

FAQs

Why is there such overcrowding at Ft. Belvoir Elementary School?

The growth and increase in enrollment seem to correspond, at least in part, to the phased renovation of housing on the post. The on-post housing improvements, which increased the number of bedrooms for many housing units, seem to have attracted more families. The high quality of the autism program and other educational services at Ft. Belvoir Elementary are also well established among military families having special needs students. Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) has clearly indicated the need to plan for a second school as part of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) review and in its capital improvement program (CIP) in order to accommodate the continued high enrollments currently experienced and anticipated into the future at Ft. Belvoir Elementary School. Both FCPS and Ft. Belvoir command are very much aware of the need to address overcrowding at Ft. Belvoir Elementary and will continue to work together through this boundary study and beyond to arrive at a long-term solution.

Why doesn't Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) construct additional classrooms to be added onto Ft. Belvoir Elementary School to relieve the crowding?

Modular building additions and trailers have been used to address capacity deficiencies in the past. With a current program capacity of 1,200 students and enrollment of over 1,400 and growing, Ft. Belvoir Elementary is already larger than some middle schools in Fairfax County. Adding capacity to the school is not a viable alternative, given its present size and enrollment, and would not provide an optimal elementary school educational environment. The current boundary study that is being undertaken could result in the relocation of general education students living in military housing to a nearby school with some additional capacity.

Why aren't other housing areas on the base under consideration for re-assignment as part of this study?

Woodlawn Village is the closest residential area to Woodlawn Elementary, which is the only school that has capacity to receive students over the next

several years. This area has the advantage of potentially allowing most of the students to be walkers; if students must be bused, then this is the shortest and most efficient bus ride for FCPS to provide to transport these students.

Will transportation to and from the student after-school services center at Markham continue to be provided?

Yes. If your student currently is participating in before- and after-school child care at Markham center, transportation to and from Woodlawn Elementary will be provided.

Is before- and/or after-school child care available at Woodlawn Elementary School, and what is the cost?

Yes, there is also some available space in the School Age Child Care (SACC) program at Woodlawn Elementary. The SACC program is operated by Fairfax County, Office for Children. The fee schedule and additional information on this program may be found at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ofc.

Will my special needs student be able to remain at Ft. Belvoir Elementary School?

Students with IEPs (individualized education programs) will continue to be assigned based on their individual special needs. It is anticipated that most special needs students would continue to receive services at Ft. Belvoir Elementary. However, Woodlawn Elementary may also accommodate students with special needs as part of existing programs at the school. Specific questions should be addressed to the appropriate instructional staff members and/or the principal of either Ft. Belvoir or Woodlawn Elementary School.

Will walking be an option for my student if he or she is assigned to Woodlawn Elementary School?

Most of the Woodlawn Village residential area is deemed to be within walking distance to Woodlawn Elementary, and safe walkways are provided for the route, including a crossing guard to help students cross Pole Road.

Ft Belvoir will study the feasibility and impact of opening the back gate of Woodlawn housing for pedestrian traffic; however, it is not currently an authorized access point for this housing area.

How soon would this change go into effect if approved by the School Board?

If approved by the School Board, this change would go into effect this September for the 2009-10 school year for K-fifth grade students. Rising sixth graders would have the option to remain at Ft. Belvoir to finish their elementary school years at Ft. Belvoir, and transportation for these sixth grade students would be provided.

What is the schedule for the School Board to consider this boundary study?

- A community information meeting will be held on May 5, 2009, at 7 p.m. at the Wood Theater. Questions may be submitted before this meeting by e-mailing boundaries@fcps.edu.
- The School Board will conduct a public hearing on the proposal on June 3, 2009, at Jackson Middle School.
- The School Board is scheduled to take action on the proposed study at its June 25, 2009, regular meeting, also at Jackson Middle School.

Does Ft. Belvoir Elementary School serve only families and students living on post or in military housing controlled by the post?

Yes, with the small exception of a housing area on the north side of Rt. 1 opposite the Tulley Gate area. This housing area is not part of the post, but it is within the assigned boundary area for Ft. Belvoir Elementary.

What steps will FCPS take to transition my students into a new school?

If the School Board approves a boundary change, the principal and staff members from Woodlawn Elementary will send out notices and letters to affected families to invite them to the school to visit and to meet staff

members and teachers. They will also provide the necessary orientation meetings to welcome students and their families. Additional improvements and changes to the school's interior will also be undertaken over the summer to better accommodate the additional students anticipated as a result of the boundary reassignment.

What other options for other school sites have been reviewed to keep all Ft. Belvoir elementary-age students on post?

Several other sites, such as a modular facility, an extension to the current school, and use of other facilities on the installation, have been considered to allow all elementary students to remain on post. Unfortunately, none of these options is available quickly enough to resolve the immediate need.

Is renovation of previous school sites on post an option now or in the future?

Fort Belvoir has considered use of the previous schools on the installation as an option to relieve the overcrowding; however, there are no other facilities on the installation to house the organizations that are currently functioning in the renovated schools (Markham and Barden). Fort Belvoir will continue to consider these two schools as viable options if space can be found for the existing organizations in these facilities.

Has a new site for a second school been identified?

Fort Belvoir has set a site for a new school. This site is northwest of the current school and is situated on Woodlawn Road.

Why is the Army building additional child development centers on post and not using those funds for a new school?

The child development centers (CDCs) and schools service two very different needs and requirements and are funded by two separate sources. CDCs receive direct federal funding to support the Army mission by providing the child care that allows soldiers to go to work. Schools are funded by the local county to support their mission for providing education to all children residing in the county. The installation is partnering with the

county in support of Fort Belvoir's children by providing the land on which to build a new school.

Will Markham and Barden be considered in the future for a potential school?

Both previous schools of Markham and Barden will be considered as temporary options to relieve the overcrowding. The problem is, however, that there is no other available space on the installation for the two programs currently operating in these facilities. Further, both facilities provide services that are mandated by the Army to help soldiers meet the mission.

Markham houses the School Age Services (SAS) program, which provides child care before and after school as well as full-time care during all school breaks. During the day, SAS also provides part-day preschool classes, instructional classes, sports classes, and home-school classroom space. SAS supports 215 children daily. Further, SAS provides office space not only for the SAS administration but also for the overall Child Youth and School Services (CYSS) program administration and for the central enrollment and registration offices totaling 41 personnel with additional staff needs associated with BRAC of five to seven personnel.

Barden is the adult education center providing classroom space during both the day and evening to meet the Army mission for adult education. There is office space not only to support the Education Center staff but also to meet the space requirements for the colleges and universities that offer classes at the center. The education center also houses the Army Transition Assistance program that provides counseling and job assistance services to soldiers as they leave military duty. Also the Barden center houses the Army's Intermediate Leadership Education (ILE) program that trains Army officers in a resident program. This function cannot be relocated and would be incompatible with an elementary school in the same building. Further, the Barden center meeting space for a variety of mission programs.

In summary, while both schools will be considered, it is a daunting task to resolve because both facilities would have to relocate and no ample space is currently available for such a move.

