

BCPS High School Capacity Study Email Log: 06/13/18 through 07/19/18

July 13, 2018, 1253 hours

K. Stack

Good afternoon, I would like to voice my feeling about redistricting Catonsville to Woodlawn. I am not alone in my concerns. I moved to Catonsville from Edmondson heights area so my son could go to a public school with less behavioral issues, violence and drugs. He was in private school for 1st and 2nd grade due to these issues. Woodlawn is not a safe environment. Just in the last few weeks of school in 2018 there were two incidents of violence where students brought knives to school and multiple students were arrested due to fighting. I bought my home only two years ago in my neighborhood for the fact he was districted to Catonsville. My son has ADHD and learning disabilities. Catonsville is rated a 7/10 school as Woodlawn is rated 3/10 school. Why is this ok? The other factor is the value of my home will decrease. I will be forced to move before the value of my home goes down. I'm a single mom who supports my son solely, no father is involved, and will do anything to make sure he is in the best environment growing up. When I vote this will be a deciding factor. Please feel free to contact me by email or call 410-402-4011. Thank you for your time

July 15, 2018, 0820 hours

D. Singley

Good morning. I reside in the Westview Park area of Catonsville which is zoned to Woodlawn High School. My son is in the 8th grade and attends Sudbrook. I also want to state that I am a graduate of Milford Mill Academy class of 1999. When talking about capacity, I am in favor of using already existing seats at under utilized schools to alleviate overcrowding issues. I am not in favor of building brand new high schools simply to relieve overcrowding. The inequities that exist in the SW district effecting the educational experience of our children is stark. Unfortunately, many parents won't even consider sending their children to Woodlawn due to its reputation. Instead, these parents choose to either move to the other side of Catonsville or elsewhere, request a special permission transfer, apply to magnet schools, apply to private schools or home school. I imagine it is the same at other schools. Addressing the inequities and reputation of these schools is what will alleviate overcrowding and capacity issues. I can't help but notice the lack of racial integration in our student populations at the high school level, which is sad. Woodlawn High also has a much higher FARMS, foster care and homeless population compared to Catonsville High. There is a rumor that many students attending Woodlawn, Milford and Randallstown are from Baltimore City and have been placed in homes in the county through the foster care and juvenile systems concentrated in the Woodlawn/Milford/Randallstown areas. Due to their placements, they are zoned to these schools. I am not sure how true this rumor is but it affects the schools' reputation in a negative way. If it is true, maybe some of the placements could be spread around the county a little bit more and not so concentrated to Milford, Woodlawn and Randallstown High Schools. Parental involvement is higher at Catonsville High as well, perhaps for some of the reasons mentioned previously. The issue is far more complex than simply building a bigger school for the wealthier Catonsville High. With that said, please engage the Woodlawn High community and the areas zoned to Woodlawn High. I'm concerned that we are being left out of the discussion. Thanks, Danielle Singley

July 15, 2018, 1935 hours

E. Anagnostakis

We moved into the Towson school district just for the schools. I was able to pull my child out of private school. I don't want to put her back in if we were zoned for parkville. Moved out of the city for a reason. I will gladly take a property tax increase. The other thing if they cracked down on people using of peoples' addresses. Just got to show three piece of mail.

BCPS High School Capacity Study Email Log: 06/13/18 through 07/19/18

July 15, 2018, 2055 hours

E. Kitlowski

Overcrowding in High Schools It is commendable the Board of Education is looking ahead to resolve an issue. What is apparent is the lack of educational planning or programming being considered.

Mr. Basu states in the Focus Group presentation: *For purposes of this analysis, we are only considering capacity issues – we are not considering facility quality; • This may not seem reasonable, but BCPS must ensure that every scholar has a seat; • Of course, whatever solution(s) is/are ultimately implemented will likely have some impact on the physical qualities of certain school*

As an educator, I have the following concerns: Our vision of education needs to be supported by facilities, not the other way around; the educational programs of BCPS need to be central to planning facilities. The scope of the analysis is primarily economic and statistical in nature. It does not account for evolving educational needs of our students and what facilities will be needed for programs. The Magnet and Vo-Tech school offerings and facilities need to be evaluated from an historic and future perspective. There are problems with the enrollment process for Magnet Schools which limit the opportunities for students. County-wide, there has been too much emphasis on college ready with a reduction in career ready options. As BCPS expands programs, we must have the space. With more students enrolling in parallel programs, wouldn't including CCBC in the discussion be appropriate?

BCPS must ensure that a zip code does not represent the quality of educational opportunity. There is a wide diversity of communities in Baltimore County. Schools in wealthier areas are both viewed as better schools and tend to be the schools with overcapacity issues. There are parents who send their children to a private school to keep their child out of the community school. This issue must be addressed.

BCPS must account for community needs in planning for schools. Equity of curricular options does not make for equality of educational outcomes of our students. Any redistricting must include levels of income in all aspects of planning, including building capacity. School quality affects property values which are part of economic stability.

There are many students living in Baltimore County that attend private schools. This generally is a function of income which is also affected by the economy. I am sure the enrollment in BCPS increased with the economic collapse in 2008. The demographic change in Baltimore County is partly a function of the gentrification of Baltimore City and the increase of Section 8 housing in the county. What economic factors were included in the projection?

Educators are part of the solution. Without their input, the issues illustrated above will continually make solutions illusive. Without addressing the educational aspects, any solution will potentially be more disruptive.

July 15, 2018, 2216 hours

E. Russo

Board and others, As you consider plans to reduce overcrowding, I urge you to not simply consider the voices of the best-connected BCPS families. While Towson is overcrowded, Lansdowne is in dire straits and has been for quite some time. Why should my children, currently zoned for Catonsville, or my friends' children, currently zoned for Towson, receive better options simply because their parents "know the system" or have louder voices? The children of Lansdowne deserve an education free from the distractions of undrinkable water, improper ADA access, and literal sinkholes. They deserve priority in the relief process. Would you want your own children and their teachers to wonder, daily, what part of their building will separate next? Thank you.

July 16, 2018, 1404 hours

T. Bowden

Hi, Would it be possible to re-draw/re-publish the scenario maps to include the demarcations between each of the five Baltimore County Zones (Southwest, Northwest, Central, Northeast, and Southeast)? While overall the County needs to address overcrowding of the high schools, I feel it would be beneficial to examine each zone independently in order to determine the best overall solution per Zone and for the County as a whole. Thanks!!

BCPS High School Capacity Study Email Log: 06/13/18 through 07/19/18

July 16, 2018, 1646 hours

S. McIntire

The dashboards for 7 scenarios are a useful format for presenting a summarized view, but the underlying data needs to be made available for the public to reach an informed conclusion on the different options.

One anomaly jumps to the surface-

Scenario 1, "Use Existing Seats" inexplicably shows 392 fewer Students Relocating than Scenario 2, "Aggressively Use Existing Seats. Even though Scenario 2 shows an extra 6 boundary changes including ~ 300 students apparently relocated from Catonsville to Woodlawn (which btw is a good strategy to reduce overcapacity by driving students out of the BCPS system entirely). That makes no sense and begs the question of how "Students Relocating" is defined and calculated.

For each scenario, we need to see the underlying data, including:

1. Underlying projections in enrollment growth for each school. It would be good to know improvements from the Student Count document that has been prepared.
2. Detail of Capital Cost- what projects are included in each scenario and in what amount. There is confusion as to whether these numbers are marginal costs on top of the existing capital budget, or whether some of them are already factored in.
3. Detail of boundary changes, where are students relocating to & from. There seems to be less deviation in Students Relocated than I'd expect through these scenarios. Without the detail, it is hard to judge the scenarios, especially when there is the anomaly I described above. It isn't reasonable for people to just trust BCPS admin to get these life-altering details right.

Need to Include Property Value Declines in Redistricting Decisions

I would also add some estimate of the reduced property value and capitalized tax revenue loss to the County that will come from rezoning neighborhoods with a high-performing school to a lower-performing school. That entirely foreseeable cost will likely change the NET capital costs and is relevant to the decision of invest vs. redistrict.

Best regards, Steve McIntire, Towson

July 17, 2018, 1259 hours

K. Lopez

Good Afternoon, I have completed the high school survey. I attended the session at Carver High last week and was told the survey had places to make comments. Apparently my question was misunderstood. I did not fill in all of the answers as I felt that many of them needed an explanation from me as to my answer. Unfortunately, BCPS typically does not provide the opportunity within surveys for comments. So, here are my thoughts- the question about what should be the priority in making sure all students have a seat- none of those answers included the importance of making sure all of the schools being looked at are in good, safe, condition. I have 4 children, 2 have graduated from Dulaney, and 2 will be enrolled this fall. I can't understand how Dulaney is being considered in its current state as a school that could handle more students. Dulaney has needed basic changes since before my oldest attended (class of 2014). The air conditioning is not throughout the school, the wi-fi is not sufficient to handle the need- especially when the devices will be in use this fall, and the water is brown. (not even discussing the athletic fields and track situations) I can not comprehend how a decision can be made regarding projected numbers, when the school is in such horrid shape. The question about the capacity of the enrollment for schools- in my opinion it is not the capacity of the school that should be considered, it is the capacity of each classroom. I have been told that the maximum number of students in a classroom is 30. This maximum has not been adhered to at Dulaney. The money being spent to look at 10 years from now- BEFORE fixing the obvious structural problems and classroom size problems doesn't make sense to me. Fix the school and the class sizes and then tackle the projected numbers. Feel free to respond to this email.

Thanks for your time - Karen Lopez

July 17, 2018, 1729 hours

J. Barth

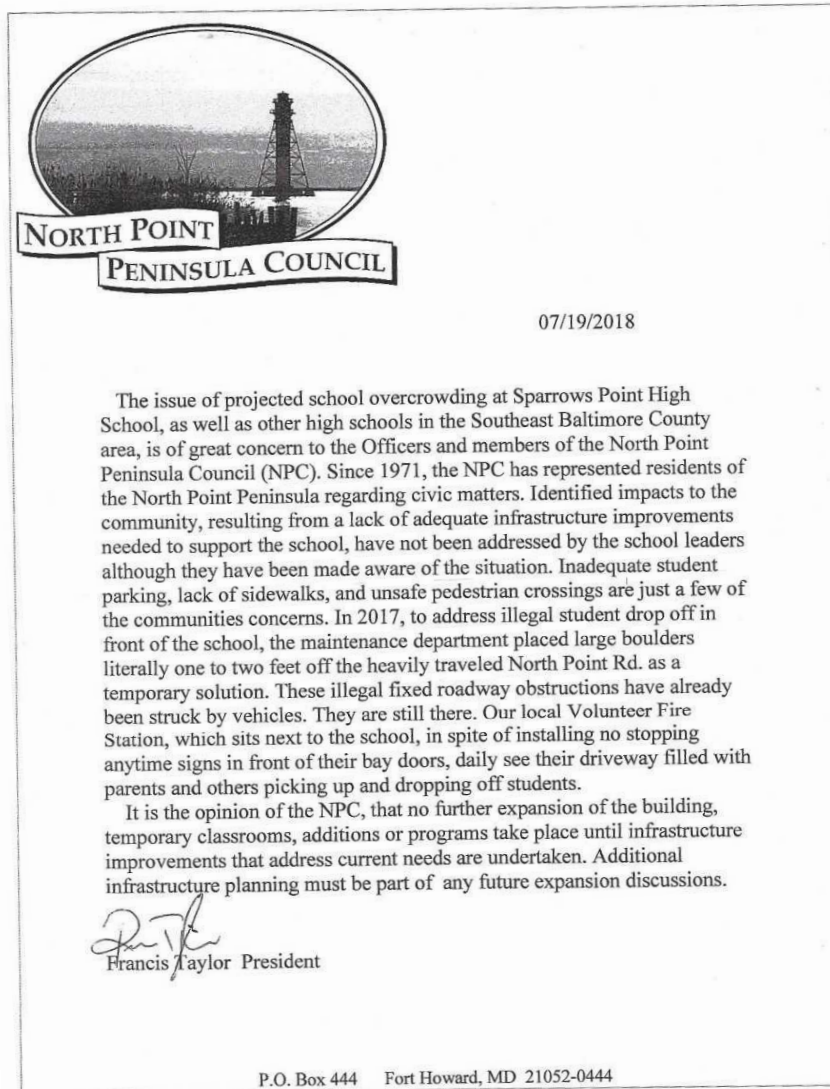
Build a new school in Towson and in Catonsville.

BCPS High School Capacity Study Email Log: 06/13/18 through 07/19/18

July 17, 2018, 2108 hours

F. Taylor

Please see the attached comments



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BCPS High School Capacity Study Email Log: 06/13/18 through 07/19/18

July 17, 2018, 2108 hours

P. Letocha

Dear Kevin Smith,

I am following up on my previous message to you from July 10 regarding the Towson High site analysis that your staff conducted in April. I've not yet heard back from you.

I attended the capacity study public input session at Dundalk High tonight. I asked Anirban Basu of Sage Policy Group about whether he had taken the site analysis for Towson High into consideration. His reply was that GWWO has been in communication with BCPS facilities staff including Mr. Dixit but that their review of the site analysis only considered the ability of the site to accommodate classroom seats in a larger building. Basu said that Sage did not consider transportation issues about whether Towson High could safely handle the traffic flow of buses, cars, and parking for a larger 2000 seat capacity at the Towson High property. This was also the case with other high school sites. Towson High is on a very congested site bisected by a stream, and surrounded by a growing Towson University and established residential neighborhoods. Access to the parking lots is challenging. The bus loop is congested and encircles the student parking, which is inadequate. Surrounding neighborhoods already face problems with student parking from the high school and university.

Why isn't Sage Policy considering transportation as part of capacity analysis of what individual high school sites can accommodate?

Transportation was an issue that the focus group I attended raised as a concern for the capacity study. If Towson High, the most overcrowded high school, can not accommodate 2000 student capacity from a transportation safety perspective, yet 6 of 7 scenarios proposed 2000 students then the entire plan is flawed. Towson High is geographically at the center of the BCPS system and at the center of the capacity needs, with a 750+ projected over enrollment. It is critical for the public to be able to engage in an open and transparent discussion of how many students the THS site can accommodate that takes all relevant factors into consideration, including safety as students, staff and community members enter and exit the property during normal and emergency situations.

Is the Towson High site analysis that your staff completed in April something you can share with me and members of the Towson High community?

I understand the need to keep some specific safety details confidential to protect our school population, but the basic issue of how many seats a site can safely accommodate is critical to a public understanding of the desirability and feasibility of the solutions presented. The public needs to know this as do our government officials and policy makers, some of whom I have copied here.

Thank you, Phoebe Evans Letocha

On Jul 10, 2018, at 10:26 AM

Dear Kevin Smith,

Is the Towson High site analysis that your staff completed in April something you can share with me and members of the Towson High community?

When we spoke in May at the Superintendent's listening tour at West Towson Elementary, you indicated that the site analysis showed that it would be difficult to increase capacity to 2000 students at Towson High from a traffic and transportation perspective. I'm concerned that 6 of 7 options presented by Sage Policy Group as part of the capacity study suggest a 2000 seat Towson High and the other option (#5) presents a 1700 seat THS. Did BCPS share the Towson High site analysis with Sage Policy? Do any of the options being presented by Sage Policy as part of the capacity study take into consideration how many seats the actual existing high school properties can safely accommodate?

I participated in one of the focus groups for the capacity study and am not impressed with the options being presented. They do not seem to reflect the feedback regarding optimal school size desired by BCPS families.

Thank you, Phoebe Evans Letocha

BCPS High School Capacity Study Email Log: 06/13/18 through 07/19/18

July 19, 2018, 0824 hours

H. Bishop

I filled out the survey concerning possible redistricting that will impact Catonsville High School. I feel like to answer these questions, the community would have better understood what was being asked with diagrams of the areas impacted. I also felt like the questions were written in a biased way to misdirect our community. Words like "efficient" were used that could confuse people. Of course the "efficient" option would save our community money, right? It is a guarantee that taxes won't increase, right? This is very misleading considering the difference between our taxes NOT increasing verses the loss of property value in a redistricting scenario.

I paid top dollar for my home back in 2006 based largely on what school district it was in. If my home is (for example) redistricted from Catonsville High School to Woodlawn High School, I will lose SIGNIFICANT value regardless of whether I have children or not. This will be in the range of \$100,000+ value lost in my investment due completely to the redistricting. This is not fair to me or my neighbors. If I wanted a home in Woodlawn, I could have bought a nicer home for a lot less money. By forcing a school with a lower success rate and a higher violence rate on me, you will have literally stolen money from my investment. People in the district should be reimbursed by BCPS for their loss of investment in that scenario. Suddenly, redistricting doesn't seem as "efficient" if the county has to give people money to equal the loss of value of their real estate.

Most likely an addition on to Catonsville High School or a new building with increased capacity will be of higher value to our community. In addition, rather than taking money from our economy with reduced home values, you would invest capital in our community by employing architects, engineers, and construction workers. Catonsville has proven to be a highly successful school. The schools that you would move students to have SIGNIFICANT lower success rates as is well-documented.

I feel that people need to understand what they are being asked. Each option should include diagrams showing the changes and impact on our economy...specifically how much taxes would increase, and how real estate values will be reduced. Everyone should also see the statistics of students who graduate from Catonsville High School and Woodlawn High School or others impacted including SAT scores, graduation rates, percent that advance to and graduate from higher education, AP offerings and results, state exams, grades, any other placement exams, Great School Rankings, and crime statistics in both the school and the community surrounding the school. After all, the schools that have plenty of available space to maximize our "efficiency" are those with the lowest test scores and highest crime rates. That is why we chose NOT to buy homes in those districts. We should not be punished with redistricting.

There is no need to respond if your intention is to say my home will not lose value as I know this is not true.

Sincerely, Heather and Mark Bishop

July 19, 2018, 1119 hours

H. Jovenal

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wanted to express my concern for the potential rezoning of school districts that have been proposed. Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Heather Jovenal. I am a U.S. Army Veteran, Government employee, and most importantly, a Mom to two very awesome boys. I chose to move to the 'Ville due to my neighborhood having access to good schools, specifically that Catonsville High School (CHS) is a good school for my children to attend. I was very careful to research schools that would benefit my children's education and very careful to only move to a neighborhood with good schools. My eldest son, Zyon was just selected to be in the Engineering Program, Project Lead the Way at CHS. There is no way I would have moved to my neighborhood (just behind Edmondson Ave.) if I thought it would be potentially zoned for Windsor Mill or any other school with a 3/10 rating. (Not to mention my home value will drop significantly if it is rezoned). I do not think it is good to put a bandaid on an issue with schools. Although building new schools is expensive, I think it is very important for children and families to feel comfortable and proud of the educational opportunities for their children. Please support building new schools and please do not allow the rezoning to take affect which would make me sell my house and move. I will not send my child to a sub-standard school. There are young, family, children and community oriented families on the outskirts communities of Catonsville who strengthen the community and are actively involved in the CHS community. If these families are forced to move due to being rezoned to sub-standard schools; I wonder who will move in to these areas in their stead. Probably not those who care as much about education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Heather Jovenal