



June 3, 2021

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Michael J. Martirano, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

Subject: Reporting Impacts of New Construction on School Enrollment

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information to the Board in advance of the presentation of the 2021 Feasibility Study on June 10, 2021, and the upcoming quarterly joint session with the Howard County Council. In recent years there has been an ongoing discussion regarding the impact of new residential development on public school enrollment. Data and reports have been provided answering various questions around this topic, however, there is still confusion, misinterpretation and additional inquiries on the topic.

There is a misperception that residential development provides a single-year impact on school enrollment. Residential development adds new students to the school system in and beyond the year of permitting. When new residential developments are permitted for occupancy, and the new units are sold or leased, the first occupants of this new home may add new students to the schools to which this development is assigned. In subsequent years, these homes will turn over to new occupants, through sales or new leases, and those new occupants may bring new students. The impact to assigned schools of new housing does not end once the homes are occupied for the first time. Recent reporting, which has been focused on a comparison of the impact of new construction versus resales, has led to some confusion and misrepresentation.

Following are two examples comparing the year one student yield and ongoing student yield from recent developments:

Enclave at Tierney Farm Student Yield Data

In 2017, at the intersection of Guilford Rd. and MD Rt. 108 a new development called Enclave at Tierney Farm began to be permitted. Over the next three years, 150 single-family detached homes were built, permitted, and sold. Official enrollment counts from September 30, 2018, 2019, and 2020 show the following counts of students new to their school due to moving into one of these newly-permitted units:

	2018	2019	2020
ES	18	33	23
MS	5	8	9
HS	2	6	6

As of September 30, 2020, there are 154 total enrolled students, 44 more than the 110 who were new to their school in the three years new units were permitted in this development. These additional students may have moved into homes in the years following their permit year through the resale of the home, moving in as pre-school-aged children, or moving into their home through other circumstances.

Oxford Square Student Yield Data

At Oxford Square, as of September 30, 2020, there were approximately 1,050 housing units. Students began moving into these newly constructed units and enrolling in school for SY 2015-16. Since that year 235 students from newly-constructed units have enrolled in schools serving this neighborhood. These families were the first occupant of their home in the year of permitting, as shown below.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
ES	30	26	11	20	21	36
MS	5	15	7	5	4	10
HS	7	9	8	4	10	7

As of September 30, 2020 there were 340, 105 more than the 235 who were new to their school in the year’s new units were permitted in this development. In addition to the year one enrollment impact, new students have continued to arrive at Hanover Hills ES, Thomas Viaduct MS, and Long Reach HS as residents of this development.

When considering the impacts of new development on student enrollment, it may be informative to consider not just the impact of the first occupant of each home. Following the year of construction and permitting, those homes will change hands multiple times with each new occupant having the potential to bring new students to the school system. Depending on the unit type and the location in the county, the impact will vary as seen in the data above from two distinctly different developments in different parts of the county.

In 2018 the Howard County Council passed CB1-2018 the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance requiring HCPSS to report “for any projected increase in enrollment, an indication of what portions of the increase are attributed to sales or rental turnover of existing residential units, new development, and other factors”. This information is provided annually in the Feasibility Study to satisfy the requirement. This projected enrollment impact is often used in discussions regarding the impacts of new construction versus existing housing on student enrollment. While the data reported to align with the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance is accurate and informative, it focuses on a comparison of projected first-year enrollment vs other housing factor projections of the same year. The reporting requirement does not give the actual annual student counts as presented above. Presenting the projected housing student yield information in this way characterizes the projected new construction student yield from the year of permitting as the only impact from new housing. The newly constructed units become part of the existing housing stock and students yielded from these houses are included in apartment turnover and resales, regardless of the age of the home.

All of the impacts of new development are accounted for in our projection methodology. Our process counts all existing students and identifies students who arrived new to their school via a housing transaction over the past five years to calculate average historical yield rates for each housing factor, at each school. This recent historical data is used to predict future enrollment. Our projection methodology has yielded very accurate results, with a > 99% accuracy rate at the county-wide level, and > 95% average one-year accuracy at the school level. In addition, this methodology has been reviewed three times in the past eight years by a consultant. Each consultant review has found the methodology sound, and the accuracy of our projection on par with, or better than industry standards. For the most recent report, please consult Board resources for June 13, 2019. Feel free to contact the Office of School Planning (OSP) for information regarding the 2015 and 2013 reports.

The OSP continues to work towards reporting relevant and timely data in ways that can be easily accessed and understood by stakeholders. New reporting methods may take time to develop to ensure data is accurate and complete.

If you have any questions, please contact Daniel Lubeley, Director of Capital Planning and Construction.

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