

# I. Introduction

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With highly ranked educational programs, Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) is a fundamental part of Frederick County and a reason why many people choose to move here. Over the past several decades, population growth in the county has been steady (see [Figure 2A](#)), mostly concentrated around Frederick City, the Interstate 70 corridor and in the southeastern part of the county along the Interstate 270 corridor.

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the FCPS student population grew by more than 10,000 students and resources were focused on adding capacity. From 2006 to 2015, the student population growth rate was lower and FCPS was able to shift some resources to modernization of older schools. Today, FCPS must balance resources between adding capacity (especially at the elementary and high school level) in key growth areas and modernizing older schools.

FCPS also strives to provide new educational services mandated by the state as well as opportunities for new and innovative educational programs. Our main goal continues to be to provide a safe, caring and engaging environment in which the children of Frederick County can learn. FCPS' 10 year Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP) speaks directly to that goal by detailing our approach to building, expanding or modernizing Frederick County's educational facilities over the next decade.

## PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

FCPS projects enrollments and identifies facility needs 10 years into the future to allow the time necessary to plan, design and construct new facilities. Included in the EFMP is the six year FCPS Capital Improvement Program (CIP) that serves as the basis for annual capital funding requests to the state and county (see [Appendix A](#)).

Our 10 year EFMP is designed to:

- Inform the community, the Board of Education (BOE), and state and county officials about FCPS' long-range plans for educational facility improvements.
- Document FCPS' long-range enrollment projections and future facility needs.
- Provide a common point of reference to allow FCPS to coordinate future new educational facility locations with county and municipal officials and coordinate future facility needs and funding requirements with state officials.
- Document FCPS' schedule of major renovation and maintenance projects for our existing buildings.
- Comply with state regulations that require FCPS, and all local jurisdictions, to update its EFMP annually.

## PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS

FCPS updates the EFMP each year in accordance with the requirements in the Maryland Public School Construction Program "Administrative Procedures Guide." While FCPS writes its own master plan, the state's administrative procedures guide defines the required content of the plan.

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FCPS' EFMP is updated each year by our Capital Programs Department. The update process includes several steps that help to ensure that our facilities' needs and recommendations are as current as possible. These steps are:

1. Update 10 year enrollment projections	March-April
2. Prepare draft EFMP update	March-May
3. Present draft EFMP to the Board of Education	June
4. Present draft EFMP to the Frederick County Planning Commission	June
5. Board of Education adopts final EFMP and CIP	June

FCPS submits capital project funding requests (included in the approved EFMP) to state and county agencies in October and November (see [Appendix A](#)). Individual county and state agencies maintain procedures for evaluating the Board-approved capital project funding requests (See [Appendix C](#) and [Appendix D](#)).

Close cooperation among state, county and FCPS officials is essential to ensure that FCPS successfully updates and executes the EFMP. Public awareness of and involvement in the planning process is also key.

## EDUCATIONAL FACILITY PLANNING – INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONTEXT

This EFMP is guided by the goals established in other planning documents prepared by the BOE, Frederick County Government, and the state. While not all these planning documents focus on educational facilities, their goals depend in part on meeting school facility needs. Some of these plans include:

*FCPS Strategic Plan:* The BOE began work on the Strategic Plan in Spring 2014. Aspirational goals were adopted in December 2014 along with correlating priorities. In November 2018, FCPS published the most recent Master Plan Annual Update that provided measurable progress updates on the BOE's goals.

*Frederick County Comprehensive Maintenance Plan:* Approved annually by the BOE, this plan establishes a system-wide evaluation of facility conditions and a maintenance management system to increase the life expectancy of building systems.

*Frederick County's Future: Many Places, One Community:* The county comprehensive plan provides recommendations for long-range development. Included are goals and objectives which seek to direct growth to appropriate areas of the county based on the availability of utilities, environmental concerns, existing land use patterns, etc. This plan also identifies general locations for future school sites. It is essential that this plan and our master plans are consistent. The County has been developing a new comprehensive plan, *Livable Frederick* which will likely be adopted in 2019.

*Frederick County Capital Improvements Program:* This six-year program incorporates capital projects requested by the BOE and included in the County Executive's annual Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The county CIP is then approved by the County Council. It also includes projects requested by other county agencies and departments. It establishes the parameters and schedules for capital improvement projects. All FCPS capital projects must conform to the requirements of this program.

*Maryland “Smart and Sustainable Growth Act” (2009) and “Sustainable Communities Act” (2010):* These state bills and other related legislation directed growth to areas identified as consistent with local comprehensive plans. Tax credits were directed towards rehabilitation of existing communities and a sustainable growth commission was created.

*A Better Maryland Plan:* The Maryland Department of Planning is currently working on a statewide plan to enrich the lives of Marylanders, use smart growth principles, grow responsibly and protect Maryland’s resources. The plan is expected to be complete by July 1, 2019.

The EFMP is also guided by two other foundational documents that govern the administration of FCPS. These are the BOE Policy and Regulations. These documents cover a wide range of specific instructional and program objectives related to such topics as organizational patterns, staffing ratios, transportation, and redistricting guidelines (see Appendices P-S).

