

# BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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## PROPOSED FY2021 CAPITAL BUDGET

### Responses to Board Members' Questions August 16, 2019

#### FY 2021 STATE CAPITAL REQUEST

1. I don't see the planning money the County Executive budgeted for a new Lansdowne High School in the table. Should this not be notated as a county funding allocation in the county portion of funding for the table?

The proposed FY2021 capital budget request to be discussed at the work session on August 20, 2019, is for state of Maryland funding only. The \$15M for planning for the construction of a new Lansdowne High School was previously funded by Baltimore County in the approved FY2020 capital budget.

2. The County Executive approved \$15M planning and design money for Lansdowne High School in his most recent budget. I do not see Planning and Design money reflected on the 2021 Capital Budget. Can staff please explain why that money is not reflected?

[See the response to Question 1.](#)

3. The Towson High community is pleased to see Towson High again included on the BCPS State Capital Budget request to address the school's aging infrastructure and extreme overcrowding. However, Towson High is already experiencing extreme overcrowding and needs short term solutions, as well as long term planning. What is the short-term plan to address overcrowding at Towson High over the next 1 year, 5 years, and 10 years, before any new high school seats can be built to relieve Towson?

[A response is included below.](#)

- For 2019-2020 school year, enrollment is projected to be 1703 students, 135%, and 443 students over its 1260 capacity.
- For 2020-2021 school year, enrollment is projected for 1798 students, 143%, and 538 students over its 1260 capacity. What planning is being done for 2020-2021?

[There are several relief strategies that BCPS has taken or will consider to mitigate overcrowding at Towson High School. These strategies range in complexity and cost to implement. Relief strategies implemented to date include internal space use compromises, classroom schedules that are flexible and responsive to the needs of students, the repurposing of space, the shared use of resource space, and relocatable units.](#)

In the short-term to mid-term, there are a number of relief strategies that may be considered: continued use of relocatable units; reconfiguration of singular units to a multi-unit structure; temporary annexation of students to another facility; and redistricting with adjacent schools that have available capacity.

The chart below outlines the continuum of strategies that are offered to schools.



**Trailers:**

Another trailer has been installed at Towson High this summer, bringing its September 2019 total to 11 trailers. Towson High's last renovation was completed in 1999, and by 2005 it was overcrowded enough to need 5 trailers because it was close to 200 students over capacity. It is now going into its 15<sup>th</sup> year of trailers and will be 440+ students overcapacity in September 2019.

- How many more years can Towson expect to have trailers on site?

A response is included below.

- What is the limit to the number of trailers that Towson High can safely accommodate both with regard to student safety and with regard to the environmental and site limitations on its 27 acre property?

A response is included below.

- Has any site analysis determined where any additional trailers can or cannot be placed?

BCPS anticipates that relocatable units will continue to be used until a long-term relief strategy is in place. A total of 11 relocatable classrooms will be in place for the 2019-2020 school year. Based on a site review, one additional unit could be placed without impacting playing fields and/or parking lots.

**Cafeteria Space:**

In September 2018 when then County Executive candidate Olszewski toured Towson High with school advocates, Assistant Principal Stevens said that the school may not have enough cafeteria space in the building to accommodate increased enrollment without adding a 5<sup>th</sup> lunch period but there is also not time in the schedule to do that.

- How will Towson High accommodate cafeteria space for lunch as the school gets increasingly overcrowded?

Various options will be discussed with the Office of Food and Nutrition Services and the school during the design development process. The most viable option will be included in the final design.

- Are students expected to eat outside or in classrooms if the cafeteria cannot accommodate its enrollment during 4 lunch periods?

A response is included above.

**Short- and mid-term plans to address overcrowding before seats can be built:**

Planning money for any new high schools after Lansdowne is not budgeted to be released until the FY2022 budget. The planning process for a new high school takes 3 years, once planning starts, and construction can take another 5 years. It may be 10 years at the earliest until any seats are built to address Towson High's current over capacity, much less its future projected overcrowding. By fall 2028 Towson High's enrollment is projected for 2028 students, 161%, and 768 students over its 1260 capacity.

In 2014, BCPS 10-year enrollment projections assumed Towson High's enrollment would remain relatively stable from 2013 to 2023 within a range of 1440 to 1480 students. Five years later, enrollment was 1629 students in Sept 2018, expected to be 1703 students in Sept 2019, and 1903 students by 2023. With even more housing units in the planning stages within the Towson catchment and continuing overcrowding at its feeder schools, the long term trend for the enrollment projects is that they will continue to rise beyond 2000 students.

- Will the board or the BCPS administration consider recommending a boundary study involving Towson High before completion of a capital project?

A response is included below.

- How large will BCPS allow Towson High's enrollment to get before providing boundary relief?

A response is included below.

- What options are available for a temporary annexation of Towson High students to a separate facility as an alternative to a boundary study?

In the short-term to mid-term, a proactive approach could include an examination to determine the viability of a boundary study and/or annexation with Towson High School and adjacent schools.

**Planned capacity for the Towson High capital request:**

The 2021 Capital budget request as well as previous year's capital requests have listed Towson High as a request for a replacement school at 1860 capacity.

- How was the listed capacity of 1860 for Towson High determined?

A response is included below.

- If 1860 is just a placeholder based on its projections from fall 2017 when planning for Towson High was announced, why is that number still being used in planning documents when Towson High's enrollment is projected to get above 1860 enrollment by 2022 and over 2000 enrollment by 2028 according to the most current 2019 Students Count report.

In 2017, the Board of Education (BOE) added Towson High School to the FY2019 CIP as a replacement school with a proposed capacity of 1,860. At this time, the BOE also initiated a study of all high schools to identify strategies to address increasing enrollment at high schools throughout the system. The results of this study were presented to the BOE in December of 2018. Additionally, Baltimore County Government has initiated the development of a 10-year capital plan for schools. BCPS anticipates the recommendations presented in the High School Capacity Study and the 10-year capital plan will inform the capacity of Towson High.

- Is 1860 capacity even feasible on the Towson High 27 acre site?

A response is included below.

- What is the maximum capacity the site could safely accommodate within the recommended state and county guidance for high school capacity?

A response is included below.

- Given that Towson High is listed as a County landmark, why is it listed as a replacement rather than a renovation, plus addition?

A preliminary review of the site indicates that the site may accommodate a high school with current enrollment projections.

As part of the design process for historically relevant buildings, it is required that community meetings be held to obtain community input and preference for design, along with detailed participation, and review by the Maryland Historical Trust. The deliberations include preparation of several options of designs with pros and cons of each option. This information is presented to the community in open meetings. The options typically include either a total replacement or preservation of historical parts of the building with a renovation and/or addition. A final decision is based on the community input received and requirements of the applicable historical agencies.

**Sources:**

[2014 - 2023 Enrollment Projections](#)

[2018 Students Count report, February 2019:](#)