

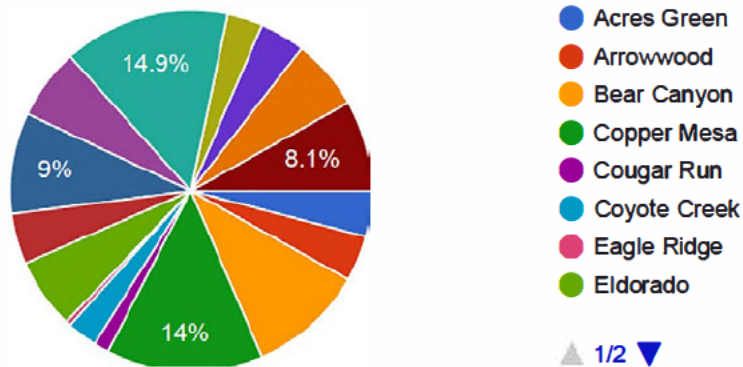
# Community Survey re Pairing Criteria

221 responses

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## School your child attends?

221 responses



1/2

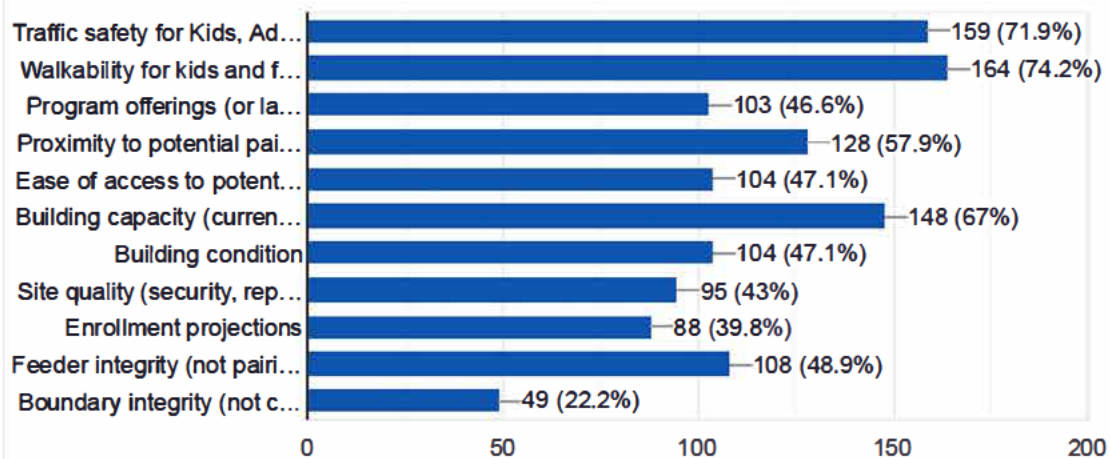
As part of the school pairing process, the Board of Education will consider Board policy regarding the criteria for pairings of schools in January 2025. In preparation, we have received a lot of suggestions about potential criteria. We want your suggestions too.

Based on input received to date, we have included criteria below for you to review. Please check only those that you think should be considered. Then, please suggest any other criteria that you think should be considered in the Comment Box below.

Please check all that you think are appropriate to consider:

\*There is a narrative box at the bottom of this survey if you'd like to add any other criteria you think we should consider.

221 responses

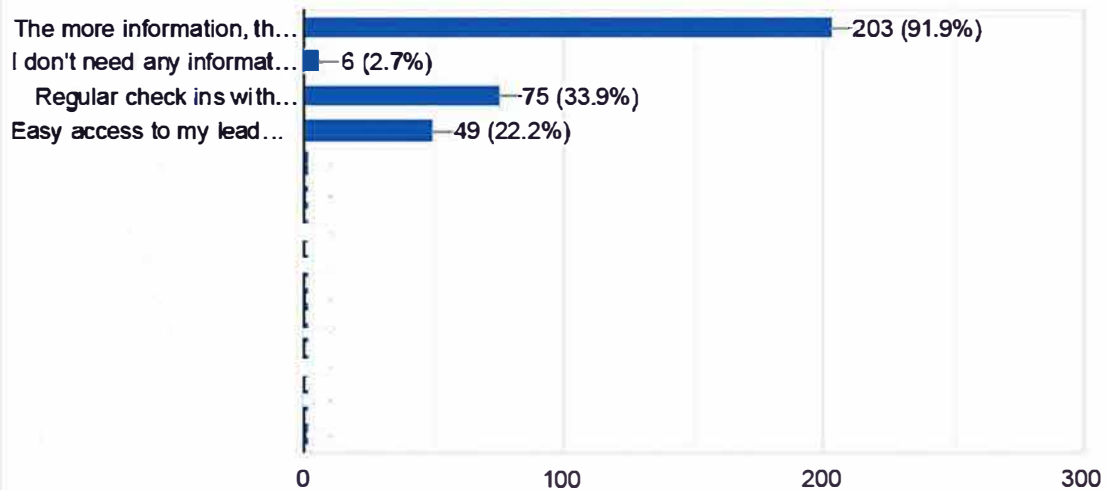


Whether you are part of a school pairing process or not, what would help you navigate the school pairing conversation from now through April 2025?

Please check all that apply to your needs:

\*There is a narrative box at the bottom of this survey if you'd like to add any other considerations.

221 responses



What questions do you have that you need answered that we may not have addressed yet?

123 responses

Do you know which schools are being paired yet?

Trying to understand and envision how to create the space in any of our current schools to accommodate such an increase of students and staff. When it comes to events such as school dance or community night we are already pushing boundaries of max capacity and a simple assembly is standing room. I do not understand how we could bring in and "fit" that many more students and classrooms when we feel completely full.

How will you handle continuity of 6th grade curriculum/experiences if some are in middle and some are in elementary? Will there be any requirements for educator collaboration across schools?

If my school does NOT merge, are things then inequitable for our smaller schools?

If we are an open enrollment family from east highlands ranch but attend saddle ranch, how will this impact us?

How much more funding will be available for the schools by pairing? Where will those dollars go? How will this positive affect my kids education? Will there be more teacher assistance and specials teachers to accommodate the large class sizes? Will my kid be displaced while you make repairs and add infrastructure to the school to prepare for the growth of students in their building? How are you entice teachers to not leave their community? If you're planning on building a whole new school in Sterling Ranch, why are we not looking at redistricting zones? The residence of Sterling Ranch purchased, knowing that there was no elementary school in our in their community- the residence in the Mountain Vista feeder purchased because of the small class sizes and small schools. How do you make sure that our schools don't slip in test scores by all of a sudden, having an influx of students?

None now

Will you combine Eldorado?

If there are schools that will not be paired, please let us know as soon as possible. With the new Sterling Ranch elementary school not opening until a year after these pairings, it appears Coyote Creek could not be in the running. Are there other schools already in operating at the big school model like Northridge and Stone Mountain that will not be considered for pairing rather would be a model to hold up to the community as the end goal for all students to access to?

Sunshine law skirting. Non-transparency of questions asked

I'm worried our school will not have a pairing and we will continue to have the same problems. All schools need to address this and there should be equity across ALL schools in terms of programming. I will consider pulling my children out if BCE is not paired. The programming there is bare bones. But the location is ideal and simply can't be beat.

What are your plans to address the over representation of Charter Schools in our district?

I've been informed that decisions are being based on birth rates. I moved to Highlands Ranch in August 2024. My eldest daughter is attending kindergarten and I have two younger daughters that will be enrolling in 2026 and 2028. In my daughters kindergarten class the majority of parents are from the inter-state (with a majority having younger children also born interstate).

I'm concerned that you are not looking at the data of number of children living in proximity to the schools who will be enrolling in the next 5 years who were not born in Colorado.

What will happen if we pair schools and then there is an over subscription in the coming years.

What will transportation look like if a community school with >80% walking students now have to ride a bus with the current understaffed situation of bus drivers??

What evidence is the district relying on to go with a school pairing instead of drawing new boundaries? It seems like school pairing comes with a morass of issues (over large schools, more students than school capacity, greatly extending travel distance to school) with literally no benefit that I can see. I appreciate that separating kids from friends would be very difficult, but the school pairing "cure" seems so very much worse than the disease. Have you spoken with other school districts that have done the pairing idea and it's gone comparatively well, or is this some scheme you've cooked up based on no evidence or proof of concept whatsoever?

A full, transparent financial report of how the closures will save money. Especially given the buildings will be kept, maintained, and no reduction in headcount. I want to know the exact financial impact.

Message received, aging population is affecting numbers. If there were no charter schools in HR, would that decrease the chances of this school merge, out of curiosity?

██████████ runs amazing before school sports for the kids, spearheads a very meaningful program to us in Landsharks, and even runs a summer camp. What will happen to him and his programming with a school merge. How will a merge affect student teacher ratios? How will the merged school manage their unity towards security, staying proactive to manage school situations before they boil into a more serious matter?

Transportation - Will there be additional transportation support? If so, how will it be funded— and more importantly, by whom? Can you also post or share details about how traffic pattern will affect our walkers? Last school year, our neighborhood suffered a tragic loss due to an

accident on HR Parkway. What research has been conducted to ensure children will no longer have to cross dangerous major streets like this? Safety should be the top priority.

Timing and Transition - You claim to prioritize the well-being of the kids, yet only one year is being allocated to prepare for this significant disruption. Transparency is critical—please share which schools are being considered for pairing and how the traditions and cultures of each school will be preserved during this process.

As leaders in our school district, it is your responsibility to provide a detailed plan to guide schools through this transition. Mandating change without offering clear support places an undue burden on schools that are already focused on the vital task of educating our children.

Bigger Picture - What is your ultimate end goal for the August 2026 deadline? How does this decision benefit the community—or does it primarily serve other interests? Transparency about motivations and plans is critical for trust and cooperation.

Won't the paired schools have very high enrollment, leaving the other schools still with very low enrollments? How does this solve programming needs for the remaining schools not being paired?

Will you be busing children to the new schools if they are not in walking distance? How will that work for elementary aged kids? e.g. pickup locations on the street?

Continuity for IEP supports for our kids. Will the SpEd teams be split up? or all go to the one new school? Some of our kids require familiarity.

Class and school size.

We purposefully chose Heritage as it is walking distance for us, a nice sized school where everyone knows everyone. This will not be possible if the elementary school has 700 students.

With pairings of schools, the sending of 6th graders to middle (ranch view) will be disastrous. The traffic is a nightmare currently, how are we supposed to handle another 25% influx of more vehicles when the traffic is already unsafe.

What roadway improvements are anticipated for the new pairing schools, such as mid block crossings, hawk signals, safe walks to schools?

It has been mentioned that it will either be 4 to 2 or 6 to 3; what factor(s) drive which it will be?

Why are the charter schools getting higher priority to stay open as compared to regular Highlands Ranch elementary schools?

Schools that will be closed, what is the intended purpose of those schools after they close?

Anticipating the home Value impact on the neighborhood the schools are closed in?

Can parents protest this and what might happen if legal action is sought? With survey data what percentage of parents are commenting positive or negative?

More detailed financial information that shows the cost savings associated with combined schools.

Experts to talk about home values when buildings are repurposed.

It is unclear if there is a possibility that kids will move to the middle schools for 6th grade. If considered, would that be for all elementary schools?

1. Why are redrawing boundaries not a consideration before pairing schools 2. My student will be in kindergarten in '26. How can I get district emails regarding this even though I don't have a current student in district?

Not sure about building capacity enough for kids. Including classrooms, cafeteria, gym, library and bathrooms.

Not sure about traffic congestion around schools.

Not sure about optimal ratios per classroom

Why is the increasing cost per pupil a problem given state revenues and property values have gone up significantly in recent years? Additionally we passed the teacher pay increase which seems like it should further boost revenues. I get there are new schools being built but these come with new homes and new tax revenues. It seems like there should be plenty of revenue to make our education better for a declining population that is going to need higher quality and a more tailored education more than ever. Where is the money going or planned to go? I am not finding a detailed budget that explains how and where money is being saved and where it goes instead?

Can you commit to not approving new charters in Highlands Ranch for some period of time in conjunction with this public school closure process? Separately, I'd ask that you consider walkability and proximity over and above not splitting schools, so that we can maximize walkability.

Will busing be free for families that are forced into a new building when they could have walked? The bar for free/reduced is so low, that it's not a reasonable assumption that families can access that support. Adjusting family budgets to add childcare and bussing costs for kids that would been cared for by a neighbor and walked is a big impact to families. We chose where we live because our kids could walk to school with friends. Our school is truly a neighborhood school. How can we preserve that if we're selected for consolidation? How can we lessen that impact to families?

If there will "still be a few smaller schools" how will you build up those remaining schools in terms of resources and opportunities?



After criteria is decided upon, when and how will the district release data for each school relevant to that criteria?

What conversations are we having about enticing students back from charters? (Busing blackouts impact parents' decisions to pull kids out of schools into charters they can walk to). How can we reach out to our communities to explain the positive shifts in the district that can bring kids back?

Small schools need to be marketed as a good thing as well--the language around program opportunities being better at "fully funded" (people hear "larger") schools is risky--how are we best supporting ALL schools?

What are the actual dollar for dollar costs projected to be associated with these closures and pairings?

If student achievement and test scores show a decrease due to over populated schools and teacher:student ratios being in excess, will the district reconsider reopening schools again? As the data has shown for decades, smaller class sizes play more of a role in building community and student achievement than the programs being offered alone.

How can you take into consideration well-attended school functions as a reason to keep a school together and untouched?

Now that 5A has passed and a new school will be built in Sterling Ranch to alleviate the over crowding of Coyote Creek and others, how will that affect the pairings? Can the pairings be pushed back a year to see how it shakes out with the new school builds?

You've done a great job so far and I feel so lucky to have heard great insight, opinions and support from our school Principal as well. I wish this didn't have to happen but understand it's for the best for all DougCo kids.

At the meeting at on 11/20, Mr Colella shared that there is research that shows that it is better for 6th grade to be in Middle School. I am having a hard time finding that, just in a general search. What I am finding is the opposite, that data shows that having 6th grade in Middle School, produces worse behavior and lower test scores compared to 6th graders in elementary school. Looks like the positive outcomes are more for K-8 schools which doesn't fit out neighborhood school model. So I'm wondering what research is being looked at? I'd love to see it, as I don't personally support that 6th graders move to Middle School. However, I am trying to keep an open mind and be informed. Also, I wanted to confirm that if 6th grade does get moved into Middle School, that, that would occur with the '26-'27 school year, specifically for MRMS?

We chose our elementary school based on proximity - our children can see our house and will never have to cross a street to get to and from school, but we also love the principal and his values system. If our school closes is the district going to provide information to parents about which other elementary school closely matches the values/culture?



I worry about my home value going down if our neighborhood school is closed and I also worry about HR in general attracting new families if it is well-known that the district is in decline. What is the district doing to attract new families and to keep the families that have chosen to establish themselves here?

Why has school re-zoning not been considered? Is proximity of how close current schools are to one another (Summit view & Heritage for example) being taken into consideration?

None

If emotional impact on the kids and families has been considered. As well as consideration that people bought houses to be able to walk to neighborhood schools

Is Ranch View going to be 6, 7 and 8 when these pairings happen? I feel this is important to make a decision on and announce at the January meeting. I have a child that will be in 6th the year of the transition and need adequate time to prepare her and us for the major transition from elementary to middle school if that is the case. I do not feel waiting until April to announce this is enough time.

I think I need more specifics about how my kids will get to school if our neighborhood school closes. It's difficult to provide feedback when things are kept so vague. What are the possible solutions?

Will all the data gathered be shared publicly before the January 8th meeting.

Will sixth grade be moving to middle school?

Could the Discovery Program be impacted by this?

I would like to see the actual projections for Douglas County. Even the graph shown at the meeting shows the decline has leveled out and enrollment has increased in the last year or two.

If pairing happens how will you solve the transportation crisis that is currently happening and will only worsen with extra load.

I'm worried about class size, I'm worried about distance and extra work for parents and kids to get to school, I'm worried about our kids with special needs, I'm worried if this will happen again in middle or high school. It seems you won't be able to answer any of this until a decision is made so I urge the board to just provide all information you have and make a decision know quickly.

What will the district be doing to support teachers, staff and students ensuring that

relationships that have been established between staff and students are not only maintained

but preserved during this very difficult transition.

What will be done with the empty schools?

Because my children's school is an EL school, is there a possibility that it could be combined with another?

The enticing part of moving to HR was the small school atmosphere. These buildings weren't built for large classes. They feel too-small as is. How are you planning to shove all these children into these small schools AND keep the enticement of HR by closing schools? How will enrollment improve if we have closed schools and overpopulated schools for those coming into the area?

How will you ensure no children are left behind? How will you ensure a supportive and easy transfer for our special needs students? How will IEP handoffs be handled?

If we are considered a thriving school are we still being considered for pairings? Would be good to know if thriving schools are off the table

SSN programs-considering impact change has on those students and working hard to provide continuity. Looking at programs that are established and successful vrs programs that have newer staff and really not very established.

More information needs to be published and presented regarding classroom size management planning of the paired schools. Information on how support programs will be handled (psychologists, counselors, etc.).

Does the current roadway and sidewalk systems have the ability to handle the merged new schools with parents driving from other areas.

Are you considering the age of the schools. How will base staff be affected. And how will it work

This decision was very much a top heavy decision. There was no discussion with LRPC, DAC, MBEC, etc before Kane and the board decided to ram this down our throats. I am not at all convinced this will save taxpayers money. The extra costs for portables, getting middle schools ready to take 6th graders, trying to cram hundreds of kids into schools that don't have room....it's a wash monetarily. Where's the savings? This whole thing feels incredibly unnecessary and forced by Kane and the majority board.

Can those staff members being displaced have priority, even over other employees in the district, looking for a new job? They should have priority and not have to accept a job in southern parts of the county, or somewhere they don't want to be, just to stay in the district.

When merging schools, it should not be assumed that staff from the remaining school will

automatically retain their positions while adding staff and students from the closing school. All teachers and staff should be evaluated to ensure the most experienced and capable individuals are selected to support students and the community through the transition.

I understand we are considering pairing schools with low enrollment. However, if one school has consistently had significantly lower enrollment, it should be carefully evaluated. Transitioning families from that school to another may have less impact compared to moving families from a larger school to one with lower enrollment.

With so many students from Sterling Ranch attending Coyote Creek, should we consider delaying the pairing of the TRHS feeder area for a year or two? Waiting until schools are built in Sterling Ranch and enrollment numbers at Coyote Creek are adjusted could influence how pairings are determined for the area. It would seem that you are not getting an accurate look at that school's enrollment.

Can you provide more details about how open enrollment works? Are schools allowed to accept as many students as they want? There's a narrative in the community that Stone Mountain has accepted more students than it can accommodate, resulting in the addition of temporary buildings. If that's accurate, can limits be put in place?

1. Would you consider leaving West Highlands Ranch schools alone until the new Sterling Ranch schools are built to see what that does for enrollment?
2. Do you look at community involvement? Saddle Ranch has a community far beyond the inside walls of the school.
3. Are you looking at bus routes for kids? Our school currently doesn't have any buses so taking it away would put 3 neighborhoods needing buses that we don't have.
4. Will you add more traffic lights around the school that gets merged into? With such a big student population it seems needed.

There are so many rumors and fear floating around. Please keep us informed about this process so that we don't speculate! :) (fwiw I think no matter what happens, we have great schools and they will stay great!)

Once again- are you wiping boundaries and pairing schools that are together physically then redrawing lines based on population? That clearly is a fair and defensible way of doing it.

If 6th grade would be moved to the middle school vs. kept at the elementary level - and when this would be implemented (ie as part of the school pairings, or at a later date). Also, what criteria is used to make this determination (maturity of students, iReady/CMAS score comparison between 6th graders in elementary school and 6th graders at the middle school in Douglas County, school space at local middle schools, continuity across the feeders (ie some middle schools 7/8 and others 6/7/8), impacts of Outdoor Ed, National Elementary Honor Society, Student Council, school leadership opportunities for 6th graders, negative impacts of 11 year olds having to navigate different classes, teachers, peer pressure, etc). And thinking through the option of "well, you can move your kid to a school that still has 6th grade at the elementary level isn't a great option either - that leaves parents with the choice of having to rip their student away from all their friends and move to a new school for 1 year before moving to

ANOTHER new (middle) school the next year, where all their friends from the previous year has already mixed with the other 6th grade classes, so while that may sound like a good option on paper, it is NOT a good option for the students and putting them through 2 stressful transitions in 2 years. If moving 6th grade to the middle school is on the table, I would recommend a longer time table (ie 3-4 years) so students and families have more time to adjust to the idea of 6th graders in middle school.

Please ensure feeder integrity

Is there a hold on allowing additional charter schools in the area? This would obviously make the issue worse.

Will the community have access to the data? Is there a third party consulting firm who is taking a neutral look at the data and giving their recommendations to the board?

Will there be more community meetings after pairings are decided?

I've seen some information about transitioning 6th grade into middle school for ALL DCSD schools. Is this true? If so, why? What's the timing?

It was mentioned multiple times that paired student populations "would work themselves out" over time and that there is the assumption of some students leaving due to open enrollment options.

What is the assumed percentage of the population that will move out of the overcrowded paired schools? How much of the modeling for success relies on a minimum percentage leaving due to open enrollment or charter enrollment? And what plans are being put in place if people don't leave due to open enrollment or charter school enrollment?

And from the outside looking in, Kane's constant commentary about how much Charter schools are struggling, then hearing her almost immediately say that there is an assumption that some students will leave because of the pairing and overcrowding, throws some flags regarding her sincerity.

How are we providing transportation if we are no longer in a school that is close to our home?

Please consider test scores, ratings and teacher longevity before closing Heritage Elementary. I understand the economic issues but as a smaller school our Community (through PTO and our Principal working her budget) supports the school and allows us to have many opportunities for our children. With small class sizes and specials.

My concern would be pairing schools in different Feeder areas. We moved into our house to go to Heritage, Mountain Ridge and Vista. My son goes to Mountain Ridge I don't want my daughter going to Cresthill/HRHS

How will you account for subjective criteria that isn't measurable (or applicable to other

schools)? For example, investments to a school like at SCE our PTO has invested over \$75k plus into LED sign, front entrance Pergola remodel, outdoor classroom, disproportionate impact of relocating SPED and AN students into a new building/environment, etc. if you will publish criteria that has been selected by the community - but there is a lot of nuance that goes into a decision like this.

How are you going to keep class sizes small and relatively similar to what we have now if you combine schools? My daughter's class is 25 they don't need more than that!

Additional support from traffic will be needed at the paired schooling and should be addressed appropriately for the safety of all.

I do not think so

Is the district looking to change elementary school boundaries to better facilitate geographical adjacencies?

The sooner you can tell us what schools will be combined the better so we can all plan accordingly.

Heritage seems to have feeders throughout the county which I hope weighs to keep it. However if it is not kept, I worry our son will have less accessibility to the playgrounds as Katie Lawson has made our playground Accessible which is absolutely amazing as well as her amazing staff.

We are hoping bussing is addressed. We aren't currently walkable to our school & the bus stop location & cancellations make it difficult to use.

For schools that are closed, how long will you plan to keep those buildings? Is there a term like 20 years? 30 years?

Can some of the empty school buildings be used to support full day universal preschool or even half day?

Why are you not considering re-zoning? It makes so much sense for Copper Mesa to get all of Firelight and The Hearth, right? So we avoid making kids cross Wildcat Reserve and we increase our enrollment? Our street is actually zoned for Heritage, but we enrolled in Copper Mesa because we can easily walk along the trail to get there—no street crossing at all. It's actually closer, as well.

If this has been a problem for 10 years, why now? Also, why can't you have shared programs between schools? Have a bus take kids to and from so you don't have to rely on parents? I feel that you're overlooking the fact that a lot of people love having their kids in a neighborhood school. It's part of our little communities. You're going to help kill off neighborhoods too because one of our major draws is a neighborhood school you can walk to.



if 6th grade goes to the MS is there room or is the \$20million going to help with that influx?

None right now

How the school board plans to ease the children into their new environment

Building use of paired schools is huge to me. My kids will no longer be in elementary school when this occurs. The idea of having an empty or partially used school building in our neighborhood is very concerning. It will lower property values, has a lot of safety concerns, etc. It seems like we are just getting vague comments about the schools possible uses and that likely they are now unneeded buildings. I love the idea of a building preschool, special needs school. Possibly consider a 6th grade building as an option nearby the middle school. I would like a solid answer to how our school building will be used prior to closing a school.

If you pair schools that would now require a further travel (not too far, but too far to walk) will busses be provided?

How will this effect the registration process? This affects me as a parent and as an employee. I am the registrar at [REDACTED]. I am just wondering how this will affect enrollment and open enrollment.

-If decline is in middle highlands ranch, why merge 2 schools in west HR?

\*\*\*\*per master capital plan:

\*\*5 out of 6 MVHS feeder elementary schools are under 350 kids with several of those projecting decline from less than 350? If I'm reading the 2024-2025 year correctly/ if the numbers are right.

Will charter schools be considered for pairing? If not, why?

Why I did the bill pass to improve schools if the money is just to build in new developments? And why are charter schools not included? They get state funding?

If dcsl is open enrollment how does this solve anything?

Why don't we just raise additional funds to increase teachers for the low enrollment schools?

Can we hear the feedback from current principles and teachers for low enrollment schools?

Can you share enrollment data for each school going back years. I think while we have open enrollment no one really knows what schools may have benefits to enrollment in. Perhaps the real problem is community information on enrollment and programs when picking the school their kids go to each year.

When discussing building capacity, how is kitchen/lunch line capacity being taken into consideration? Currently at our school, 2 grades eat at a time (total of 4 classes), and more often than not, all the kids can't even get through the line to get lunch before the lights go off for the 5-minute warning, meaning these kids that JUST got their lunch have barely 5 minutes to eat. How, if we combine with another school, would this be addressed?? Kids should be given more than 5 minutes to eat 1) so they can eat a complete meal and 2) to limit food waste. My kids ask me to pack them lunch more often than not because they REPEATEDLY say they do not have enough time to get school lunch and eat it.

Having the recess before lunch complicates this because if kids take a long time to line up from recess to go into lunch, it then shortens the time they have to eat lunch (but that's another problem for another day).

What efforts has the District engaged in to avoid this as a possibility?

- 1) What sort of legal or written guarantee can Highlands Ranch homeowners receive that the vacated school buildings will be maintained and used by DCSD (regardless of who sits on the board)?
- 2) Can DCSD assure the community that there are no conflicts of interest with those who are finalizing the criteria and determining the partnered schools with having kids, grandkids, friends, etc. in the schools that are being considered?
- 3) If 6th graders moving to middle school is being considered, can you provide data regarding academics or overall satisfaction of students and families who currently do this in the district?
- 4) When the decision is made to partner 6 to 3 OR 4 to 2 schools, can DCSD present data as to how the decision was made?

Bussing and transportation



\* Comment narrative box if needed.

105 responses

Na

N/a

After attending a public meeting I'm actually excited about the prospect of pairings but I'm VERY concerned about the paired school having adequate space to house all students. I do NOT want mobiles to be used for education. At the meeting it was said that no one likes mobiles and yet they are in use at many schools that are currently experiencing decline and have been in use for multiple years. My other concern is class size. I'd like the district to come up with a policy on class size for the paired schools. Bigger schools is not a problem but bigger class sizes are.

Can we try to fight for the district to ban rentals properties in Douglas county? A majority of the homes are rental properties with older homeowners who refuse to sell making so much money because they bought 20+ years ago. This makes it difficult for families to stay long term and equally affects us younger families who want our children to grow up with friends but they move in and out every year or two. Banning rentals properties could be a solution and force 1,000's of homes to go up for sale making it possible for new families to move here.

Bipartisan oversight of the school board during this process, open and honest communication

None at this time

Many families in these Highlands Ranch schools specifically bought their house for walkability to their neighborhood school and for feeders. I think the most important aspect is maintaining that neighborhood school feel for as many schools as possible, pairing schools that are geographically close within the boundaries of major roads and not changing school boundaries for feeders.

Please be more transparent or hype up more the positives that married schools will receive- learning foreign languages, dedicated science labs, new playground, better staffing for mental health, etc.

Acres Green has very specific struggles and should be paired- it is a failing school. When you pair it, you will need to spend considerable time and effort to tackle how it's pairing will pull down the school it is paired with. The amount of turnover between both staff and students is considerable. Additional concerns revolve around the number of special needs kids and ESL considerations. Currently, Acres Green can't afford the resources it needs to be successful and this is reflected in its CMAS scores. How will you combine two schools with greatly differing capabilities amongst their student populations?

I've been informed that decisions are being based on birth rates. I moved to Highlands Ranch in August 2024. My eldest daughter is attending kindergarten and I have two younger daughters that will be enrolling in 2026 and 2028. In my daughters kindergarten class the majority of parents are from inter-state (with a majority having younger children also born interstate).

I'm concerned that you are not looking at the data of number of children living in proximity to the schools who will be enrolling in the next 5 years who were not born in Colorado.

What will happen if we pair schools and then there is an over subscription in the coming years.

Thank you for taking the time to answer our questions.

Additional consideration: Academic success, testing, accomplishments and recognition

Pairing seems like the worst possible way to go about doing this. Schools with 600-750 kids seems like a nightmare scenario. I respect the need to close some schools but making three gigantic schools from school pairing is the most unreasonable way to accomplish this goal. In the meeting, that is exactly what most of the parents were saying and I hope you'll listen before it's too late.

Pairing schools may require enhanced security for increased population.

If capacity is an issue, such as Heritage & Summit View, one option would be to separate them into one being K-3rd and the other 4th-6th. Having 2 "mini" elementary schools close by would be more helpful for parents of multiple children as opposed to moving a campus far away.

1. Interview schools and see if they are struggling. Address on a case-by-case basis. Close schools which want to be closed.
2. Close in different feeder areas. Don't close schools that all feed into the same middle and high school.
3. Close schools in areas that have an alternative school in close proximity, such as a charter school. That way, if proximity is important to a family they have an alternative.
4. Give closed schools priority on bus routes for at least a couple years. This will help families who are used to short commutes or walking to school. You could also temporarily expand the minimum radius to alleviate any bus driver shortage. E.g. from 2 miles to 3 miles
5. For receiving schools, choose ones that have the capacity. Minimize construction at all costs. As we all know, construction is disruptive and takes much longer than estimated.
6. The receiving school needs to be close to the closed school.
7. Minimize commutes that cross busy roads or heavily trafficked areas.

Financial Transparency - Please set up a meeting to discuss how funds will be used and distributed both before and after the pairing process. Reading about it is not the same as having an open discussion.

One year is simply not enough time for schools to build the collaboration and bonds necessary for a successful transition. Teachers plan their curriculum well in advance; how can they be

expected to incorporate such a monumental shift within this limited timeframe? Quick fixes, such as rushed meet-and-greet events, are not sufficient. If the well-being of students and teachers is truly a priority, more time and thoughtful planning are essential for this major transition.

#### Narrative box

It seems like the approach from the Board toward this is very thoughtful and well-intentioned to date.

Thank you for the open meetings.

Not going to tell you "don't close our kids school because well my kids go there". My thoughts are pragmatic. I've read your information available. Appreciate the FAQ section etc. Based on my research I believe the criteria should be a ven diagram of three factors - declining enrollment, performance rating, geography. Not a simple metric like building size. Based on data available at SchoolView on CO Dept of Education, there are six schools that fall in the bottom 10 of both performance rating and kindergarten enrollment: Arrowwood, Eldorado, Acres Green, Wildcat Mountain, Trailblazer, and Copper Mesa. Almost all of those schools are located near another school within the same feeder that has a higher performance rating and higher kindergarten enrollment, while also not putting a significant burden on the families to change dropoff/pickup locations. Prime example in our Mountain Vista feeder system: Sand Creek has declining enrollment however scores well on performance rating and would be a burden to shift those families to Summit View or Heritage; Copper Mesa has similar declining enrollment however scores lower on performance rating and would not be a burden to shift those families to Summit View or Heritage (many Heritage families live by Southridge Rec Center which is the same Firelight neighborhood as Copper Mesa); Summit View is only slightly better in enrollment and performance rating than Copper Mesa but does not fall in bottom 10 of either category above; Heritage has increasing enrollment as well as scores at the top of performance rating and would be a better candidate to receive a school than to close; Mountain Vista feeder example Copper Mesa is likely the choice to close. Example in ThunderRidge feeder: Trailblazer is bottom 10 in both categories above and is close to the other schools that score better in both categories. If not protecting feeder integrity, then there are other options like Copper Mesa and Arrowwood or Sand Creek and Cougar Run. Thank you for your time

I feel the charter schools are getting higher priority to stay open as compared to regular Highlands Ranch elementary schools? Can you explain why charter schools will not be closed?

Please make sure the Equity Advisory Council is consulted (I am co-chair).

N/A

See questions section

I don't think it's a good idea to close 6 schools around all together and just open 2 further away



in the future. The process should be more planned and executed in different stages. It seems it only care for money, specially coming from big companies that develop further areas, instead of kid's school education.

One thing that I don't think makes sense if we are combining schools is not sending 6th grade to middle school for all schools in that middle school feeder. That creates two separate incoming classes and hurts the ability to offer extra programming which is more important for middle school than elementary.

Please don't approve new charters in Highlands Ranch during or right after closing true public schools. It seems so unfair that they are exempt from this process.

A concern I have about choice is that this process will push people preemptively out of schools that are rumored to be consolidated, impacting enrollment data. If people know that their school is "secure" they may not choose to move their child. I understand the timeline, and I also understand how talk around the community can really impact parents' decisions (talk already impacts how people choose into school, unfortunately). So being prudent about information shared is really important. I think you all have been. Choice is a great buzzword, but many choices are uninformed.

I still wonder about reforming boundaries within a school zone (not talking about cross-feeder). I get keeping kids together is a goal, but that goal shouldn't take priority over safety and transportation decisions.

The ESTABLISHED community should be considered. If a school already possesses a thriving, active community of neighbors and families that attend the school, it should not be considered for separation. Our kids go through enough then to lose all their friends and their school.

Copper Mesa Elementary is inside of a neighborhood which is zoned for two different schools. The kids in the front of the neighborhood, who are zoned for Heritage, must cross Wildcat every day. Could the zones be looked at to have all future incoming kindergarten students in the Firelight neighborhood attend Copper Mesa instead? And also, some of the Hearth neighborhood, which is much closer to Copper Mesa than Wildcat Elementary?

School tenure of the teachers should be considered, as an established school culture has a huge impact for the students and community, and cannot be quickly rebuilt.

I understand that the parings are going to happen and I appreciate the long runway that the district is providing. These are all great schools and wonderful communities! I've lived in HR for almost 34 yrs, so I have witnessed HR grow and change! I have a 4th and 6th grader at CME, so I am absolutely biased! However, I believe that CME is the newest building within our feeder. The BASE preschool program was just relocated to CME this year. Currently, it doesn't make sense that a portion of Firelight is zoned for Heritage. When CME is walkable, without having cross any major roads. There is even a portion across Griggs that is zoned for Heritage (a farther distance than going to CME). Many kids open enroll from the Hearth, to CME because

it's closer to them than their home school of Wildcat Mountain. My nephew lives in Spaces, but is zoned for Summit View. He takes a bus, on the weeks that it is available to SVE, when Heritage is closer to their house. I assume that these are all things that committees and staff are aware of and that I am not offering any lightning thoughts! I appreciated the community member offering that reviewing boundaries (NOT changing feeder boundaries) really should be looked at and I think that all of the above supports that.

We all know that a neighborhood school being used for anything other than a neighborhood school is not as good. It is an anchor for a community, no matter if you have school-aged kids or not. I was saddened to hear another community member share their thoughts about the possibility of the Bridge program potentially coming to their neighborhood school. To be clear, that is not what I am echoing here. I am very much for the buildings being used by the district. I am saying that Firelight, truly is an island (as another community member shared). For CME not to function as a neighborhood school, doesn't geographically make sense, in comparison to other elementary schools within the MVHS feeder.

Walkability to schools is the main factor for purchasing our home so if a consolidation happens I hope this is a considered factor

I think the most important consideration is the kids being able to stay with their friends and teachers that they know. I hope that this doesn't change.

Safe walkability is by far my biggest factor. We bought our house specifically so our kids could walk to school without crossing a major intersection and just walk along the greenbelt path. Really disappointed that we may lose that as an option. After that child was killed crossing Highlands ranch parkway on his way to school, in a crosswalk and with the right of way, no way I will let me kids walk to a school requiring that crossing.

I am begging to keep Saddle Ranch for my kids. We love it so much and really want to stay here. Please.

Please see above.

Steve C. said that class sizes would not increase and the school that is being paired would bring their own teachers since no one will lose their job. Erin Kane also said class sizes will "absolutely not" increase on the 12/3 zoom session. I don't understand where those classes will go. There aren't empty rooms in our school. How can there be two principals? Two PE teachers? Did I misunderstand? Class size is a very top priority for my family. This has been a top contributor to the academic and social success of my children. I think it's best to be honest about this and not guarantee class size won't increase. Perhaps it would be better to say class sizes wouldn't increase beyond a certain point. You can't guarantee my student will stay in a class of 18 if the size of the school is doubling.

How many children age 0-10 are in the boundaries of the school currently?

My top priority is student safety and my kids not having to cross major roads like HR parkway and Broadway etc.

I think boundaries need to be evaluated very closely. If we have six schools feeding to one high school for example, and they all have approximately 300 kids in them, it makes absolutely zero sense to combine two schools and have 1 school with 600 kids and 4 schools with 300. Boundary re-assignment would be a much better option.

Take into consideration the schools that are the center of communities. The schools that people choose to open enroll students bc they like the small sizes and or the vibe/characteristic of the school community.

Please consider the 45 plus homes that are being constructed at Cactus Bluff Ave and Bitterroot Pl, Highlands Ranch, 80129.

n/a

Thank you for taking the time and effort to answer questions

It is disappointing that Douglas county is unwilling to fund our children's education. This will ruin property values, cause young families to move away, and is a black mark on an otherwise delightful place to live.

Just submitted a previous lengthier response, however forgot to include the link to my dashboard from which basing those thoughts on. Hope this helps: [https://app.powerbi.com/view?](https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrJoiYjRhNWFIYmUtZDA3My00ZGNkLWI3OGMtMDY3Yjk4NzE5N2E4IiwidCI6ImE1NzNjM2RILTA4MDItNDcwOS04OGU5LWVjNzIhY2NkN2Q1OCJ9)

[r=eyJrJoiYjRhNWFIYmUtZDA3My00ZGNkLWI3OGMtMDY3Yjk4NzE5N2E4IiwidCI6ImE1NzNjM2RILTA4MDItNDcwOS04OGU5LWVjNzIhY2NkN2Q1OCJ9](https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrJoiYjRhNWFIYmUtZDA3My00ZGNkLWI3OGMtMDY3Yjk4NzE5N2E4IiwidCI6ImE1NzNjM2RILTA4MDItNDcwOS04OGU5LWVjNzIhY2NkN2Q1OCJ9)

Based on the virtual meeting last night, this plan has not been thoroughly thought out. There has been no communication to the community and no representation of the actual parents and students effected. The answers we received were vague and left us leaving with less than we started. You continue to say the boundary-line changes would "traumatize kids" yet seem to not understand that closing schools would do more damage. You literally state that "things will even out" in the future as you figure it out now, but you are sacrificing years of our kids education for a gamble. It's alarming.

I'm very concerned about 6th grade going to the middle schools. My son is a 7th grader and the transition has been concerning - older kids on the bus, his exposure to inappropriate behavior at school. My two younger children are girls so I'm even more concerned for them. 6th grade in the elementary school makes more sense from a maturity level perspective.

Would busing be brought back if school pairing changes your walkability? District is asking a lot of parents if there are no additional transportation options

During the meeting, it was mentioned that this survey could be found online. However, if it is available, it's extremely difficult to locate. I only had access because I took a picture during the meeting. When I tried to find it on the website, thinking it would be easier, I couldn't.

The meeting also referenced 16 schools but did not list them. As a DCSD parent in the area, I thought I knew which schools were being considered for pairing, but I wasn't certain. The website did not provide a clear list, and it wasn't until I reviewed the survey that I understood which schools were involved.

As a parent who supports the need for pairing but also recognizes the frustration of others, I urge you to be transparent with information. Clear communication can help prevent further anger among those who are already upset.

Please keep Coyote Creek

Will DCSD be providing complete transparency to parents with current school statistics (ie current/projected enrollment, teacher/staff status, etc at all 16 schools under consideration, and where each school falls under each criteria element, and if those criteria are weighted or equal. It was mentioned at the meeting today that it's about "kids first" but then they go on to talk about well, at smaller schools, it's a .8 position and .2 position or a .5 and .5 position, and we really need them to be at a "1" position. However, that really is stemming from a budget decision for personnel, and not "what is best for kids" decision. Is there full transparency with families for what all salaries/budgets are for ALL staff (including DCSD leadership) and budgets for all departments beyond personnel to see where the budget and funding is going for everything? The definition of "school resources" needs to be put in more concrete terms with concrete examples for parents to understand. Most parents understand "demographics are changing and there are less kids in this neighborhood/area vs. tons of growth in new build areas", but DCSD needs to provide more details to parents on what "resource allocation" really means on criteria for combining schools. Also, at the presentation today, the slide show had a grid with WAY more criteria for consideration than what is on the survey. ALL of those on the slide from that presentation need to be on the survey - if you don't give all options to parents, you won't know what is truly important, if you aren't asking for feedback on all of them.

Please consider redrawing boundaries. For example, Northridge is bursting at the seams and Sand Creek has a lot of capacity. There are neighborhoods near Dad Clark districted for Northridge even though they are much closer to Sand Creek. Makes no sense to not look into this first since it will impact a lot less people overall.

Please ensure feeder integrity. Many families chose their homes based ultimately on which high school feeder we are in. If there is a shut down elementary school and the feeder is changed you are stealing money we intentionally spent on proximity to an elementary school and feeder boundaries. Please do the right thing and keep feeder boundaries intact.

There should be a data review meeting which allows community members the opportunity to be presented with all the facts and have a discussion with each other around it. This is a well educated community and just saying you are collecting data and then making a decision is no



transparent on how the data is being used to inform the decision of the board. Parents should be able to come together around the data and make their own recommendations as a group and be able to present that. There is already a lot of distrust of the school board and so giving them all the power to make the decision does not seem to be in the best interest of the parents, students and community at large. The worry is they are carrying out a pre planned agenda and does not seem fiscally responsible to spend a god awful amount of \$120 million dollars on 2 new schools just to close 2-3 other ones.

Voicing (loudly) my support for Saddle Ranch Elementary not being affected by these changes.

I just don't feel like this is going to be benefit my children and I would like some clarity on what the benefits are.

With the 6th grade moving to middle component (I think that it needs to be all or nothing within feeder - you cannot have some stay in elementary and some in middle within the same feeder) you will potentially make unpaired schools even smaller and exacerbate the low enrollment issue. You will need to consider redrawing boundaries in these areas (ideally without impacting feeder) sand creek is an example of this - Northridge and cougar run are full and we are empty - if we are unpaired and you take our 6th graders - our school would be worse off of than it is today, unless you redraw boundaries (but boundaries isn't an instant solve as many will likely still choice enroll into NR).

Separately, I heard a "rumor" that Northridge was a strong contender to close - which I thought was interesting because they are such a desirable and full school. The idea was that GT discovery program would remain there (and you could utilize remainder of building for offices or other district programs) and the rest of students could be absorbed into SCE with little traffic safety issues since we are in similar neighborhood today. I just thought if this wasn't being discussed it was a potentially viable option worth exploring. We have so many empty classrooms at SCE - I think we are a great pairing candidate to absorb students (obvious bias)

Please consider the accessibility of Summit View over Heritage if those two schools are being considered. Summit view can easily be accessed by multiple neighborhoods, with multiple parking lots. Heritage is not as easily accessed by houses off venneford, and has one parking lot. Drop off and pick alone would be overwhelming with what would be a very large school if paired.

IEP and 504 support and stability should be an additional criteria to consider in pairing schools.

(To ensure that appropriate resources are available for all students who need this added support is present from the beginning of the pairing.)

I also think school performance should be considered when pairing schools. Though teacher are ensured jobs they may not necessarily stay with a school or population of students and I think that teacher performance and ability has a direct effect on student engagement and

performance in school.

We are very upset about the idea of combining these schools. Our school's enrollment has been growing each year the past 3 years. We do not wish for class size to increase. Our administration and PTO had been working diligently to make our school amazing in every aspect. We have a community that you will shatter if you do this.

Copper Mesa is currently undergoing a major renovation to place smart screens in the teachers rooms. This would be beneficial to be used in years to come. It also has great access roads for large traffic coming through from poston parkway and windridge circle.

Maintaining good teachers leading up to the merge. I am concerned that teachers /staff will leave if their school/ workplace changes. I am concerned with the timeframe after the plan is announced to when the merge occurs and the maintaining good teachers after the merge

Thank you so much for your time and your help

Send 6th to middle school and please be open with us

I highly recommend looking at the district geography and closeness of schools to limit the need for busses and maintain a neighborhood feel.

My kids have graduated but I'm interested as a community member. I indicated the elementary they attended, my neighborhood school

I'm curious if the boundaries for the middle & high school will be changed and when that would be effective. We are very close to mountain vista yet in the thunder ridge boundary. Will parents be involved in the decision making? I would be interested in getting involved if possible.

School ratings should be considered

I think that our principal does a tremendous job asking the school community for that they value and publishes those results to us so we understand things. For example, we do not have many "specials" like other schools, but our class sizes are low, which is what our community values. I think sending out school-based surveys and seeing which schools could pair well based on survey results might be an interesting idea.

Thank you for taking the time to get feedback from us!!

NA

Thank you for all of your hard work for our kids! We know this isn't easy.

If moved we would have to walk across a major roadway either HRP or Lucent with small children. There are 8 small children just in my street that haven't started DCSD school system

yet. Are those families who recently moved taken into consideration too? And that is just my small street of 20 houses.

See above

After attending the 1st session, I would like to see the FAQ section of the DCSD Growth & Decline website expanded to include answers to parent questions from community meetings.

Hard decision to make but I trust the board and superintendent are doing what is best.

The birth rate in Colorado being used as only declining demographic and not taking renters or new out of state residents into account. As a classmate and graduate of TRHS with the first child born in HR, the population ebbs and flows. It dipped once we went to college and now increasing again because those that have moved back to raise their kids in the neighborhood they grew up in want their kids in the schools we went to. Every 20 years this will happen. HR was built in waves too. There are neighborhoods that are older than others because they were built first. Those neighborhoods are struggling to populate schools because the families can't afford to move.

Academic awards, history of enrollment (for example, our school has had years in the past with expanded class sizes, recent years, so under-enrollment could be related to the current interest rates and real estate market).

More specific data point for accessibility, look at # of drop off/pick up zones. Parents navigating pick up/drop off is a large concern and could create a mess. How many schools have more than one "driveway" area to help alleviate bottlenecks in traffic flow.

Strongly prefer that Saddle Ranch remain as is or minimally affected.

Closing neighborhood schools negatively impacts our neighborhood (diminishes the value and family feel of the neighborhood, the walkability, heading to the playground on bikes for play dates). It takes away the independence my child currently has. If our school closes he can no longer walk to school or head to the playground on his own. We bought in this neighborhood a long time ago, moved away, and came back because of the school. We love our school and community so much, closing it would be devastating

Total number of students/class sizes are what I'm most concerned about. If we haven't had decreasing enrollment over the past few years and if our building is full then I don't think we should be paired or closed.

Going forward when there are newly developed communities I within our school district the developers and county need to be more involved in a discussion around funding of new schools.

Very unhappy with the school closure decision overall

Trailblazer school PTO raised tens of thousands of dollars this year to build a new playground that would serve not only the school but the community at large. The students, staff and community worked very hard to make this happen. Please consider this.

Very disappointed in the school district for singling out Highlands Ranch. We shouldn't be punished for where we live. Also, we like the small classroom sizes at our current school.

Should be considered- community involvement in that school - do families show up to activities, can the school community fundraise? Also, be transparent with true cost benefit analysis of keeping all schools open vs this closed/pairing scenario. Families feel in the dark. We just moved here in may because our old school closed- we have been through this already and it is rough!

Why are you mixing up declining birth rates and aging in place? Feels SO political. We are owed better than this. People are smarter than you're treating them.

My 2 biggest concerns are safety getting kids to and from school across busy roads and that we stay in the same feeder school.

I completely agree with the pairing, not drawing all new boundaries. I think you are doing an amazing job and carefully considering all feedback. This has been coming for years and if anyone is surprised, they have been living under a rock. As a finance professional, I would gladly be involved if you are asking for rational community feedback. Thank you for all you are doing for the kids of DCSD!!!!

There's a better way.

Please add teacher to student ratio to the priority criteria. Smaller ratio is better for educational outcomes.

Based on the meeting, it appears that re-drawing boundaries really may be a better solution rather than closing and combining schools. Where is the data comparing costs, projected enrollment, etc. between the two options of redrawing the boundaries and combining schools?

None

Today AGE does not have routes that get all kids to school all of the time, and the District would be contemplating a solution that involves bussing 300 kids from a school they can walk to across a major 6 lane highway to another location. The school lost a substantial portion of its population already to charter schools because of this ongoing issue. Eagle Ridge is at capacity and Lone Tree Elementary is not an option so the only alternative (until Ridgeway is built) is Fox Creek. If transportation is impacted, how is the District going to get AGE student the education they are entitled to if they can't get to the new school?

Pairing Summit View to Heritage (or vice versa) makes sense as the schools are literally

across the street from each other and I would venture the impact to families financially would be smaller than say AGE to Fox Creek with a likely lower median income, difficult transport, and higher impact to students and families. I'm not making the suggestion that Summit View and Heritage merge, only trying to illustrate that there would be a diseparate financial impact families at AGE.

Firelight neighborhood already splits the kids into copper mesa and heritage elementary. Seems like the easiest option is to combine those two schools esp since copper mesa has very low enrollment

I think you also need to consider employment/staffing ramifications. Will teachers quit if forced to move schools, will you lose the younger cohort of teachers and be left with many close to retirement...a lot of impacts to think of but it would be a shame to combine schools and then be left with staffing issues afterwards.

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