

October 20, 2020

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

**Re: School Allocation Policy Changes
Comments from Elizabeth Brown, CCBOE**

Dear Commissioners,

The Board of Education for Charles County would like to communicate our concerns regarding the proposed changes to the school allocation policy and the impact on Charles County Public Schools. The statements below were shared by Elizabeth Brown, CCBOE Board Member at the October 20, 2020 Commissioners Public Hearing. These comments pertain to the effects of a lack of collaboration and insufficient funding.

- Students have the most to lose when adults who make decisions that affect a student's education do not work together and take into consideration how these changes can affect a student's ability to learn. Overcrowding leads to larger class sizes, crowded hallways, crowded school buses, students eating lunches outside of normal times since cafeterias can only seat so many students and most importantly how instruction is delivered.
- A higher student to teacher ratio can affect how much time a teacher has to identify struggling learners and then to work one on one with students who may need additional explanation of content. Larger class sizes makes it more difficult for teachers to build relationships with students. Smaller classes have a tendency to be more cohesive and typically have less behavior management issues.
- Overcrowded schools with space issues often have teachers who are not assigned to their own classroom. Schools with more teachers than classrooms have to create flexible schedules in which some teachers have to move around the building to teach in classrooms that are empty for a block or period while the teacher assigned to the classroom on a full time basis has their planning period. Teachers displaced during their planning time are often displeased. Teachers who float typically have lower morale that can lead to teacher retention issues. Teachers placed in those situations have a difficult time bringing their resources and manipulatives from classroom to classroom, as they move around during the day thus affecting the quality of instruction.

- The aforementioned concerns can lead to teacher retention issues. Teachers seek transfers to less crowded schools within the same school system or unfortunately seek employment with other school systems. Low employee moral can affect how effective a teacher is in the classroom and the relationships they build with students, their colleagues, and the school's administration. Due to national teacher shortages, school systems must do all they can to retain good teachers.
- One short-term solution for overcrowding is to place relocatable classrooms on campuses. Some teachers and parents have concerns when students are assigned to relocatable classrooms when there is not enough existing space in a building to accommodate all students and teachers. Teachers and parents express safety and security concerns. Most relocatable classroom or modular buildings do not have running water so students, teachers and parents have concerns about the lack of restrooms and the inability to wash their hands. Some parents express concern about the safety of portable classrooms during severe weather events even though drills have students and staff coming into the main building.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Brown

Board Member, Charles County Board of Education