



**DATE:** August 29, 2024  
**TO:** School Board Members  
**FROM:** Dr. Mary Elizabeth Davis  
Superintendent of Schools  
**SUBJECT:** Annual Report - - Critical Overcrowding

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The SY2024-25 Cherokee County Inventory of School Housing (CCISH) shows the impact of enrollment growth patterns/shifts and indicates several areas where additional classroom space will soon be needed.

Additionally, SY2024-25 marks the twelfth consecutive year during which none of the School District's schools are considered "critically overcrowded," reflecting long-standing successful management practices and School Board Policies governing student enrollment growth forecasts, school construction project planning and student attendance area decisions.

The attached chart uses this school year's 20-day enrollment count (August 28, 2024) to measure the percentage of overcrowding. School Board Policy defines "critically overcrowded" as when a school exceeds 140% of its enrollment capacity and meets other criteria, including use of all existing portable classrooms. Pursuant to the School Board's Critical Overcrowding Policy (FDBD), the impact of actual student enrollment is evaluated annually after the 20th day of classes, which is when attendance traditionally peaks, to determine critically overcrowded schools and what, if any, action is needed.

The effort to eliminate "critical overcrowding" in the School District began in 2001, with an aggressive, multi-tiered Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (Ed-SPLOST) plan proposed by a Blue Ribbon Committee of community leaders and approved by the School Board for inclusion on a local ballot referendum. This plan to "bond" future sales tax revenue, which has been extended four times by voters over the past 20 years, continues today with new construction, strategic land purchases, facility renovations, replacement school buses and emerging technologies for students and staff.


Unfortunately, if portable classrooms were not available, eight schools would currently be operating at 100% or more of their capacity. It should be remembered that, while portable classrooms provide relief for classroom instruction, they do not alleviate overcrowding in media centers, cafeterias, restrooms and hallways, as well as not resolving (and sometimes exacerbating) shortages in critical resources such as lockers, parking and recess/playground areas. The schools are: Free Home ES, Ralph Bunche Center, Woodstock ES,

Creekland MS, E.T. Booth MS, Teasley MS, Creekview HS and Woodstock HS. Of those eight schools, one is operating at more than 120% capacity (Creekland MS).

Staff continues to analyze this new data to determine recommendations that may be needed to address overcrowding in preparation for the next school year(s). Data is compiled and analyzed year-round to monitor not only enrollment growth, but also the local real estate market, development trends, local birth rates and other demographics...in order to best determine when and where new and/or replacement school facilities are needed.

Again, it should be noted that since the 2001 Blue Ribbon Committee's findings, all new and replacement school construction and renovations in the School District have been funded primarily by Ed-SPLOST revenue, which was renewed during the November 2021 general election. As such, current overcrowding and capacity issues will be alleviated through construction of the following projects over the next five-year period: Cherokee HS Replacement, Free Home ES Replacement, Creekland MS Classroom Addition, Creekview HS Classroom Addition and Woodstock HS Classroom Addition. Also, with our high schools ranging in enrollment from 1,875 to 2,917 students, Auxiliary Gymnasium Construction at Creekview HS, Sequoyah HS and River Ridge HS would result in all six of our high schools possessing a second gymnasium, which is critical space for both curricular and extracurricular programming.

Finally, staff will conduct a classroom space utilization study and a comprehensive residential zoning/future student population projection report this Fall in order to determine priorities as we look toward development of the next five-year facility plan. Since our construction efforts dating back to 2001 have focused primarily on the construction of classrooms to address overcrowding, the District will now couple that focus with an assessment of age and condition to ensure a focused effort on maintenance and upkeep of facilities, mechanical systems, and renovation projects.

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MED/MMc/TM  
Attachment

cc: Superintendent's Cabinet  
Principals  
Assistant Principals  
School Board Attorney

## 2024-2025 Cherokee County Inventory of School Housing

School Name	Facility Enrollment Capacity <sup>1</sup>			SY2024-2025 20 Day Enrollment	Percentage Overcrowding		Portable Classrooms
	As Constructed <sup>2</sup>	Special Programs <sup>3</sup>	With Portables		Without Portables	With Portables <sup>4</sup>	
Arnold Mill ES (K-5)	1,100	1,068	1,068	749	70%	70%	0
Avery ES (K-5)	1,175	1,163	1,163	1,088	94%	94%	0
Ball Ground ES (PK-5)*	1,175	1,131	1,131	651	58%	58%	0
Bascomb ES (K-5)	1,062	1,050	1,050	902	86%	86%	0
Boston ES (K-5)	862	838	887	636	76%	72%	4
Carmel ES (K-5)	1,100	1,062	1,275	897	84%	70%	12
Clark Creek ES (K-5)	1,200	1,175	1,175	1,076	92%	92%	0
Clayton ES (K-5)	312	312	431	280	90%	65%	8
Free Home ES (K-5)	250	250	400	279	112%	70%	8
Hasty ES (PK-5)*	1,175	1,163	1,193	1,085	93%	91%	2
Hickory Flat ES (K-5)	925	906	1,006	861	95%	86%	6
Holly Springs ES (PK-5)*	1,100	1,068	1,068	842	79%	79%	0
Indian Knoll ES (K-5)	1,200	1,187	1,187	861	73%	73%	0
Johnston ES (PK-5)*	750	750	883	572	76%	65%	8
Knox ES (K-5)	1,200	1,175	1,175	876	75%	75%	0
Liberty ES (K-5)	1,175	1,137	1,337	965	85%	72%	12
Little River ES (K-5)	1,518	1,506	1,506	1,211	80%	80%	0
Macedonia ES (K-5)	862	862	862	717	83%	83%	0
Mountain Road ES (K-5)	725	700	700	372	53%	53%	0
Oak Grove ES (PK-5)*	775	750	750	566	75%	75%	0
Ralph Bunche Center (PK)*	100	100	100	104	104%	104%	0
R. M. Moore ES (PK-5)*	1,062	1,038	1,088	1,013	98%	93%	4
Sixes ES (K-5)	891	879	879	731	83%	83%	0
Woodstock ES (K-5)	1,175	1,143	1,213	1,153	101%	95%	4
Creekland MS (6-8)	1,200	1,193	1,406	1,502	126%	107%	12
Dean Rusk MS (6-8)	1,675	1,643	1,643	1,530	93%	93%	0
E. T. Booth MS (6-8)	1,562	1,538	1,643	1,660	108%	101%	6
Freedom MS (6-8)	1,200	1,193	1,193	924	77%	77%	0
Mill Creek MS (6-8)	1,562	1,550	1,550	1,469	95%	95%	0
Teasley MS (6-8)	1,562	1,518	1,518	1,578	104%	104%	0
Woodstock MS (6-8)	1,362	1,293	1,293	1,068	83%	83%	0
Cherokee HS (9-12)	3,480	3,410	3,410	2,917	86%	86%	0
Creekview HS (9-12)	1,875	1,838	1,956	2,014	110%	103%	6
Etowah HS (9-12)	2,575	2,525	2,525	2,330	92%	92%	0
River Ridge HS (9-12)	2,075	2,025	2,025	1,875	93%	93%	0
Sequoyah HS (9-12)	2,400	2,375	2,375	2,061	87%	87%	0
Woodstock HS (9-12)	1,975	1,913	2,363	1,950	102%	83%	22

Total Overcrowding Percentage	
Without Portables	With Portables
82%	79%
98%	95%
93%	90%
< 90%	90% - 99%
100% - 139%	> 140%

<b>Total ES % Overcrowding</b>	82%	79%
<b>Total MS % Overcrowding</b>	98%	95%
<b>Total HS % Overcrowding</b>	93%	90%

**Notes:**

\* Enrollment numbers include P3 and P4 students where applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Capacity calculations based on State Instructional Unit Capacity Charts

<sup>2</sup> Original Facility Construction IU Designation

<sup>3</sup> Adjustments are calculated to accommodate specialized classrooms that operate at a limited capacity based on usage

<sup>4</sup> If/when school capacity is extended by the use of portables, the capacity of core areas (e.g., media center, cafeteria, hallways, kitchens, restrooms, etc.) is not expanded.