

## POSITION STATEMENT

---

November 6, 2019

### Clarksville Middle School Parent Teacher Association Position Statement

Attendance Area Adjustment Plan (dated August 20, 2019)

According to the [Maryland PTA](#), the mission of our PTSA is to support and speak on behalf of children in our school, in the community, and before government bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children.

The Clarksville Middle School (CMS) PTA holds the following positions:

1. We agree with the goal of addressing issues of inequity in Howard County. It is not clear, however, that evidence supports moving students out of their communities to address this goal. Socioeconomic disparity should be addressed by devoting educational resources (teacher hiring, after school mentoring, other programs) based on need rather than by disrupting students' lives.
2. Any redistricting should affect the fewest number of families necessary. Moving 207 students from a school that is not overcrowded is not justified. In addition, busing these students, many of whom are able to walk to CMS, to a school that is over 5 miles away seems particularly unreasonable.
3. Forcing students to transfer schools is detrimental to their mental health by removing their safety net and introducing unnecessary change and stress. Removing a students' network of support—friends, other parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators—leaves them vulnerable during puberty, a critical time in their physical and emotional development. Howard County has recently increased attention and resources on mental health. Forcing children to move to a school out of their neighborhood will definitely add stress and may increase sadness, hopelessness, and suicidal ideation. This is contrary to HCPSS's stated objectives of improving the mental health of our student population.
4. General comments about the process of redistricting:
  - a. Involve the community, especially families affected by redistricting, in a less-hurried, more thoughtful process of decision-making. Parents would like to continue to be involved in how boundaries are re-drawn, and we understand that redistricting will happen.
  - b. Families of redistricted students should be given a minimum of two years notice prior to changing schools.
  - c. Avoid manipulating districts to ensure that communities, neighborhoods, and strong consistent feeders are maintained.
  - d. Keep costs (e.g. staffing and transportation) and environmental impacts in mind.