



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
JULY 22, 2024

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County Executive Outlines Steps to Relieve School Overcrowding

FREDERICK, Md. – Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater today announced steps to address challenges created by the growing enrollment in Frederick County Public Schools. The solutions unveiled Monday will add new capacity sooner than anticipated, create extra space at the most overcrowded school, and add more sites for future schools.

“School construction has been a priority for my administration – and for me personally – since my first day in office,” County Executive Fitzwater said. “I spent 17 years as a classroom teacher, so I understand firsthand the challenges students, educators, and families face when school buildings are overcrowded. By working together with our partners at the State and FCPS, we are finding creative solutions to solve school overcrowding that was created by growth approved a decade ago.”

The cost to build a school is a shared responsibility between the State and the County. The Board of Education sets the priority for the order schools are built. Their top priority this year was a new elementary school, Elementary School #41. While the State Interagency Commission on School Construction approved the location for the school, they did not approve any funding or give local planning approval this year. Local planning approval is the State’s assurance that they will share in the cost to build a school.

“Frederick County can no longer wait for the State. Oakdale Elementary School is projected to be over 170% of its capacity when it opens later this year,” the County Executive said. “I have a plan to lessen the impact of school overcrowding and new residential growth.”

FCPS Superintendent Dr. Cheryl L. Dyson said, “We appreciate the County Executive’s proactive approach to addressing school overcrowding. The \$3 million investment in School #41’s design, funded by developer fees, along with utilizing nearby land for temporary facilities at Oakdale Elementary, demonstrates our commitment to providing quality education in accommodating environments. Acquiring additional land for future schools further supports our goal of meeting the educational needs of our growing community.”

Board of Education President Karen Yoho added, “I fully support the County Executive’s decisive actions to tackle school overcrowding head-on. The allocation of funds, entirely through developer fees, demonstrates our commitment to advancing educational infrastructure efficiently. By leveraging existing resources and acquiring strategic land, we are laying a solid foundation to meet the educational demands of our growing community.”

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County Executive Fitzwater and County Council Members announce steps being taken to address school overcrowding.

The plan includes three new components:

- **Commit \$3 million to begin the design of School #41.** 100% of the money will come from fees the developers have already paid to the County in the form of school mitigation fees. The County Council will need to approve this as a supplemental budget. By starting the design work now, the school could open a year sooner, in August 2027, assuming the State grants planning approval for construction to begin in Fiscal Year 2026.
- **Ease crowding at Oakdale Elementary until the new school is built.** Next to Oakdale is land where a library will be built in four years. For the next few years, until Elementary School #41 is built, that site can be used for field space for Oakdale students. That allows FCPS to use land next to the main building for extra indoor space for core uses, like a cafeteria or gymnasium. This plan would still allow the library to open on time.
- **Purchase land for future schools.** Nearly 20 acres of land on Gas House Pike was recently bought for an additional school site. The land was paid for by developer fees, not taxpayers. Additionally, two other developments, as a condition of their approvals, must donate land for school sites, one for a middle school near Deer Crossing Elementary School in Gordon Mills, and the other for an elementary school on the Casey property on the west side of Md. Route 75.

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