

## **Woodward HS Boundary Study**

### *Frequently Asked Questions*

**Q: What is the projected date of the Woodward High School opening?**

A: Woodward is currently projected to open as a new high school for the 2027-2028 school year. The school is currently being used as a holding school for Northwood High School. Northwood is expected to move to its newly re-built high school summer of 2027 and Woodward will open to its new school community.

**Q: How do I know if my child will go to this school?**

A: Students currently in grade 9 and above will almost certainly attend WJ for their entire HS career. Current 9<sup>th</sup> graders will be rising seniors when Woodward opens and MCPS does not require students to move for their last year in a school (5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>). Students currently in grades 8 and below may be affected by the boundary changes necessitated by the reopening of Woodward High School. These changes will be determined by a process known as a Boundary Study. The Boundary Study is a process that unfolds over the course of many months. Decisions about who will attend Woodward are expected in late spring 2026. (See below for the full Woodward Boundary Study scope and timeline).

**Q: Will kids at WJ switch over to Woodward?**

A: It is highly likely that some kids will switch from WJ to Woodward. MCPS has a policy against moving students for their senior year of high school. Rising seniors (current 9th graders based on a Fall 2027 opening) will not switch schools. MCPS has a mixed history of moving rising juniors (current 8th graders). In its most recent high school boundary study (Seneca Valley HS), rising juniors were not moved. However, that was a project that increased the capacity of Seneca Valley HS, not the opening of a new school, and does not bind the Board/MCPS for future decisions. Rising sophomores (current 7th graders) who are re-districted to Woodward are likely to switch over. Until the Boundary Study is completed, we simply do not know which students in what grades will be moved from WJ to Woodward. The Boundary Study also creates the opportunity for the community to give input on this decision.

**Q: Who is involved in the Woodward Boundary Study?**

A: On March 28, 2023, the Board of Education approved a "scope" for the Woodward

Boundary Study, officially beginning the Boundary Study process. The Woodward Boundary Study will include eight high schools – Bethesda-Chevy Chase, Walt Whitman, Walter Johnson, Albert Einstein, John F. Kennedy, Wheaton, Northwood, and Montgomery Blair. The Woodward Boundary Study will also include the 14 middle schools that currently feed into those eight high schools. Elementary school boundaries are not currently included in the scope of the Boundary Study and are not expected to change due to this Boundary Study.

Concurrently MCPS is conducting the Crown High School Boundary Study, which incorporates high schools and middle schools to our north. Crown High School will be a brand new high school in Gaithersburg and is also scheduled to open for the 2027-2028 school year. These two Boundary Studies are independent of each other but are using the same consultant and timeline.

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**Q: What is the timeline of the Woodward Boundary Study?**

A: The timeline for the Boundary Study adopted on March 19, 2024, shows that the core of the Boundary Study process (community meetings, option development, feedback) will occur throughout 2025. Below is the officially adopted schedule:

- Early 2025 – Fall 2025 –Boundary Study process (Community meetings, option development, feedback)
- Early 2026 – Boundary study report is released
- Winter 2026 (February) –Superintendent of schools' recommendation on the boundary study is released
- Winter 2026 (February – March) –Board of Education work sessions, public hearings, and action on the superintendent of schools' recommendation on the boundary study.

It is important to know that earlier deadlines were missed, and the consultant was not engaged until December 2024 (originally planned for summer 2024). It is possible that some of this schedule may end up changed but we are pushing for and do expect final boundary decisions by the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

**Q: If an older sibling goes to WJ, will a younger sibling be grandfathered into WJ?**

A: Historically, when boundary changes have been made, there is no grandfathering-in of siblings.

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**Q: Why is Northwood currently using the Woodward building as a holding school?**

A: Construction is desperately needed at a number of schools, including for the Northwood HS community. Northwood High School reopened in 2004 without a full renovation of the building. Since MCPS does not have a dedicated high school holding school space, many other “holding school” options were considered for Northwood, including converted office space in downtown Silver Spring. No other acceptable solutions were ultimately identified and MCPS decided that using Woodward as a holding school was the best option.

**Q: Is there any chance that the timeline could change and Woodward could open later than the 2027- 2028 school year?**

A: Yes, but hopefully not. A one-year delay, announced in 2023, is now already built into the new schedule. Any delays in planning, funding, or construction of the Woodward and Northwood projects could delay the reopening past the 2027-2028 school year, but are not currently expected. The WJ Cluster is advocating for no additional delays and to ensure that all other parts are on track.

**Q: Will Walter Johnson remain open as a high school?**

A: Yes, Walter Johnson will remain open as a high school.

**Q: Will there be any change to the middle school assignments? How about elementary school assignments?**

A: The Boundary Study scope does include all 14 middle schools that feed into the eight high schools included in the Boundary Study. This means that middle school assignments will be part of the Boundary Study and could change. Elementary school boundaries are not currently within the scope of the Boundary Study, and while it is possible this could change before or during the Boundary Study, it is not currently expected.

**Q: Is it correct that Woodward will eventually house an arts magnet program?**

A: This is no longer necessarily the plan. For many years there were discussions about an arts magnet at Woodward, but MCPS never officially made that decision. More recently MCPS has decided to take a full view of all programs offered around the county and seems to expect that will help determine what, if any, special programs are offered at Woodward. Since the 2100+ student population of Woodward is not expected to be filled from geographic boundaries alone, we do expect some special programming – but we do not currently know what it will entail.

**Q: Is KP/Wyngate/Ashburton/Farmland/Luxmanor/Garrett Park definitely redistricted to Woodward?**

A: No. No decisions have been made yet regarding which students will attend Woodward High School. That is what the Boundary Study process will determine. It is worth noting that, although elementary school boundaries were not included in the Boundary Study and are not expected to change, middle school assignments are included in the Boundary Study and would not be required to follow existing elementary school boundary lines. In other words, the Boundary Study process could include proposals where some KP/Wyngate/Ashburton/Farmland/Luxmanor/Garrett Park students are redistricted to Woodward and others within the same elementary schools are not.

**Q: Will Woodward HS have an auditorium?**

A: Yes – we expect the auditorium to be mostly completed by summer 2027. There was a proposal to indefinitely postpone the auditorium, but the new MCPS Superintendent has committed to finishing construction of the Woodward building. The auditorium is expected to be completed as part of Phase II of the project, recently started, that will include a parking structure, additional athletic facilities, and the auditorium.

**Q: What type of course offerings will Woodward have?**

A: Woodward will house a full complement of high school classes and activities, similar to other Montgomery County high schools. It will likely also include some unique or special programming but that has not been decided yet (see question about an arts magnet).

**Q: How is the Down County Consortium (DCC) involved and what impacts may that have?**

The participation of the Down County Consortium (DCC) high schools also complicates the decision about whether students would move from a high school they already attend to Woodward. The DCC high schools are Blair, Einstein, Kennedy, Northwood, and Wheaton. All DCC students participate in a choice process in the fall of 8<sup>th</sup> grade in which they express interest in high schools based on home area and based on programmatic offerings. It may be more difficult for MCPS to move rising sophomore and junior students who went through a choice process and are participating in specific programs. It is unclear how this will all affect the Woodward Boundary Study decisions and programming, but it is likely to be an important point of discussion.

**Q: What policies guide Boundary Studies and what factors will be considered?**

A: Board Policy FAA sets out four factors (below) to be considered when proposing and selecting among options for school boundary changes. The language below was reiterated in the MCPS presentation for the contract approval request for the consultant for the Boundary Study on Dec. 5, 2024:

- Demographic characteristics of student population ("We want to create schools with a diverse student body.")
- Geography ("We want to keep students close to home.")
- Stability of school assignments over time (We want to minimize disruption to students' education.")
- Facility utilization ("We want to use our resources wisely.")

**Q: What discussions have occurred about the impact on home values of potential boundary changes?**

A: None. The Board of Education is responsible for making changes to school boundaries and there are policies and procedures that govern boundary studies. MCPS staff and the Board of Education are directed to consider the four factors listed above, from Policy FAA. Home values are not one of the factors that the Board of Education considers in making decisions regarding school boundary changes.

**Q: How can I get involved and give my input?**

A: Glad you asked! MCPS, with the help of their consultant, will be conducting a variety of meetings and surveys over the next year to get community input. We expect to have a more concrete timeline soon and will be sending it out through our Cluster Representatives to individual school communities. Meetings are expected to be both in-person and virtual. Please look for these emails, attend sessions, and send feedback through the various channels they provide. Your Cluster Representatives and Cluster Coordinators are always happy to help answer questions and help you navigate this process.

**Q: Where can I find out more?**

A: MCPS has created a Boundary Study website, including an intro video, that covers both the Woodward and Crown High School Boundary Studies:

<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/boundary-study>



Board Policy FAA: [Board Policy FAA, Educational Facilities Planning](#)

(lays out the factors used in Boundary Studies)



Board Policy ABA: [Board Policy ABA, Community Engagement](#) (Expectations for community input and engagement)



[Adoption of Contract for Consultant](#)

(Gives numbers of meetings expected)



[Woodward High School Reopening Project Page](#)

(Construction related information)

