



2024 School Boundary Study

School Boundary Planning Team Meeting 1
September 12, 2024

*Presented by: Wicomico County Public
Schools and Cropper GIS Consulting*



Cropper GIS

Welcome and Introductions



Who We Are



Cropper GIS Consulting, LLC

- K-12 school planning is our business and our passion. Our specialty is facilitating boundary processes.
- Cropper GIS works with K-12 school districts to:
 - Develop boundary plans
 - Facilitate community engagement
 - Perform demographic studies
 - Prepare long-range facility master plans
 - Conduct housing and pupil yield-factor studies

James Cooper & Matthew Cropper, Cropper GIS

- 20+ years experience providing GIS mapping and analysis services to school districts and other clients
- Facilitated boundary change study projects across the U.S.
- Published numerous times on topics related to K-12 facility and boundary change processes

The Company

Recent Projects:

- Frederick County Schools, MD
- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, NC
- Baltimore County Public Schools, MD
- Groveport Madison Schools, OH
- Westerville City Schools, OH
- Worthington Schools, OH
- Huber Heights City Schools, OH
- Akron Public Schools, OH
- MSD Washington Township, IN
- Charleston County Schools, SC
- Covington Independent Schools, KY



Project Objectives

In accordance with district policy, the Wicomico County Board of Education (WCBOE) is vested with the authority to delineate the geographical attendance area for each public school. Fluctuations in enrollment and shifts in the educational landscape may necessitate the modification of attendance areas. Notably, due to instances of overcrowding and underutilization in numerous elementary schools within the district, the Wicomico County Public School (WCPS) System has initiated a comprehensive school boundary study.

The WCPS boundary study is tasked with meeting the following key objectives:

- To balance utilization/relieve overcrowding among the elementary schools within the study area (Delmar Elementary is **not** included in this study).
- To make best efforts to ensure that Fall 2025 boundary changes align with long-term facilities and Elementary-to-Middle-to-High School feeder patterns.

School Boundary Study

Cropper GIS Consulting was hired by boundary to facilitate and manage the project. Our firm is tasked to:

- A. **Develop** supporting materials to help facilitate the study.
- B. **Facilitate** an expert-based process of developing a student boundary plan.
- C. **Empower** the community throughout the process.
- D. **Leverage** expertise to develop logical, efficient, and effective student boundary options with the planning team.
- E. **Recommend** a boundary plan to the School Board.

Boundary Study Factors

- a) Educational welfare of students
- b) Frequency of boundary changes, with every attempt being made to limit individual student boundary changes to not more than once every five years
- c) Proximity to schools, in order to maximize walkers and minimize distance or time of bus runs
- d) Student demographics, to maintain or increase the diversity among schools to reflect the diversity of the region and school system
- e) Established feeder patterns
- f) Impact on neighborhoods and communities
- g) Impact on specialized school programs or a change to school capacity
- h) Instructional and operational capacity of involved schools
- i) Capacity trends
- j) Capital plans
- k) Geographic features

Stakeholders



Stakeholders

Outline of Stakeholder Responsibilities	
Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule and facilitate internal planning team meetings. • Communicate updates with planning team, including updated handout and meeting schedule logistics. • Conduct public meetings to solicit feedback related to draft options that are under consideration. • Support the district in providing materials such as presentations, handouts, and online interactive maps for the public's consumption. • Coordinate and summarize online feedback received from general public and school boundary planning team.
School Boundary Planning Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consists of key WCPS district administrators including central office, senior leadership, department staff personnel, planning, and Wicomico County community members. • Group will work to review draft options that are being developed in preparation to share with the School Board and public. • Review input provided from the consultant and general public regarding draft options and continue to modify maps with a focus on the best solution for all students as a whole. • Share a boundary plan with the School Board
General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed through website. • Invited to submit comments and input throughout the entire process.. • Invited to participate in public information sessions and to provide input via surveys and online general feedback form.
School Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charge school boundary planning team with its responsibilities. • Identify questions the SBPT is expected to answer. • Advise staff and the process regarding policy related considerations and other board-level decisions.

Timeline



Timeline

Timeline for School Boundary Study

	June '24	July '24	Aug. '24	Sept. '24	Oct. '24	Nov. '24	Dec. '24	Jan. '25	Feb. '25
<i>Presentation of Process with Board of Education</i>	6/25								
<i>Board of Education Approval of School Boundary Study Process</i>		7/9							
<i>Data Collection</i>	PHASE 1								
<i>Data Analysis / Assimilation</i>			PHASE 2						
<i>Background Report / Baseline Options Development</i>			PHASE 3						
<i>School Boundary Planning Team Work</i>			PHASE 4						
Introduction to upcoming process (YouTube Recording)			8/27						
Public Information Session #1 : Present Project Process, Criteria, Timeline, and School Boundary Study Objectives to Community. On-site meetings at 4pm and 6pm. 2 different locations.				9/19					
Staff Presentations to Communities (if needed)				TBD					
Public Information Session #2: Present DRAFT School Boundary Plans to General Public for Comment/Feedback. On-site meetings at 4pm and 6pm to review options and q/a at end of session. 2 different locations.						11/21			
Staff Presentations to Communities (if needed)							TBD		
<i>Board of Education</i>									
<i>Work session to Present Final School Boundary Plan Recommendation</i>								1/7	
<i>Public Hearing</i>								1/14	
<i>Work session on Potential Modified School Boundary Plan (if needed)</i>								1/28	
<i>Vote on School Boundary Plan</i>									2/11

Project Approach



Boundary Study Phases

PHASE 1

DATA COLLECTION

Pertinent data will be collected throughout the life of the boundary study

This data includes a wide array of GIS data, student enrollment data, and current/future school facility data

Data collected is provided by Wicomico County Public Schools & Wicomico County, MD.

PHASE 2

DATA ASSIMILATION

All data collected must be integrated into GIS to enable quick and efficient analysis and options development

Student data will be geocoded so we can map out where students live in relation to school boundaries

School attendance boundaries will also be used in conjunction with neighborhood (subdivision) data from the counties to develop planning blocks which outline small geographic areas highlighting student populations

PHASE 3

BACKGROUND REPORT & BASELINE OPTIONS DEVELOPED

A background report is developed during Phase 3 and distributed to the stakeholders

The background report outlines the key objectives, guidelines & factors, boundary study process, stakeholders' roles, overview of expected mapping conventions, and current enrollment statistics relating to the boundary study

A baseline set of options is then developed as starting point for the SBPT team to began evaluating boundary options. They can keep them as option, alter, or disregard them entirely

PHASE 4

OPTION ANALYSIS: SBPT MEETINGS & PUBLIC INFO

The SBPT will typically meet 1-2 times a month over a period of 3-4 months participating in option building exercises as they create/modify/review different boundary plans

Two public information sessions will be held to provide the general public an opportunity to understand the boundary study process, as well as to solicit feedback regarding draft options

The Superintendent will be delivering a recommendation to the BOE on behalf of the SBPT

Data Collection

Data availability and quality are central to this boundary study. A comprehensive collection of data is compiled throughout the life of the study. Data collected includes:

- WCPS– Official enrollment counts by school by grade, along with enrollment databases by address. Data/feedback regarding transportation, school locations, facility information.
- City / County Sources– Base GIS data (address pts, municipalities, subdivisions, existing and planned developments, road networks, etc.)

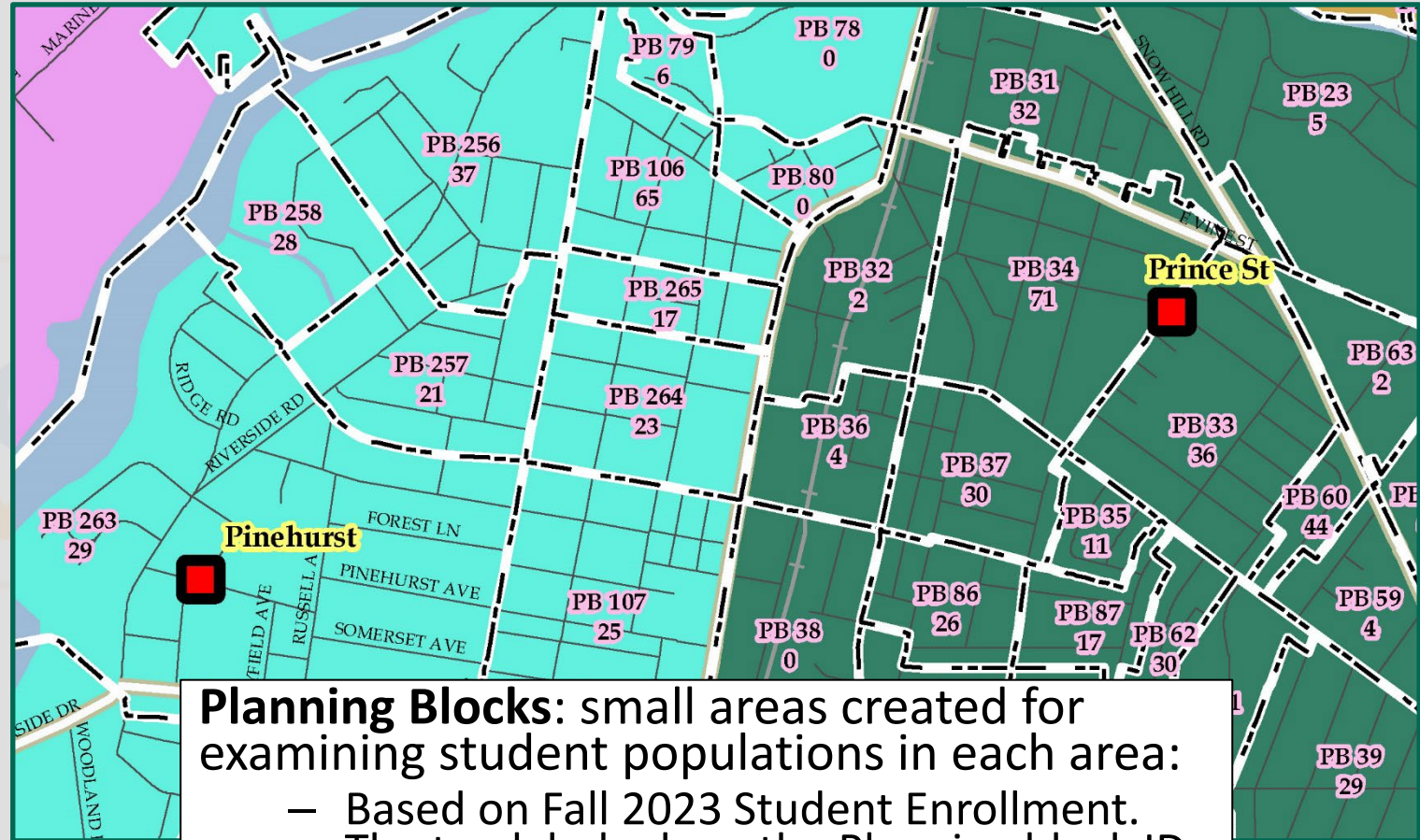
Data collection efforts have been underway through the summer, and information will continue to be collected throughout the process if it is deemed useful.

Data Assimilation

Cropper is tasked to develop several key pieces of information to help facilitate the boundary process.

Once data is collected, it is necessary to integrate it into GIS to enable quick and efficient analysis and boundary options development. This includes, but is not limited to, geographically mapping out:

- Attendance zones
- Student's home addresses
- Planning Blocks

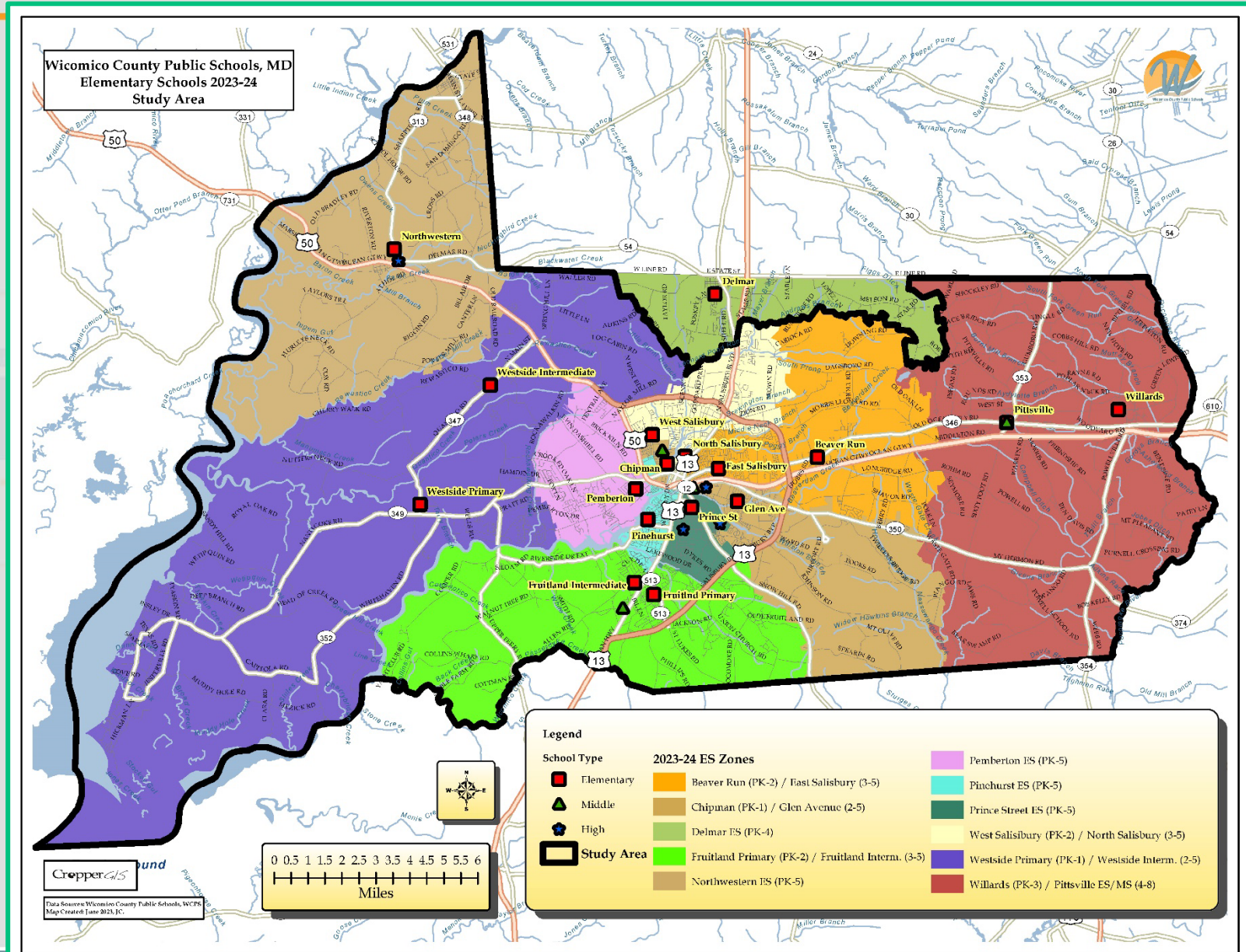


Planning Blocks: small areas created for examining student populations in each area:

- Based on Fall 2023 Student Enrollment. The top labels show the Planning block ID (PB #). The bottom labels show the number of K-5 WCPS students that live and attend their boundary school within the study area.

Phase 2

Boundary Study Area



Phase 2

Interactive Webmap

- An online map has been developed to further inform all stakeholders on the work of the school boundary planning team.
- Current zones and options can be viewed on the map.
- Other features can be turned on/off on the map, including planning blocks.
- Map is customizable and can/will be updated during the process to show new options along with other information requested by the school boundary planning team.
- Site can be viewed on any device, including mobile devices and tablets (with internet connection).
- Site address is:

<https://croppermap.com/wicomico/>

Phase 2

Interactive Webmap

Wicomico County, MD

Help

Basemaps

Enter an address here

View School Boundaries

- Planning Blocks
- Elementary Boundaries
- Middle Boundaries
- High Boundaries

Zoom To School Boundaries

Select A School Zone:

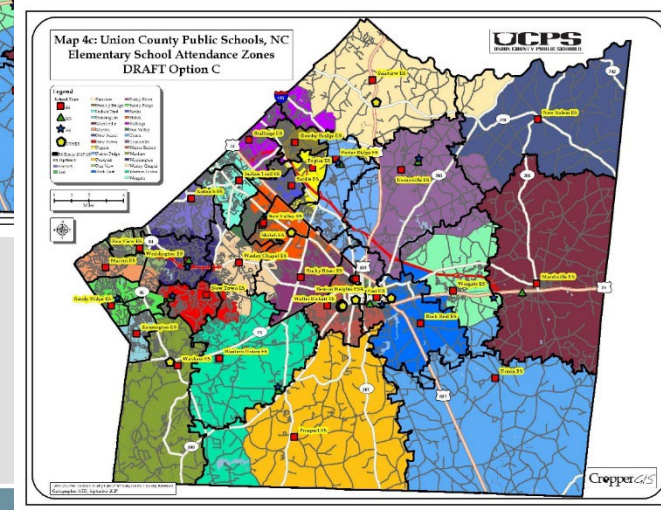
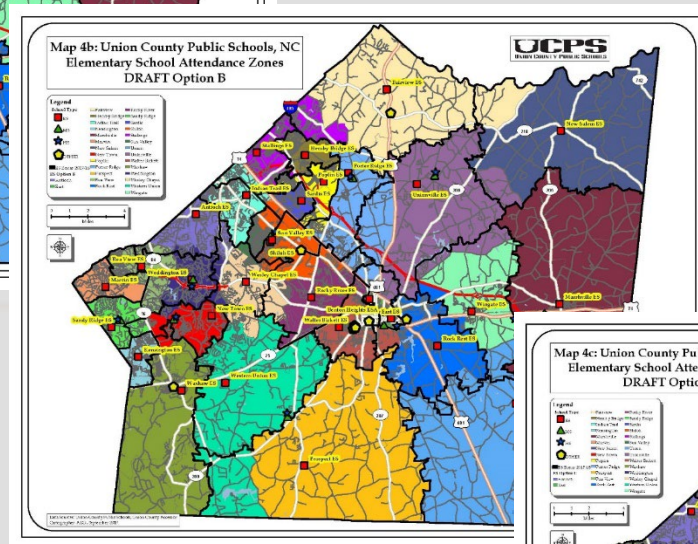
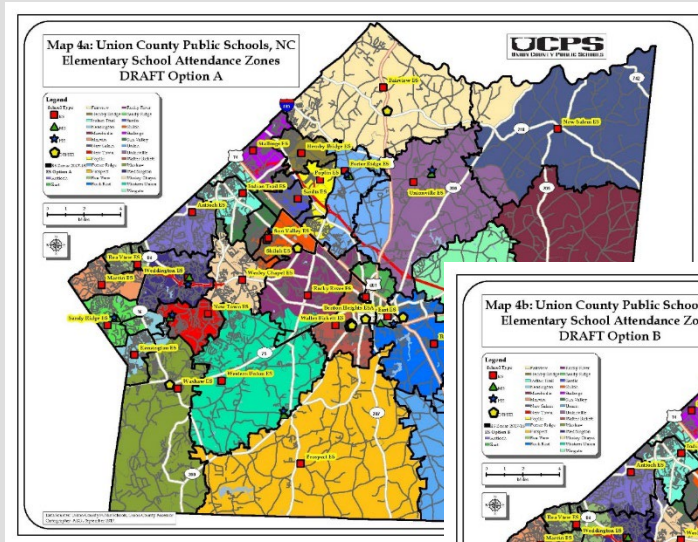
Clear Result

Print

Map showing school boundaries in Wicomico County, MD. Key locations include Salisbury, Delmar, and various school zones like Northwest, Salisbury, Westside, and Pittsville. Major roads like US-13 and MD-336 are visible. The map includes a search bar, a legend, and navigation tools.

POWERED BY esri

Baseline Options Development



To expedite the process and empower the community, it is best to begin with a series of baseline boundary options.

Baseline options will be shared the next meeting on October 2nd.

School Boundary Planning Team and Public Engagement

The school boundary planning team will meet 1-2 times per month from September 2024 through December 2024 to analyze data, review attendance zones, and develop boundary options.

At the second public information session on November 21, 2024, the work of the team will be shared, and community members will have an opportunity to discuss the planning team's work with staff and planning team members.

Valuable information will also be gathered via a community survey that will take place after the information session.

The consultant, on behalf of the work by the school boundary planning team and Public input, will recommend a boundary plan to the School Board in January 2025.

Communication Logistics



Communication Logistics

Visit the boundary study Web site at wcpsboundarystudy.org

- Submit comments via the online [Wicomico County Public Schools, MD - 2024 School Boundary Study General Feedback Form](https://wcpsboundarystudy.org)
 - Comments are logged verbatim to the Web site for public viewing

Wicomico County Public Schools, MD: 2024 School Boundary Study

Project Overview Project Maps

Project Overview

Recent / Useful Documents:

- [2024 Boundary Study Background Report](#)
- [Wicomico County Public Schools Web Page](#)
- [General Feedback Form](#)
- [2024 Boundary Study Preview Presentation \(YouTube Link\)](#)

Background

In accordance with district policy 38 and The Annotated Code of Maryland, the Wicomico County Board of Education (WCBOE) is vested with the authority to delineate the geographical attendance area for each public school. Fluctuations in enrollment and shifts in the educational landscape may necessitate the modification of attendance areas. Notably, due to instances of overcrowding and underutilization in numerous elementary schools within the district, the Wicomico County Public School District has initiated a comprehensive school boundary study.

The primary aim of this study is to address capacity concerns and establish equitable utilization levels across elementary schools in the district. Sixteen of the seventeen elementary schools within the district will be subject to this boundary study, while Dolmar Elementary will be exempt from any attendance boundary modifications. Additionally, minimal adjustments at the middle school and high school levels are anticipated to realign feeder patterns as students progress through the educational system.

Project Objectives

- To balance utilization/relieve overcrowding among the elementary schools within the study area.
- To make best efforts to ensure that fall 2025 boundary changes align with long-term facilities and Elementary-to-Middle-to-High School feeder patterns.

Project Overview Project Maps Webmap WCPS Website

Wicomico COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Maryland's Most Diverse Schools

Wicomico County Public Schools
Boundary Study: Suggestions and Questions for 2024-25

You are invited to provide input on the district's proposed boundary changes. This is the best way for us to understand the needs of our community. Please take the time to provide input on our website and submit the form. Questions will be answered to the extent possible. Input will be reviewed and incorporated as appropriate. Please be respectful in providing feedback. We are committed to providing a safe and equitable learning environment for all students. For more information, please contact the School Board at 410-326-1234.

General Feedback Form

Next Steps

Sept.-Oct.,
2024

School Boundary Planning Team will meet 1-2 times per months developing/deliberating over boundary options

September
19, 2024

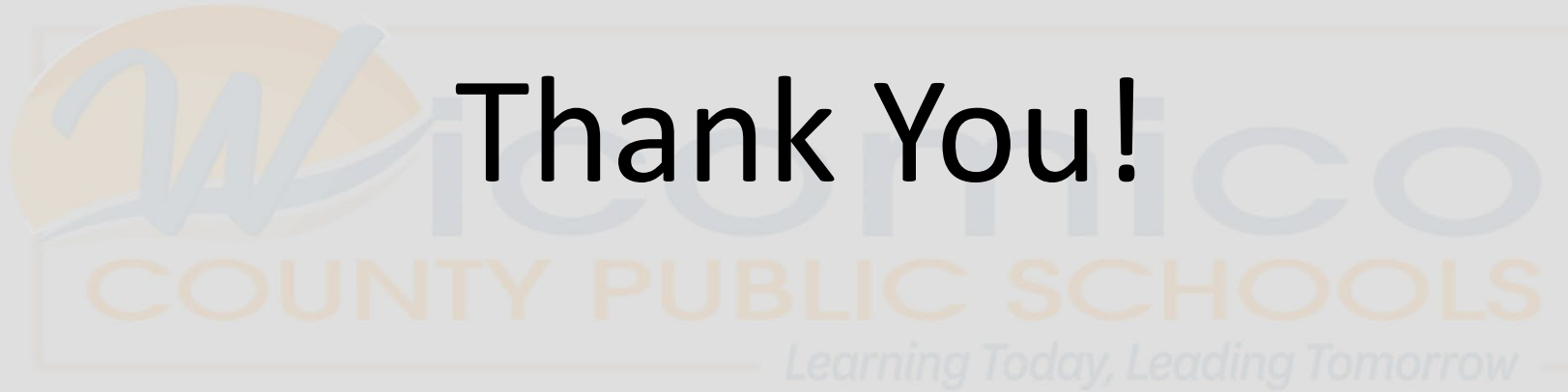
Public Information Session #1 will be held in person @
4 p.m. – Wicomico High School Auditorium
6 p.m. – West Salisbury Elementary School

November
21, 2024

Public Information Session #2 will be held in person @
4 p.m. – Salisbury Middle School
6 p.m. – Prince Street Elementary School



Thank You!



Cropper G/S