

February 6,

2026

## **Wootton PTSA Statement on the Proposed Relocation of Wootton to Crown**

School boundary decisions affect students, families, educators, and entire communities. While we acknowledge MCPS staff and Board members have invested time in this process, we are concerned that the Superintendent's recommendation will cause lasting harm across MCPS.

After reviewing the superintendent's recommendation and supporting materials, we are profoundly opposed to Option H. This recommendation does not serve Montgomery County or its students—it serves administrative convenience at the expense of sound educational planning. Over the past several months, families, students, educators, and community leaders from the Wootton, Magruder, and Richard Montgomery high school clusters have made their position unmistakably clear: Option H creates widespread disruption, undermines long-term planning, and ignores the growth realities facing Montgomery County.

MCPS has chosen not to listen.

The rationale for **closing** Wootton High School and relocating it to the Crown site is fundamentally flawed, and we strongly request transparency and answers to the following critical deficiencies before any final decision is made:

**First, facility utilization is being misused as a hard rule rather than a planning tool.** The primary excuse for rejecting a new high school at Crown is that it would open under 80% capacity. This is arbitrary. New schools open below full utilization by design, especially in designated growth areas. MCPS has offered no evidence that temporary under-utilization causes educational harm. More troubling, MCPS has failed to analyze—or refuses to acknowledge—the long-term risk of removing comprehensive high school capacity from the Rockville–Gaithersburg growth corridor, one of Montgomery County's fastest-growing residential areas with thousands of approved and planned housing units. This is not just a school community concern. [The Maryland Building Industry Association has raised alarms](#). Elected officials have raised alarms. This is a countywide growth management failure with consequences that will last for generations. This will be a permanent solution using short-term data.

**Second, long-term enrollment uncertainty is acknowledged but then ignored.** MCPS admits that housing pipeline data is incomplete and that students arrive over time. Despite this admission, the recommendation permanently relocates an existing

high school rather than preserving future flexibility. MCPS's own enrollment projections acknowledge significant data gaps and uncertainty beyond 2030. Yet, instead of planning conservatively to preserve capacity where growth is undeniable, MCPS is gambling with our children's future. If enrollment materializes as every growth indicator suggests it will, the cost to reinstate capacity will dwarf the investment required to preserve it today. The absence of post-2030 modeling is not a minor oversight—it is a dereliction of planning responsibility.

**Third, operational convenience has been prioritized over educational stability and student welfare.** MCPS proposes uprooting Wootton so the building can serve as a temporary holding facility during renovations at Damascus and Magruder. Read that again: we are permanently disrupting an established, thriving school community so MCPS can use the building as a swing space. Meanwhile, Magruder families—who have waited years for promised relief—are told to wait even longer. This is not a plan. This is kicking the can down the road while inflicting maximum disruption on students who deserve better. Alternative strategies that preserve Wootton in place are dismissed without serious consideration. And if the current Wootton facility truly has safety or infrastructure problems severe enough to justify relocation, then using it to house other students is unconscionable and contradicts the stated rationale entirely.

**Fourth, transportation and walkability claims are misleading at best, dishonest at worst.** MCPS highlights an increase of 167 walkable students at Crown (from 551 to 718) while conveniently ignoring students who lose walkability near the current Wootton site and the cascading transportation impacts across multiple clusters. We dispute the claim of 718 walkable students—the data does not support it. Moreover, the proposed Crown school already encompasses all walkable students in that area, regardless of configuration, so there is no "net gain." The truth: over 500 current Wootton students who can walk to school today will lose that ability. This is not an improvement. This is spin. Additionally, the Magruder community impact would extend throughout Rockville, Richard Montgomery, and Gaithersburg areas, creating traffic chaos across the entire I-270 corridor as students are bussed much longer distances than necessary.

**Fifth, the alternative was never given a fair evaluation.** MCPS has admitted that opening High School #27 was modeled "for comparison," not as a legitimate planning option. It was evaluated only through narrow utilization metrics, not through comprehensive analysis of growth management, community stability, or long-term capacity needs. Furthermore, Option H emerged late in the process—after months of public debate over Options A through G—deliberately limiting meaningful community input and rigorous scrutiny. This is not in compliance with MCPS's commitment to transparent planning. This is a bait-and-switch.

**What families were promised in 2019:** A new high school to relieve overcrowding at Quince Orchard, Richard Montgomery, and Gaithersburg High Schools. **What they're getting in 2027:** An expensive musical chairs game where Wootton moves to a new building, the old Wootton site becomes a "holding school" for renovations and then permanently shut down, and **the original overcrowding problem remains unsolved.** The students, teachers, and families all deserve better. The \$200+ million "solution" to overcrowding doesn't actually create any new capacity. The communities that were promised relief **get nothing.**

**Finally, this decision is permanent and irreversible in any practical sense.** Once Wootton is relocated and boundaries are redrawn, reinstating it as a comprehensive high school will require another years-long, disruptive boundary process, additional capital investment, and the painstaking rebuilding of programs and community relationships. MCPS is demanding that this community accept a permanent loss in exchange for temporary administrative convenience. That is unacceptable. The permanence of this decision demands a level of certainty and rigor that has not been demonstrated—not even close.

We share MCPS's stated commitment to fiscal responsibility, equity, and efficient facility use. But efficiency is not a value unto itself when it comes at the cost of sound planning and community stability. Relocating a successful school out of a growing community—based on incomplete data, without serious consideration of alternatives, and in service of short-term logistics—is not responsible stewardship. It is shortsighted decision-making that will harm MCPS students for decades.

**We urge the Board of Education to reject Option H immediately and to direct staff to develop a plan that actually serves students.** In 2009, MCPS scheduled Wootton High School's renovation for completion in 2018. Seventeen years later, that renovation has been removed from the Capital Improvement Program entirely, with no future plan in place. MCPS now proposes closing Wootton. Wootton is not just a building. It is a core community institution that anchors neighborhoods, supports feeder schools, and represents decades of public investment and trust. Removing this comprehensive high school from its community will weaken Rockville's educational infrastructure and betray the families who depend on it.

This decision must serve the students of Montgomery County—not the administrative convenience of the central office and the Board of Education. Not just today, but for the next thirty years.

We stand ready to work with the Board on solutions that align school planning with Montgomery County's documented, undeniable growth trajectory. But make no mistake: Option H is not that solution. It is a mistake—one this community will not accept quietly.