Comprehensive Boundary Review Executive Summary

Background

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) is committed to ensuring that each and every student has equitable access to excellence and opportunity, as outlined in the FCPS 2023–30 Strategic Plan. To support this effort, the Fairfax County School Board voted in July 2024 to update FCPS Boundary Policy 8130. This action followed a months-long Governance Committee review, a February 2024 board forum, and board work sessions in June 2024. The revised policy modernizes the division's approach to boundary adjustments, clarifies criteria for comprehensive and off-cycle reviews, updates expectations for public engagement, and strengthens guidelines for phasing in elementary, middle, and high school boundary changes. The School Board also approved follow-on motions directing the superintendent to establish the Superintendent's Boundary Review Advisory Committee to provide community feedback throughout the process.

In furtherance of this commitment, FCPS initiated a comprehensive review of school boundaries – its first in nearly four decades – to ensure that enrollment, facilities, programming, and student well-being remain aligned with the needs of a growing and changing community. This review examined school boundaries across the division to support population growth, changes in school capacity, and evolving community needs. It represents a key step in advancing the division's strategic work to create the conditions under which every student can reach their greatest potential.

The current school boundary structure presents several challenges that the comprehensive review aims to address. As of School Year (SY) 2025–26, 42 schools function as split feeders across two school levels, affecting all six regions and 18 of the division's 24 high school pyramids. This includes 30 elementary schools feeding into multiple middle schools, 33 elementary schools feeding into more than one high school, and six middle schools split between multiple high schools. In addition, 22 schools across the division have attendance islands (16 at the elementary level, three in middle school, and three in high school) spanning five of the six regions and 14 of

the 24 high school pyramids. Collectively, these patterns create inconsistencies in student progression, strain operational efficiency, and underscore the need for a systemwide, modernized boundary approach.

Regularly reviewing and updating school boundaries is widely recognized as an industry best practice. FCPS notes in its own boundary review materials that "regularly reviewing and updating school district boundaries is a best practice" for aligning facilities, enrollment, and community needs. Consistent with this guidance, the updated Policy 8130 now requires the division to conduct a comprehensive, divisionwide boundary review at least once every five years — though this requirement does not necessarily mean that boundary changes will occur on that timeline.

In September 2024, the School Board awarded a contract to Thru Consulting to support the division's comprehensive boundary review. This marked a significant milestone, as more than 40 years had passed since FCPS last undertook a review of similar scope and scale.

During that period of time, both Fairfax County's population and FCPS enrollment have grown substantially. By launching a new comprehensive review, the division, superintendent, and School Board sought to:

- Ensure equitable access to programs and facilities.
- Balance available capacity to make the most effective use of school buildings.
- Establish consistent attendance zones by reducing isolated attendance areas and split-feeder patterns.
- Minimize student travel times to and from school.

Educational research reviewed by the FCPS Office of Research and Program Evaluation (ORPE) shows that well-planned boundary adjustments can positively influence student achievement by improving instructional quality, operational efficiency, and student well-being. ORPE found that balancing enrollment helps ensure appropriate class sizes, expands access to programs and facilities, and reduces overcrowding. The research also highlights operational benefits, including more efficient use of resources, reduced transportation pressures, and improved long-term capital planning. In addition, ORPE notes that strategic boundary decisions can support student well-being by shortening commutes, strengthening peer continuity, and fostering stronger connections to school communities. Together, these findings reinforce the value of a comprehensive boundary review in creating more equitable and effective learning environments.

Comprehensive Boundary Review Phases

The comprehensive boundary review process was broken into two phases. While these phases were connected, they each had a unique focus.



Phase 1: Community Awareness and Information Gathering

This first phase focused on building community understanding of the boundary review process and collecting data to inform potential boundary changes. During this phase, the school division engaged families, staff, and community members through regionwide, in-person and virtual meetings to discuss challenges, opportunities, and priorities related to current school boundaries. Community input was gathered alongside demographic, enrollment, and facility data. This information was analyzed by Thru Consulting to develop three draft boundary scenarios, which were shared as part of Phase 2.

Phase 2: Review of Draft Scenarios and Community Feedback

The second phase centered on sharing the data from Phase 1 with the School Board and community. This data included the key engagement findings and the three draft boundary scenarios. The first three scenarios were presented to the entire division through a series of community meetings that took place in the spring of 2025 (SY 24-25), known as Part 1. During these meetings, additional feedback was collected from the community and reviewed by the Superintendent's Boundary Review Advisory Committee. In coordination with the Committee, Thru Consulting, and FCPS, a fourth scenario was created and then shared with the community

during fall 2025 (SY 25-26), known as Part 2. Here too, additional feedback was collected from the community, which the Committee reviewed and provided to the superintendent and FCPS.

Final Scenario Development and School Board Approval

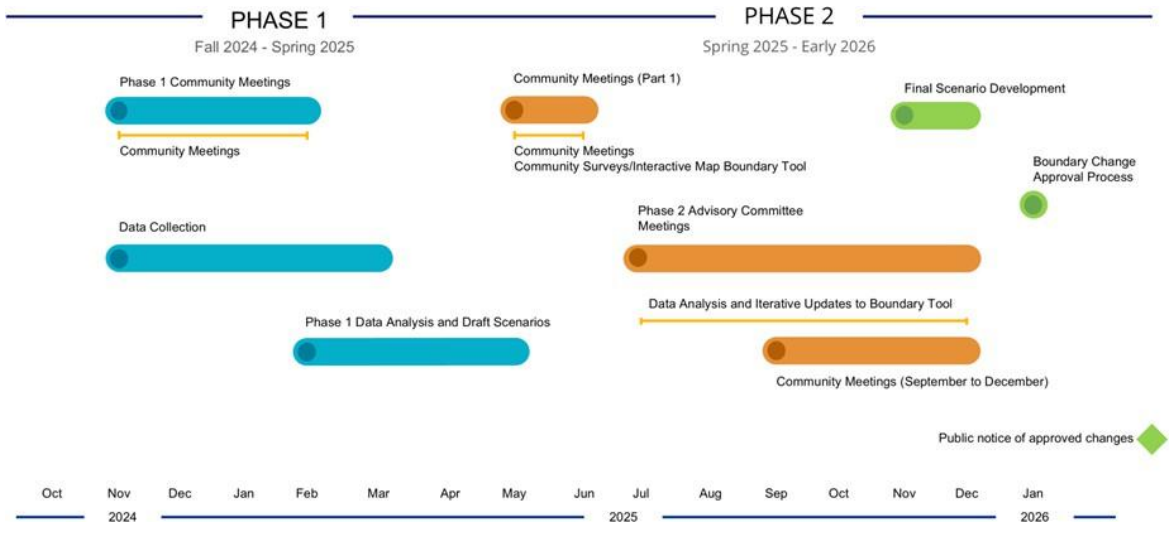
The final scenario represents the culmination of several iterative rounds of updates to the four previous boundary scenarios developed in collaboration with the Superintendent's Boundary Review Advisory Committee, Thru Consulting, and FCPS. This scenario takes into account important community needs and requests while addressing current challenges with the school boundaries that led to inequitable access to facilities and programs, overcrowding, split-feeder schools, and longer commute times for students. The superintendent will review the committee's recommendations and use them to inform her final recommendation on school boundary changes, which will be presented to the School Board on January 8, 2026. The School Board will conduct a public hearing on the proposed changes on January 10, 2026, and is then scheduled to vote on the comprehensive boundary review and implementation at a meeting on January 22, 2026.



Timeline

The following provides a high-level timeline of the boundary review process, beginning with the initial forum about the policy changes and culminating with the School Board's final vote on the final boundary scenario.

- **Phase 1: Fall 2024 - Spring 2025**
  - Nov. 2024 - Feb. 2025: Community Meetings
  - Nov. 2024 - March 2025: Data Collection
  - Feb. 2025 - May 2025: Data Analysis and Draft Scenarios
- **Phase 2: Spring 2025 - Winter 2026**
  - May 2025 - June 2025: Community Meetings (Part 1)
  - July 2025 - Oct. 2025: Data Analysis and Scenario Updates
  - Oct. 2025 - Nov. 2025: Community Meetings (Part 2)
  - Nov. 2025 - Dec. 2025: Final Scenario Development
- **Approval Process: Winter 2026**
  - Thursday, January 8, 2026: Superintendent is scheduled to present her recommendation (final scenario) on proposed boundary changes to the School Board.
  - Saturday, January 10, 2026: A public hearing on the comprehensive boundary review is scheduled.
  - Thursday, January 22, 2026: The School Board is scheduled to vote on the boundary recommendations. Once approved, notice of the approved boundary changes will be shared with all staff and families.



Community Engagement

Robust community engagement across FCPS is a critical part of the boundary review process and is required by the updated FCPS Boundary Policy 8130 and, to a lesser extent, by the Code of Virginia. It also represents an important facet of FCPS' core values to keep communities informed and engaged, as learning happens best in community. The success of these new school boundaries is not possible without input and support from the communities who will be directly impacted by the changes.

Superintendent's Boundary Review Advisory Committee Overview

The Superintendent's Boundary Review Advisory Committee is a critical component of FCPS' comprehensive boundary review. Each of the 96 committee members' unique perspectives and insight are invaluable as we work together to ensure this process is transparent, includes significant community participation and feedback, and always keeps the best interests of FCPS students at the center of every decision and recommendation that is made.

In reviewing the school boundaries and community feedback, the committee was charged with:

- Ensuring equitable access to programs and facilities.
- Balancing available capacity to make the best use of our school facilities.
- Establishing consistent "attendance zones" (i.e., school boundaries) by addressing isolated attendance areas (also known as islands) and reducing split-feeder patterns (when one school feeds to two different schools, like a middle school to two different high schools).
- Minimizing travel time for students to and from school.

The committee met 16 times throughout the boundary review process, providing guidance and feedback on potential boundary scenarios and making recommendations to the superintendent that centered community voices. For the final scenario, the superintendent considered the committee's recommendations in formulating her final recommendation and will present that recommendation to the School Board on Thursday, January 8, 2026.

Committee Members

The Superintendent's Boundary Review Committee includes parents, caregivers, and community members from each of FCPS' 24 high school pyramids. The committee also includes school-based and division administrators, teachers, operational staff, and other community representatives who can speak to the interests and needs of families. Given the overwhelming interest to participate as a member on the committee, FCPS assigned a number to each applicant who confirmed their ability to attend meetings, in person, through January 2026. Numbers were then chosen via a random number generator and then matched with the names set forth on the list of confirmed applicants to create the committee.

As originally constituted, each FCPS pyramid is represented on the Committee by a minimum of two individuals who reside within the current boundaries for that pyramid. Special concerns within the school division's current boundary system, including so-called "split feeders" and "attendance islands," are represented by individuals who reside in areas affected by those concerns. These are just two of the many special concerns that are represented on the committee and are noted in the list below. (* = split feeder, ** = attendance island, *** = both)

Annandale
Lucas Castanos*
Jacqueline Chevalier Mosely*

Centreville
Becca Ferrick
Kenneth Preede

Chantilly
Afsheen Awan
Michelle Breslin

Edison
Laura Huerta
Pearl Prince*

Falls Church
Stephanie Felton Downor
Charla Ouertatani

Fairfax
Shaghayegh Azima***
Brandi Collins**
Reza Jaberi**

Hayfield
Lynesha Brown
Shaneika Rice

Herndon
Zulakha Imran
Christopher Noyes

Justice
Bruce Allison
Ann-Marie Ward

Lake Braddock
Cheryl Kelly
Amanda Parker**

Langley
Jane DelGiorno
Ariana Raines

Lewis
Jenni L. House
Adam Polite

Madison
Morgan Greene
Dana Stewart***

Marshall
Elise Fisher
Kristina Glines

McLean
Bo Du**
Bingyi Xiang

Mount Vernon
Marie McCain
Cynthia Peverall*

Oakton
Jessica Kim
Raymond Mendenilla

Robinson
Bernard Laryea
Sunnie Salvia

South County
Magan L Araiza
Syed Younus

South Lakes
Brian Gerald McInerney
Daniel Murphy

West Potomac
John Cofrancesco
Nic Nivison**

West Springfield
Cory Cress
Suzanne Dickey

Westfield
Jessica Chun
Jenae Grader

Woodson
Mark Angres***
Vanessa Hall
Aaron Middlekauff***

Advanced Academic Programs Advisory Committee
Kirsten Maloney

Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities (ACSD)
Nita Payton

Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee
Whitney Ketchledge

City of Fairfax Planning and Development
Eric Forman

Director, Title I
Jennifer Hertzberg

Edu-Futuro
Ed Aponte

Facilities Planning Advisory Council
Cathy Hosek

FairFACTS Matters
Christina Williams (regular representative)
Megan Anderson Brooks (regular representative)
Mike Beirne (alternate representative)

Fairfax Alliance of Black School Educators (FABSE)
Laura Waterman

Fairfax Asian Educators Association
Young Lee

Fairfax Association of Elementary School Principals (FAESP)
Rebecca Forgy

Fairfax County Council of PTAs
Debbie Kilpatrick

Fairfax County Federation of Citizen Associations
Tim Thompson

Fairfax County Federation of Teachers
David Walrod
Susie Chavez
Yolanda Corado Cendejas

Fairfax County High School Principals' Association (HSPA)
Ellen Reilly - High School
Lindsey Kearns - Secondary School

Fairfax County Special Education PTA (SEPTA)
Amanda Campbell
Lavanya Ravulapalli

Fairfax County Department of Planning & Development
Kelly Atkinson
(Tracy Strunk)

Fairfax County Parents Association
Erin Dyal

Fairfax Education Association
Leslie Houston
Kevin Hickerson
Nichole Lansdowne

Fairfax Hispanic Educators' Association
Manny Gomez Portillo

Fairfax NAACP
Sujatha Hampton
Marquis Small

FCPS Pride: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Allied Employees of FCPS
Robert Rigby

Geo Information Systems
Eric Posner

Middle School Principals' Association (MSPA)
Drew Campbell

Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee (MSAOC)
George Becerra

Neurodivergent Liberation Coalition
Jennifer Litton Tidd

Strategic Plan Advisory Group
Joe Miller

Superintendent's Military-Connected Family Advisory Group
Megan Dross

FCPS Staff
Andy Mueck - Chief Operating Officer
Geovanny Ponce - Chief of Schools

Erik Gordon - Chief of Facilities Services and Capital Planning
Jessica Gillis - Executive Director, Capital Improvements and Planning
Lisa Youngblood Hall - Chief Experience and Engagement Officer
Nardos King - Chief Equity Officer
Paul D'Andrade - Executive Director, Transportation Services
Sloan Presidio - Chief Academic Officer

Community Meetings

FCPS hosted a series of both virtual and in-person community engagement meetings to share information with impacted families and collect feedback that informed new iterations of the boundary scenarios. Each of these meetings included a full complement of support from facilitators, to translators and interpreters, handouts and posters, computers to use the Boundary Explorer Tool, and agendas to help guide conversations and solicit feedback from participating community members.

Beginning in fall 2024, FCPS engaged in four sets of community meetings across Phases 1 and 2. These included:

- **Phase 1 Meetings | Fall 2024-Winter 2025**
  - 6 in-person meetings
  - 6 virtual meetings
  - 2,351 participants

- **Phase 2 Meetings, Part 1 | Spring 2025**
  - 8 hybrid meetings (in person and virtual)
  - 1,565 participants
  - 3,400+ comments collected by Thru Consulting (Pigeonhole tool), which received 100,000+ votes.
  - 13,000+ comments collected through the Boundary Explorer Tool.

- **Phase 2 Meetings, Part 2 | Fall 2025**

  September
  - 12 hybrid meetings (in person and virtual)
  - 890 participants

  October
  - 14 hybrid meetings (in person and virtual)
  - 1,614 participants
  - 11,747 comments collected through the Boundary Explorer Tool between 10/13 and 11/18.

  December
  - Two meetings (in person and virtual)
  - 246 participants

20 additional meetings the superintendent held directly with community members (includes meetings in the summer, as well as September, October, November, and December).

Preliminary Outcomes

Split Feeders

A split feeder is a particular school from which students progress to two or more higher-level schools. For example, when elementary school students from the same school are assigned to attend two or more middle schools, that elementary school is considered a split feeder. Policy 8130 identifies split feeders as a key consideration in boundary planning. Under the Enrollment/Capacity criterion, the policy calls for balancing capacity while "eliminating or preventing the establishment of split feeders, whenever possible." A related criterion reinforces this by prioritizing the maintenance of school pyramid groupings.

Each school community and location is unique, therefore, during the community engagement process and development of the superintendent's recommendation, the split feeder consideration may have been addressed differently. The following will be presented to the School Board in the superintendent's final scenario:

- Eight of the elementary-school-to-middle-school split feeders (Keene Mill, Olde Creek, Westbriar, Vienna, Spring Hill, Riverside, Coates, and Mason Crest) have been eliminated.
- One elementary school (Crossfield) had the number of middle schools it feeds reduced from three middle schools to two middle schools.
- Eight of the elementary-school-to-high-school split feeders (Keene Mill, Olde Creek, Vienna, Wolftrap, Spring Hill, Riverside, Coates, and Mason Crest) have been eliminated.
- Two elementary schools (Westbriar and Crossfield) have the number of high schools they feed to reduced from three high schools to two high schools.
- None of the middle-school-to-high-school split feeders have been eliminated. We will likely see some progress as we approach the western high school boundary work.

Attendance Islands

An attendance island is a geographic area assigned to a school even though it is not directly connected to that school's boundary. This definition does not apply to school buildings located outside their attendance zone. Policy 8130 addresses this issue through its Proximity criterion, which directs the superintendent to promote contiguous attendance zones and maintain neighborhood groupings to eliminate or prevent attendance islands.

Each school community and location are unique, therefore, during the community engagement process and development of the superintendent's recommendation, attendance islands may have been addressed differently. The following will be presented to the School Board in the superintendent's final scenario:

- Four schools had their attendance islands eliminated (Keene Mill ES, Olde Creek ES, Fort Hunt ES, and Groveton ES).
- Two schools have the number of attendance islands reduced (McLean HS and Longfellow MS).

Student Planning Areas (SPAs)

SPAs are geographic sub-units that collectively form a school's boundary. Each unit is assigned a unique identification number. SPAs are larger than individual housing units but smaller than a full school boundary. SPAs serve as the primary unit of analysis for school boundary adjustment studies. FCPS may analyze potential boundary adjustment scenarios by reassigning one or more SPAs from one school to another school. This method allows FCPS to address factors like access to programs, student membership and school capacity, a student's proximity to schools, and transportation efficiency. To model the effects of a proposed scenario, student membership data are aggregated at the SPA level. The consultant utilized the FCPS SPA geographic sub-units to develop scenarios for consideration by the community.

Students Impacted by Boundary Adjustments

Several secondary criteria in Policy 8130 address the impact of boundary changes on students, including minimizing disruption to instructional programs and promoting long-term stability. Under the superintendent's recommendation in her final scenario, 52 schools have proposed changes to their boundaries. This impacts an estimated 1,174 elementary students, 447 middle school students, and 589 high school students — a total of 2,210 students.

Looking Ahead

As FCPS concludes this initial comprehensive boundary review under the revised Policy 8130, several structures and processes will help ensure continuity, monitoring, and readiness for future adjustments in alignment with the review cycle established by Policy 8130.

Advanced Academic Program - Middle Schools

During the School Board meeting on September 25, 2025, the School Board voted to instruct the Superintendent to develop and present to the Board, by March 2026, a comprehensive plan for establishing Advanced Academic Program Centers in every middle school in the division.

Quarterly Skeleton Committee Meetings

To maintain momentum and provide ongoing oversight, a streamlined (or "skeleton") version of the BRAC will meet quarterly. These meetings will allow staff and community representatives to monitor implementation, review emerging data, and surface any issues that may require attention before the next full boundary review cycle.

Regular SPA Updates

SPAs will continue to be updated to reflect shifts in student populations, to inform future boundary studies and both short-term operational decisions and long-range planning.

Identifying Flagged Sites for the Next Review Cycle

Based on data from SPAs, community feedback, and lessons learned from the current review, FCPS will develop an initial list of "flagged" school sites or areas for closer examination during the next boundary review. These flagged areas may include schools experiencing sustained over- or under-capacity, complex feeder patterns, or significant changes in housing development or student demographics. These areas include but are not limited to:

- The neighborhoods in Gunston, Halley, Laurel Hill, and Lorton Station elementary schools' boundaries (to be reviewed and recommendation to the Board by January 2027).
- The Bren Mar Park Elementary School middle and high school feeders (to be reviewed in approximately two years).
- The Briarwood Trace and Briarwood Farms communities (to be reviewed in approximately two years). This is to make sure we have data on the impact of enrollment at Oakton HS following the opening of the new western high school.
- The Tysons Green community (to integrate a priority transfer option for high school students only who wish to transfer to Madison HS if they provide their own transportation). The middle school option for Thoreau is not possible at this time.
- The Bull Run Elementary School boundary on hold for now (to be reviewed with the Western High School boundary study).
- Greenway Downs, Jefferson Village, and Kingsley Commons neighborhoods will be flagged for review.
- Riverside Elementary School Full-time Advanced Academic Program Center (to be considered to be relocated to Woodley Hills Elementary School before the next Comprehensive Boundary Review w/perhaps a soft launch sooner)
- School boundary realignment for non-residential areas (i.e., Buckman Road and Richmond Highway intersection and Greendale Golf Course and surrounding area).
- Minor school boundary adjustments (e.g., 2817 Douglas Street was addressed in the current Comprehensive Boundary Review).

Together, these efforts will allow FCPS to enter the next boundary review cycle with readiness and continuity from the first study. They also reinforce the division's ongoing commitment to equitable access, operational efficiency, and student well-being.

Reflections from the Superintendent

Dear Team FCPS,

FCPS remains deeply committed to ensuring that each and every student has equitable access to excellence and opportunity, as outlined in the 2023–30 Strategic Plan. As part of this commitment, the division undertook a comprehensive review of school boundaries for the first time in nearly four decades. This work was guided by the priorities put forth by the School Board in Policy 8130 and designed to help FCPS respond thoughtfully to population growth, changing facility needs, student health and wellness considerations, and the evolving expectations of the community.

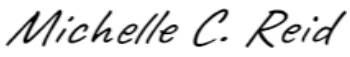
Boundary work is one of the most important responsibilities entrusted to a school division, shaping students' daily experiences, influencing family routines, and defining the sense of stability and belonging essential to learning. Because of this significance, it was critical that the division's approach reflected excellence, equity, and transparency at every step.

Throughout this process, we heard meaningful and impactful feedback from families, staff, and community members. Their questions, hopes, and thoughtful reflections helped guide our work and ensured that the comprehensive boundary review and scenarios centered the real experiences of those we serve. This effort also represented one of the most comprehensive undertakings our teams had managed in decades, requiring deep collaboration, careful analysis, and unwavering commitment across the division. I am profoundly grateful for the dedication shown by our staff and the partnership shown by our community.

This review was not only about understanding our current boundaries, it was about building a stronger foundation for the future. It marked an important step toward establishing a clearer, more predictable, and more equitable process for ongoing boundary work. As we move forward, the lessons we learned and the insights we gained will help us improve the experiences of families, strengthen trust, and ensure that our systems evolve alongside the needs of our students, staff and families.

Most importantly, this work affirmed our shared belief that every student deserves the strongest possible start, and that by listening, learning, and working together, we can continue to build a school division that grows better, more responsive, more equitable, and more aligned with our community's aspirations year after year. Together, all things are possible!

Take good care,



Dr. Michelle Reid
Superintendent
Fairfax County Public Schools