

# Summary of July 22 Central Summer Area Advocacy meeting at Wootton

## Attendees

MCPS leadership including Dr. Taylor, Board of Education (BOE) members including Julie Yang, Natalie Zimmerman, Laura Steward and Karla Silvestre, MCCPTA representatives Sally McCarthy, several county councils, several elementary, middle, and high school principals, and Maryland Delegates including Dr. Chao Wu, Maryland Delegate and former Howard County BOE member. Few current BOE members also listened to part of the boundary study/secondary program analysis discussion session.

## Format

The first hour was meet and greet before breaking into sessions. Our taskforce members joined and voiced our concerns and priorities in the **two breakout sessions** that focused on:

- Boundary Study
- Secondary Program Analysis

Participants were encouraged to suggest areas the MCCPTA should advocate for in the next phase.

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## Key Points Discussed by Parents

### 1. Split Schools & Feeder Stability

- Strong call to “**minimize splits**”, citing small split examples in the current options to highlight concerns.

### 2. Data Transparency and Accuracy

- Multiple parents raised issues about the accuracy of the **Program Analysis** data and called for full transparency from MCPS.
- There were requests to share all internal data and modeling used, and to formally elevate these concerns to **MCCPTA**.

- Our taskforce member raised concerns about data accuracy to Julie Yang and Sally McCarthy, Chair of the CIP committee for MCCPTA

### 3. Program Study Process and Pilot Suggestions

- Due to cost constraints, the program study was removed from the original RFP and is now conducted in-house by MCPS staff. MCPS believes they have more insight and knowledge regarding the programs.
- Parents suggested pilot **programs** in new schools **before making permanent changes**.
- Requests were made to keep students in the programs they started, and not disrupt them midstream.
- A shared recommendation was to coordinate the two efforts, let program analysis and boundary study support each other, not parallel execution.
- Difficulty for current middle school students to decide on their HS programs due to too many unknown factors about the new programs.

### 4. Social-Emotional Impact & Grandfathering

- Parents voiced strong concerns about the emotional toll of switching schools, especially during transitional years like middle school. Also, having kids in multiple HS schools.
- Suggestions were made to allow “**grandfathering**” — letting students remain at their current school even if boundaries shift.

### 5. Coordination Between Studies

- Parents noted a **lack of coordination** between the Boundary Study and the Program Analysis. Boundary study and program analysis are happening simultaneously but slack communication. Parents think secondary program analysis should be the first layer then the boundary study.
- A shared recommendation was to **merge the two efforts**, so that policy changes consider both zoning and program needs holistically.

### 6. Utilization and Stability

- Parents suggested revising the “optimum utilization” at 80-100% to a higher range (such as 90-110%) considering an existing built-in buffer in capacity calculation to allow school stability and avoid unnecessary redistricting.

### 7. Other Concerns Raised

- Poolesville residents worry that their high school may be used more for regional programs than serving their own community.
- The Class of 2030, impacted by COVID, needs greater stability.
- Parents repeatedly emphasized **continuity, community, and data accuracy**.

- Another shared recommendation was to set up a Crown HS with local community and extended programs, reduce the large number of student shift to support community continuity, and enhance program access.
  - A Poolsville HS student highly recommended extending existing magnet programs, setting up in more schools to accept more students. He mentioned many students (his friends) might want to join the program if more seats would open.
  - Need for realistic transportation and walkability studies that emphasize safety of children vs. 2 mile radius.
  - If Wootton is slated for major renovations that might impact capacity, would like to avoid students switching schools multiple times during this renovation.
  - Stonebridge residents: Concerned their neighborhood is split between Townhouse and Single-Family homes, which does not appear “equitable”
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## Moving Forward

- **MCCPTA’s next round of input on boundary options is expected in late September.** Parents are strongly encouraged to stay engaged, attend meetings, and continue voicing concerns.
- **Within our community**, we will continue analyzing published data, pushing for transparency, advocate minimizing split articulation, stability and continuity and to **keep Wayside Elementary within the Churchill cluster.**