  
• Facility condition, and  
• Educational adequacy, and equity.

The MYIPAS is comprised of two phases. The first phase evaluated high school facilities and the second phase evaluated elementary, middle schools, and other specialty schools/centers. Data and community input was collected and as part of the second phase. A presentation of final recommendations was given to the Board in the fall of 2021 and provides a comprehensive set of recommendations for all public schools in Baltimore County. Additional details are included in the Section D Student Enrollment Trends, Facility Needs, and Planning Priorities of this document and on the study Web site: https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/departments/executive/myipas.html.

Recommendations from MYIPAS were used to develop the FY23 CIP and other longer range planning initiatives.

TRENDS

The facility needs of BCPS are driven by three factors: a growing student body that is increasingly diverse, the condition of the existing buildings, and new educational programs that require renovated or new spaces. The BOE must balance these frequently competing imperatives within the constraints presented by finances, the capacity of BCPS staff and of the design and construction industries, and available sites.

FACILITY CONDITIONS

BCPS operates a total of 176 separate educational programs in 170 buildings. These permanent buildings house more than 16.4 million square feet of space on approximately 4,000 acres of land, exclusive of the 310 relocatable classroom units that are used for a variety of purposes.

As is typical in the older urban areas around Baltimore and Washington, the BCPS school facilities are old: the system has the seventh oldest average square footage among all the school systems in the state of Maryland. With an average adjusted age of construction of 1990 the system ranks just below the statewide average for age of square footage1.

These older facilities lack many of the features that are standard in today’s schools, including fully equipped science laboratories, small instructional spaces for group or individual instruction, and elevators and other accessibility accommodations for the disabled. In many older building systems, for example, the window walls and mechanical control systems do not meet contemporary standards for energy conservation. The age of the building systems means that greater efforts are needed to maintain the facilities than would be required for newer facilities.

The new schools and additions proposed in the capital program, as well as the large number of renovation and system upgrade projects already underway or in planning, will significantly improve the learning environment, the comfort, and the operational efficiency of BCPS’ buildings. As buildings are

1 Interagency Committee on School Construction, FY 2021 Annual Report Maintenance of Maryland’s Public School Buildings, page 17.
renovated, older facilities are replaced, and new square footage is added, the average age of buildings will decrease, improving the school system’s ranking for this indicator relative to the 23 other jurisdictions in the state.

ENROLLMENT AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

ENROLLMENT GROWTH

Since 1986, when enrollment was at 80,630, BCPS student population has followed a twenty-year increasing trend. From 2008 to 2019, enrollment increased by 11,395 students (from 103,643 to 115,038) with 11 consecutive years of enrollment increases. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, enrollment in SY2020 decreased to 111,084, a loss of 4,000 students from SY2019. For SY2021, enrollment remained similar at 111,120.

BCPS consultants and staff have used their best judgement to account for the current and future impact of the pandemic on projected enrollments and estimate enrollment will recover the roughly 4,000 student decrease in enrollment in about three years. Further, BCPS estimates that over the next ten years approximately 7,500 students will be added to the system (the equivalent of eleven new 700-seat elementary schools, six new 1,400-seat middle schools, or five new high schools). Since the most rapid increase between 2021 and 2026 will be in Grades 9 through 12, it is in the high schools that a great deal of new work will need to be concentrated.

BCPS is devoting significant time and resources in strategically planning for future high school capacity needs. In 2018, a high school study was completed that included multiple surveys and public information sessions to understand community preferences and to complete a thorough examination of possible relief strategies including additions/renovations, replacement schools, increased number of magnet seats, and redistricting. The recently completed MYIPAS mentioned above provided a more robust analysis and more specific capital planning. At present, following the recommendations of MYIPAS, BCPS is conducting studies for both the Northeast and Southeast Areas to evaluate options for improving facility conditions and providing capacity relief for area high schools. Taken together, this demonstrates BCPS’ extensive deliberation, study, and public engagement in considering current and future building utilization, conditions and educational adequacy and equity for high schools.

Because of its location, employment opportunities, transportation network, and many educational, social, and cultural offerings, Baltimore County is an attractive place to live and raise families. Population growth is affected by changes in demographic conditions as well as housing construction and occupancy, which lead to changes in the size and character of the student enrollment. Of the five planning regions established by the school system, population growth has been and is projected to be most intensive in the Northeast, Northwest, and Central Planning Regions.

Growth in some areas will be promoted by the economic development programs of the Baltimore County government. The County Master Plan 2020 directs growth within the Urban Rural Demarcation Line (URDL), with emphasis placed on nine geographic investment areas. The Owings Mills transit-oriented development in the Northwest Planning Region, the mixed-use development of Towson in the Central Planning Region, and the Middle River Redevelopment Area in the Northeast Planning Region are intended to stimulate new housing and bring in new businesses and services that will demand a skilled, educated workforce. Currently, the Northwest and Northeast Planning Regions have the largest number of approved housing units, indicating the potential for future residential growth in these areas.
Growth will also be seen in the stable communities of the Southwest Planning Region, and in the revitalized waterfront communities of the Southeast Planning Region. Redevelopment of the 3,100-acre Sparrows Point site, in the Southeast Planning Region, is projected to generate 10,000 permanent jobs. The population growth generated by these jobs will impact enrollment in many elementary, middle, and high schools in the region.

Other County plans, initiatives, and policies that may have an impact on school enrollments are the 2014 Baltimore County Water Supply and Sewerage Plan, which aligns water and sewer capacity with county zoning designations; the 2012 Strategic Operations Plan, which identifies the nine geographic investment areas and six high-employment economic clusters; the Baltimore County Adequate Public Facility Ordinance (APFO) requirements, which align infrastructure investment with housing development; the Conciliation Agreement between Baltimore County and the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development which seeks to deconcentrate poverty and increase fair housing opportunities for the disabled and for low-to-moderate income households; and the Baltimore County FY 2022 Capital Budget, which supports the school system’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

COMPOSITION OF THE STUDENT BODY

The demographic composition of the student body has changed significantly in recent years. In the 20 years between 2001 and 2021 the proportion of minority students grew by 27 percent, from 40 percent to 67 percent. The Hispanic student body represented the largest increase in minority students, now comprising 12 percent of the total student body. Since 2017, all five planning regions have seen significant growth in the Hispanic enrollment, with the largest increase in the Southeast Planning Region and the smallest in the Central Planning Region.

EDUCATIONAL TREND

GENERAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The projected increase in student enrollment in many areas of the county impacts the general educational program in several ways: the number of students in classrooms; the usage of core facilities such as the cafeteria, library-media center, health suite, and gymnasium; the availability of space for small-group and individual instruction; and basic operational matters such as the adequacy of the internal circulation system. Excessively large facilities can aggravate the safety and security of the schools, which are areas of fundamental concern. Relocatable classrooms may be required to provide the classroom space that is needed pending the construction of new schools and additions.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

In recent years, the number of students receiving special education services has varied dramatically from prior historical trends. Diverging from prior dramatic growth, in the two school years since SY19, the number of students receiving special education services has decreased by nearly 1,200 students (7.2 percent). However, as this corresponds to a decrease in enrollment systemwide, the percentage of BCPS students receiving special education services has not changed significantly (13.9% in SY19 to 13.5% in SY22). The lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on enrollment practices of families is the most reasonable explanation for the sudden change as the proportion of students receiving special education services to the general student body has remained similar.
This is the most resource-intensive area of instruction, as facilities that provide accommodations for students receiving special education services may involve providing unique and specialized adaptations to meet the children’s physical and emotional needs. Conventional classrooms in older buildings are often too small and not designed properly to accommodate students in the least restrictive environment (LRE) required by the federal *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004* (IDEA). There is also a need for smaller spaces that support individual or small-group instruction. Older facilities may lack not only appropriate instructional spaces, but the handicap accessibility features that are incorporated into new schools and additions under the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA).

While the inclusion of students receiving special education services in the LRE affects the design and capacity of the general education classrooms, several special education programs have unique facility requirements. These include occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), and speech language (SL) services. These programs are described in Section B (*Educational Provisions*).

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)**

The overall increase of minority students in the school system is reflected in the number of students who are enrolled in the English as Second Language (ESOL) program. Over the last five years, there has been significant growth in the number of ELL enrollments. Since 2017, enrollment has increased by 50 percent from 6,840 to 10,272 students. During this same period, the largest increase in ELL enrollment and the fastest rate of growth occurred in the Southeast Planning Region, increasing by 1,081 students, an increase of 101%. As ELL enrollment has increased over the past two years when systemwide enrollment has decreased, the percentage of the student body that is ELL has increased from 7.9 percent in SY19 to 9.2 percent in SY21.

As with special education, there is a need for smaller spaces to provide individual or small-group instruction to students in the ESOL program. To ensure supervision of ELL students and their integration, these spaces should be adjacent to or even within the general classroom. While from the beginning new schools can be designed with such features, it is often difficult to identify and construct these spaces in older school facilities. As a result, since general classrooms are used heavily throughout the day, spaces designed for other purposes must often be called into service for instruction.

BCPS currently serves the elementary ELL population in their home schools and in regional centers at the middle and high school levels. The system is evaluating a plan to change the secondary service model to better accommodate students at or closer to their home schools.

**EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Educational Opportunity is designed for students who have not been successful in the general classroom setting. BCPS has devised a continuum of options to address the needs of these students. These include programs that are offered in schools as well as in separate alternative middle and high schools, with programs designed for students both with and without an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The facilities for alternative education may include spaces that allow access to online courses for credit recovery or accelerated learning; separate spaces within the regular school to provide the student with controlled access to the regular program, as behavior and educational attainment warrant; and
completely separated facilities for either short- or long-term occupancy, depending on the students’ capacities to integrate with regular educational programs.

CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION (CTE)

CTE programs prepare students to enter the workplace directly from high school, and/or to continue their education at a post-secondary institution. Many CTE programs are well suited to instruction in the classroom, for example Business, Management and Finance, The Teacher Academy of Maryland within the Human Resources Services program, and the Information Technology offerings. In some cases, the classroom infrastructure requires enhancements to support the program, for example a higher level of ventilation is needed where computers are concentrated. Other programs require highly-specialized spaces with spatial dimensions appropriate for the type of work being conducted and to ensure safety, and they may require specialized equipment with unique spatial characteristics. Such programs include Construction and Development, Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology, and Transportation Technology. Still other programs benefit from being adjacent to outdoor space, particularly the offerings within the construction curriculum and the Environmental, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Systems program.

The distribution of programs among high schools must consider the existing spaces and infrastructure to determine if there is an appropriate fit between the program and the school facility. The educational specifications for new and replacement schools and for schools targeted for major renovation should incorporate the specialized requirements of CTE programs from the beginning of planning.

BLUEPRINT FOR MARYLAND’S FUTURE

The Blueprint for Maryland’s Future, also known as the Blueprint, establishes in law the policies and accountability recommendations of the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education. The Bill took effect on July 1, 2020, and has five major policy areas: Early Childhood Education, High-Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders, College and Career Readiness (CCR) Pathways – including Career and Technical Education, More Resources to Ensure All Students are Successful, and Governance and Accountability.

BCPS is developing an implementation plan for the items in the Blueprint. Elements of this plan, especially those relating to Early Childhood Education and Career and Technical Education have profound implications for educational facilities.

As LEAs will be required to offer free Preschool and Prekindergarten programs for families that are considered economically disadvantaged, this will mean a significant expansion of full-day Preschool and Prekindergarten programs. Given the high utilization of schools throughout the system and the educational specifications for early childhood programs, providing full day early childhood programs systemwide will require significant capital investments in addition to thoughtful strategic planning.

An internationally benchmarked curriculum that enables most students to achieve “college- and career-ready” status by the end of tenth grade must be implemented in each LEA. All students who meet CCR standards must have access to no cost post-CCR pathways including competitive entry college prep program, early college/dual enrollment, robust Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, and credit or non-credit certificate or licenses programs courses or apprenticeship leading to occupational
credential or postsecondary certificate. BCPS is well established with our community college partners, the College Board, and CTE programming to meet this requirement, however capital planning is needed to provide equitable access throughout the system. Specifically, the feasibility of constructing a career and technical magnet high school in the Northwest Planning Region is being evaluated.

REGIONAL TRENDS AND FACILITY NEEDS

As described in its mission statement, the Department of Facilities Management and Strategic Planning’s goal is “to provide a 21st century instructional capability that addresses student enrollment trends, incorporates future flexibility and student-centered learning, fully supports the highest performance of students and staff, and provides for the safety, comfort, and well-being of every student.”

Every planning region in the county has benefited from work to build new schools or to improve the existing facilities. MYIPAS is a significant example of BCPS’ commitment to addresses facility conditions, current and future enrollment needs, and educational adequacy and equity needs throughout the system.

Covering a large geographic area, Baltimore County’s demographic, economic, and residential situations vary across the five planning regions. Just as demographic profiles and facility conditions vary from region to region, there are marked differences within each region that affect the delivery of educational programs. This EFMP, along with the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Comprehensive Maintenance Plan (CMP), work to address enrollment growth while ensuring equity in the quality of educational facilities across the entire county.

Detailed information on each planning region may be found in Section D, including the specific projects that have been included in the FY 2023 CIP.
**SOUTHWEST PLANNING REGION**

Aside from major development in the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) and Woodlawn areas, the Southwest Region is characterized by stable communities with small-scale commercial and industrial development. This region has a large Asian student population and has by far the largest ELL population in the county.

**Elementary Schools:** The number of over-capacity schools in the Southwest has been significantly reduced in recent years through a capital program of additions and replacement projects. In total, 1,536 new seats have been made available since 2016. While nine schools are projected to exceed capacity during the projection period, collective utilization remains below 100 percent.

**Secondary Schools:** The collective utilization of middle schools does not exceed 100 percent for the next decade, but four of six schools are projected to exceed capacity. The collective utilization of high schools begins to exceed 100 percent beginning in 2024 and two high schools are projected over capacity throughout the decade.

A replacement school at Lansdowne High School is included in the FY 2023 CIP.

**NORTHWEST PLANNING REGION**

The Northwest Region is a major target for economic development, with a substantial number of multifamily housing units and excellent high-speed transportation connections to Baltimore and the region. The region has the second largest ELL population and the second largest population of students receiving special education services in the county.

**Elementary Schools:** Collective utilization of elementary schools in this area are projected to exceed capacity beginning in 2026. Projected utilization for Lyons Mill, Reisterstown, and Summit Park elementary schools are projected to exceed 130 percent capacity in 2027. To provide relief, the current CIP includes three replacement projects and one addition which will together add 1,243 new seats.

**Secondary Schools:** Over the next decade, the collective utilization at the middle and high school levels are not projected to exceed 100 percent. Deer Park Middle Magnet, New Town High School and Owings Mills High School are projected to exceed 115 percent of capacity during the 10-year projection period.

**CENTRAL PLANNING REGION**

The Central Planning Region has the largest population, the highest level of educational attainment, and the highest median household income in the county. Although an aggressive capital program has provided relief in the York Road corridor and other areas, schools at every level are projected to be overcrowded within a decade.

**Elementary Schools:** Despite the addition of 2,107 seats between 2010 and 2017, there is not sufficient capacity in the Central Planning Region to address projected enrollment. The collective utilization of elementary schools is projected to exceed capacity in 2024 and to remain above 100 percent throughout the remainder of the decade. In 2022, one school is projected to be overcrowded, exceeding 115 percent
utilization. By 2027, four of these schools will be overcrowded and one school will be severely overcrowded (exceed 130 percent).

**Secondary Schools:** Although the collective utilization at both the middle and high school levels does not currently exceed the available capacity, there will be insufficient capacity at the middle school level by 2030. At the middle school level, Dumbarton Middle School is projected to be overcrowded by the end of the decade, exceeding 115 percent. The FY 2023 CIP includes one capital project, an addition and renovation at Pine Grove Middle School, to provide capacity relief.

Towson High School, at 133.2 percent capacity, is currently the second highest over-capacity high school in the system. Utilization at this school is expected to continue to increase steadily to 137.5 percent in 2031. As mentioned previously, MYIPAS provides important guidance in the development of future capital projects to meet growing high school enrollments.

**NORTHEAST PLANNING REGION**

Continuous development in the Honeygo/White Marsh areas has led to intensive enrollment growth in the Northeast Region. With several large developments currently under construction, this rapid growth in enrollment is anticipated to continue.

**Elementary Schools:** The elementary schools currently have the highest collective utilization in the county. As of September 2021, two elementary schools in the region were overcrowded, with utilizations exceeding 115 percent. Through an aggressive capital plan, relief has been and will continue to be provided in the region. For the 2018 school year, the completion of one new school and one replacement school added 1,134 seats of capacity to the region. Additional relief will occur with the completion of a second new school, Rossville Elementary and replacement of another school, Red House Run Elementary.

**Secondary Schools:** Of the six middle schools in the region, three currently exceed 100 percent utilization and one, Perry Hall Middle, is projected to be overcrowded in 2029, with enrollment exceeding 115 percent. Two projects, a new middle school and an addition/renovation project at Pine Grove Middle School are included in the FY 2023 CIP to provide capacity relief at middle schools in both the Central and Northeast planning regions. Currently, three of five high schools in the region are at or exceed 100 percent utilization and are projected to continue to grow throughout the decade with Parkville and Overlea both projected to exceed 115 percent utilization by 2023. As recommended in MYIPAS, BCPS is currently conducting a study to evaluate options for improving facility conditions and providing capacity relief to schools in the area.

**SOUTHEAST PLANNING REGION**

With the repurposing of former industrial areas, the Southeast Planning Region has the greatest potential in the county for rapid employment growth. As this develops, most of the schools in the Dundalk area will be impacted by increases in enrollment.

**Elementary Schools:** Three replacement schools have provided an additional 559 seats to the region. However, as of September 2021, one school in the region, Deep Creek Elementary, is overcrowded with
utilization exceeding 115 percent and another, Grange Elementary, is projected to be overcrowded in 2022.

**Secondary Schools:** Throughout the next decade, the collective utilization for middle schools is not projected to exceed 100 percent capacity and no middle school is projected to exceed 115 percent capacity.

As of September 2021, the collective utilization of high schools was 115 percent. Dundalk High at 139 percent utilization currently has the highest utilization in the system and is projected to exceed 150 percent utilization in 2023. An addition to Dundalk High is planned to address this acute need. Sparrows Point (129.6%) also has a high utilization and is projected to increase in future years. As recommended in MYIPAS, BCPS is currently conducting a study to evaluate options for improving facility conditions and providing capacity relief to high schools in this area.