

Appendix C: Comments in response to question about whether options to relieve school overcrowding in our cluster should include building a new middle school located closer to our community

1. This is a no-brainer. Westland is TOO far away from our community.
2. Absolutely - 1400 students at Westland is just too big!!!
3. Unsure, but it seems like a reasonable solution.
4. see above
5. Easier said than done, but if it relieves congestion and doesn't add to the long busing for our kids, we need to consider this option.
6. This is the only way to responsibility plan for the future
7. Westland is a perfectly good middle school. When we all moved here we knew this was our middle school. The county cannot afford this cost right now. Why should our tax dollars go for this?
8. Absolutely. this solves the overcrowding issue at NCC, CC and Westland middle school. Perhaps negates the need for additions at NCC and CC, so end result could be equivalent cost savings.
9. This is essential. Schools need a community to support them and there is no way I can be involved in a school as far away as Westland.
10. Not sure what is involved with that and would need to weigh resource needs with long-term needs
11. Our children will spend way too much time getting to/from Westland
12. Yes, definitely!!! Building a new middle school is the only viable solution to solving overcrowding. The sooner the process can begin, the better.
13. Or make Lynnbrook Community Center into either an elementary or middle school.
14. I think we need to seriously look into keeping our students closer to home and not utilizing precious fuel to bus them and then drive to the school to be involved.
15. It seems that if the money to build a new school could be used to fund program support for the chases, we could avoid this.
16. A new middle school close by is my first choice of the approaches.
17. But if there were no way to keep 6th grade at Chevy Chase and NCC, my answer would likely change -- it would be better to have two middle schools than a really overcrowded Westland, regardless of which of the two schools our child would attend. But again, the best option would be to keep 6th grade at CCES and NCC.
18. I think the best way to relieve overcrowding in the elementary schools and provide curriculum equity for all 6th grade students is to move the 6th grades to a middle school. However, I would not want to send my children to a middle school with an enrollment of over 1400 students. That is much too large a school.
19. Westland is very far away
20. This is the most sensible solution. The sooner MCPS undertakes this approach, the better.
21. I think the option should remain - however I only like that if we remain in the B-CC cluster. I don't want my kids going to someplace other than B-CC.

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22. I am not sure exactly where they would build. But I do recall that everyone complained when they tore down Kensington Middle School and Leland. Montgomery County should learn to plan better.
23. One that is closer to the affected area--Chevy Chase/Bethesda area
24. I can't imagine that that should be a budget priority.
25. It's unbelievable to me how far away Westland is. I would be supportive of figuring out how to make it better for 6th graders in middle school if we were able to make serious progress in alleviating overcrowding
26. Without this option, none of the others make sense. It is short sighted to address overcrowding at the elementary schools but not the Middle School.
27. Not now, but if growth continues it will be necessary. I do not think it's feasible to think about this as an option even for the children currently at RHPS.
28. As long as the student population level supported the provision of programs.
29. A new middle school is critical.... Westland will be too large.
30. It is ridiculous that our children are bussed as far as they are from East Bethesda all the way to Westland to get to middle school when they are still relatively young yet old enough for there to be real trouble on a bus for that long a ride.
31. I believe our cluster is so overcrowded that it would make more sense to build a middle school closer to our community to relieve overcrowding as well as to cut down on the commute to school.
32. Given the size of both Pyle and Westland, and the projected continued increase in student populations, it seems inevitable that we will need another middle school for our cluster. I am not as concerned with location as with student body size.
33. This seems like the best solution.
34. Only if necessary in the short-term and medium-term. Communities go through expansion and contraction phases. I don't think we should overburden the county's resources through building and maintenance (although, little is more important than education) if alternatives exist.
35. I'd rather the money went to instruction than buildings, but the school-o-dex indicates that Westland will be overcrowded in the next couple of years, and that's even without moving the CCES and NCC 6th graders there. So, it seems to me that there MUST be building (either an addition or a new middle school) to alleviate middle school overcrowding.
36. I don't have enough information to know whether the current and expected future overcrowding at WMS is sufficient to require a new middle school. I do know that I would love to have the kids go to a closer school. We are near RHPS, and our WMS kids have to leave the house at 6:50 am to catch the bus.
37. This is my #1 choice!
38. Westland is too far away from CC and NCC.
39. Yes! I think many parents in the NCC and CC communities would be more in favor of moving the 6th grade to middle school if that middle school was much closer to our neighborhoods. The commute to Westland from NCC and CC is just too long and the kids spend way too much time on the bus each day. As it is, our children spend about 45 minutes to 1 hour commuting to Rosemary Hills each day. It is just too much time wasted on the bus. Plus, it is my

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understanding that Westland is already overcrowded and will be even more so with the addition of the 6th graders from NCC and CC - this area needs another middle school. I think a middle school in the range of 1400 kids is just way too big. We need another middle school in the BCC cluster and we need it closer to NCC and CC.

40. The quality of life loss because of the early day and long commute would be diminished by a closer middle school.
41. If it is true that without a new middle school Westland will be the largest middle school in the county.
42. ABSOLUTELY!!! It is absurd to have my child travel to a middle school off Mass Ave and have to ride the bus for over 40 minutes!
43. Absolutely. Best option in the long run.
44. Yes, I don't like the U.S concept of mega schools. I am wary of boundary studies but would rather that than a huge, unwieldy, impersonal middle school.
45. The county is the one that didn't see this coming and screwed it up in the first place and now it's time to grow up and face the music. A new middle school is a must. The situation is not going to get any better and there are locations that with some renovation could serve as a new middle school. I believe the White House has money out there for schools. Figure out a way to get your hands on it.
46. Tentative yes. I know that this sounds good in theory, but I do have concerns about what this means to Rosemary Hills. (does this option require RHPS to become 1st-5th?)
47. or make use of existing structures, like the Lynbrook Elementary School, no longer in use as a school.
48. I prefer to have 6th Grade at CCES, but a second best option is another middle school in our neighborhood.
49. If the new middle school offers the same programs and has the IB program like Westland then I think this is a viable option as well.
50. This is a necessity. Westland and Pyle are already too big.
51. Yes but I'm concerned because a new school requires a boundary study and that could mess things up even further!
52. Westland is already a far commute for many kids in this cluster. If there are buildings that could be used for this purpose, I believe we should make the most of current community resources.
53. Of course the glacial pace MCPS moves at assures me that my daughter, not in 2nd grade, would never see this school even if it got built.
54. This is a possibility, but until there are specifics or proposals it is impossible to answer whether this is advisable.
55. Nice idea but I think in the current fiscal environment that is not a feasible option.
56. I believe this should be a priority, the middle schools are way too large.
57. But not if this means my children will be sent to middle school in 6th grade. I'm only in favor of this option because it seems like Westland is too far to be considered a community middle school.

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58. I like the idea of eliminating the amount of time on the bus.
59. As long as quality standards stay the same are the same as Westland, a new school would be great.
60. Many NCC kids in particular, travel WAY too far to get to Westland. For after school activities (drama club, etc) Picking up kids at rush hour to get home is BRUTAL. Has taken me over an hour to get home several times.
61. A great idea but with land at a premium is it a viable option
62. Westland is too far away for 6th graders living in the northern and eastern parts of the cluster. It is unreasonable to have 6th graders on the bus with 8th graders for 1.5 hours or more every day.
63. A new middle school is crucial to relieve overcrowding, and to serve students in the East side of the BCC cluster.
64. Any school with an enrollment greater than 800 would seem to be too large to immerse a 6th grader into, socially.
65. I think this is a viable option, and needs to be discussed further with Mr. Bulson and MCPS officials. The alternative MS proposal calls for an addition at WMS, and based on the 2015 enrollment projections, would still leave WMS overcrowded. That seems to be a very short sighted long-term strategy. But in building a new MS, we need confirmation from MCPS that we are not trading one scale issue (potential solved by moving the 6th grades) for other scale problems (potentially not have the enrollment levels needed at either NCC or CCES, or at a new MS, to offer the breadth of services that current receive at both the elementary level and at WMS). We need to ensure that we are not trading one scale issue for another.
66. The reality of the growing numbers and fact that students learn better with a smaller teacher:student ration point to the necessity of a new middle school. Research suggests that middle school students need unique attention because of the nature of adolescent development and how it can foster and/or inhibit academic success. That is, children need to feel valued and encouraged in school. This can only happen when teachers are given an appropriate class size so that they can really know their students and go to their strengths and help improve their weaknesses.
67. 1400 students is FAR to big for a middle school.
68. Yes, this should be considered as an option. My limited knowledge of this issue suggest that there are possibilities of high-quality expansions of NCC and CC that would obviate the need for a new middle school, but it should not be ruled out as an option.
69. I have some concerns about this, however. Will the size of the middle school be sufficient to address any scale concerns? Will the MS be located within the boundaries of the community? Will we end up with split articulation, or could the Westland-new MS student population be equally split between the new schools to achieve a reasonably sized student body in the two schools and avoid articulation.
70. Westland is a huge school and our kids have a very long commute.
71. Seems like a very good idea, but it will not help students over the next couple of years.
72. Take into account transportation time for the students and costs for the district it's the only thing that really makes sense. Something more centrally located. Although every effort should be made to continue with demographic integration.

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73. ABSOLUTELY. This would be my first preference of all of the options to deal with the current overcrowding in the system. I believe it offers many desirable aspects: more local school (shorter bus ride) for 6th as well as those kids in 7th and 8th, gives our sixth graders access to the true middle school curriculum and teachers that specialize in those subjects, but also would be on the smaller side (750 was the size floated at the NCC meeting) and thereby preserve that community feel. My concern, however, is that this is not a realistic option. The discussion at the NCCC meeting was that there was plenty of money in the CapEx budget to build, but there are serious shortages in the operating budgets that have led to the current program cuts that we are facing. Where is the money coming from to staff a completely new middle school (separate from building it)? I imagine that the operating budget for a brand new school would be much larger (whole new set of janitors, office and administrative staff even beyond the teaching staff) than the operating budget increase required to add the CC and NCC 6th graders to Westland. Is this really an option? Clearly it is my preference if it truly is.
74. I strongly support building a new middle school closer to our community. The Washington region has some of the highest traffic congestion in the nation. It makes no sense to send middle school children across the county during rush hour when there are other solutions available.
75. trip from CC to middle school would be an hour by bus
76. IF census and other data indicate the likelihood of a long term need for another school, I would support a closer middle-school being built.
77. I think this is a viable consideration, but we would need to assess cost, time, and impact to the community.
78. Closer to East Bethesda, Chevy Chase, and Kensington.
79. PLEASE MAKE THIS A PRIORITY!!!
80. It appears obvious that Westland will be/is already too large for one community and another middle school should be built as soon as possible anyway.....even when not assessing this questionable location of 6th grade now.
81. What about Lynbrook?
82. I agree but with caveats: I would not be happy with potential new boundary studies that could revise current boundaries. And "closer" to our community" is a subjective statement. I think this question is hard to answer without knowing the exact planned location. ie: I would much rather have my children at Westland than at a school located in Wheaton or Silver Spring.
83. The idea of a smaller, closer school is terrifically appealing!
84. Does anyone remember that the Leland Middle School was closed and torn down because of lack of children and merged to become Westland?
85. None of the options consider the tidal wave of overcrowding heading our way in this area with the impending development of Chevy Chase Lake area (seems inevitable now, once the economy recovers) and the BRAC realignment. We must take a longer view and prepare for years down the road. So far, the options are short-sighted.
86. Yes, but again only if it offers the same curriculum and other services.
87. I strongly believe that BE routing for East Bethesda, with K-5 for elementary school and a smaller more local middle school. It is OK if that has fewer options than a very large middle school.

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88. Use the Lynbrook Childcare center area!!!!!!!!!!
89. Absolutely. If they do send the 6th graders to Westland whatever academic curriculum benefits they would achieve are negated by an overcrowded classroom held in a trailer--which is where our kids will be if they are moved.
90. I think part of what drives the desire to keep children at NCC and CCE is the fact that Westland feels very remote from where we live.
91. Don't know
92. The key is to find a location closer to the RH and CC communities. However, it will take at least 5-6 years to get a school approved and built. In the meantime, we should keep our kids at NCC and CCES and demand better programming, staffing and necessary additions to these schools.
93. We live in Kensington. I don't like the idea of my children going to middle school so far away. Even RHPS is far for us.
94. Yes, aren't you thinking that's an appropriate option to consider long term? Make sure you adequately and appropriately consider BRAC, Chevy Chase Lake development, and steadily increasing transportation costs, among other factors when developing projections, including cost impacts.
95. I think a new middle school with approximately 750 students is better than having the largest middle school in the county at 1400+ students.
96. No that would raise already high taxes. At the same time, i don't want class sizes to increase. Perhaps more trailers should be used or the cluster borders need to be narrowed so that those who come from Silver Spring attend Silver Spring schools.
97. At this time, I think the best option is to work with the County to keep 6th grade at NCC.
98. only if they will have continue to have access to the same resources/curriculum as the rest of the county.
99. Absolutely. The travel distance to Westland is way too far, it is not even part of our community.
100. Although we are stilling facing the fallout from the recession, Montgomery County schools have high standards and needs to figure out a way to maintain the high standards. We moved to the area specifically for the quality of education that Montgomery County schools provide to its students.
101. Absolutely!
102. All options should be given consideration.
103. YES -- this is way to far to drive to get from NCC area to Westland.
104. I think Westland is too big as it stands now.
105. Would be more cost effective to use the Leland Community Center perhaps.
106. I don't know enough about the statistics on the population of school-aged kids, but generally, I wouldn't advocate spending the money the county doesn't have for an entire new school building. The overcrowding could be temporary and is somewhat tied to the economy (private schools are losing kids to public schools). I'd rather those funds be spent on better teachers, equipment, more course offerings, more extra-curricular activities, etc. Or, for building more permanent facilities at existing schools to accommodate more classrooms (instead of the

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- outbuildings) so the class sizes can be reduced. A longer school day would also be a plus to accommodate more classes, more recreation and help out working parents.
107. There is overcrowding at Westland and Chevy Chase and NCC while needing an addition, appear to be smaller than most of the schools. If there were a middle school closer than at least there would be a closer community feel and the kids would remain together.
 108. I'm undecided - if it could offer the same things as Westland and is actually feasible, it would be nice to have the school closer to home.
 109. North Chevy Chase Park sounds like an ideal location.
 110. Not sure
 111. westland is a fantastic school. the administration is terrific. I would be very disappointed if my children did not have the opportunity to attend westland.
 112. don't know all the other options
 113. Because of the focus on the 6th grade, I don't believe that the community has been given an adequate chance to be presented with information about this option and to ask questions. I am concerned that Westland is in danger of becoming overly large, if not in 5 years, then 10 due to BRAC, Purple line and other development. I am interested in exploring options about middle school, but not yet ready to endorse a new middle school (despite my yes to this answer). I have serious concerns about the negative impact of a new middle school if it creates more split articulation or if it is a shared middle school outside the BCC cluster.
 114. Former Lynnbrook ES should be considered for middle or elementary school. East Bethesda needs both.
 115. I am very much in favor of a new middle school located closer to our community, PROVIDED that the new middle school is of sufficient size to ensure that it receives resources comparable to those that would be provided at a larger, undivided Westland.
 116. But only if the county will insure that the school receives the appropriate resources.
 117. Split the Middle school into smaller more manageable pieces.
 118. Westland is too big and too far away.
 119. None
 120. Westland is too large.
 121. We live far east in the culster. Anything that gets my child to a school closer than Westland is a benefit to them (less time on bus) and me (ability to be more involved in a closer school).
 122. If Westland gets all of the 6th graders in the cluster, it will be the largest middle school in the county. We are closer to Pyle Middle school (not in our cluster) than to Westland.
 123. 1400 middle school students under one roof is ludicrous. It would be cheaper and in these kids better to reopen one of the elementary schools with a gym and quarentine those 6th graders in there - too big for elementary school and too small to be with sexually active huge 8th graders. (I know, I already dealt with 8th grade with my now Freshman)
 124. This is the perfect opportunity to repurpose a building (keeping with the Green designation of both RHPS and NCC) for a new middle school. Westland is too far and too crowded.
 125. I am unceratin on this issue. My primary concern is that I do not believe the 6th graders should

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be in the middle school, for developmental and educational reasons. While building a new middle school for overcrowding issues might be a good thing, it does not address the 6th grade issue. My concerns about the 6th graders going to middle school have nothing to do with the size and overcrowding issues in the middle school.

126. I am a strong advocate for leaving 6th graders with the elementary school. I'm in favor of trailers at our current schools. My 2nd grader had a trailer classroom at Rosemary Hills and it was absolutely fine and even seemed more secure as it was locked down from the rest of the school.
127. The loss of the Larchmont School property is felt especially in this situation as it would have made an excellent location for a middle school to serve the Kensington/North Chevy Chase community
128. I hate the idea of having my kids in a school factory with 1400 students, and spending 1h30 in the bus every day, not allowing them to do sport nor extra activities, which they need as much as math and English. Building a smaller, "kids size" and more "human" middle school would just be fantastic...
129. Absolutely. Long overdue.
130. Depends if close Westland or have it in addition to Westland
131. I think Westland is too big as is. I know adding another middle school is expensive, but I think it would be great to have a smaller school that is closer to where I live.
132. I certainly think all options should be explored, but have no further view on the subject without more information.
133. Westland is totally out of the way and is too large.
134. Include - as an option for consideration, at least
135. There is little to be gained--and much to be lost--by making an already over-capacity middle school (Westland) even larger. Overcrowding is not relieved by creating more overcrowding, and even the county's own projections show Westland exceeding capacity by 2012 without the addition of NCC and CC 6th grades. A new middle school seems the only viable solution to the overcrowding and transportation issues involved with the students in this section of the cluster. Any other solution is a band-aid fix and neither equitable nor in the best interest of the students.
136. No opinion, but a new middle school seems reasonable
137. Perhaps, but I like 6th graders not being mixed with the older kids.
138. If this will help having a smaller middle school rather than enlarge Westland
139. The county should explore taking back the Leland Center or the French School on Beach Drive.
140. Westland is too long a commute for CC students, especially given the terrible traffic.
141. Closer to East Bethesda and Kensington
142. My answer really is perhaps -- depending on additional facts that I need to know.
143. First improve the existing structures (CCES and NCCES)
144. If curriculum is an issue, than I think a new middle school is a better answer than sending them to over-crowded, far-away Westland.

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145. Start now.

146. I absolutely believe one of the options needs to be to build a new middle school. Overcrowding is an issue now and will only become more of an issue as families continue to move back into the area from the suburbs and development (residential) continues in the Bethesda CBD. To think this won't be more of an issue in another couple of years is shortsided.