



Barney Rush, *Mayor*
Irene Lane, *Vice Mayor*
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Tambra Leonard, *Community Liaison*

VIA EMAIL

June 24, 2025

Dr. Thomas Taylor, Superintendent
Montgomery County Public Schools

Ms. Julie Yang, President
Montgomery County Board of Education

Dear Dr. Taylor and Ms. Yang,

On behalf of the Town of Chevy Chase, I would like to share our Town Council's perspective on the current boundary study associated with the opening of the new high schools in Montgomery County. We are following this matter closely, as the decisions that result from this process could significantly affect families in our community. We have provided our residents with links to the presentations and materials outlining the proposed boundary options and have actively encouraged them to complete the public survey which MCPS has provided. We also understand that the various PTSA's associated with the different schools that our children attend are deeply involved and urging families to make their voices heard.

While we recognize that the primary input you receive should come from parents and school associations, the scale of this decision and the volume of feedback that the Town Council has received have moved us to share a few high-level concerns.

Support for New Investment & MCPS Objectives

We appreciate the County's continued investment in educational infrastructure and fully support the need for new high schools to accommodate the projected enrollment growth. We also acknowledge the complexity of balancing the four guiding objectives outlined by MCPS: maintaining geographic proximity; promoting comparable capacity utilization rates; maintaining stability of student school assignments; and maintaining diverse student bodies. We know that MCPS has identified reducing chronic absenteeism as a high priority. We would be interested to learn if and how achieving the objectives stated in the boundary study may play a role in raising student attendance.

We recognize that it is not possible to fully achieve all four of the objectives: some run counter to others, to varying degrees. Therefore, we believe the overarching goal should be a fusion that substantially achieves the objectives without seeking to achieve fully or perfectly any one of them. We note that the current boundaries represent a successful fusion of several of these goals: Town students attend highly diverse schools which are local for most grades. Busing for some of the elementary school years is accepted as necessary to promote diversity for our children. Yet regardless of where students who are together for K – 2 attend their remaining elementary school years, they are all together again at Silver Creek Middle School and BCC for high school.

Concern Over Geographic Proximity

With that context, we are very concerned about any option that materially impairs the realization of key objectives in the effort to satisfy a single goal. Option 3 is the clearest example of such an outcome: The recognized value of maintaining geographical proximity is essentially ignored, as high school students in our Town, currently able to walk to BCC, would have to be bussed miles to a distant school. Students in other down-county areas would also face the same situation, with this option. This shift undermines student well-being and participation in after-school activities, increases stress on working families and weakens school support and neighborhood cohesion. It will also be costly and thereby put pressure on other categories of the school budgets that directly support quality education.

Maintaining Stable School Assignments

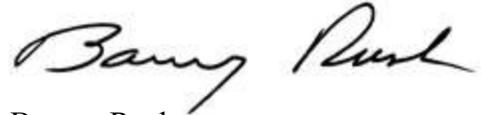
We believe that a “best case” fusion of the four objectives should give more weight to maintaining stable school assignments and allow children to grow up with classmates whom they stay with through their years in the public school system. Many parents in our Town are particularly sensitive to this issue because of the split elementary school experience: Rosemary Hills brings together all K – 2nd students from a broad and diverse catchment area. The students are then split between Chevy Chase and North Chevy Chase Elementary schools for grades 3 – 5. These parents believe that their children should be able to rejoin early elementary school friends in a single middle school. Moreover, under option 2, CCES students, already split from friends in grade 3, are further split in middle school. This double split is especially concerning.

Reviewing the Transition Period

Finally, parents have raised with us a concern regarding transition. We understand that, separate from whatever final decision is taken regarding school boundaries, there remains the issue of the time frame for affected students to transition to new school districts. The current plan raises the prospect that students who enter high school in the fall of 2026 would spend only one year in that high school before being redistricted. This proposed reassignment timeline would be a highly disruptive scenario that would have students attending three different schools in three years. We urge MCPS to consider a more stable, phased transition to minimize disruption.

Thank you for considering our comments. We look forward to reviewing the next round of recommendations informed by community feedback and hope to see an option that more successfully balances the stated objectives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barney Rush". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barney Rush
Mayor

cc: Montgomery County Board of Education
Councilmember Andrew Friedson