



ZONES OF ATTENDANCE COMMUNITY FORUM

Bethlehem Central Middle School Auditorium
November 20, 2025

Agenda

- **6:30 p.m.** Presentation by Tyler Technologies, BCMS Auditorium
- **7:15 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.** Breakout Sessions
 - Eagle: MS Library
 - Elsmere: MS Library
 - Glenmont: MS 157
 - Hamagrael: MS 147
 - Slingerlands: MS 148
- **8 p.m. to 9 p.m.,** Public feedback session, BCMS Auditorium

Submit feedback, input, ideas

Audience members will have several opportunities to submit feedback and input. All ideas are welcome! Questions that were submitted in advance will be part of the Q & A prior to the Breakout sessions. Some questions presented tonight have been condensed or edited to include most frequently asked questions. A full FAQ will be posted to the website.

Recording

This session is being recorded and will be available on the district's YouTube channel.



BCSD Mission

To educate and prepare all students to reach their potential, discover their purpose and be engaged community members.



Q. Why is there a sudden need to make changes to enrollment zones?

Three of five elementary schools are experiencing serious operational challenges due to enrollment that must be addressed. Glenmont is over capacity, Eagle is at capacity and Elsmere did not have enough students this year to fill two kindergarten sections. The district announced in May 2025 that there was a need to examine attendance boundaries due to demographic trends that have shifted enrollment toward Glenmont and Eagle, and away from Elsmere, Slingerlands and Hamagrael. A bump in enrollment this year has compounded the problem and more students are placed in schools outside of their home school.



Q. In previous presentations, it was noted that modest increases were expected in grades K-5. Has that changed?

The district uses the Capital District Regional Planning Commission (CDRPC) to provide enrollment projections. These projections have been very reliable over the past several years. The most recent 2025-26 enrollment projections, which were provided to the district on Nov. 12, 2025, show a slight decrease of 1.0% in K-5 enrollment between 2025-26 and 2030-31. These most recent projections are being used by Tyler Technologies in the projections and modeling you will see this evening. The new CDRPC report differs from the 2024-25 CDRPC report, which had projected modest K-5 enrollment increases through 2029-2030. It is important to note that K-5 enrollment in 2025-26 grew at twice the rate of projections. It is also important to note that enrollment is projected to grow at Glenmont and remain high at Eagle, while declining at the other elementary schools.



Q. I keep hearing about low enrollment at Elsmere. Why is having at least two sections per grade so important?

It is important for balancing student needs, academically and socially. Two sections allow schools to place students in ways that support differentiated learning, provides students with more classmates to interact with, and offers opportunities to reshuffle peer groups each year through grade 5. A minimum of two sections per grade also supports teacher collaboration, the sharing of materials and creates more stability within the grade.



Q. Why not give current students the opportunity to be grandfathered in so they can stay in their current school?

A grandfathering provision for all students would not allow the district to address the imbalance in enrollment that is currently impacting students, staff and families. The need is immediate and allowing all students to remain in their current school would not address the root of the problem. Tyler Technologies has agreed to present a model for grandfathering fifth grade students. This model is not yet available and will be shared with the committee and the Board of Education once it has been completed.



Q. Is the goal to keep siblings together in the same school once, or if, boundaries are redrawn?

Yes. The goal is to keep siblings together.



Q. Could you explain why schools that are not at capacity may still have students reassigned?

The Elementary Zones of Attendance Committee, which has been working on the enrollment issue, has identified maintaining smaller class sizes as a priority for all students districtwide. The committee has also prioritized contiguous boundaries for school attendance zones. To meet these class size goals and keep neighborhoods together, movement may be required of students in currently under-enrolled schools.



Q. Will there be a plan to support students who are rezoned??

Yes. There will be a plan to assist all students with changes to their school placement. This would involve administrators, teachers, counselors and parents. In addition, students who are not changing schools but who may be welcoming new students, will also receive support and guidance through the process.



Q. Will redistricting take into account keeping new students within their home attendance zones?

One of the goals of examining enrollment zones is to reduce the need for administrative placement of students in schools outside of their home school. This practice has increased in the last few years due to the imbalance of enrollment among the five schools. Out-of-zone placements are only used when necessary. Every effort is made to accommodate home school placement.



Q. Are the plans recognizing the large (Kleinke Farm) development in Kenwood that will add many school age children to Elsmere?

Yes, growth from developments that are planned or underway have been taken into consideration. They are included in the revised enrollment projections presented this evening.



Q. It seems like it would be more cost effective and less disruptive to add on to the crowded buildings, rather than uproot students. Has this option been considered??

This does not make sense when the district schools have adequate existing space for all students. There are currently 15 K-5 classrooms that are not being used for general instruction. In addition, there are no enrollment projections that show the type of growth that would support adding physical space to the district.



Q. Have flex zones been considered, where families moving into a particular area would be assigned to a school based on capacity?

The district has looked into flex zones and administrators have had discussions with districts that have implemented flex zones. Flex zones would not serve the immediate needs of the district. Flex zones are often used in areas where a surge of housing development is expected to increase enrollment in the future. Our needs are now, and housing development is not expected to have a significant impact on K-5 enrollment over the next five years.



Q. Will any increases in school census lead to capital improvements at those facilities??

The schools are maintained to meet their maximum enrollment capacity. Should specific needs arise from changes in enrollment, those needs would be addressed in future capital projects.



Q. Have you considered the impact of parents' dissatisfaction with the rezoning effort on the Dec. 2 Capital Project vote?

There are plenty of ways for people to register their dissatisfaction with changes to enrollment zones without penalizing current and future students, all of whom would benefit from the nearly \$60 million in building improvements that are planned. Please keep in mind that if the capital project is defeated, it would mean delays in critical infrastructure and safety updates at all schools, could result in an increase in emergency repairs that are often costly, and most certainly, a second referendum would be needed, again with increased costs and resources.



Q. How are related service rooms (including spaces for OT, PT, and speech) being factored into building-level classroom counts?

In buildings with available rooms, related services are using some of these spaces. However, the buildings who are at capacity do not have the ability to use larger spaces. The goal of using our space more efficiently would allow all buildings to have more flexibility and space for these related services.



Q. How will rezoning benefit special education students, particularly in relation to class sizes, access to services, and proximity to specialized programs?

Rezoning that provides for a more equitable distribution of students will benefit all students in regards to programs and services.



Q. What considerations are being made for reducing additional movement for special education students, particularly those in the co-taught classrooms?

In the current models, any students who are placed at a school for a special education program are accounted for in their current school and program. They are not included in the numbers to return to their home schools for 2026-27 or future projections.



Q. Enrollment changes at the elementary schools will impact enrollment in afterschool programs. How will afterschool programs like School's Out be notified of changes to enrollment, and what will the impact be?

Once a plan has been finalized and approved by the Board of Education, the district will notify before- and after-school care providers, and will work closely with those providing onsite programs, such as School's Out, to ensure they are fully engaged and prepared for any changes.



Q. Have you all considered an option of just centralizing Kindergarten in one building and using the existing buildings for just grades 1- 5?

From 1997-2008, the district had kindergarten located in one building, at Slingerlands. Kindergarten returned to the elementary schools when it was determined that is was best for students and for families, to keep grades K-5 in the same building.



Q. Have you considered putting UPK classrooms in the underenrolled buildings?

This option has been considered; however, placing all UPK students in the under-enrolled schools would require them to move again for kindergarten. Additionally, UPK programs operate on different schedules and have different requirements than K–5 programs. The District has determined that balancing K–5 enrollment provides a more effective solution both programmatically and instructionally.

