



HCPSS Redistricting for the 2018-2019 School Year

Emerson Community Clubhouse

July 10, 2017

Renee Kamen, Manager of School Planning, Howard County Public School System (HCPSS)

- **Ms. Kamen** graciously accepted the Emerson Community's invitation to discuss the ongoing process for **redistricting** of Howard County schools at **all three levels for the 2018-2019 school year**.
- The meeting was moderated by **Katie Schneider**, an Emerson Resident who has been selected as a member of the **Area Attendance Committee (AAC)**, composed of community volunteers who will make independent recommendations for school attendance area adjustments.

Highlights:

[http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/hcpssmd/Board.nsf/files/ANKTAL678677/\\$file/06%2022%202017%20Presentation%20of%20Feasibility%20Study%20PowerPoint.pdf](http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/hcpssmd/Board.nsf/files/ANKTAL678677/$file/06%2022%202017%20Presentation%20of%20Feasibility%20Study%20PowerPoint.pdf)

- **Redistricting** is being driven by **severe over-crowding** of schools in the north and east (**1000 seats needed**), and the opening of new elementary school (ES #42) in 2018.
 - The **new HCPSS Superintendent** has directed that **all three levels** be adjusted (elementary, middle, & high schools) to address severe imbalances.
- The process is **only at the very beginning** and the **Feasibility Study** is **only a starting point**
 - The **2017 Feasibility Study** is only the **HCPSS staff's recommendations** for implementing **Policy 6010**, which defines the **14 criteria** for attendance area adjustments (redistricting).
- The entire process is **policy-driven**, because it is the only way to **structure** an extremely complex process.
 - Her staff's proposal is **only one of many independent recommendations**, with the **Area Attendance Committee (AAC)** and the **HCPSS Superintendent** each setting their goals independently and creating their own recommendations.
- The **Howard County Board of Education (BoE)** is the final decision authority on all issues, and will receive **all of these recommendations** as well as **formally-tracked input from the public**.
 - Each of these inputs is potentially independent, and the BoE will make the decisions.
 - The public can submit **suggestions and questions** via an **online survey link**, which staff will log, track, and pass on to the AAC.
 - Survey and more information: <http://www.hcpss.org/school-planning/>



- The public can also contact the **BoE members directly**, but be aware that at this early stage they will forward the questions to **HCPSS staff** who will attempt to answer them on behalf of the BoE and Superintendent
- The **AAC meets** every Tuesday from June 27 – August 15.
 - Beginning July 18th they will meet from 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm to give them an extra hour of work.
 - The **public is welcome to attend but cannot interact directly with the AAC in the room.**
 - **Public input** is received via the **survey and email**, which HCPSS staff logs, tracks, and submits to the AAC.
- **HCPSS staff will work with communities** who wish to propose **alternate plans**.
 - All **data is public**, though some data (e.g., Free and Reduced Meals, or FARM) is only given as percentages at each school due to **privacy issues**.
 - **HCPSS staff** can run **models** to determine the **impact of proposed changes** on the **14 criteria**, and explain why moving polygons do or do not help meet **Policy 6010**.
- Otherwise, **public hearings by the BoE** are expected at **two meetings in October**.
 - [Final BoE decision scheduled for November 16, 2017]
- In an extended Q&A:
 - Ms. Kamen agreed to provide written answers to the prepared questions later
 - HCPSS staff will work with communities developing alternate proposals for the AAC
- **Emerson and Wincopia Farms** residents have established a **committee** to examine the attendance areas and determine how we can help HCPSS meet the Policy 6010 criteria.
 - All residents are welcome to participate – more information will be forthcoming
- On an indirectly-related topic, residents should address **concerns about persistent differences in school performance** to the **Board of Education**
 - This topic is **independent of redistricting** and can be provided as **public input** at **regular BoE meetings**

Other Details:

1. Background

- a. Slides were not working so Ms. Kamen gave an oral summary of her previous presentation of the **2017 Feasibility Study** to the **Howard County Board of Education (BoE)** on **June 22, 2017**.
 - i. [http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/hcpssmd/Board.nsf/files/ANKTAL678677/\\$file/06%2022%202017%20Presentation%20of%20Feasibility%20Study%20PowerPoint.pdf](http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/hcpssmd/Board.nsf/files/ANKTAL678677/$file/06%2022%202017%20Presentation%20of%20Feasibility%20Study%20PowerPoint.pdf)
- b. Ms. Kamen became manager of school planning for HCPSS 1 year ago (2016).



- i. She formerly worked in Montgomery County but her first involvement with school redistricting occurred in the last HCPSS cycle in 2012-2013, when middle schools were redistricted.
 1. She was the president of her son's middle school and high school PTAs at the time.
 2. Her predecessor who managed the last redistricting has moved to Montgomery County.
 - ii. Redistricting is only one-sixth of her job, which is planning for utilization of physical facilities in the schools:
 1. Redistricting
 2. Project student enrollment
 3. Planning for infrastructure needs and securing land
 4. Represent HCPSS in the permitting process (review of development proposals)
 5. Projecting growth
 6. Working with facility managers and construction supervisors throughout HCPSS
 - iii. She and two others in the office are struggling to respond to the many calls and other contacts since the process began
 1. They appreciate our patience as they work to respond
2. Redistricting Process
- a. Emphasizes this is only at the very beginning, and her staff's recommendations are only a starting point
 - i. Final picture may not look like the Feasibility Study at all
 - ii. BoE is the final decision authority
 - iii. BoE is policy-driven (Policy 6010)
 - b. The study organized things into regions and identified needs
 - i. Generally speaking are over-crowded by 1000 seats in east, capacity is in the west
 - ii. Polygons defined according to long-standing criteria
 1. Generally try to have about 100 elementary school students per polygon
 - iii. Some things don't get funded
 - c. Superintendent wants comprehensive school redistricting looking at the County as a whole
 - i. New Elementary School #42 (Coca Cola Drive in Hanover) requires redistricting
 - ii. Seeking permission from BoE to address all three levels
 - iii. Must look at middle school if doing elementary school anyway
 1. But, do not have excess seats at middle school level in the west
 - iv. Also want to keep communities together ("feeder schools")



1. Principle of keeping kids together from elementary to middle to high school
- d. Drivers of the Feasibility Study
- i. Opening of ES #42
 - ii. Balance utilization in high-growth areas
 1. Ex: Manor Woods parents in Ellicott City are very active because the school is very overcrowded (640 seats but 800 students)
 - iii. Everything goes back to the policy, which tells the staff how to evaluate plans – all 14 criteria in Policy 6010
 1. Look at facility utilization
 - a. Does plan balance utilization, reduce transportation, avoid moving too many walkers out, meet policy criteria
 2. Then looked at community stability
 - a. Keeping kids together as they progress in school
 - b. Try to keep areas contiguous, avoid isolated islands
 3. Then look at demographic characteristics (new to the policy this year)
 - a. Racial, ethnic, socio-economic factors
 - iv. HCPSS staff started by looking at schools where they had excess capacity, then at neighboring schools that were overcrowded
 1. Also considered physical boundaries and access, for example don't want to cut off a cul-de-sac so consider where the major roads are
 2. Also don't want islands, which are inefficient for transportation, etc.
 - v. Feasibility Study p. 48: Assessment of how well the plan met the criteria
 1. How well they met the criteria, and pros and cons
 2. Looking to balance ES-MS-HS, fix feeds as well as avoid small feeds (small populations that break off and don't follow the path the majority of the school does)
 3. Sometimes cannot balance all 14 criteria
- e. AAC will follow the same process
- i. In the past, usually started with the Feasibility Study and modified it
 - ii. But, AAC will establish its own goals and perform its own analysis of the same publicly available data
 1. AAC volunteers must look at the entire county and do not represent a given area
 - a. Your representative is not the AAC, it is the BoE
 2. Must take into account everything, including public input
 - iii. Sometime this summer the AAC will develop own plan which will be published for public comment
 - iv. AAC meets every Tuesday
 1. Public can attend but not interact in person
 2. Public can submit input through HCPSS staff via survey link or email
 3. HCPSS staff facilitate the meetings but do not influence them



- v. Staff will work with communities trying to develop alternatives
 - 1. Will develop the models to determine the impact on the criteria
 - 2. Will submit as input to AAC
 - 3. But, AAC may or may not adopt those plans
- f. Both HCPSS staff and AAC plans will go to the HCPSS Superintendent as independent inputs
 - i. Superintendent will make his own recommendation to the BoE
 - 1. Will outline his own goals in the recommendation
- g. There is lots of interaction throughout the process
 - i. Fall Regional Meetings: September 12 & 13
 - ii. Superintendent Presents Plan to BoE: October 3
 - iii. BoE Public Hearings: October 26 & November 7
 - iv. Final Approval of Area Attendance Plan: November 16
 - 1. After the BoE's decisions citizens may submit appeals within 30 days
- h. Board of Education
 - i. Usually bases its decisions on all of these inputs plus public testimony
 - 1. Note that each of these inputs will establish its own goals

Q&A:

Questions were submitted ahead of time, and topics not addressed in the presentation were asked afterwards:

1. Q: The swap of students between Atholton and Hammond doesn't seem to make sense, as the total number of students exchanged is virtually the same.
 - a. HCPSS Staff did begin by looking at schools with excess capacity, then at overcrowded neighbors that could be addressed, and the shifting of students caused a domino effect throughout the county.
 - b. But addressing this specific situation, in part it was that Atholton's district had an island and part of the suggested swap moves students closer to their school
 - c. If you believe there is a better solution, please propose alternatives and HCPSS staff will work with your community on the models
 - i. Can then take it to the AAC
 - ii. Very difficult process once you get into the details
2. Q: Are the 14 criteria equally weighted? Yes
3. Q: Can the written questions from Emerson be answered in writing? Yes
4. Q: Can they avoid making changes as much as possible?
 - a. This is not part of Policy 6010
 - b. But, there are provisions for phasing in the changes – BoE decides how that will be implemented:
 - i. HCPSS Staff recommended that rising seniors (Class of 2019) stay at their old schools



1. Feasibility Study assumes 800 seniors will stay
 - ii. Board could consider rising juniors at their deliberations in November (Class of 2020)
 1. Would affect another group of students
 - c. Can also consider 5th, 6th, and 8th graders
5. Q: What is the status and effect of the planned new High School #13?
 - a. Planned for Mission Road in Jessup in 2024 (redistricting in 2023)
 - i. In process of acquiring land and planning site
 - ii. Unsure of the status – separate mechanism where Howard County acquires the land, and HCPSS works on other areas
 - iii. But it is in the Capital Budget for 2024
 - b. Extensive discussion of whether this will force students to move back and forth between schools and if county is trying to not build portables
 - i. Ms. Kamen does not believe that was the driver
 - ii. HCPSS had to look at Howard County as a whole and though some schools would still be overcrowded in projections, it would greatly reduce it
 1. Under the current system, some schools would have 600 extra students
 2. Would be reduced to 100
 - c. When the new HS #13 opens it will draw from neighboring schools, but the capacity does not exist now
 - i. Q: Why do the swap in areas that are green (within enrollment limits) under the old plan, if capacity is there?
 1. They have to look at the entire county, and reducing both the number of red (overcapacity) schools as well as mitigating the amount the remaining ones are still overcrowded
 2. Their plan tried to balance this
 3. Projections are that due to new development there will be 100 new (not existing) students in the system
 4. Believe they will need a new high school
 - ii. If you do not think this is the best plan, please suggest alternatives and HCPSS staff will work with you assessing them against the Policy 6010 criteria
 1. Staff can address why they moved a polygon; why something doesn't work; what the effect on all three levels is
 - a. Can respond about the effect of moving a specific polygon
 2. Submit your concerns to the survey
 - a. Staff will run models and pass to AAC
 - b. AAC staff can also ask Staff to run tests, Katie has some planned already



6. Q: In related questions, where can concerns over differences in school performance be addressed, as seen in objective test scores? Where do we go to ask that Howard County ensure that all schools have the programs in place to ensure academic success?
 - a. First, assessing academic success pre- and post-changes is part of the new demographic criteria
 - b. But Katie suggests that ensuring the administration and programs of all county schools are equally strong is a BoE issue that can be raised outside of the redistricting process (e.g., at regular Board meetings during public comment)
7. Q: What is the path to have concerns heard?
 - a. Now: HCPSS Staff and AAC (via survey, email)
 - i. Can email BoE but know at this point HCPSS Staff is answering on their behalf
 - b. September: Regional Meetings
 - c. October: BoE Public Meetings
8. Q: Emerson formed a committee last week, submitted questions through Katie, would like to create plans to help HCPSS Staff
 - a. Ms. Kamen says when this plan is formulated, call HCPSS Staff for help
 - b. Committee has 9 volunteers, welcome additional help
 - c. Emerson Management will send out emails
 - d. Also will have sign-up sheets after this meeting
 - e. Goal is to reduce the burden on Emerson Management and have the residents work on this directly



References:

1. **Presentation of 2017 Feasibility Study** to Howard County BoE, June 22, 2017
 - a. [http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/hcpssmd/Board.nsf/files/ANKTAL678677/\\$file/06%2022%202017%20Presentation%20of%20Feasibility%20Study%20PowerPoint.pdf](http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/hcpssmd/Board.nsf/files/ANKTAL678677/$file/06%2022%202017%20Presentation%20of%20Feasibility%20Study%20PowerPoint.pdf)
 - b. Map of Polygons:
 - i. <http://www.hcpss.org/f/schoolplanning/planning-polygon-map-1617.pdf>
2. **School Planning Page:**
 - a. <http://www.hcpss.org/school-planning/>
 - b. Survey:
 - i. <http://hcpss-gis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/GeoForm/index.html?appid=c4c6b382238d4b8887083b9deec090ca>
 - c. Email:
 - i. SchoolPlanning@hcpss.org
 - d. Phone:
 - i. 410-313-7184
3. **2017 Feasibility Study:**
 - a. [http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/hcpssmd/Board.nsf/files/ANKVXX71C038/\\$file/06%2022%202017%20Presentation%20of%20Feasibility%20Study%20BR%20Revised.pdf](http://www.boarddocs.com/mabe/hcpssmd/Board.nsf/files/ANKVXX71C038/$file/06%2022%202017%20Presentation%20of%20Feasibility%20Study%20BR%20Revised.pdf)
4. **Policy 6010:**
 - a. <http://www.hcpss.org/f/board/policies/6010.pdf>
5. **Redistricting Process & Timeline**
 - a. <http://www.hcpss.org/school-planning/redistricting-process/>