

Atholton High School PTSA



Board of Education
Howard County Public School System
10910 Rt. 108
Ellicott City, Maryland 21042

February 26, 2009

Dear Dr. Cousin and Members of the Board of Education,

I am writing on behalf of the Atholton High School Parent Teacher Student Association Executive Board (AHS PTSA) to express our support for calculating High School Capacity at the existing state formula as detailed in the January 22, 2009 report to the Board of Education, and includes using the results of the 2008 Gilbert Study. The 2008 Gilbert Study reported the number of teaching stations actually existing in each high school.

The state formula calculates capacity as the number of Teaching Stations (TS) * Class Size ratio of 25 * 85% Utilization of Space. One need only walk through our twelve high schools to appreciate how each one is a unique facility. We applaud using a capacity formula which represents a realistic measurement of our facilities as well as using the same formula which is applied for state funding decisions.

We understand that a concern might be raised going from the current capacity of 1332 at all schools to a capacity ranging from 1403 to 1573 at these schools. However, we hope to allay fears by demonstrating that we are already accommodating these increased capacities.

The current formula calculation uses a Class Size ratio of 23.5 students at 90% utilization. The state formula calculation uses a Class Size ratio of 25 students at 85% utilization. These two formulas yield 21.15 and 21.25 students respectively.

$$\begin{aligned} 23.5 * 90\% &= 21.15 \text{ students} \\ 25 * 85\% &= 21.25 \text{ students} \end{aligned}$$

The current formula uses 63 Teaching Stations. Counting 63 TS for each formula yields a difference of seven students.

$$\begin{aligned} 23.5 * 90\% &= 21.15 * 63 = 1332 \\ 25 * 85\% &= 21.25 * 63 = 1339 \end{aligned}$$

The data chart in the January 22, 2009 report shows the state formula using the Gilbert count for Teaching Stations.

If the current formula is applied using the Gilbert count of Teaching Stations, rather than counting 63 TS for all schools, the capacities at each high school are seven students less than the state formula calculations, as illustrated below.



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Teaching Station Count and Capacity Calculation Comparison

School	Gilbert TS	Current; 63 TS	Current; Gilbert TS	Recommended	Alternate
		#TS * 23.5 * 90%	#TS * 23.5 * 90%	State; Gilbert TS	Gilbert TS
		#TS * 23.5 * 90%	#TS * 23.5 * 90%	#TS * 25 * 85%	#TS * 27 * 80%
AHS	71	1332	1502	1509	1534
CHS	70	1332	1481	1488	1512
GHS	72	1332	1523	1530	1556
HaHS	66	1332	1396	1403	1426
HoHS	71	1332	1502	1509	1534
LRHS	72	1332	1523	1530	1556
MRHS	74	1332	1566	1573	1599
MHHS	72	1332	1523	1530	1556
OMHS	71	1332	1502	1509	1534
RHS	72	1332	1523	1530	1556
RHHS	70	1332	1481	1488	1512
WLHS	72	1332	1523	1530	1556
Total	853	15984	18045	18129	18431

Therefore, it can be seen that using the Gilbert count of Teaching Stations is the most critical component of the capacity formula. We appreciate that the Department of Education staff are making visits to each high school to verify the Gilbert Study count of Teaching Stations.

Understanding that these existing teaching stations are being used now allows an easy transition to using the state capacity formula. We further support using a Utilization Percentage of 85% to accommodate differences in our buildings in important areas such as hallways and cafeterias.

The AHS PTSA recommends further consideration of the real differences among the twelve high schools when decisions based on capacity will be made. Thoughtful attention should be given to whether the 110% capacity threshold remains viable for all twelve high school buildings when realistic capacity calculations are used.

Thank you for recognizing the uniqueness of our high school facilities and moving forward to assessing them in a realistic way.

Sincerely,

Caryn D. Lasser
AHS PTSA President



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