
MEETING MINUTES Facilities Enrollment Advisory Committee Meeting

03/11/2021
Virtual Zoom Webinar

Committee Members Present:

Jennifer Ashbaugh, Co-Chair	Cory Moskowitz
Jennifer Bausman	Kent Niedzielski, Co-Chair
Patricia Felix	Lura Norris
Angela Fentress	Patricia Rhodes
Joseph Jefferson	Gail Stewart
Judith Kerns	

Staff Members Present:

Chad Criswell, Sr. Project Manager & Planning Supervisor
Robert H. Rollins III, Director Planning & Development
Jeff Proulx, Chief Operating Officer
Dr. Jana Palmer, Executive Director Elementary Education
Dr. Richard Akers, Executive Director Secondary Education
David Brandenburg, Executive Director Finance
Eric Sisler, Budget Finance Manager
Wendy Smith, Secretary Facilities Planning & Development

Community Attendance:

Approximately 44 members of the community viewed all or part of the webinar

Summary of the Discussion of the Facilities and Enrollment Advisory Committee:

I. Review of the Agenda

The meeting began with a review of the agenda.

Staff opened the meeting with a review of the procedure for public correspondence and public participation (viewing of the meeting). Any FEAC meeting whether in-person or virtual is open for members of the public to attend or view. However, only members of the FEAC and invited participants are scheduled to participate in the meeting. Members of the public may share their comments by emailing the FEAC committee at FEAC@wcps.k12.md.us. The emails will be presented to the members of the FEAC for its consideration. Staff noted that FEAC was previously sent all of the public correspondence that WCPS had received by March 3rd. Public correspondence that was received after March 3rd was sent to the FEAC on March 10th. Staff will send the next set of received public correspondence to the FEAC the day before the next FEAC meeting. It was noted that any public correspondence provided to the FEAC will be included in the next meeting minutes.

II. Review of Working Document #3
(included with these meeting minutes along with the public correspondence)

Factor 4 – Educational Programs

Consideration of Elementary School Educational Programs

Staff presented student enrollment data pertaining to Cascade, Old Forge and Smithsburg elementary schools that identified available student seats at each school. It should be noted that Old Forge Elementary has two portables which could provide approximately 50 additional student seats beyond the state rated capacity (SRC). Staff reiterated that portable classrooms are not included in the determination of the SRC.

Staffing is the largest difference between these three schools. The enrollment at Cascade Elementary only allows for an 11-month Principal and a 10-month Secretary. This staffing constraint creates an inconvenience for parents during the summer who wish to enroll their students at Cascade Elementary. Parents are able to register their students for Cascade at either Old Forge or Smithsburg Elementary but must return to Cascade in the fall to finalize the registration. Staff noted that Cascade Elementary is a 1-round school based on the current grade to grade enrollment. This means there is only one classroom for each grade level which limits the principal's flexibility to balance class size. Having 2 or more classrooms per grade level at a school allows more options. For example, Cascade Elementary currently has a grade which has grown during the school year to 31 students. If enrollment were to continue to increase, the single class size would increase accordingly. However, if the school were 2 rounds, enrollment increases could be shared between multiple classes, easing the impact. Based on the current enrollment at the 20 to 30 range, it becomes difficult to provide additional staff, when other schools are also in need of staff to keep class sizes low. Other limitations for students occur with access to counselors. Currently, Cascade Elementary students have a counselor onsite two days per week. While other staff members can offer support to students in crisis these members are not professionally trained to provide those services.

Question: Are parents able to make an appointment with Cascade Elementary staff to register their students during the summer?

Staff: *The school is essentially closed for the month of July during the summer. The 10-month secretary and/or 11-month principal may be able to work a few days during the summer, but generally parents are directed to Smithsburg and Old Forge elementary schools for registration during this time period.*

Question: What are 1 round schools?

Staff: *1 round school = 1 classroom per grade
2 round school = 2 classrooms per grade
3 round school = 3 classrooms per grade*

Question: How are teachers able to work on planning and collaboration in a 1 round school setting and what is vertical planning?

Staff: With a 1 round school setting teachers are not able to work with colleagues to do collaborative planning for the same grade level. Staff will usually reach out to neighboring schools to work with them on collaborative planning. Last year, teachers at Cascade Elementary worked with staff at both Smithsburg and Old Forge elementary schools on collaborative planning for similar grades. Sometimes teachers will do vertical planning in this scenario. Vertical planning would be where a Pre-K and Kindergarten teacher work together on curriculum across an upper/lower grade level.

Question: How many special permissions go to magnet programs?

Staff: Magnet students are not counted in special permissions. The number of magnet students and special permissions were discussed at the 2/18/2021 meeting and are presented in the minutes and Working Document #2 for reference.

Question: Is it troubling that some students do not have access to full time counselors at their schools? Especially, with the stress of the past year.

Staff: Washington County Public Schools (WCPS) is looking for ways to expand counselors at the elementary level for just those reasons. There is no way to forecast when a student may require counselling services. Staff at each school are prepared to assist students in need, however, the ability to provide a full-time counselor on staff would be preferred.

Consideration of Secondary School Educational Programs

Staff presented a comparison of facility data for Hancock Middle/High, Clear Spring Middle, and Clear Spring High schools. Clear Spring Middle and Clear Spring High schools have a combined total of 55 classrooms. Hancock Middle/High school has a total of 25 classrooms. Secondary educational staffing was reviewed for each school. Hancock Middle/High employs 30 certificated staff members to support 235 students. Clear Spring High School and Clear Spring Middle combined employ 70 certificated staff members to support 810 students. It was noted that Clear Spring Schools employ 2.3 times the number of teachers to serve almost 3.5 times the number of students as compared to Hancock Middle/High School. At Hancock Middle/High School there are two Administrators with one being part-time. The part-time Administrator is also an Athletic Director. These administrators cover both middle and high school populations. The current enrollment numbers at Hancock Middle/High school do not accommodate offering expanded programs and extra-curricular activities. Clear Spring Middle School and Clear Spring High School have 1.4 and 1.6 Administrators respectively with one of those three (in total) administrators being shared between the schools. Both also offer six paraprofessionals (12 total between the two schools), where Hancock Middle/High School only has three in total. A committee member stated that Hancock Middle/High School did not offer a Special Education Program. This was confirmed, and

noted that Special Needs / Special Education Students attend Clear Spring Middle School or Clear Spring High School (or Marshall Street) for access to those programs

There is an economy of scale that is obtained when a school has a large number of students and staff. With more students WCPS is able to offer a larger number of programs. At Clear Spring Middle School WCPS offers the Rise Program for students with autism and the Connections Program that serve students with disabilities until they are 18 years old. Students from other schools are also able to attend these programs. Hancock Middle/High offers band and art for middle school. Clear Spring Middle offers band, chorus, orchestra and art. A major aspect of educational programming in high school is the ability to provide rigorous courses and prepare students for success in college and/or careers. Hancock Middle/High offers 6 advanced placement programs and 1 dual credit program. Clear Spring High school offers 19 advanced placement programs and 4 dual credit programs. Even though the student to staff ratio is higher, the opportunities and variety of subject matter is much greater at Clear Spring High based on the number of students that attend and wish to enroll.

Athletics are an extension of the high school program. Currently, students have opportunities to participate in a greater variety of sports at Clear Spring High. Most of the sports at Clear Spring High are able to offer opportunities to participate at both the varsity and junior varsity levels. Except for the boy's basketball and the girl's volleyball programs, Hancock Middle/High only has enough interested athletes to fill one varsity team for the sports that are being offered.

It should be noted that if enrollment continues to decrease at either Hancock Middle/High or Clear Spring High there may not be a sufficient number of student athletes to support the existing athletic teams.

Question: At one of the FEAC's previous meetings the FEAC discussed if it could be feasible to create a K-12 school at Hancock Middle/High School since the state rated capacity of Hancock Middle/High School is 591 and the total enrollment of both the Hancock Elementary and Hancock Middle/High schools is 448.

Staff: *Hancock Elementary is a 2-round school. The programs currently presented at Hancock Elementary require 12 classrooms, plus rooms for special education and the Encore programs. At a minimum the high school requires a classroom for each subject, and classes such as science require specific laboratory set-ups that aren't suitable for teaching other subjects. Consideration would need to be given to the restrooms, cafeteria, media center, music, and art rooms to create space that is applicable to the sizes and needs of both the younger and older students. Additionally, the SRC is calculated differently at a secondary school than at an elementary school – which can give the appearance of a false equivalence when reviewing seat capacities. In short, there are simply not enough classrooms at Hancock Middle/High for the student enrollment of both schools to attend there simultaneously.*

Question: Is it known exactly how many staff would move from Hancock Middle/High School to Clear Spring Middle and Clear Spring High schools?

Staff: Certificated staffing levels include all staff not just teachers. Certificated staff numbers identified in Working Document #3 include counselors, teachers, and special education teachers. Some of these positions, such as Counselors, do not impact individual class sizes and may not be moved. A certain number of teaching positions at Hancock Middle/High School would be relocated to Clear Spring Middle and Clear Spring High Schools to maintain class size. Typically, the average class sizes at Clear Spring Middle and Clear Spring High schools are three students less per class than the rest of the County.

Staff reminded the FEAC that its role in this process is to provide a recommendation to the Board of Education. Any final decision, school closure, redistricting, staffing changes, etc. are the responsibility of the Board of Education. Staff indicated that estimates of staffing changings for the review by the FEAC to meet this Charge would be reviewed in Factor 6 (Financial Considerations). It was noted that these staffing changes would be estimates, and subject to change. Staff did note that, as with previous school closures, WCPS does not anticipate the loss of jobs, even if positions were to be eliminated. Every year WCPS conducts a New Teacher Academy for at least 100 new teachers. It is anticipated that Teacher, Administrator and ESP positions will either follow the students to provide the additional student services needed at their receiving schools or will be available through attrition of staff at other locations within the school system.

Question: Would it make sense to move students and staff from the western portion of the North Hagerstown High School attendance zone to Clear Spring High School and in turn relocate students from the western portion of the Clear Spring High School attendance zone to Hancock Middle/High School?

Staff: At the current time there is a “bubble” of increased enrollment in grades moving through the high school level. Staff noted that when these grades move through the school and graduate in the next few years, enrollment may decrease at some WCPS high school facilities. Portable classrooms provide temporary relief for a temporary situation, such as an enrollment bubble. It was noted that birth rates continue to decline, which could indicate lower enrollments in the future. However, large residential developments that are active or proposed could have the opposite effect. The majority of these developments are currently located in areas where there is water/sewer capacity (urban/Hagerstown area) rather than in the more rural areas of the county. A proposal of this nature, in isolation, could seem beneficial to potentially alleviate enrollment pressures within the high schools in Hagerstown, however a far larger number of students would be impacted. At the next meeting staff will be reviewing Factor 7 – “Student Relocation” and will discuss various scenarios.

Question: Are there any other options for transportation other than what was presented at the February 18 meeting? Pickup times for Hancock Elementary already start at 6:30 am.

Staff: After the February 18th meeting, staff met to discuss whether there were any other options for transporting students that had not previously been considered. The transportation team was tasked with analyzing the bus routes for more options. As discussed at a previous meeting, the current driver shortage compounds the issue. The Hancock Middle/High attendance zone is serviced by contracted owner/operators who could be offered incentives to create a new bus route. Staff is reviewing the option of adding an additional bus route to the west of Hancock. It appears that this option could help maintain the ride times very close to the current ride times. Staff indicated that this additional cost would not be shown in Factor 6 – “Financial Considerations”. Staff reminded the FEAC that the Transportation department presented the “worst case” scenario to the FEAC. The department is continuing to review and develop alternative scenarios to increase the efficiency/ride times, however that may or may not change the cost by one additional contract bus (approximately \$55,000/year). To better the ride times, there may be only 10 students on a bus in some cases. This would ultimately be a Board of Education decision.

Question: Will a decline in student enrollment result in a reduction of programs at the various schools?

Staff: WCPS would not be able to offer courses that are not a requirement of graduation without the student enrollment necessary to support the programs.

Question: Would more career and technology programming become available if the students of Hancock Middle/ High were combined with the students at Clear Spring High and Clear Spring Middle?

Staff: With more enrollment, there is a greater likelihood that a sufficient number of students would be interested in specific programs to justify the hiring of teachers with expertise in these subject matters, opening the possibility of expanding programs. It is also beneficial for students and teachers to be engaged in a learning environment where they are challenged by their peers and able to work collaboratively within larger groups of students.

Question: While a larger student enrollment allows for more opportunities for extra curricular activities, there is concern among the Hancock families that distance will prevent their students from participation in these activities due to parents having conflicting schedules and/or lack of transportation resources to enable them to pick up their students at the conclusion of practices, events, and club meetings. Would an activity bus be available to help?

Staff: Staff noted that the Board of Education is solely responsible for the WCPS budget. The FEAC would be making a recommendation to the Board of Education for its consideration. The possibility of an activity bus could certainly be identified in that recommendation. For example, while it is not the FEAC that will make the determination to close any school or provide for an activity bus, the FEAC could

include, if it was to recommended a school closure, that the Board of Education (BOE) explore options of providing transportation assistance for extra-curricular activities to the affected community.

Question: Do the results of the standardized tests given at either Hancock Middle/High or Clear Spring High reflect the individualized instruction that is received by these students when compared to other students throughout the county?

Staff: *Staff provided a website that provides standard testing results.*
<https://reportcard.msde.maryland.gov/>

Hancock Middle Senior High School's state testing scores in Math and English Language Arts (ELA) are a little above average in some areas and a little below average in other areas. Clear Spring Middle School and Clear Spring High School's state testing scores in Math and ELA are a little above average.

2019 MCAP Percent Proficient <i>(MCAP = Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program)</i>		
School	Math	ELA
Boonsboro Middle	53.8	66.3
Clear Spring Middle	48.7	58.1
E. Russell Hicks Middle	36.9	50
Hancock Middle/High	26.1	57.7
Northern Middle	24.7	43
Smithsburg Middle	51	62.4
Springfield Middle	39.2	48.9
Western Heights Middle	22.9	40.7
MIDDLE SCHOOL AVERAGE	37.92	53.39

2019 MCAP Percent Proficient <i>(MCAP = Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program)</i>		
School	Math	ELA
Barbara Ingram School for the Arts	76.6	90.6
Boonsboro High	54.2	69.5
Clear Spring High	56.6	76.3
Hancock Middle/High	53.1	65.6
North Hagerstown High	38.2	67.6
Smithsburg High	57.1	73.5
South Hagerstown High	29.1	66.2
Williamsport High	36.4	60
HIGH SCHOOL AVERAGE	50.17	71.17

Factor 6 – Financial Considerations

Staff presented the FY2019 per pupil expense for the schools under consideration. In all cases the per pupil expenses for these schools was higher than the average for cost at WCPS.

Cascade Elementary	\$14,401	Elementary School Average	\$12,363
Clear Spring Middle	\$14,992	Middle School Average	\$11,618
Clear Spring High	\$14,325	High School Average	\$12,550
Hancock Middle/High	\$21,176	MS & HS Combined Average	\$12,151

Based on the fact that over 86% of the General Fund Budget of WCPS is for employees and benefits, the primary source of savings would be from the potential staffing reductions that could be made as a result of a school closure. In addition to the potential staff savings, staff also presented an estimate of utility savings and potential transportation savings. It should be noted that the transportation savings presented do not take into consideration the discussion on transportation this evening (i.e. current review of Hancock routes to reduce ride time/adding a bus). That information may be provided to the Board of Education in the future if it considers a school closing.

If the following schools were considered for closure WCPS could see the following reductions in annual expenses:

Estimated savings from the Closure & Consolidation of Cascade Elementary into Smithsburg & Old Forge Elementary schools:	-\$1,031,000 annually
Estimated Savings from the Closure & Consolidation of Clear Spring Middle & Clear Spring High into Springfield Middle, Hancock Middle/High, North Hagerstown High & Williamsport High:	-\$3,410,000 annually
Estimated Savings from the Closure & Consolidation of Hancock Middle/High into Clear Spring Middle & Clear Spring High:	-\$1,933,000 annually

As staff reviewed the finance numbers it determined that closure of Clear Spring Middle and Clear Spring High could result in more savings than the closure of the smaller Hancock Middle/High School. If seat capacity existed elsewhere to house students from an one of WCPS' larger schools, the possibility exists that even larger savings could result due to economies of scale and the maximization of the use of every seat in the WCPS inventory. However, the Charge from the Board was not to only consider if it was financially beneficial to close a school. The Charge from the

Board is to review the identified schools and make a recommendation based on all of the factors that are being reviewed (not just cost).

The overall average adjusted age of the facilities under consideration is 50 years. All of the facilities under consideration will continue to age and require capital projects and maintenance just like all other WCPS facilities. A list showing the average capital cost for the replacement of major building systems was presented. The closure of any facility reduces the overall inventory of systems that require maintenance and eventual replacement, which in turn lowers overall operating and capital costs for the school system. Staff explained that, when comparing school facilities for possible closure, it is also important to consider the seat capacity of each school. The cost to construct or replace the space needed per student at the middle and high school level ranges between \$55,000 and \$70,000. For the facilities being studied, Clear Spring Middle and High schools combined have the capacity to house 670 more students than Hancock Middle/High School. At the cost per student shown, closing the smaller facility in this case would preserve these 670 seats valued at between \$37M and \$46M.

Factor 5 – Racial Composition of Student Body

Staff presented the estimated percentage of minority students enrolled at each school resulting from the closure and consolidation of the school facilities under consideration. The resulting changes were minimal, and shown in Working Document # 3.

III. Discussion of Future FEAC Meetings, FEAC Members, and Meeting Dates

The committee voted to have the next FEAC meeting virtually. The overall vote was 7-3. One member of the FEAC voted to both have a virtual meeting and an in-person meeting. That vote was eliminated from this result.

IV. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by: Wendy Smith, Secretary, Facilities Planning & Development

Attachments:

Working Document #3

Public Correspondence Packet #1 - sent to the FEAC on 3/3/21

(all public correspondence from the Charge issuance to 3/3/21)

Public Correspondence Packet #2 - sent to the FEAC on 3/10/21

(all public correspondence from 3/3/21 – 3/10/21)

In Accordance with the January 19, 2021 Charge from the Washington County Board of Education (WCBOE) to the Facilities and Enrollment Advisory Committee (FEAC)

Considerations for Continuing Use or Closure of WCPS School Facilities

Working Document 3

*For use at the March 11, 2021
Facilities Enrollment Advisory Committee (FEAC) Meeting*

THIS IS NOT A FINAL REPORT, OR RECOMMENDATION FROM THE FEAC.

This document and the information/considerations contained herein are intended as a preliminary investigation for use by the Facilities and Enrollment Advisory Committee (FEAC). This document contains various information that is subject to future revision, including but not limited to: draft enrollment projections, Free and Reduced Meal Student (FARMS) information, assumptions, and recommendations. All information may be revised prior to a final report.

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- I. Factor 4 -Educational Programs**

- II. Factor 6 – Financial Considerations**
(Finance staff has been scheduled for the 3/11/21 meeting. Because of this, Factor 6 will be moved ahead of Factor 5)

- III. Factor 5 – Racial Composition of Student Body**

I. Factor 4 – Educational Programs

The FEAC, in formulating its recommendations, is to consider the following factors as stated in COMAR 13A.02.09.01:

1. Student enrollment trends; (Working Document #2)
2. Age or condition of school buildings; (Working Document #2)
3. Transportation; (Working Document #2)
- 4. Educational programs;**
5. Racial composition of student body;
6. Financial considerations;
7. Student relocation;
8. Impact on community in geographic attendance area for school proposed to be closed and school, or schools, to which student will be relocating.

While each of the factors listed above is to be considered, it may be impractical, in all cases, to reconcile each closure recommendation with each and every factor.

Consideration of Elementary School Educational Programs

Elementary School Facilities			
School	State Rated Capacity	Current Enrollment	Available Seats
Cascade	278	130	148
Old Forge*	366	298	68
Smithsburg	431	320	111

* Also has two (2) portable classrooms that are not counted in the State Rated Capacity

Table 1 – Comparison of Elementary School Facilities and 2020 Enrollment

As shown in Table 1 above, Old Forge Elementary has two portables which allow for approximately 50 more students that are not already indicated in the state rated capacity above.

Elementary School Educational Staffing		
Cascade	Old Forge	Smithsburg
Students: 130	Students: 298	Students: 320
Administrators: 1 – 11 month	Administrators: 1	Administrators: 1
Certificated Staff: 16	Certificated Staff: 28	Certificated Staff: 29
Clerical Staff: 1 – 10 month	Clerical Staff: 1 – 12 month	Clerical Staff: 1 – 12 month
Paraprofessional: 3	Paraprofessional: 8	Paraprofessional: 2

Table 2 – Comparison of Elementary School Staffing

Reviewing the educational staffing at the impacted elementary facilities, Table 2 above shows the total count of various staff at each facility. What Table 2 doesn't depict is that, based on enrollment and available staffing, Cascade has a part time lead teacher, as well as part time gifted and talented, encore, and special education teachers. A counselor is assigned for two (2) days per week to serve the 130 Cascade students. At Smithsburg and Old Forge, these same positions are supported by full time staff to educate 320 and 298 students respectively. Cascade has an Orchestra/Band teacher present at the facility for two (2) hours a week, whereas both Smithsburg and Old Forge have a staff member present at their respective facilities for 2 days per week. Of note, Old Forge Elementary will have a full-time music teacher next year who will also be supporting band students. Additionally, because of low enrollment, Cascade has a 10-month secretary and an 11-month principal, which creates a service gap each summer. Both Old Forge and Smithsburg have 12-month secretaries and principals.

When looking at the paraprofessionals at Cascade, 2 of the 3 assist individual students. These students would continue to have the assistance outlined in their Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) if they were to be relocated to a different facility. Cascade Elementary does not have a special education program. Old Forge Elementary has two (2) special education programs supporting students from multiple schools.

Summary of the Educational Programs at Cascade Elementary, Old Forge Elementary and Smithsburg Elementary

- Each school offers the same educational programs, but Smithsburg Elementary and Old Forge have full-time staff to support daily needs.
- Smithsburg and Old Forge have access to a full-time Counselor daily.
- Cascade has an 11- month principal, Smithsburg and Old Forge have 12-month principals.
- Cascade has a 10-month secretary, Smithsburg and Old Forge both have a 12 - month secretary.
- One round schools (Cascade) are subject to both very large class sizes (31) and very small class sizes (7).

- Each year, more Cascade area parents choose to have their students attend a different elementary via the special permission process than do parents from Smithsburg and Old Forge:
 - Cascade (13 students)
 - Old Forge Elementary (6 students)
 - Smithsburg Elementary (8 students)

Consideration of Secondary Educational Programs

Hancock Middle/High School (HMSHS)

Clear Spring Middle School (CSMS)

Clear Spring High School (CSHS)

Secondary Facilities		
HMSHS	CSMS	CSHS
High School Classroom: 14 Middle School Classrooms: 11 Cafeteria: 1 Gym: 1 Community Gym: 1 Media Center 1 1 Auditorium (capacity is 468)	Classrooms: 25 Cafeteria: 1 Gym: 1 Auxiliary Gym: 1 Media Center 1	Classrooms: 30 Cafeteria: 1 Gym: 1 Auxiliary Room: 1 Media Center 1 1 Auditorium (capacity is 588)

Table 3 – Comparison of Secondary Facilities.

Table 3 above shows the comparison of the facility spaces at Hancock Middle/High School, Clear Spring Middle School, and Clear Spring High School. Combined, Clear Spring Middle School and Clear Spring High School have a total of 55 classrooms, more than double the number of classrooms at Hancock Middle/High School which total 25 classrooms.

Secondary Educational Staffing		
HMSHS	CSMS	CSHS
Students: 235 MS: 103 - HS: 132 Administrators: 2 Certificated Staff: 30 Clerical Staff: 2 Paraprofessional: 3	Students: 340 Administrators: 1.4 Certificated Staff: 32 Clerical Staff: 2 Paraprofessional: 6	Students: 470 Administrators: 1.6 Certificated Staff: 38 Clerical Staff: 3 Paraprofessional: 6

Table 4 - Comparison of Secondary School Staffing and 2020 Enrollment

Table 4 above shows the educational staff at Hancock Middle/High School in comparison with Clear Spring Middle School and Clear Spring High School. Hancock Middle/ High School employs 30 certificated staff members to support 235 students. Clear Spring High School and Clear Spring Middle School, combined for comparison, employ 70 certificated staff members to serve 810 students. In total, the Clear Spring Schools employ 2.3 times the number of teachers to serve almost 3.5 times the number of students as compared to Hancock Middle/High School.

Middle School Fine Arts and Special Education Programs			
Hancock Middle Senior High		Clear Spring Middle	
Fine Arts	Special Education	Fine Arts	Special Education
Band Art	None	Band Chorus Orchestra Art	Rise (autism) Connections (life skills)

Table 5 – Comparison of Middle School Fine Arts and Special Education Programs

High School Fine Arts, Special Education, and CTE Courses or Programs					
Hancock Middle Senior High			Clear Spring High		
Fine Arts	Special Education	Career Technology	Fine Arts	Special Education	Career Technology
Band Art	None	Carpentry Child Care Software	Art Band Choir Drama Orchestra	Rise Connections	Childcare Marketing Software Career R&D Ag Academy: -Power Mech. -Environmental -Animal Sci.

Table 6 – Comparison of High School Fine Arts, Special Education, and CTE Programs

High School Advanced Placement and Dual Credit Courses					
Hancock Middle Senior High		Clear Spring High			
Advanced Placement		Dual Credit	Advanced Placement		Dual Credit
English Language Physics Environmental U.S. History Government World History		College Algebra	English Language Physics Environmental U.S. History Government World History Spanish English Language Human Geography Psychology	Capstone Seminar Capstone Research Statistics Calculus AB Calculus BC Macroeconomics Music Theory Art and Design Biology	College Algebra Music Apprec. Public Speaking Sociology

Table 7 – Comparison of High School Advanced Placement and Dual Credit Programs

Table 5 through Table 7 above show the comparison of various educational programs (Fine Arts, Special Education, Advanced Placement, and Dual Credit) available at Hancock Middle/High School, Clear Spring Middle School, and Clear Spring High School highlighting the variety of offerings that become available with more staff, and larger enrollment. If enrollment were to increase at any of the facilities, it is probable that additional programs/courses may be able to be offered to the students.

High School Athletics							
Hancock Middle Senior High				Clear Spring High			
Fall	Winter	Spring	Unified Sports	Fall	Winter	Spring	Unified Sports
Football (Varsity only)	Boys Basketball (JV & Varsity)	Baseball (Varsity only)	None at this time	Football (JV & Varsity)	Boys Basketball (JV & Varsity)	Baseball (JV & Varsity)	Bocce Tennis Track
Volleyball (JV & Varsity)	Girls Basketball (Varsity only)	Softball (Varsity only)		Volleyball (JV & Varsity)	Girls Basketball (Varsity only)	Softball (JV & Varsity)	
	Indoor Track	Outdoor Track		Golf	Indoor Track	Outdoor Track	
				Boys Soccer (JV & Varsity)		Tennis	
				Girls Soccer (JV & Varsity)			

Table 8 – Comparison of High School Athletic Programs (from 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school year)

Table 8 above shows the comparison of athletic programs that were available (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) at Hancock High School and Clear Spring High School. If enrollment continues to decrease at either of these facilities, there may not be a sufficient number of student athletes available or interested to support a full slate of athletic teams. If enrollment were to increase at any of the facilities, it is probable that additional athletic team options may be able to be offered to the students. The elimination of junior varsity and freshman teams creates a situation that either no longer provides skill training opportunities, or forces young athletes to compete against older athletes from other schools. The potential differences in skill level, physical size, or age can all potentially create safety issues in some sports.

MARYLAND PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Enrollments (2019-21)

Grades 9-11

School		School		School		School		
Montgomery Blair	Mtg	2489	North Point	Cha	1323	North Harford	Hfd	932
High Point	PG	2063	Great Mills	StM	1302	Oakdale	Fre	927
Northwest	Mtg	2035	Chopticon	StM	1301	Thomas Stone	Cha	925
Walter Johnson	Mtg	2008	Watkins Mill	Mtg	1293	Glenelg	How	915
Eleanor Roosevelt	PG	2007	Woodlawn	B Co	1279	Seneca Valley	Mtg	910
Richard Montgomery	Mtg	1934	Col. Zadok Magruder	Mtg	1276	La Plata	Cha	909
Northwestern (PG)	PG	1909	Dundalk	B Co	1275	Digital Harbor	Balt	908
Clarksburg	Mtg	1899	Towson	B Co	1241	Westlake	Cha	906
Parkdale	PG	1880	Mt. Hebron	How	1233	Walkersville	Fre	900
Bowie	PG	1858	J. M. Bennett	Wic	1223	Miford Mill Academy	B Co	899
Gaithersburg	Mtg	1857	Centennial	How	1207	Owings Mills	B Co	890
North County	AA	1794	Poly	Balt	1206	Poolesville	Mtg	890
Dr. Henry A Wise Jr.	PG	1779	Tuscarora	Fre	1204	Queen Anne's	QA	890
Western	Balt	1736	Reservoir	How	1199	Southwestern	Balt	883
C H Flowers	PG	1719	Kenwood	B Co	1198	Parkside	Wic	877
Old Mill	AA	1700	Long Reach	How	1191	North Caroline	Cln	874
Wheaton	Mtg	1685	Bel Air	Hfd	1183	Century	Car	873
Broadneck	AA	1679	Aberdeen	Hfd	1175	Patterson	Balt	870
South River	AA	1669	Westminster	Car	1174	Middletown	Fre	859
Winston Churchill	Mtg	1665	Northern (Cal.)	Cal	1121	Eastern Technical	B Co	856
Quince Orchard	Mtg	1661	Atholton	How	1116	Calvert	Cal	855
Duval	PG	1646	Huntingtown	Cal	1113	Winters Mill	Car	853
Arundel	AA	1630	Oxon Hill	PG	1113	Rising Sun	Cec	853
Bethesda-Chevy Chase	Mtg	1611	Frederick	Fre	1111	Crossland	PG	847
Glen Burnie	AA	1607	Edgewood	Hfd	1110	New Town	B Co	827
Walt Whitman	Mtg	1585	Patapsco	B Co	1101	Patuxent	Cal	815
Annapolis	AA	1577	Franklin	B Co	1097	Wicomico	Wic	811
Meade	AA	1574	Rockville	Mtg	1096	North East (Cecil)	Cec	802
Paint Branch	Mtg	1568	River Hill	How	1095	South Carroll	Car	798
Thomas S. Wootton	Mtg	1565	C. Milton Wright	Hfd	1085	Sparrows Point	B Co	791
Sherwood	Mtg	1542	Mariotts Ridge	How	1077	Liberty	Car	786
Bladensburg	PG	1533	Northeast (AA)	AA	1072	Harford Tech	Hfd	784
Suitland	PG	1505	Chesapeake	AA	1060	Lackey	Cha	779
Parkville	B Co	1484	North Hagerstown	Was	1060	Frederick Douglass	PG	772
Laurel	PG	1461	Hammond	How	1054	Chesapeake	B Co	764
Perry Hall	B Co	1472	City	Balt	1044	Southern (AA)	AA	759
Howard	How	1469	South Hagerstown	Was	1042	Elkton	Cec	755
Northwood	Mtg	1454	Damascus	Mtg	1022	Overlea	B Co	747
Severna Park	AA	1439	Manchester Valley	Car	1021	Fallston	Hfd	744
Leonardtown	StM	1417	St. Charles	Cha	1018	Boonsboro	Was	742
Dulaney	B Co	1415	Linganore	Fre	997	Randallstown	B Co	739
Catonsville	B Co	1397	Wilde Lake	How	992	Carver A&T	B Co	731
Albert Einstein	Mtg	1381	Stephen Decatur	Wor	989	Carver Vo-Tech	Balt	729
Springbrook	Mtg	1379	Hereford	B Co	970	Francis Scott Key	Car	725
Urbana	Fre	1377	Easton	Tal	970	Williamsport	Was	725
John F. Kennedy	Mtg	1371	Lansdowne	B Co	968	Gwynn Park	PG	704
Mergenthaler	Balt	1346	Oakland Mills	How	964	Dunbar	Balt	698
James Blake	Mtg	1344	Kent Island	QA	952	Pikesville	B Co	696
Thomas Johnson	Fre	1335	Potomac	PG	942	Forest Park	Balt	696
						Largo	PG	675

https://www.mpssaa.org/assets/1/6/Classifications_19-21.pdf



Washington County



Frederick County (East)



Allegany County (West)

Table 9 – Chart from the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (2019-2021) – enrollment calculated for grades 9 - 11

Table 9 above shows that, if Clear Spring High and Hancock High were combined into one (1) single school facility, the 9-11 enrollment would be 490 students. It would still be 76 students less than any Allegany County High School (to the West of Washington County), 79 students less than any Frederick County High School (to the East of Washington County), and 100 students less

than any other Washington County High School (Smithsburg). Hancock High School is the smallest “non-specialty” high school in the State of Maryland.

FEAC Discussion/Questions/Comments –

II. Factor 6 – Financial Considerations

The FEAC, in formulating its recommendations, is to consider the following factors as stated in COMAR 13A.02.09.01:

1. Student enrollment trends; (Working Document #2)
2. Age or condition of school buildings; (Working Document #2)
3. Transportation; (Working Document #2)
4. Educational programs;
5. Racial composition of student body;
- 6. Financial considerations;**
7. Student relocation;
8. Impact on community in geographic attendance area for school proposed to be closed and school, or schools, to which student will be relocating.

While each of the factors listed above is to be considered, it may be impractical, in all cases, to reconcile each closure recommendation with each and every factor.

Per Pupil Expenditures

Based on new federal regulations, WCPS recently started reporting per pupil expenditures at the individual school level to the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The first (and most recent) year of data was from the fiscal year 2019 (FY19). The school systems fiscal year runs from July through June just like other State and local government entities. Table 9 that follows presents per pupil expenditures from FY2019 related to the schools under consideration for possible closure. This data includes only annual operating expenses and not capital expenditures.

School	FY2019 Per Pupil Expense
Cascade Elementary	\$14,041
<i>Elementary School Average</i>	\$12,363
Clear Spring Middle	\$14,992
<i>Middle School Average</i>	\$11,618
Clear Spring High	\$14,325
Hancock Middle/High	\$21,176
<i>High School Average</i>	\$12,550
<i>Secondary School Average (MS & HS Combined)</i>	\$12,151

Table 10 – FY2019 Per Pupil Expense for Cascade Elementary, Clear Spring Middle, Clear Spring High, and Hancock Middle/High as compared to Elementary, Middle and High School Average Per Pupil Expense.

Estimated Annual Operating Savings

The Finance Department has developed estimated annual savings for the schools that could potentially be recommended for closure with input from instructional leaders in relation to the projected staffing needs. WCPS has grouped the middle and high schools together at both Hancock and Clear Spring for purposes of this presentation assuming that if either were closed, both the middle and high school for that region would be closed. This was done to simplify the review. For example, since the middle school and high school students in Clear Spring ride the bus together, if only one was closed the transportation cost would be adversely affected (discussed at the FEAC meeting on February 18, 2021). The same would hold true for Hancock Middle/High School. In addition, in both of these regions the middle and high schools share some staffing positions between them.

The primary source of savings would be from the potential staffing reductions that could be made as the result of a school closure, which is what would be expected based on the fact that over 86% of the General Fund Budget expenses represent the individuals WCPS employs and associated benefits. These estimated position savings do not represent the actual salary and benefits of the currently filled positions at the effected schools, but the projected cost of a new hire in a similar position. It was assumed that all estimated position savings could primarily be achieved through position attrition throughout the entire school system. In addition to the potential staffing savings, also included is an estimate of the utility savings and the potential cost of transportation based on the information provided by the Transportation Department at a prior meeting.

Summary of Cost Factors Included in Estimated Annual Operating Savings

- Potential staffing reductions would be the primary source of savings from possible school closures based on the fact that over 86% of the General Fund Operating Budget expenses are associated with employee salaries and benefits.
- Transportation related additional costs.
- Utilities related savings.

Estimated Savings from the Closure & Consolidation of Cascade Elementary School into Smithsburg & Old Forge Elementary Schools

Cost Factors	FTE (Full-Time Equivalent Employees)	Estimated Cost / (Savings)
Staffing	-13.00	-\$991,000
Transportation		\$0
Utilities		-\$40,000
Total	-13.00	-\$1,031,00

Table 11 - Estimated Operating Savings from the Closure & Consolidation of Cascade Elementary

Estimated Savings from the Closure & Consolidation of Clear Spring Middle & High Schools into Springfield Middle, Hancock Middle/High, North Hagerstown High, & Williamsport High School

Cost Factors	FTE (Full-Time Equivalent Employees)	Estimated Cost / (Savings)
Staffing	-54.00	-\$4,195,000
Transportation		\$1,045,000
Utilities		-\$260,000
Total	-54.00	-\$3,410,000

Table 12 - Estimated Operating Savings from the Closure & Consolidation of Clear Spring Middle & High Schools

Estimated Savings from the Closure & Consolidation of Hancock Middle/High School into Clear Spring Middle & High Schools

Cost Factors	FTE (Full-Time Equivalent Employees)	Estimated Cost / (Savings)
Staffing	-25.00	-\$1,904,000
Transportation		\$90,000
Utilities		-\$119,000
Total	-25.00	-\$1,933,000

Table 13 - Estimated Operating Savings from the Closure & Consolidation of Hancock Middle/High School

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

The average age of the square footage of the four (4) schools under review is approximately 51 years.

Facility Adjusted Ages (2020 Educational Facilities Master Plan)

- Cascade Elementary School - 66 years
- Hancock Middle/High School - 54 years
- Clear Spring High School - 43 years
- Clear Spring Middle School - 41 years
-

Maintaining facilities over the years is costly with multi-million dollar roof, HVAC, boiler, and chiller projects being required. In addition, older schools often required major plumbing replacements and accessibility upgrades. Reducing the maintained building inventory would save millions of dollars by eliminating no longer needed capital upgrades and replacements.

All Facilities will continue to age and require costly Capital Projects to maintain

- Roofs - Average \$1.5M – \$2.5M
- HVAC Systems - Average \$3M - \$8M
- Boilers - Average \$0.8M - \$1.5M
- Chillers - Average \$1M – \$2M

Closure of a facility results in overall Capital Expenditure Savings

FEAC Discussion/Questions/Comments –

III. Factor 5 – Racial Composition of Student Body

The FEAC, in formulating its recommendations, is to consider the following factors as stated in COMAR 13A.02.09.01:

1. Student enrollment trends; (Working Document #2)
2. Age or condition of school buildings; (Working Document #2)
3. Transportation; (Working Document #2)
4. Educational programs;
- 5. Racial composition of student body;**
6. Financial considerations;
7. Student relocation;
8. Impact on community in geographic attendance area for school proposed to be closed and school, or schools, to which student will be relocating.

While each of the factors listed above is to be considered, it may be impractical, in all cases, to reconcile each closure recommendation with each and every factor.

The estimated percentage of minority students that would be enrolled at each school based on the closures being considered are estimated using information discussed in student enrollment trends, transportation, and are reflective of the areas that will be discussed in the Student Relocation Factor. These estimates are subject to changes based on a future redistricting effort. While this represents a possible relocation scenario, actual attendance boundary revision recommendations would be determined via a separate Charge and process from the Board of Education.

Table 14 – Table 17 below present the estimated percentage of minority students resulting from the closure and consolidation of school facilities under consideration by the FEAC.

Close Cascade Elementary School		
	Current Status - Percentage of Minority Students (2019 and 2020 Data)	Estimated Percentage of Minority Students based on Closure
Cascade Elementary	7% - 8%	
Old Forge Elementary	11%	11%
Smithsburg Elementary	15% - 16%	13% - 14%

Table 14 – Estimated percentage of Minority Students enrolled based on Cascade ES Closure

Close Hancock Middle / High School		
	Current Status - Percentage of Minority Students (2019 and 2020 Data)	Estimated Percentage of Minority Students based on Closure
Hancock Middle	4% - 5%	
Hancock High	3% - 5%	
Clear Spring Middle	10% - 12%	9% - 11%
Clear Spring High	10%	8% - 9%

Table 15 – Estimated percentage of Minority Students enrolled based on Hancock MS/HS Closure

Close Clear Spring Middle School		
	Current Status - Percentage of Minority Students (2019 and 2020 Data)	Estimated Percentage of Minority Students based on Closure
Clear Spring Middle	10% - 12%	
Hancock Middle	4% - 5%	6% - 7%
Springfield Middle	28% - 32%	26% - 29%

Table 16 – Estimated percentage of Minority Students enrolled based on Clear Spring MS Closure

Close Clear Spring High School		
	Current Status - Percentage of Minority Students (2019 and 2020 Data)	Estimated Percentage of Minority Students based on Closure
Clear Spring High	10%	
Hancock High	3% - 5%	5% - 6%
Norh Hagerstown High	48% - 51%	45% - 48%
Williamsport High	27%	25%

Table 17 – Estimated percentage of Minority Students enrolled based on Clear Spring HS Closure

FEAC Discussion/Questions/Comments –

Subject: Fwd: Hancock Schools
Date: Saturday, February 20, 2021 at 4:24:53 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Criswell, Chad
To: Anderson, Erin, Rollins, Robert, Proulx, Jeffrey
Category:  FEAC

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From: Williams, Melissa <WilliMel@wcps.k12.md.us>
Sent: Saturday, February 20, 2021 12:05:44 PM
To: Criswell, Chad <CriswCha@wcps.k12.md.us>
Subject: Fw: Hancock Schools

Here's another one, Chad.

Melissa

From: Williams, Melissa <WilliMel@wcps.k12.md.us>
Sent: Saturday, February 20, 2021 11:21 AM
To: Emily Donahue [REDACTED]
Cc: Bickford, Pieter <BickfPie@wcps.k12.md.us>; Stouffer, Stanley <StoufSta@wcps.k12.md.us>; Murray, Linda <MurraLin@wcps.k12.md.us>; Evans, Darrell <EvansDar@wcps.k12.md.us>; Zentmeyer, April <ZentmApr@wcps.k12.md.us>; Guessford, Michael <GuessMic@wcps.k12.md.us>; Michael, Boyd <MichaBoy@wcps.k12.md.us>
Subject: Re: Hancock Schools

Good morning, Ms. Donahue,

Thank you for your heartfelt email to me. As is our practice, I am copying Superintendent and my fellow board members on this response to you.

Having taught for a number of years at Hancock Elementary, I know first-hand of the love the members of the Hancock community have for their schools. The Board of Education's Facilities Enrollment Advisory Committee (FEAC) has just begun its work gathering information. In the days to come, the Board of Education will be following the discussions occurring in FEAC meetings; listening to the community, Superintendent Michael, and the superintendent's staff; and awaiting the recommendations to come from FEAC. I can assure you that any and all decisions made by the Board of Education will be done after much thought and discussion and with the intent of providing the best possible educational opportunities for students.

Again, thank you for reaching out.

Sincerely,

Melissa A. Williams, President
Washington County Board of Education

From: Emily Donahue [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 5:20 PM
To: Williams, Melissa <WilliMel@wcps.k12.md.us>
Subject: Hancock Schools

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing in regards to the potential life changing decision that is about to be made in my home. I have lived in Hancock my whole life. My family have been in Hancock for several generations. I love this town and our school is a huge part of it. I have lost both my parents and my closest family and friends have all moved away. I have purposefully stayed in Hancock because this town is my home, and this is where I want to raise my son. I want him to go to my school. My happiest memories from my child hood were at school with my friends and the amazing staff there. I know if my son is shipped off to any other school, he wont have that. Please do not close the Hancock school and take these dreams away from my family.

Thank you for your time,

Emily Donahue

Subject: FW: Hancock Schools
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 at 1:57:06 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Criswell, Chad
To: Anderson, Erin
Category:  FEAC

Also this one from last week.

Chad K. Criswell | Senior Project Manager and Planning Supervisor
Building a Community that Inspires Curiosity, Creativity, and Achievement.

301.766.8601 (office) | 301.331.9946 (mobile) | www.wcpsmd.com
Washington County Public Schools | 10435 Downsville Pike, Hagerstown, MD 21740

From: Michael, Boyd
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 12:21 PM
To: Brooke Havens [REDACTED]
Cc: Proulx, Jeffrey <ProulJef@wcps.k12.md.us>; Rollins, Robert <RolliRob@wcps.k12.md.us>; Criswell, Chad <CriswCha@wcps.k12.md.us>
Subject: RE: Hancock Schools

Ms. Havens,

I don't see any recommendation that would include closing the elementary school. If any thing happens it is more likely to effect the middle/high school.

Regards,

Boyd Michael

Dr. Boyd J. Michael, III | Superintendent
Building a Community that Inspires Curiosity, Creativity, and Achievement.
301.766.2816 | www.wcpsmd.com
Washington County Public Schools | 10435 Downsville Pike, Hagerstown, MD 21740

From: Brooke Havens [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 19, 2021 10:40 AM
To: Michael, Boyd <MichaBoy@wcps.k12.md.us>
Subject: Re: Hancock Schools

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Okay thank you, if this does happen I will be pulling my kids because a 90 min bus ride one way is way to much for a elementary school kid.

On Thu, Feb 18, 2021, 10:23 AM Michael, Boyd <MichaBoy@wcps.k12.md.us> wrote:

Ms. Havens,

Thank you for sharing your concerns. The Facilities Enrollment Advisory Committee is in the early stages of making their recommendations to the Board of Education. No decisions have been as of now. There are many concerns about the continuing decline in enrollment in the Hancock area. This decline has been occurring over many years with no sign of it rebounding in the near future.

We will keep the community informed.

Regards,
Boyd Michael

Dr. Boyd J. Michael, III | Superintendent
Building a Community that Inspires Curiosity, Creativity, and Achievement.
301.766.2816 | www.wcpsmd.com
Washington County Public Schools | 10435 Downsville Pike, Hagerstown, MD 21740

From: Brooke Havens [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2021 10:07 AM
To: Michael, Boyd <MichaBoy@wcps.k12.md.us>
Subject: Hancock Schools

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

This would really be bad for our two kids if they wouls shut down the schools. They have moved schools so much I moved here so that wouldn't be a problem anymore. Plus they get more one to one help with being a small school. Hancock really needs the school for economics reasons too. People will stop moving here if there is no schools for the kids.

Please please consider keeping our schools.

Thank you a concerned mother

Brooke Havens

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Subject: Closure of Hancock Schools

Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 at 3:49:45 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Diana O'Brien

To: FEAC

Category:  FEAC

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this email to detail the burden that the closure of the Hancock area schools would cause on the students and, subsequently, their families.

First and foremost, I'd like to address weather concerns. I believe it is well known that the western region of Washington county experiences more severe weather than the Hagerstown area. So much, in fact, Washington County annexed the region, giving the Board the ability to close Hancock schools when the rest would remain open. It hasn't been used, and many times I have wondered why. Was it because there has never been a need? No. Is it because the Board Members are out of touch with the Hancock region? Probably. By the grace of God and good instincts of our bus drivers were kids able to make it home safely. Certainly not because of the caring, or lack thereof, of the board.

Secondly, the Hancock area is an expansive area. A straight drive from the western most part of Hancock to clear spring would take 40 minutes, let alone having an entire route to cover. At what point is it beneficial for a student to spend 3+ hours on a bus, daily? I'd imagine this isn't a concern of yours, because your children aren't effected. It will be destructive to the family element. An early wake up, an extended day at school, homework. Where does family time begin? Is it after dinner, when children will be cleaning up and getting ready for an earlier slumber directly related to an earlier wake up? Or would it be before dinner, which has all been but eliminated thanks to homework and extended travel times? It seems to me that the lack of a home life will have an adverse effect on the child, and the family unit. But as long as it saves money, it's ok? What a great example we're setting for our children; people do not matter, the budget does!

Lastly, I appreciate that Hancock has all but been forgotten when it comes to magnet programs. I certainly appreciate that everything has been centered around Hagerstown, and transportation is NOT provided. Many families in Hancock are not financial sound, I'll even go as far as to say financially poor. Commuting to Hagerstown or the surrounding area daily, isn't an option. Whatever happened to an equal educational opportunity? It seems to have been lost when we're talking about Hancock. Parents strive to provide better opportunities for their children. You'd think fighting the very people elected to help with education wouldn't be necessary, but here we are.

My main question: do you even care? Do you care about the quality of education you are providing to students outside of the area of Hagerstown? My daughter's bus has been at maximum capacity for 2 years. What do we do as an educational system? Make longer routes instead of contracting more drivers. It's more cost efficient. Certainly from a financial aspect, but what about mental and emotional? It's ok, we'll just add more students AND lengthen the bus route. Giving them less time at home, and shortening the amount of time with family must be the agenda. I don't see this being beneficial for anything but.

I pray you look at the larger picture as you consider shutting our school down. I pray you know how unfair you have been to Hancock area students. Furthermore, I pray that Hancock area students will benefit from this conversation that has begun, and a fair and equal educational opportunity will develop.

Regards,

Diana

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

Subject: Hancock Schools
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 at 3:16:54 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Jamie Myers
To: FEAC
Category:  FEAC

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this email to detail the burden that the closure of the Hancock area schools would cause on the students and, subsequently, their families.

First and foremost I'd like to address weather concerns. I believe it is well known that the western region of Washington county experienced more severe weather than the Hagerstown area. So much, in fact, Washington County annexed the region, giving the Board the ability to close Hancock schools when the rest would remain open. It hasn't been used, and many times I have wondered why. Was it because there has never been a need? No. Is it because the Board Members are out of touch with the Hancock region? Probably. By the grace of God and good instincts of our bus drivers were kids able to make it home safely. Certainly not because of the caring, or lack thereof, of the board.

Secondly, the Hancock area is an expansive area. A straight drive from the western most part of Hancock to clear spring would take 40 minutes, let alone having an entire route to cover. At what point is it beneficial for a student to spend 3+ hours on a bus, daily? I'd imagine this isn't a concern of yours, because your children aren't effected. It will be destructive to the family element. An early wake up, an extended day at school, homework. Where does family time begin? Is it after dinner, when children will be cleaning up and getting ready for an earlier slumber directly related to an earlier wake up? Or would it be before dinner, which has all been but eliminated thanks to homework and extended travel times? It seems to me that the lack of a home life will have an adverse effect on the child, and the family unit. But as long as it saves money, it's ok? What a great example we're setting for our children; people do not matter, the budget does!

Lastly, I appreciate that Hancock has all but been forgotten when it comes to magnet programs. I certainly appreciate that everything has been centered around Hagerstown, and transportation is NOT provided. Many families in Hancock are not financial sound, I'll even go as far as to say financially poor. Commuting to Hagerstown or the surrounding area daily, isn't an option. Whatever happened to an equal educational opportunity? It seems to have been lost when we're talking about Hancock. Parents strive to provide better opportunities for their children. You'd think fighting the very people elected to help with education wouldn't be necessary, but here we are.

My main question: do you even care? Do you care about the quality of education you are providing to students outside of the area of Hagerstown? My daughter's bus has been at maximum capacity for 2 years. What do we do as an educational system? Make longer routes instead of contracting more drivers. It's more cost efficient. Certainly from a financial aspect, but what about mental and emotional? It's ok, we'll just add more students AND lengthen the bus route. Giving them less time at home, and shortening the amount of time with family must be the agenda. I don't see this being beneficial for anything but.

I pray you look at the larger picture as you consider shutting our school down. I pray you how unfair you have been to Hancock area students. Furthermore, I pray that Hancock area students will benefit from this conversation that has

begun, and a fair and equal educational opportunity will develop.

Regards,

Jamie Myers

Subject: Hancock Schools
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 at 2:19:02 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: levi little
To: FEAC
Category:  FEAC

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

2/19/2021

Dear WCPS FEAC Members,

I am writing to you after watching the meeting held to potentially close one of the Hancock schools. There are many factors that have already been discussed but many more that I doubt will even be brought up.

My first argument as to why it is a terrible idea to consider closing any school at this time is because the veto on the Kirwan Commission legislation may be overturned. This is where funding would be based on the school rather than the amount of students attending. The Kirwan funding plan directly helps locations like Hancock where many families are at or below the poverty line.

Secondly, it is always thrown out that Hancock is one of the most expensive schools to operate. This is far from the truth when it comes to the overall cost of our schools when everything is factored in; such as the capital improvements or the lack thereof over the past several decades. Our schools have seen little to no effort in fixing very dangerous facility flaws. One of which I petitioned for had been walls in our elementary school due to fire safety hazards and egress issues where we received less than \$100,000 to remedy. I believe that with the same money the 45 year old carpet had been replaced as well. As thankful as I was for the safety upgrade, soon after WCPS BOE spent triple that on a phone system upgrade. That just goes to show how little we receive or expect.

If the concern is the cost of replacing our school buildings, we are not asking for a new school because our buildings have been well maintained by the Hancock staff members, the structure is sound, and they just need some renovations at some point because our buildings already allow for westward development in our county. It would be far less than \$100 million for a new school and our buildings would last another 50 years. I feel that these factors alone show how Hancock schools have not and will not be a burden of cost to WCPS.

I'm not sure that WCPS can stand by their statement on the budget FAQ web page. "Schools that have more students who are economically disadvantaged will receive extra staffing to lower class sizes and provide additional support for intervention." That would not be true if they were to close any of the Hancock schools. We already have the smaller class sizes but now they are too small and

cost too much? It appears to me that the goal is to have so many students in a classroom that there is a need for mobile classrooms. I never would have thought that Hancock schools would be considered a financial burden with how much we actually receive out of the WCPS budget.

Lastly, we have millions of dollars in infrastructure upgrades that will be happening very soon in our town which will hopefully lead to more growth in our area. Closing one of our schools would undoubtedly be a devastating setback that would not be worth the shortsighted savings.

I know that you all have a difficult task at hand and I fear that only looking at the presented data and maps will not provide enough information to make an informed decision. Maybe this Committee would be interested in taking the bus ride that our kids would need to take if one of our rural schools closed. I'm sure that a lot of the same holds true for Clear Spring and that would not be right to do to areas that ask for and/or receive very little.

I'm humbly asking that you come to the conclusion that closing rural schools is a mistake and not to be considered for redistricting or closure due to budget cuts. Thank you for your consideration and your time in helping to solve the WCPS financial problems.

Sincerely,
Levi Little

Subject: Do not close Hancock Middle Senior High
Date: Sunday, February 21, 2021 at 4:43:21 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Charles Sexton
To: FEAC, Michael, Boyd, Williams, Melissa, Stouffer, Stanley, Guessford, Michael, Bickford, Pieter, Murray, Linda, Evans, Darrell, Zentmeyer, April
Category:  FEAC

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear WCPS and FEAC Members,

I feel betrayed WCPS would be considering the closing of Hancock Middle Senior High School. What's best for the children? This is what my wife and I always think when we need to make decisions for our children. We sacrifice and put them first before anything. This includes financial gains. Because the biggest investment we can make is in our children.

WCPS Board members, my wife and I voted for you. Not because we liked your names on a piece of paper. But because we researched and felt you would serve in the best interest of our children and put them first. Dr. Michael, you were one of my principal's during my schooling at Hancock Middle Senior High. You, more than anyone else this letter is addressed to should know how the Hancock Community feels about their schools.

The schools in Hancock are the soul of the community. Closing Hancock Middle Senior High would destroy the community and uproot our children from their hometown. The students in Hancock already have some of the longest bus commutes in the county. Currently, most students in Hancock have about a 15-minute bus ride one way to school. If the school closes, most students would then have an hour or more bus ride one way to school. My commute to work is less time than this and is totally unacceptable to expect a student to endure.

During your review I ask you not to think of any financial gains. But to think of the best interest of the children in Hancock and put them first. Destroying a community and uprooting students is not the right answer. So, I ask you to please not close Hancock Middle Senior High School. I appreciate your time.

Sincerely,

Charles Sexton

Subject: Re: Keep Hancock Middle-Senior High School Open
Date: Sunday, February 21, 2021 at 8:12:23 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: Michael, Boyd
To: Michael Fox
CC: Proulx, Jeffrey, Criswell, Chad, Rollins, Robert
Category:  FEAC

Michael,

It is great to hear from you. I too have many fond memories of my four wonderful years at Hancock Middle/Senior High School. The students, the staff, and community worked collectively over those four years and HMSHS moved from last place in every student achievement area to the top in Washington County. This collaboration effort resulted in the National Blue Ribbon School recognition. While our smaller class sizes might have helped, it was the work of the school-wide-community team that made this achievement possible. That effort can be and has been repeated in other schools that have worked together.

It is with mixed emotions that I support the thorough review of our schools with declining enrollment. HMSHS is half the size it was when you and I were there. At that time there were many limited opportunities for our students. With this steady decline in enrollment the school is just not the same. Something needs to change. I want the best for every student in our county and will work tirelessly to the end.

Hang there with us and the process. I have copied the liaisons for the Facilities Enrollment Advisory Committee on my response to you. They will share your thoughts with the committee.

Regards,
Boyd Michael

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 21, 2021, at 3:43 AM, Michael Fox [REDACTED] wrote:

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Superintendent Michael,

I know you've probably received several emails about the above subject line. I am writing to also ask the same thing, but I also ask only one thing, please don't only read this as the Superintendent, read this as the man who once led Hancock Middle-Senior High School.

As you know, from being a former principal at Hancock Middle-Senior High School how tight-knit the community is. You are also more than likely aware of how small class sizes benefit both the students and faculty. In the last year that you were principal at Hancock, my sixth-grade year, HMSHS was named a National Blue-Ribbon School of Excellence, and the sixth-grade class all passed the Maryland Functional Reading Test. It also felt really good when the faculty was able to call us each by name and truly interacted with us. I can tell you, from my time at Washington County Technical High School, unless a faculty member had you, they didn't know you. I feel by potentially shutting down HMSHS that these students would be done a great disservice.

Another factor I feel needs to be remembered is the faculty. I had some of the best teachers in the world at Hancock. Ms. Little, Mr. and Mrs. Wachter, Mr. Hoopengardner, Mr. Michaels, etc. Each of those five had a tremendous gift of reaching their students. In fact, every teacher had that gift. For example, if it wasn't for Mr. Michaels's passion, I wouldn't have tried the Geography Bee. Ms. Little instilled a love of writing in me. The list goes on. While I only know a few of the faculty who teach at HMSHS currently, I am sure all of those teachers have that same passion for seeing the students succeed.

Hancock may be the smallest school, but the passion and drive are there to be the best. I am asking that you allow future generations to have the same experience that I as well as countless others have had. Please don't close Hancock Middle-Senior High School.

Thank you,
Michael Fox

Subject: Re: Hancock
Date: Thursday, February 25, 2021 at 7:53:07 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Michael, Boyd
To: D Lowe
CC: Williams, Melissa, Stouffer, Stanley, Guessford, Michael, Bickford, Pieter, Murray, Linda, Evans, Darrell, Zentmeyer, April, Rollins, Robert, Proulx, Jeffrey, Criswell, Chad
Category:  FEAC

Ms. Lowe,

Thank you for your email and sharing your passion and support for Hancock Middle/Senior High School. The Facilities Enrollment Advisory Committee is still in the process of making their recommendations to the Board. They have a detailed process and list of considerations to follow. While there is potential cost savings by closing the school, that is the least of my concerns. I served as principal of the school for four wonderful years of my 42 year career. At that time it was difficult to provide the opportunities that every middle and high school student should have because of the size of the student body. Since that time, the enrollment has declined significantly and it is increasingly difficult to meet the needs of all students at the school. I fear more opportunities will be lost as the enrollment continues on the current path. It is nice to have a small school but at some point small can become too small.

I have copied the liaison to the FEAC on this email so that it will be shared with the committee.

Regards,
Boyd Michael

On Feb 25, 2021, at 10:08 AM, D Lowe [REDACTED] wrote:

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Board Member(s),
Please read this letter with an open mind and heart. This letter does not come from anger or bitterness but sincerely comes from concern for our WCPS children. I am not ignorant to the budget concerns and it certainly isn't my place to say where cuts should be made. However, the cuts shouldn't be ones that directly hurt our students. I am speaking of the possibility of closing the Hancock area schools. As an employee of WCPS, I have a genuine interest in the success of all our students, the success of our schools, and the success of our county. But, first and foremost, my concern is for the students.
I have been affected by consolidation of schools. I came to Hancock Middle Senior High School my

senior year from Allegany County. In my circumstance, this consolidation benefited me. I grew up less than a mile from the county border and lived 10 minutes from Hancock. Attending a school closer to my home allowed for my hard working parents to attend my school events; I had more time with my family and, I was able to connect after school with classmates in sports, clubs, and local after school employment. I was able to do these things because of one thing, location! If you close Hancock Middle Senior High, you will be denying the children that currently attend access to many opportunities. Yes, Hagerstown area schools have more sports/ after school opportunities and programs. But, how many of our Hancock students would be able to participate? Very few, maybe those whose parents already work in Hagerstown? The majority of families would struggle to be able to support their child/ our students in these after school events. Every single “perk” you tell yourself these students would benefit from is a lie. The programs that are boasted about would lack participation from our Hancock area students, not because of disinterest, but because of the distance between their home and school. Also, did you know that Hancock has some of the best teachers? And, before you say “well let’s disperse them into the county”, I’m going to tell you why. Hancock teachers are provided a precious opportunity; to build relationships with all of their students (something a small school and community provides). The teachers at Hancock are not just these students’ teachers for a year or two, they are their teachers for a lifetime. I have seen this impact with my own eyes. Please, do not sacrifice our students’ well-being, education/ opportunities, or time to benefit the budget. They are worth way more than what you would be saving.

Sincerely,
Darleane Lowe
“Students first, they are worth it!”

Subject: hancock school

Date: Friday, February 26, 2021 at 10:18:02 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: david graven

To: FEAC

Category:  FEAC

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I would like to let you know that I oppose the closing of Hancock school. this is unfair to the kids the parents and the teachers. no matter how you spin it this is not what the citizens of Hancock want. You should know I would rather take my children out of school and home school them than have them travel to another school and subject them to this stress of change. This covid19 pandemic has already been hard on our kids. to move them to another school and make them adjust to a schedule that allows enough time for them to make it to this new school is not in their best interest . I urge you and your colleagues to trash this outrageous idea to close the Hancock schools. thank you.

Subject: Potential closing of Hancock school

Date: Saturday, February 27, 2021 at 8:18:16 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Cristina Welch

To: Michael, Boyd, Williams, Melissa, Stouffer, Stanley, Guessford, Michael, Bickford, Pieter, Murray, Linda, Evans, Darrell, Zentmeyer, April, FEAC

Category:  FEAC

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To all our fellow board members, superintendent, and facilities members,

I want to start by asking a huge question, why? Why is this such a burden to our county to potentially close Hancock Middle Senior High school? Do these kids in our small community not have a matter to you? None the less the feelings they will perceive if their forced to uproot from their hometown to attend school elsewhere within the county.

While you have proven that the mental well-being of Hancock students is not a factor I truly believe your outlook on this situation is not fair. These students in our Hancock community are like family. They all support and stick together to help each other. Why would uprooting them to another school be of any option?

Why is the only option in this matter to close the school? Give us a chance! Put a magnet program in Hancock. Let more Allegheny County families that have fought to come to Hancock schools come. Give the kids a chance.

This past year has not been easy on anyone, students, parents, school staff. I am appalled at the board of Washington county including the facilities members to even think this is a competent idea at this time. These students are just getting back into the swing of being in the brick and mortar and happy to see their fellow classmates in their home school setting and you are causing such anxiety by bringing up this awful potential decision. You realize this isn't just a burden to the teachers and parents, it mostly effects the students. Students are comfortable where they are, why would you even think it's ok to uproot them?

There are other options to bring the financial burden back to the positive. But clearly that is your only worry. You don't care about the well-being of these Hancock students. You have proven that.

Let me touch on the bus situation. The slides that were shared in the meeting stated 90 min bus rides. That included to and from school. Is that even safe for an everyday commute for children? Not to mention the early pick ups in the morning. This will trigger earlier bed times and less family time. Does that not matter? While Hancock has always started earlier than most other county schools and dismissed earlier. You are now saying even earlier in the morning that these students will need to awake to catch a bus. This is fair? All because you are willing to close a small community school, the community suffers. When will taking money and finances out of this equation and putting in the well being of Hancock's community come into play? If I'm not mistaken, Hancock is a town in the county and pays taxes just like everyone else. We as homeowners pay county taxes, and I'm certain a "school tax" is included somewhere in there. I believe someone needs to show us on paper how our Hancock students are the most expensive? If anything Hancock schools receive a lot less than the other county schools. We have been forgotten on so many levels through the years.

But the main factor that bothers me the most is knowing the superintendent of Washington county public school once was the principal of Hancock. He of all should know how this is effecting our small town. There are more on the board as well that previously taught or were employed by the board in a school setting in the past and know how the potential of closing a school would have effected them as well. It saddens me that not one member of the board has responded or spoken up about any of our concerns. We as parents are speaking up for our community and our children. We are panther proud and we are a strong team! Please take into consideration our concerns and make the right choice to leave Hancock schools alone and help us grow instead of burying our memories and our comfort.

Cristina W

Subject: CONCERNS WITH CLOSING WASHINGTON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (HANCOCK)

Date: Sunday, February 28, 2021 at 1:44:36 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Timothy Boyer

To: FEAC, Michael, Boyd, Williams, Melissa, Stouffer, Stanley, Guessford, Michael, Bickford, Pieter, Murray, Linda, Evans, Darrell, Zentmeyer, April

Category:  FEAC

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To the WCBOE, Superintendent and FEAC committee

My name is Tim Boyer. I am a lifelong resident and graduate of Hancock. I have two elementary age students and I am currently a Hancock Town Councilman. I am concerned with the proposed closing of the Hancock school on all three of these levels. I appreciate you taking the time to read this letter and the concerns our community has with this proposal.

First, this is not an appropriate time to begin planning any school closures. We are in the middle of a pandemic and under a state of emergency. This causes limited accessibility to openly discuss or take public comments. The current FEAC meetings are virtual only and there is no ability for public comment. In addition, families are already under tremendous stress and should not need to worry about the effects of closing schools at this time. Many families that would normally have time to express their concerns are more worried about how they are paying rent or feeding their families. It was just 2 years ago that the Superintendent Boyd Michael was at the high school telling us there was no intention to close the Hancock school in the 10-year plan but yet here we are.

One of the biggest concerns as a parent is travel. There are multiple reasons including long bus rides. We will go from over 75% of our students being on the bus for under 15 minutes to 75% of students will be on a bus over an hour. We already have the student with the longest bus ride in the county at 65 minutes and this will add an additional 30 minutes to that. That student will be on a school bus for 23.75 days each school year and this is unacceptable. This will reduce already overburdened students' time at home. There is also the safety issue of long interstate travel. If there is an accident on the interstate kids could be stuck on the interstate for extended periods of time. It also puts our newest drivers on the interstate driving their friends to school to avoid these long bus rides. I think we can all agree that this is not the safest way for them to begin driving. The last concern with the distance is the ability for Hancock students to participate in extracurricular activities as many parents will not be able to pick them up after practices. Extracurricular activities are a very important part of our education system and taking those opportunities away from our kids is unfair. The transportation plan for our elementary students staying at Hancock would be to have them start arriving at the school at 6:40am. Some of them will be getting up in the 4am hour to make it to school on time. This will limit their ability to succeed and the teacher's ability to teach. Again, this should not even be a discussion if kids are first.

As a Councilman I am concerned that closing the Hancock school will be a death sentence to the Town of Hancock in a time where we are beginning to see growth. County schools are a central piece to small communities. I have had many phone calls with concerned parents that will move before they put their children through the extra stress and safety issues that closing our school will cause. These families will not move to another location in Washington County. We are only a half mile from Fulton county in Pennsylvania and Morgan County in West Virginia. The move will not only affect the school board funding per student, but also the property values will plummet which will reduce property tax income. There will also be tax income lost due to shopping in other states for groceries, restaurants and gas and other items and many of our small businesses will close.

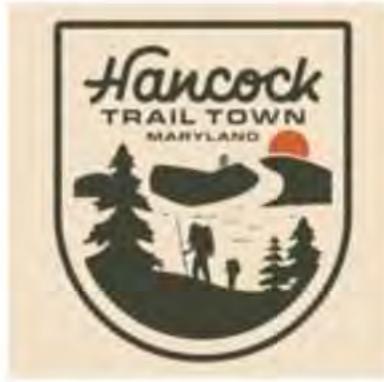
The Hancock town manager Joe Gilbert prepared a presentation and presented to some of you on some of the economic driving factors that the Town of Hancock is working on that will change future enrollment in the school. I have provided a copy of the presentation in this email for you to review. Property sales in Hancock were up 80% in the last year. People are moving to more rural areas as work is being done remotely and this has been accelerated due to the Covid pandemic. There are also some other driving factors that could help grow our population. These include developing plans of the Fairview Orchard property west of town. There is also a bypass in neighboring Morgan County that has a completion date of 2023. Both will grow the population in Hancock. We need time for these things to develop but closing our school now will prevent any of this from happening.

All options and consequences of those choices need to be considered before a decision is made. Decisions cannot be decided solely on the all mighty dollar. Just because we are in the western part of the county and are a rural area does not mean our kids don't matter. Please carefully weigh your decisions and come up with the solution that is best for our kids and best for our county.

Save Our School

Panther Pride,

Tim Boyer



Town of Hancock

Economic Development

Plan

The importance of the
Hancock Middle-Senior High School



Agenda

- Overview
- Economic Development
 - Industry
 - Housing
 - Retail and Hospitality
 - Tourism
 - Tentative Plans
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Population and Growth

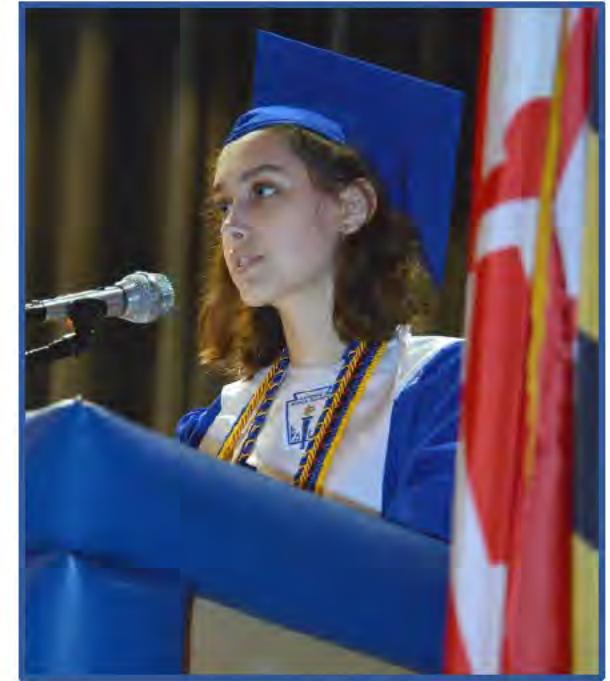




Overview



- 50 Employees to include 28 teaching positions, administration, food service, custodial staff, etc
- 254 Students
- Serves students throughout Western Washington County to Allegany County line to Indian Springs
- Major employer for the Town of Hancock
- Underlying economic conditions in Hancock has caused enrollment to drop over last several years
- Town of Hancock is dedicated to reversing these underlying economic conditions
- This movement is now underway and will begin to realize results





Economic Development

- Economic Growth and Development brings new residents to the Town of Hancock which will increase enrollment in the Town Middle-Senior High School
- Annexations will bring new industry, jobs and residents as people relocate to Hancock for employment
- Tourism is a major economic driver to Washington County and supports many jobs
- Hancock is reinventing itself to drive these tourism and hospitality jobs
- This new industry needs the infrastructure on which to grow. Hancock is in the process of rebuilding its infrastructure to support this growth



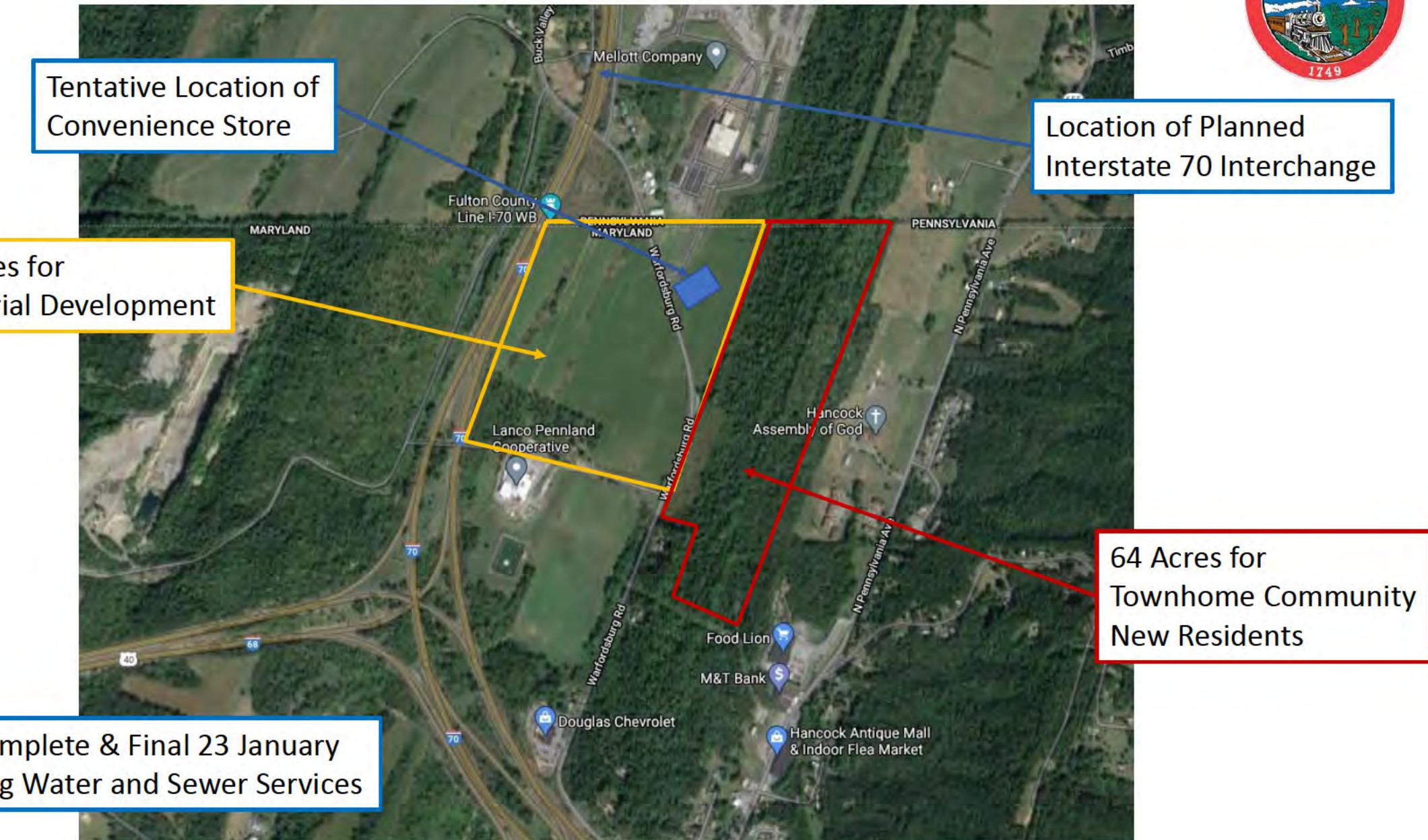
Economic Development Projects

- Orchard Business Park Annexation and Development
 - In progress since July 2020
 - Annexation final 23 January
 - 130 acre industrial park zoned Business General to attract industrial / commercial enterprises
 - Estimated job creation ± 200 jobs to bring new residents to the Town
 - Planned housing community of townhomes
 - Possible new convenient store and gas station
 - Increased economic activity throughout the Town due to influx of new jobs, businesses and residents moving into the community
 - Town committed to extending municipal water and sewer services by Autumn 2022





Orchard Business Park





Industrial Economic Development Projects

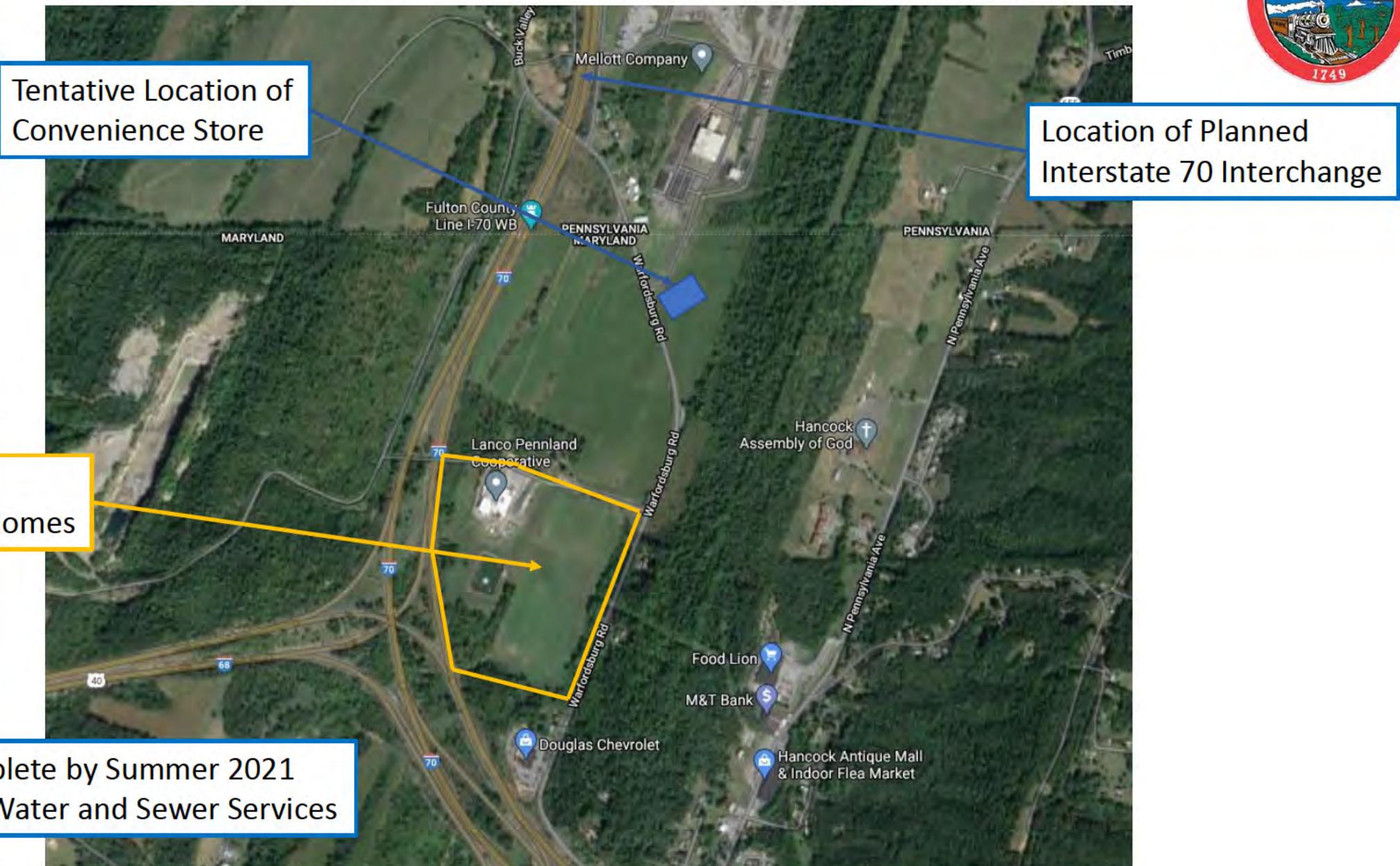


- Lanco-Pennland Annexation and Development
 - In progress
 - 50 acre residential community of single family homes Estimated 10 – 15 families to relocate to the Town
 - Possible new convenient store and gas station
 - Increased economic activity throughout the Town due to influx of new jobs, businesses and residents moving into the community
 - Town committed to extending municipal water and sewer services by Autumn 2022





Annexation of Lanco-Pennland



Annexation Complete by Summer 2021
Town Extending Water and Sewer Services



Other Economic Initiatives

- Town passed Business Incentive Resolution October 2019 offering three years waiver of Town taxes
- Town of Hancock is now a Maryland designated Sustainable Community with business incentives and funding opportunities
- Town of Hancock is State Priority Funding Area
- Town is a Main Street Community with Main Street Hancock organization active to recruit new businesses
- Town actively annexing commercial properties to extend these initiatives for new business
- Rezoning ongoing within the Town to create designated Downtown Zone and encourage business investment & jobs
- Created *Hancock Works!* Workforce and Economic Development office to coordinate economic development, attract businesses and create jobs





Economic Growth



- Development in progress at the BFS Foods location, 484 East Main St.
- Planned new AC&T facility 317 East Main Street
- Town Public Works Department to vacate from 319 East Main Street to new location with Wastewater Infrastructure project
- 319 East Main Street designated site for future hotel development to create approximately 85 jobs and spur economic activity from tourism
- New Subway Restaurant and Retail Plaza in progress West Main Street
- 5 new electric car charging stations in place and operational



Economic Growth in Progress





Economic Growth in Progress



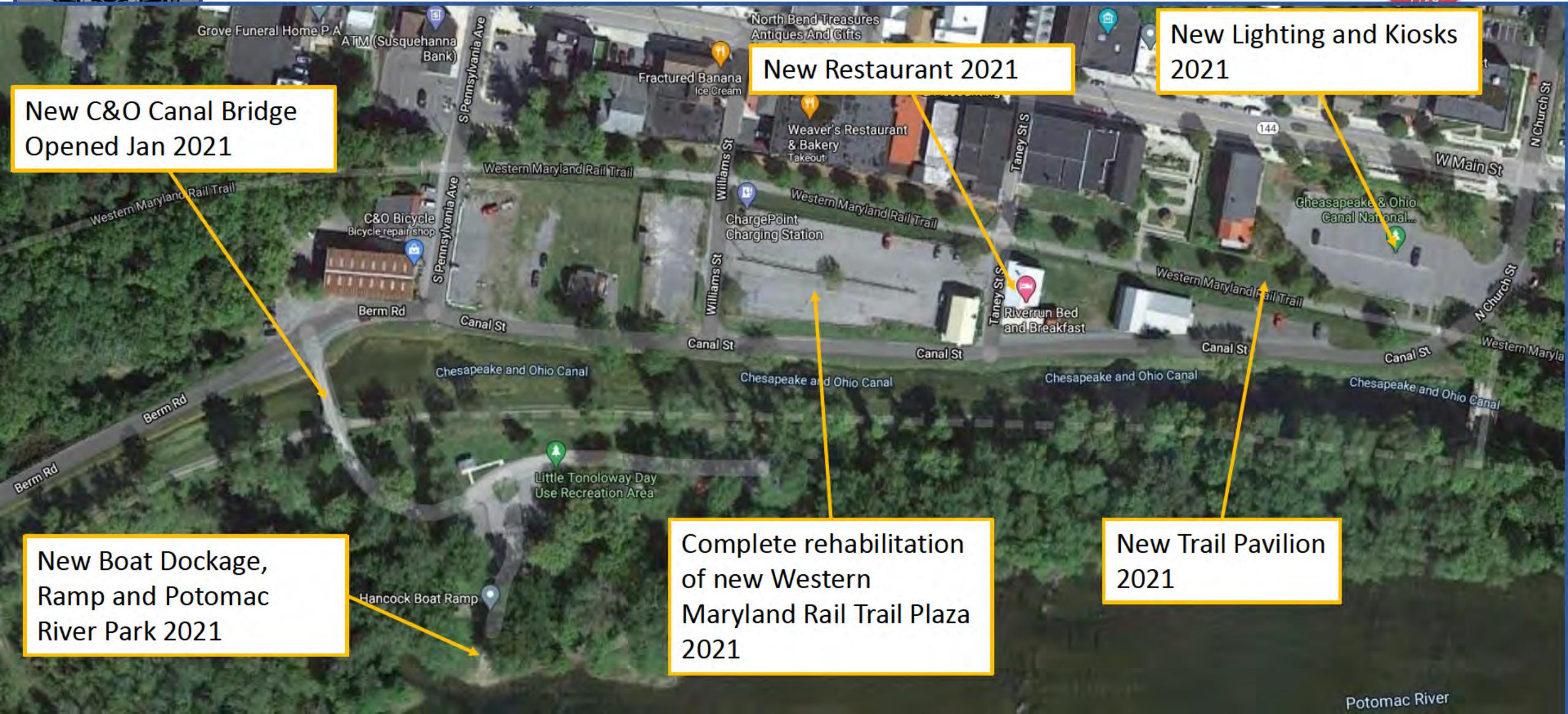


Parks Recreation and Tourism

- Town of Hancock proclaimed Trail Town Maryland by Governor Hogan
- Investing over \$1 million in parks, recreation and tourism
 - Rebuilding Potomac River boat launch and River Park
 - Rehabilitating Western Maryland Rail Trail Plazas
 - Adding new pavilions, trail extensions and attractions
 - Rebuilding sports fields, ballparks and open spaces
- Marketing campaign underway to attract tourist to spur economic activity and create jobs
- Hancock just awarded Bikeways Improvement Grant (\$64,000) to improve Western Maryland Rail Trail, Town bikeways and tourism

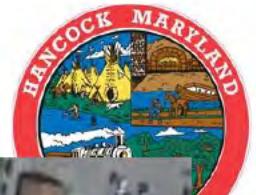


Parks, Recreation and Tourism





Parks, Recreation and Tourism





Parks, Recreation and Tourism





Infrastructure

- Town of Hancock investing over \$20 million in wastewater infrastructure
 - \$18 million for new and enlarged wastewater treatment facility
 - \$2.8 million for rehabilitation, repair and replacement of sewer lines and supporting infrastructure
- Investing over \$8 million in new fresh water infrastructure
 - New water mains, service lines and meters
 - New secondary well water source and storage
- New water and wastewater infrastructure sized to support enlargement of Town, economic growth and increase in population
- Completion date of both Town-wide projects is August 2023



Infrastructure

- Infrastructure project contracts to include 15% local hire requirement
 - Hancock Works! Workforce Development Center to coordinate hiring, employee training and onboarding with infrastructure contractors
 - Create jobs and trained workforce
 - Large capital investment into the Town with lifecycle of at least 30 years
- New infrastructure expanded to include and service annexed Orchard Business Park, Lanco-Pennland Cheese factory and housing
 - 15 single family homes
 - Possible Townhome community
- Infrastructure planned and designed to accommodate increase in population and economic growth



Conclusion

- Town of Hancock building a new future that includes an increase in population
- This increase in population will require the Hancock Middle-Senior High School to remain in place and open
- Closing the school will immediately kill 50 local jobs
- Closing the school will be a severe detriment to the future plans of the Town of Hancock
 - Current employees will move away to find work
 - Potential future Town residents will not relocate to Hancock without a local Middle-High School for their children





Conclusion

- The Hancock Middle-Senior High School is a pivotal and necessary part of the Town
- Closing of the School will derail future economic recovery plans
- The School remaining open is critical to encourage business development and commercial investment
- The Hancock School to remain open is critical to have new residents relocate to Hancock for economic opportunities
- Closing the school will be detrimental to the economic vitality and growth of the region
- Closing the school will significantly impact the quality of life for our current students and their families



A New Beginning

- The Town of Hancock is at the cusp of a new beginning and the Hancock Middle-Senior High School is critical to this!





Bottom Line

- The Town of Hancock is requesting a five-year moratorium to keep the Hancock Middle-Senior High School open
- Five years will allow the economic development and infrastructure plans of Hancock to be completed

Subject: Re: Closure of HMSHS

Date: Sunday, February 28, 2021 at 9:20:47 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Michael, Boyd

To: Marsha Flowers

CC: BOE

Category:  FEAC

Marsha,

Thank you for your email and advocacy for Hancock Middle Senior High School. Having spent four years of my professional career at Hancock, I fully support the school and have favored the school and student body as the enrollment has decreased. I have witnessed the decline in opportunities, both academically and extracurricularly for our students at Hancock and it concerns me deeply. As an example, I was shocked this fall to find out that the Raiders football team no longer exists. The elimination of a feeder program like this is the beginning of the end for a program like football. The band has not participated in the Showcase of Bands for a number of years. The enrollment in advanced placement programs continues to decline. None of these examples are a reflection on the community or school staff. It is an outstanding community and staff. As I have shared with some other community members, at what point is small, too small.

I am open to all types of options and certainly will consider those identified in your email. The FEAC has a list of items they need to consider before making their recommendations to the Board. In the end, if the school remains open, I hope that is what is best for all students in the long run.

Good luck with your rally.

Regards,
Boyd

> On Feb 28, 2021, at 4:27 PM, Marsha Flowers [REDACTED] wrote:

>

>

>

> Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

>

>

>

> As a parent of 2 kids that graduated from HMSHS, a person that lives in and supports this community, as well as a teacher at Hancock and for WCPS for 29 years, I truly hope other options than closure of HMSHS will strongly be considered!

>

> I went to Heritage Academy for most of my school days (2nd-12th). I believe in smaller schools vs larger schools. I have taught in a larger school and compared with others that have attended larger schools. Larger is not usually better overall in most cases for the majority of the students or staff! There are many benefits to a smaller school /neighborhood schools of the past.

>

> I know there is a crisis situation in probably every public school system in America. I know you can't squeeze money out of trees. I also know there are hard decisions to be made! I don't envy any of you having to make these decisions.

>

> Just like Marshall Street School, HMSHS is in a different category from ALL other WCPS schools, other than maybe Cascade. Marshall St serves a unique student body that in no way would be fair to put in any other "regular ed"

school. They have special needs that should be considered first regardless of numbers in the school! Similarly, HMSHS has a special situation unlike any other school in Washington County or even MD schools itself!

>

> I'm not telling you anything you don't already know. We are landlocked. We cannot expand or join other schools by redistricting to 3 of our borders! The only way is east. And the closest school is 20 minutes by car going 75+ miles an hour on the interstate. Regardless of where anyone lives in Hancock, it will add at least 30 more minutes by bus to an already long bus ride both morning and evening. That is in no way ok for ANY OTHER school in our county and would never fly with the majority of the High School in Washington County. Why is it ok to expect that of our school ? This would impact ANY after school activities as well, meaning most Hancock students would not be able to participate or would have hardship participating in any of those activities.

>

> Put aside "Hancock Proud, Panther Pride, Hancock Good" or any other allegiance to just our community school. The expectations of the commute in and of itself puts us at almost an equally unique situation as Marshall Street.

>

> There are options to consider. I will name just a couple that I absolutely feel would work and should be considered.....

>

> 1. With what we have come up with in virtual learning, programs could be added AT HMSHS to allow more kids to stay and offer many courses that have been offered at all the other high schools for years. This is one reason many families have sacrificed to send their kids to magnet programs. It has not even been attempted to try any programs like these at the elementary, middle or high school! This absolutely could have happened with our growing and successful Ag program that was absolutely taken to build up Clear Springs failing program. It had many opportunities for growth!

>

> 2. Make us a K-12 school and turn the elementary school into a pre-K school and daycare center. We are very similar to any private school with our numbers. With some adjustments to both schools, this is a real possibility and no one has to add unacceptable miles/time to their commute to school daily.

>

> I strongly suggest considering Hancock students and families equal to students and families in the North and South ends of Hagerstown or Williamsport , Boonsboro, Smithsburg, and Clear Spring! We have not been treated equally in many ways! That is a fact! We are usually considered the outcasts and talked about that way behind closed doors of many other schools and from leaders and ones in charge. Not enough wealthy people to be the squeaky wheel and pay for programs, sports apparel , and opportunities!

>

> When people actually make the commute here and play on our fields, they are impressed and realize what a gem it is, compared to their thoughts they had previously! I literally just talked to two resource people in our county that said how much they love coming to and dealing with our schools in Hancock. I can quote them if you would like. They gave me permission.

>

> Again , I know it is a crisis year, but closing a school without building a new one to combine schools like what has been done for the others is not ok. Asking families to sacrifice more time and taking away more opportunities is not ok. Lastly, I know if any board member had a child in HMSHS , they would be against this idea 100%!

>

> Thank you for your time and for reading through this. I will also share with all the BOE members, as I have asked to speak to each of them personally as well.

>

> I invite you to also join us on Tuesday , March 9th for our rally to save our schools!

>

> You know me well enough, I believe, to know that I am passionate and care about what I believe in. I will always stand up for what is right,

> Marsha Flowers

>

> Sent from my iPhone

Subject: Re: Potential closing of Hancock school
Date: Sunday, February 28, 2021 at 8:26:49 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Michael, Boyd
To: Cristina Welch
CC: BOE
Category:  FEAC

Ms. Welch,

Thank you again for your email follow up. I don't think the community realizes that Hancock has had five Career and Technology completer programs, similar to other high schools and only two less than schools like North and South that are 8-10 times the size of Hancock. A tremendous investment has been made in the school in hopes of student growth returning to the area.

I know it doesn't sound like it to the community, but my interest is our students.

I hope your rally goes well.

Regards,
Boyd Michael

On Feb 28, 2021, at 12:51 PM, Cristina Welch [REDACTED] wrote:

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dr Michael,
While I commend you on your experience with Hancock I am concerned of your statement stating "average student wanting to achieve." While I know each school in the county has "average students" Hancock once again needs your help and by help I don't mean to close our schools Our numbers have declined due to lack of effort to bring more suitable programs to our schools. Our more fortunate students have to go to different schools in the county to use the magnet programs. But as you are aware Hancock community has a lot of a less fortunate population. Those families do not have transportation to transport their children to 30-40 min plus areas to attend school. Some parents work an average 8-4 job and cannot drop their child off to attend a more privileged program. This is where the unfairness falls into play for Hancock. We have been forgotten about and now we are being threatened to close our schools

and made to uproot and transport the children to other parts of the county.

The input you are hearing from the community lately is what we feel. We have been forgotten about. We don't get the programs the other schools in the county do. We have nothing to boost the academics other then the "average." So why can't we be helped to bring programs to hancock?

I truly believe this whole aspect of closing the schools here in Hancock needs to be decided also on the communities input. This is going to effect more then just the communities population. By closing this school you will not be giving Hancock's community a chance to expand. Ultimately no one will want to relocate to a community where there is no school for their children. It will effect the tax income for the county and the town. I surely hope this is all being put into the factor as well.

Tuesday March 9th at 5:30pm the community is coming together to rally to "save our school and save our town" While we as a small town should not have to be doing this as it looks horrible on the face of Washington County, We are going to do this for our children. We care for the future of our children and the future of our town. We are Panther proud and we are a strong community. Taking education from our town is going to crush the community as a whole.

I encourage everyone on the board to take a step back and look at the whole picture. Simply uprooting these children is not a good choice.

Thank you again for your response to your outlook on this situation. I truly believe the best interest for Washington County is to leave Hancock school alone and let us grow as a community.

Cristina W

On Feb 28, 2021, at 11:43 AM, Michael, Boyd
<MichaBoy@wcps.k12.md.us> wrote:

Ms. Welch,

Thank you for your email and sharing your concerns.
Restricting and closing of schools are always challenging decisions for Board members and superintendents. The Board and state have very strict guidance that needs to be followed in making decisions like this. The Facilities Enrollment Advisory Committee is currently working its way through these considerations prior to making their decision.

As you wrote, I am a former principal of Hancock Middle Senior High School and count that experience as one of the highlights of my professional career. At the conclusion of my four years I

stated and firmly believed that there was no better school than Hancock for the average student or one striving to achieve. However, I also knew and still recognize today that there is much more to be offered for all students in our county.

Hancock is now about half the size it was when I was principal there. The school was well resourced when I was there as it is today, but opportunities continue to decline based on a lack of interest or just the sheer lack of enrollment. The enrollment issue is going to continue. When I was the principal, our grade sizes ranged from 50-60 students. Now the largest grade at Hancock is ninth grade at 43 and that soon will be replaced by upcoming grade level classes of 30-34.

I was proud to serve as Hancock principal. I am extremely alarmed by what I have heard from the Hancock community recently. I am increasingly hearing phases like "Hancock good" or "Good enough for Hancock". That was never acceptable by me as principal and it is not acceptable to me as superintendent. I will do all I can to support all of our children at Hancock in the best possible way. Anything less would be negligence on my part as superintendent, a job that I take very seriously.

Again I appreciate your advocacy for your community and school, and this decision is ultimately up to the Board of Education.

Regards,
Boyd Michael

Dr. Boyd J. Michael, III | Superintendent
Building a Community that Inspires Curiosity, Creativity, and Achievement.

301.766.2816 |

<https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.wcpsmd.com%2F&data=04%7C01%7CMichaBoy%40cps.k12.md.us%7Cc084fd5fbf9d4f5648a608d8dc1184bc%7C2b843e3b585e479087550d63a93f768b%7C0%7C0%7C637501315130249180%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=Jk6JTyrdmqa1uRqiygKYI0XaqBblqCbXJZwN5AAoHVQ%3D&reserved=0>

Washington County Public Schools | 10435 Downsville Pike,
Hagerstown, MD 21740

-----Original Message-----

From: Cristina Welch [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, February 27, 2021 8:18 AM
To: Michael, Boyd <MichaBoy@wcps.k12.md.us>; Williams, Melissa <WilliMel@wcps.k12.md.us>; Stouffer, Stanley <StoufSta@wcps.k12.md.us>; Guessford, Michael <GuessMic@wcps.k12.md.us>; Bickford, Pieter <BickfPie@wcps.k12.md.us>; Murray, Linda <MurraLin@wcps.k12.md.us>; Evans, Darrell <EvansDar@wcps.k12.md.us>; Zentmeyer, April <ZentmApr@wcps.k12.md.us>; FEAC <FEAC@wcps.k12.md.us>
Subject: Potential closing of Hancock school

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To all our fellow board members, superintendent, and facilities members, I want to start by asking a huge question, why? Why is this such a burden to our county to potentially close Hancock Middle Senior High school? Do these kids in our small community not have a matter to you? None the less the feelings they will perceive if their forced to uproot from their hometown to attend school elsewhere within the county. While you have proven that the mental well-being of Hancock students is not a factor I truly believe your outlook on this situation is not fair. These students in our Hancock community are like family. They all support and stick together to help each other. Why would uprooting them to another school be of any option?

Why is the only option in this matter to close the school? Give us a chance! Put a magnet program in Hancock. Let more Allegheny County families that have fought to come to Hancock schools come. Give the kids a chance.

This past year has not been easy on anyone, students,

parents, school staff. I am appalled at the board of Washington county including the facilities members to even think this is a competent idea at this time. These students are just getting back into the swing of being in the brick and mortar and happy to see their fellow classmates in their home school setting and you are causing such anxiety by bringing up this awful potential decision. You realize this isn't just a burden to the teachers and parents, it mostly effects the students. Students are comfortable where they are, why would you even think it's ok to uproot them?

There are other options to bring the financial burden back to the positive. But clearly that is your only worry. You don't care about the well-being of these Hancock students. You have proven that.

Let me touch on the bus situation. The slides that were shared in the meeting stated 90 min bus rides. That included to and from school. Is that even safe for an everyday commute for children? Not to mention the early pick ups in the morning. This will trigger earlier bed times and less family time. Does that not matter? While Hancock has always started earlier then most other county schools and dismissed earlier. You are now saying even earlier in the morning that these students will need to awake to catch a bus. This is fair? All because you are willing to close a small community school, the community suffers. When will taking money and finances out of this equation and putting in the well being of Hancock's community come into play? If I'm not mistaken, Hancock is a town in the county and pays taxes just like everyone else. We as homeowners pay county taxes, and I'm certain a "school tax" is included somewhere in there. I believe someone needs to show us on paper how our Hancock students are the most expensive? If anything hancock schools receive a lot less then the other county schools. We have been forgotten on so many levels through the years.

But the main factor that bothers me the most is knowing the superintendent of Washington county public school once was the principal of Hancock. He of all should know how this is effecting our small town. There are more on the board as well that previously taught or were employeed by the board in a school setting in the past and know how the potential of closing a school would have effected them as well. It saddens me that not one member of the board has responded or spoken up about any of our concerns. We as parents are speaking up for

our community and our children. We are panther proud and we are a strong team! Please take into consideration our concerns and make the right choice to leave Hancock schools alone and help us grow instead of burying our memories and our comfort.

Cristina W

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Subject: Letter in support of keeping Cascade Elementary School open
Date: Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 5:25:53 PM Eastern Standard Time
From: Dori Nipps
To: FEAC
Category:  FEAC
Attachments: Letter to Facilities & Enrollment Advisory Committee.pdf

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Committee members,
Please find attached a letter of support to keep Cascade Elementary School open from the Board of Directors of the Fort Ritchie Community Center in Cascade, MD.

Thank You.

Dori Nipps
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



March 1, 2021

Soon after Fort Ritchie was closed by the Army, the Washington County Board of Education considered closing Cascade Elementary for financial reasons. However, at the urging of the Cascade community and the County Commissioners who believed that a community school near Fort Ritchie was vital to the redevelopment of the property, the BOE decided to keep the school open. With the impending sale of Fort Ritchie by Washington County to a developer, we believe that Cascade Elementary should remain open because of the planned residential development anticipated at Fort Ritchie. We believe the Facilities & Enrollment Advisory Committee should also consider the planned and approved residential development in and around Smithsburg. Smithsburg Elementary currently has seats available, but might not have in the near future.

In 2008, Pen Mar Development Corporation pledged \$1,000,000 for renovations to the school. When all renovations were completed in 2011, PenMar had donated \$1,063,800. In addition to the renovation funds, PenMar also donated \$35,000 to the school's PTA for new playground equipment. Now the school was up-to-date. A few years later, when Old Forge Elementary School was overcrowded, 90 students were moved to Cascade Elementary to relieve the overcrowding at Old Forge.

In addition, a 2018 recommendation from the BOE was to close Old Forge Elementary because of problems with their drinking water supply and other issues. Old Forge has been using bottled water for drinking for a number of years. This was noted in their 2020 drinking water report. During the February 18 Facilities & Enrollment Advisory Committee meeting, BOE staff stated that they would like all schools to be on public water and sewer. Cascade Elementary is on public water and sewer. Old Forge Elementary is not.

We hope the Committee takes these facts into consideration when looking at the future of the school and the Cascade community.

Please feel free to call us with your questions or concerns.

Sincerely yours,

Fort Ritchie Community Center Board of Directors
Brandi Weigle, President
Buck Browning, Executive Director
[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Subject: Cascade Elementary Closing

Date: Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 3:57:12 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Tiffany Willard

To: FEAC

Category:  FEAC

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Tiffany Willard. My son, Logan Kimbrough, is a 2nd grader at Cascade Elementary School and has attended school there since he was in Pre-K. I have 2 older daughters who both attended Cascade Elementary from grades K-5. I also have a 3-year-old who will be starting Pre-K at Cascade in the school year 2022/2023. I want to first start out by saying that Cascade Elementary is not just a school it is a family! All my kids have always looked forward to going to school each and every day. Having a school like Cascade has given them a love for learning that they may not have gotten if they were going to any other school!

Before you make a decision on the future of our school there are a few things I think you should take into consideration. Cascade Elementary is currently in the process of becoming a green school! We have 7 acres of property we can use to create the outdoor learning labs we have planned on. We also have a wonderful Pre-K program that brings in a lot of new students each year. My son attended the first year it was opened and there was a full class with a waiting list! Like I previously stated my daughter will be attending this Pre-K program within the next year and a half. My nephew will also be attending next year! Cascade also has an amazing archery team! My daughter who is

currently in middle school participated the first year we had the program available. There were so many students who tried out for the team and so many more who could not wait to be a 4th or 5th grader to get to try out. About 10 years ago, Cascade Elementary received 1 million dollars for updates! With that money our school was able to get new doors, new windows, a new air system and much more! We were also able to remove all the old asbestos that was in the building. Our building is in great shape. We have a wonderful custodian who has been with us for many, many years. He takes amazing care of our school both inside and out. Most recently during the shutdown he used the time to paint and make any repairs that were needed. Currently in our community we have multiple areas where homes are being built. There is a large development being built right in Smithsburg which will most definitely bring in a large number of students to Smithsburg Elementary. There is also a local man who owns the Fort Ritchie area who is in the process of building townhomes which again will bring more families to our community and students directly to Cascade Elementary! Using the numbers currently provided on the WCPS website (which I know are dated as 2017 so they have fluctuated a bit) it states that Cascade Elementary has 164 students enrolled with a capacity of 274 leaving open 110 spots. Smithsburg Elementary has 360 students enrolled with a capacity of 419 students leaving open 59 spots. NOT ENOUGH FOR CASCADE STUDENTS! Old Forge Elementary has 340 students enrolled with a capacity of 377 students leaving open 37 spots. NOT ENOUGH FOR CASCADE STUDENTS! Paramount Elementary has 363 students enrolled with a capacity of 409 leaving open 46 spots. STILL NOT ENOUGH FOR CASCADE STUDENTS! What I would like to know is how splitting up our school multiple ways to squeeze our students into near capacity schools is beneficial to the CHILDREN? Any of the children? At any of the schools? Also, I would like to know if you are planning to take these schools to capacity or close to it, where do you expect to send the students who will be moving here to all these newly built homes? Which again would require you to move students around! If Cascade Elementary has 110 or more open spots why not redistrict some of the students from the schools of a higher capacity so there is room at each school for more students to enroll? With all the new homes being built in the area wouldn't that make more sense than closing a

perfectly good and functioning school? Another concern that I have is I know firsthand that Old Forge Elementary is not in as good of a condition as Cascade Elementary is! I know it would need more maintenance and upgrades including an air system like the one that Cascade already has! The classrooms at Old Forge Elementary are also not in as good of shape as ours at Cascade and we have full walls and doors which they do not! Especially with the concern of COVID-19 right now that is a big deal! If more money would be needed to be spent to upgrade and maintain these schools to be able to house all of our students wouldn't it make more sense to keep Cascade Elementary open and utilize the building that has had the upgrades and work done in recent years? In a previous article in the Herald Mail, it stated "If Cascades enrollment goes up or there is growth in adjacent schools' areas, then more schools could be affected. Some Old Forge students might go to Paramount, Pangborn, Greenbrier, or Ruth Ann Monroe Primary/Eastern Elementary to make room at Old Forge for some Cascade students." The "if enrollment goes up" or "there is growth in adjacent schools' areas" WILL happen with all the homes being built in Smithsburg and Cascade! How does having to shuffle students around possibly year after year taking them from the schools they have known and the friends they have made make sense to anyone? Especially when there is a simple and easy answer here.

REDISTRICT!!!! Move the kids from the higher capacity schools to Cascade Elementary to help elevate the need to have to shuffle more students around later on! Shutting down Cascade Elementary will not only hurt the students, staff and community of our schools but it will have a ripple effect to all those other schools who will be impacted trying to shuffle students around to try to make room when it isn't even needed! This discussion is being proposed solely for the purpose of budget cuts and is not being discussed in the best interest of the students at any of the schools mentioned above! Please take the time to truly consider all the possibilities and long-term side effects of making such a large and rash decision just to keep the budget in line. We love our school and students and do not plan to stand by and watch our community be torn apart!

Thank you,

Tiffany Willard

Subject: Registration for 3/4 meeting

Date: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 8:59:01 AM Eastern Standard Time

From: Robert Van Rens

To: FEAC

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Good morning.

I would like to register to attend the upcoming meeting (3/4/2021).

Thank you very much

--

Robert Van Rens

Robert.VanRens@NVRGovAffairs.com

*Partner
NVR Associates LLP
Government Affairs*

Subject: SAVE OUR SCHOOL ! HANCOCK MD

Date: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 at 1:03:35 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Ruth Moore

To: FEAC, Micaboy@WCPS.K12.MD.US, Williams, Melissa

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Members,

It took me a while to write this as I have no children in the Hancock schools.. my own sons are grown. I came here when they were 8 and 13. And love the small town love and respect.

Having said that ,

Closing Hancock schools would be a mistake and a disservice to our children and community as a whole .

If it's money ... isn't transporting schools within a town such as Hagerstown a more viable option - and there are low enrollment in schools in Hagerstown aren't there ?

The thing is Hancock is always getting the short end of things ... almost an afterthought for so many things and now - after being told just a few years ago by Boyd Michael that this wasn't in the plan in the next decade (after moving out Ag teacher) here we are fighting for our school , our community.

Clear Spring certainly isn't just a few minutes away as some would imagine.

The time frame on these bus would take time away from home work , time with family and make it harder for parents to attend any sports events or even to pick up their children if they are sick . This community sticks together and helps one another with that ... but another 20 miles (give or take another 10 or more depending on students location) would even make it harder. Again, this is not for the children.

As you know Hancock isn't a rich community ... is it that any funds that may be granted you would rather have in another community?

At any rate now is not the time to be evaluating this situation, the children are struggling with virtual and just getting back to school . You have to know that because of the situation some parents chose to home school rather than try to be on line at very specific times with internet that is hit or miss ... it was easier and more convenient for them to do an actual Home School Program .

I live out on one of the " ridges" and know that on my road alone in the last several years new homes have been built .. and that is on many of the out lying roads as building in this area is indeed less expensive. Now I would be surprised if at least some of these homes don't have school age children.

Why have there never been programs offered at the Hancock Schools instead of taking teachers to other schools for

other programs? Not only could we bring back the students that are traveling away to those schools offering more options but perhaps even bring more students , as close to the PA line as we are there may even be an option for some of them at the line to come to Hancock and PA actually pay a tuition as our schools would be closer .

I believe their are other options and I think Hancock deserves a chance since they are indeed a community moving in a positive direction.

Make this not only about money

Make this about our children .

Please reconsider.

Save Our School

Panther Pride

Small town proud

Thank you for your time

Ruth Moore

[REDACTED]

Subject: Cascade Elementary

Date: Thursday, March 4, 2021 at 9:55:48 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Kelsey

To: FEAC

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good evening,

I wanted to take a moment to write to you concerning Cascade Elementary. While I was unable to sign up for your meeting and am considered a Frederick County citizen, I do hope you will take into consideration my opinion.

In Frederick county, we have been dealing with the same issue with declining enrollment at Sabillasville Elementary unfortunately our board has voted to close our “small but mighty” school. After what our community has dealt with the past year, I do hope your committee remains transparent and honest with the community about your intentions.

Please remember the children and their mental health, after 2020 this is of the most importance. We have seen many of our children decline socially and develop more fear based anxiety due to their school closing and for the fear of the unknown. I am sure if the proper work is put in you all can come up with a sustainable solution. The entire Sabillasville/ Cascade area is due for development. Please look at all options, magnet programs, environmental education, an expansion of your tech high school, using a small school to better serve special needs children. The possibilities are endless when the adequate amount of time and effort are put in.

I appreciate your time in reading my email and hope that you understand my concerns as a parent with a child who is currently dealing with the emotions of losing their school. I do hope you all are able to create a program or redistrict students to Cascade. Please remember the children and their futures when making this decision. Our Sabillasville community stands behind Cascade elementary and a solid future for it. Have a great evening.

Yours truly,

Kelsey N

Concerned Sabillasville Parent

Sent from my iPhone

Help Save Our Dream

Moving Home to Hancock

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter to provide insight as to why the small community of Hancock has such a valued school system compared to other school systems I have grown to know over the years. Also, to showcase how big of a role such a small school can play in the community and the people who live there.

My husband and I are Hancock Middle Senior High School Alums. After graduation we each went off on our own separate journeys including college, starting careers, and ultimately moving away from Hancock. We reconnected, settled down and started a family. At the time it was perfect, because we were only an hour from our hometown friends and parents. I was even able to commute back for a year and coach the Hancock JV Girls Basketball Team and assistant coach the varsity team. This was special to me as I had been a key player at Hancock during my high school career and had the opportunity to have a successful college basketball career. This success granted me the opportunity to travel with a USA international basketball team. I was ecstatic that I was able to bring my skills back to my hometown, as well as show kids from such a uniquely small school that the size of the school does not limit you in life, you can still gain the tools to become successful and do amazing things coming from such a small town.

Fast forward a few years, we now have three school age children. My husband and I have had many discussions about how the schools near us are nice, but they offer a much different experience than we had. Where we are now there are multiple elementary schools that feed into multiple middle schools, that then feed into multiple high schools. The kids are forever shifting schools and friend groups at every big grade interchange. Not to mention, the number of families that come and go in this area. As soon as the kids make a good friend, they are nowhere to be found the following school year. We longed for our kids to have an experience similar to ours where you graduate high school with the same 40-50 kids that you grew up with and got to know from 5 years old on. It really is a unique opportunity that has gifted both of us lifelong friends that we still talk to and make time to visit. This is something that I feel we have special in our life compared to some of our coworkers and peers, and I owe it all to the fact that we went to a small school and grew up with in a beautifully rare, mile wide town in the “really skinny part of Western Maryland”, which is how I describe Hancock to my work friends.

After experiencing a larger school system, a life altering pandemic, and various other circumstances we made the decision that Hancock is where we want to be. We want to be near the rest of our family, our friends that have known us literally our whole lives, and we want our kids to grow up in small town America. We want them to know what it's like to go to school with kids that you really know; and then you get to know their siblings and families. Your best

friend's grandma ends up becoming your honorary grandma. You not only know your neighbors, but everyone along your street, your side of town, the whole town. This is something that our local community cannot offer us because of its larger size, and for that we have made the choice to come back to Hancock.

We want to move forward with relocating to Hancock. I want to get my kids in the Hancock school system because I believe in Hancock schools and cherish their small size.

The biggest hurdle that we are facing now is the talk of Hancock Schools closing. This would, most likely, cause us to rethink our plans. If the kids are merged with Clear Spring our children would have to ride a bus for a very long time as they would be coming all the way from the west side of Hancock. They would be the kids that the WCPS meetings were talking about having a 95-minute commute. This is just not acceptable. Not to mention, they would be traveling on the interstate for long periods every day on a bus, which I do not believe is the safest option. Ultimately, it would put a damper on the dream we have of rising the kids in such a niche little town.

I am aware that one family will not change a decision that is based on the finances needed to keep a school building running, but hopefully it helps. I wanted to write this letter to help you understand that sometimes people, even though they love the small town, have to move away for one reason or another, but eventually some of them move back for all the reasons they loved growing up there. As more and more people move back, and more businesses open like Buddy Lou's, Food Lion, or the ice cream shop on main street, I see the potential in Hancock growing. There is buzz about a new intersection and shopping center. I really hope the towns recent growth is considered when making decisions regarding the school.

Subject: Hancock MD schools

Date: Friday, March 5, 2021 at 5:56:03 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Judy Stotler

To: FEAC

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello,

I am from the Hancock area. Very disturbing to see the recent discussion of possibly closing Hancock Schools. Superintendent Boyd Michaels was at Hancock High school auditorium October 2019 for a meeting with concerned Hancock community. Question was asked then rumors of possibly closing Hancock in 2019. Michaels reply:"Nothing was in the 10 year plan to close Hancock schools." Did he flunk math class. A man his his position should be a man of his word

.Sincerely

Judy

Subject: (none)

Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 at 3:01:53 PM Eastern Standard Time

From: Carrie Clopper

To: FEAC

Caution: This email originated from outside of WCPS. Do not click links or open attachments, unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

How do we get to watch the webinar tommrow do we have to have zoom downloaded and whats the id and password are is there just a link to click on

Sent from my iPhone