

October 20, 2020

Commissioners of Charles County
200 Baltimore Street
La Plata, MD 20646

**Re: School Allocation Policy Changes
Comments from David Hancock, CCBOE**

Dear Commissioners,

The Board of Education for Charles County would like to communicate our concerns regarding the proposed changes to the current APF manual and the impact on Charles County Public Schools. The statements below were shared by David Hancock, CCBOE Board Member at the October 20, 2020 Commissioners Public Hearing. These comments pertain to reducing the number of exemptions when granting school seat allocations.

- The proposed legislation allows 800 allocations to be granted to priority development projects. CCPS requests to see the granting of exemptions capped at 400 a year instead of the proposed 800 a year for Priority Projects in the Opportunity Zone. This would satisfy any of the stages for development for Waldorf Station and allow for future projects by other developers within the Opportunity Zone. This number will in essence double the amount of yearly allocations available through all sources: St. Charles (Docket 90), school allocation waiting list, bulk allocations, DRRA, and the Towns of La Plata & Indian Head. This number should be reduced to 400 allocations a year. This is more than adequate for any stage of development for Waldorf Station based on the Development Agreement approved by the Commissioners on July 7, 2020.
- Granting 800 seats per year in addition to the aforementioned projects would potentially create more growth than CCPS could address through the traditional CIP (State and County share of construction) process for securing funding for school construction. The CIP process for building a new school can take up to 6 or 7 years before the school is ready to open. The draft legislation may provide predictability for the County Commissioners and the development community, but it does not provide predictability for CCPS to address enrollment increases in schools without adequate funding for construction and additional staffing.

- Based on recent comments from the Executive Director (Mr. Robert Gorrell) of the IAC (Interagency Commission on School Construction), CCPS can expect to receive around \$10 million a year for school construction and systemic maintenance for various projects. The \$10 million a year is based on a ten-year average. The issue with the average is when your future needs increase you are still receiving funding based on your previous ten years. Increases in school seat allocations need to be gradual to align with State funding **unless** the county can locally fund needed additions or construction of new schools.
- If the commissioners reconsider removing the inclusion of PFA's outside of the Opportunity Zone or Development District for exemptions, 400 allocations a year would be sufficient for development in the two areas. The original proposal only offered exemptions for Priority Projects in the Development District (Option 1) or the Opportunity Zones (Option 2).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Hancock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

David Hancock
Board Member, Charles County Board of Education