

I. Introduction

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. FCPS has two major needs: to continue to add capacity (especially at the elementary level) in key growth areas and to modernize older schools.

In the 1990s, the county welcomed more people, built more homes, and created more jobs than many jurisdictions in the region. During this time, Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) grew by more than 10,000 students. FCPS worked hard to keep pace with the county's growth focusing intently on adding capacity to serve the community's needs, sometimes delaying modernization of older schools to do so. As a result, FCPS met its enrollment goal of 90 percent of State Rated Capacity (SRC) system-wide at the middle and high school levels, and is near to reaching this goal at the elementary school level. Today, FCPS has the resources to begin to improve the schools with the highest priority modernization needs.

FCPS is also mindful of new educational services that the state mandates and opportunities to provide 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' 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

From a strategic perspective, FCPS projects enrollments and identifies facility needs ten years into the future to allow the time necessary to plan, design, and construct new facilities. Included in this ten year plan 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 master plan is designed to:

- Inform the community, the Board of Education, 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 Educational Facilities Master Plan annually.

PLAN APPROVAL PROCESS

FCPS updates its master plan each year in accordance with the requirements in the Maryland State Department of Education's *"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.

I

FCPS' Educational Facilities Master Plan (EFMP) is updated each year by our Division of Operations. 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 | April-June |
| 2. Prepare draft EFMP update | May-July |
| 3. Present draft EFMP to the Board of Education | August |
| 4. Present draft EFMP to the Frederick County Planning Commission | September |
| 5. Board of Education Public Hearing | September |
| 6. Board of Education adoption of final EFMP | September |

Following approval by the Board of Education, 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 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 Board of Education, 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 other plans include:

FCPS Strategic Plan: The Board of Education began work on the Strategic Plan in Spring 2014. Aspirational goals were adopted in December 2014 along with correlating priorities. Work continues on the strategic plan as the Board develops measurable goals. This plan is a dynamic document intended to guide FCPS for the next 5 to 10 years.

Frederick County Comprehensive Maintenance Plan: Approved annually by the Board of Education, 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.

Frederick County Capital Improvements Program: This 6-year program incorporates capital projects requested by the Board of Education 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 Growth” and Neighborhood Conservation: In 1997, the Maryland General Assembly passed the “*Smart Growth Areas Act.*” It established guidelines for determining which areas of the state are given priority for funding state projects and programs. Its goals are to discourage urban sprawl, preserve farmland, woodlands, and open space, and improve Chesapeake Bay water quality. State funding for any public project is tied to conformance with this act.

The Educational Facilities Master Plan is also guided by two other foundational documents that govern the administration of FCPS. These are the *Board of Education Policy* and *Board of Education 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 Q-T).

