



Staff & Community Conversations: School Closure/Consolidation Criteria

April 2025



EVANSTON/SKOKIE
SCHOOL DISTRICT 65

Every Child, Every Day, Whatever it Takes

Today's Purpose and Agenda



Purpose

- Provide input towards establishing criteria for possible school consolidation and closures

Agenda

- Build shared understanding and provide additional context
- Brainstorm criteria
- Align, review, revise possible categories for consideration
- Share next steps and closing



Building our Shared Understanding



Finance



Facilities



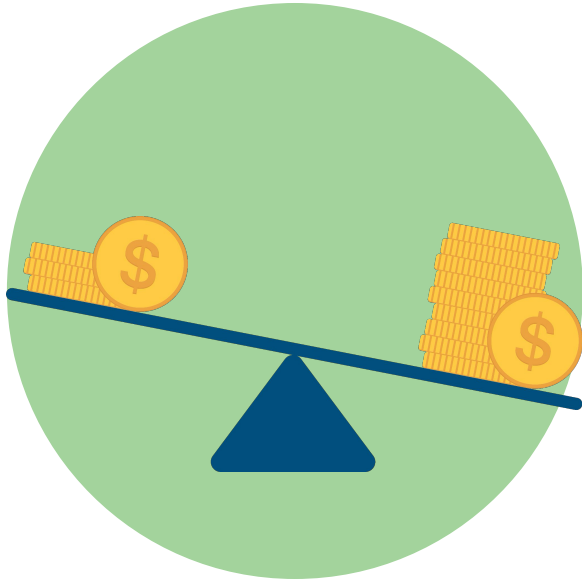
Students



**Creating a bright
future for current
and future
generations of
District 65 learners**



Why consider the need for consolidation/closures?



**Ensuring Long-term
Financial Stability**



**School Buildings in Need of
Significant Repairs and
Improvements**



**Declining Student
Enrollment and
Underutilized Schools**

Finance



\$189 Million
operating budget



\$20 Million
in operational reductions
over the past two years



\$10-\$15 Million
in estimated reductions
necessary for FY27

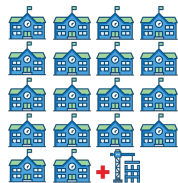


2.3% Expense Growth
Expenses outpace
revenues on an annual
basis (*structural deficit*)

- The Operating Budget supports all major district operations, programs and facilities.
- \$20 million in operational reductions includes
 - Position closures/staffing reductions, and purchased services reductions (greater efficiencies)
- \$10 - \$15 million estimated reductions for FY27
 - Necessary to maintain financial stability and move toward sustainability.
 - Avoid short-term borrowing
- The Structural Deficit Reality
 - Expenditures have outpaced revenues by 2.3% annually over the past five years (FY19–FY24).

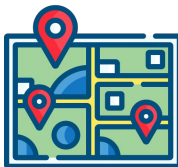
Every student has access to high quality, robust programming and the best and brightest staff. School closures/consolidations may allow us better align resources to meet this goal.

Facilities



18 School Buildings

(+Foster) with 1.2M sqft of building space



8 Square Miles

D65 Attendance Boundaries



79 Years Old

(average building age)

Poor or Very Poor

building conditions



\$188 Million

in recommended facility repairs/improvements

Facilities - Capacity

- 18 school buildings (1.2 million sq. ft of usable space)
- Schools serve an attendance boundary of 8 sq. miles.
- Current occupancy rate is 65% and will drop to 58% when Foster opens and Rhodes closes.
- Buildings range from 7% overutilized to 47% underutilized

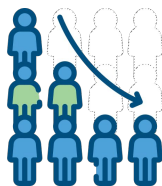
Facilities - Repair and Maintenance

- All Facility Cost Index (FCI) building rankings are poor or very poor with the exception of one building.
- The MFP projected \$188 million in work over a 10 year period of time in 2021.
- Over 25% of buildings roofs are considered “unsatisfactory” and in need of replacement.
- 4 of 18 buildings are less than 50% ADA accessible.

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Students



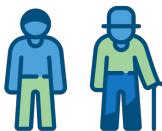
6,193 Students

declining enrollment for the next 10 years (aging population)



65% Occupancy

school building occupancy



Decreasing # of Youth

2020 Census indicates a decreasing # of youth under 13



Decreasing Enrollment

D65 returns to pre-pandemic enrollment averages

District enrollment has been consistently decreasing.

- Peak reported enrollment of 7,559 in 2016-2017 to 6,193 in 2024-2025.

Enrollment decreases are most evident in K-5 grade and in the Nichols and Haven feeder patterns.

District buildings are currently at 65% of their occupancy rate and this will shift downward when Foster opens and Rhodes closes.

The 2020 census indicates fewer children growing up in the Evanston Township boundaries - for example there were 1,056 13 years olds and 886 five year olds.

The median percent of students enrolled in the attendance boundaries has recovered 3% and is approaching pre-pandemic enrollment levels.

Our Reality: Taking a holistic look



\$189 Million
operating budget

\$20 Million
in operational reductions over
the past two years alone

\$10 -15 Million
in estimated reductions
necessary for FY27

2.3% Expense Growth
expenses outpace revenues on
an annual basis (*structural deficit*)



18 School Buildings
(+Foster) with 1.2M sqft of
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8 Square Miles
D65 Attendance Boundaries

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(average building age)

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79.3% Enrollment Average
D65 returns to pre-pandemic
student enrollment



SDRP Phase 3

District 65 must reduce expenditures by an additional **\$10-15 million** to ensure a stronger financial outlook for the future.

School Closures or Consolidations

- Building operational costs are estimated at \$2 million annually. This is a compilation of utilities, maintenance, and staff that would no longer be required with fewer schools.

Possible Scenarios

- No additional closures (*would require significant reductions elsewhere*)
- Close 1-2 additional buildings
- Close 3-4 additional buildings

No decisions have been made. The first steps in this process are to engage interested individuals in discussions around criteria that can be used to develop various scenarios for school closure and consolidation. All decisions are that of the School Board.



Group Brainstorming & Circulate

Group Processing:

- What criteria should be considered when making possible recommendations for a school to be closed or consolidated?

Create a Framework - Sort



Excellence (EX)

Striving for high-quality education and student outcomes



Equity (EQ)

Ensuring access and opportunities for ALL students



Effective Use of Resources: Finances (FI)

Maximizing financial and operational sustainability



Effective Use of Resources: Facilities (FA)

Optimizing facilities, space, and infrastructure to best support student learning and community needs

Group Processing:

- Sort your criteria into the categories (using two letter labels)
- Create an additional category if needed to capture criteria that may not fit in our existing categories.

Creating a Framework: Prioritize



Excellence (EX)

Striving for high-quality education and student outcomes



Equity (EQ)

Ensuring access and opportunities for ALL students



Effective Use of Resources: Finances (FI)

Maximizing financial and operational sustainability



Effective Use of Resources: Facilities (FA)

Optimizing facilities, space, and infrastructure to best support student learning and community needs

Prioritize your Criteria:

- Using three dots provided, vote for the **criteria** that you believe are most important on your groups' chart.



SDRP Phase 3

District 65 needs to decrease expenses by an additional \$15 million to put the District on a strong financial pathway.

School Closures or Consolidations

- Building operational costs are estimated at \$2 million annually. This is a compilation of utilities, maintenance, and staff that would no longer be required with fewer schools.

Possible Scenarios:

- No additional closures
- Close 1-2 additional buildings
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Brainstorming

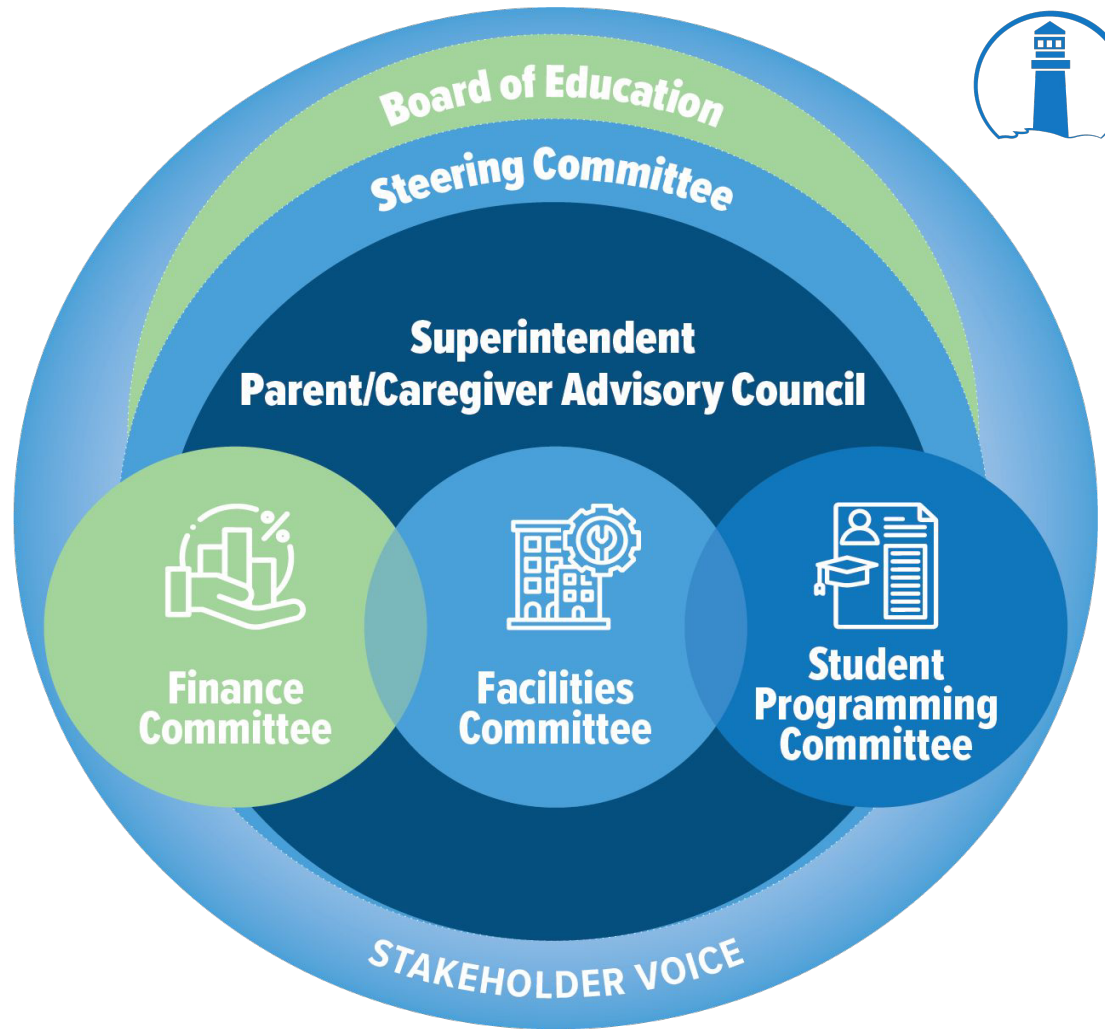
Knowing that difficult decisions are required, what creative solutions do you believe should be considered as an alternative or alongside potential school closures and/or consolidations?



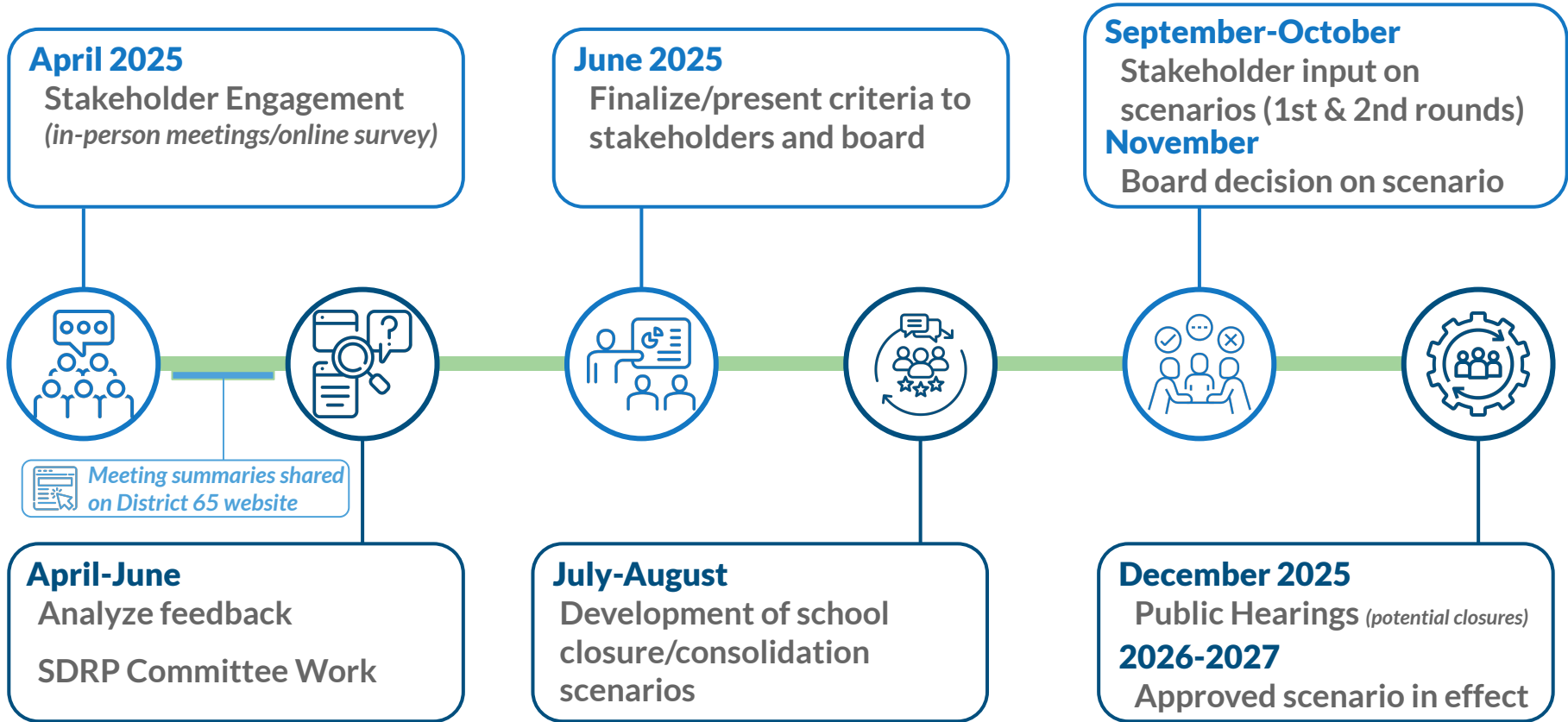
SDRP Ecosystem



- All school closure and consolidations decisions are that of the Board.
- Ensure checks and balances
- Open application processes for both SPAC and SDRP committees.
 - 15 schools represented on SPAC.
 - 45 parents/caregivers, community members, and staff on SDRP
- All aspects are rooted in stakeholder voice and input.



Next Steps: Structural Deficit Reduction Plan



Thank you!

Please
complete
this brief
exit survey.

