



Structural Deficit Reduction Plan (SDRP)

Phase 3 Update

May 19, 2025



EVANSTON/SKOKIE
SCHOOL DISTRICT 65

Every Child, Every Day, Whatever it Takes





**Every Child, Every Day,
Whatever It Takes**

Challenges

- 3-years of deficit spending
- Declining enrollment
- Significant facility needs
- Increasing costs
- Growing student needs
- Loss of ESSER/CPPRT revenue
- Community trust

Evolution/Phases of Structural Deficit Reduction Plan



FY24

FY25

FY26

FY27 and

**Beyond
Phase 3: Sustainability**

Identification

Phase 1: Immediate

Phase 2: Stabilize

**Began in February
2024**

Immediately, identified
\$7.4M in reductions for
FY25

Cuts

Hiring Freeze

Eliminated vacant
positions

Purchased Services
reductions

Developed SDRP
Framework (includes
stakeholder

\$13.2M in Reductions

Stakeholder
Engagement &
Decision-making:
December 2024
January 2025

Goes into effect:
July 1, 2025

**\$15M in Reductions
(est.)**

Stakeholder
Engagement &
Decision-making:
May-Dec 2025

Goes into effect:
July 1, 2026

SDRP Phase 3: Purpose



Financial Sustainability

- Balance the current budget to achieve financial sustainability
- Address the aging facilities
- Evaluate the effects of declining enrollment
- Alignment work to provide optimal programming for students



Every Child, Every Day, Whatever It Takes

SDRP Phase 3: Oversight/Engagement



Board of Education: Approves the final SDRP Phase III Plan

Internal Steering Committee: Refines and presents 3-5 scenarios from the Steering Committee and Stakeholder Engagement for recommendation to the School Board

Community Steering Committee: Compiles and summarizes subcommittee information

- **Facilities Committee:** Evaluates school capacity, optimal program locations, potential school consolidations and facility improvement prioritization
- **Finance Committee:** Develops the financial feasibility of proposed recommendations
- **Programs Committee:** Assesses and recommends educational programming services based on input from the Student Assignment Planning (SAP) work

Other Input: SAP, SPAC, Stakeholder Feedback Surveys and Engagement



Stakeholder Engagement

SDRP Phase 3: Timeline

Part 1

1

February to March 2025

- Revisit/confirm initial facility assessment & feasibility study
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April 2025

- Develop draft criteria
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*This timeline may be adjusted as part of the District's FY26 enrollment and staffing analysis.

SDRP Phase 3: Part I Goals



April 9 through June 30, 2025, we will facilitate SDRP Phase 3: Part 1 as follows:

Community Steering Committee: Develop a high level understanding of the intersection of the Facilities, Finance and Programs Subcommittees

- **Facilities Committee:** Signs off of on spring facilities subcommittee report including categories/criteria as well as a draft school data sheet
- **Finance Committee:** Develops a comprehensive list of options to address the structural deficit and facility improvement needs
- **Programs Committee:** Compile and validate committee discussions to provide programmatic insights to support informed facilities planning

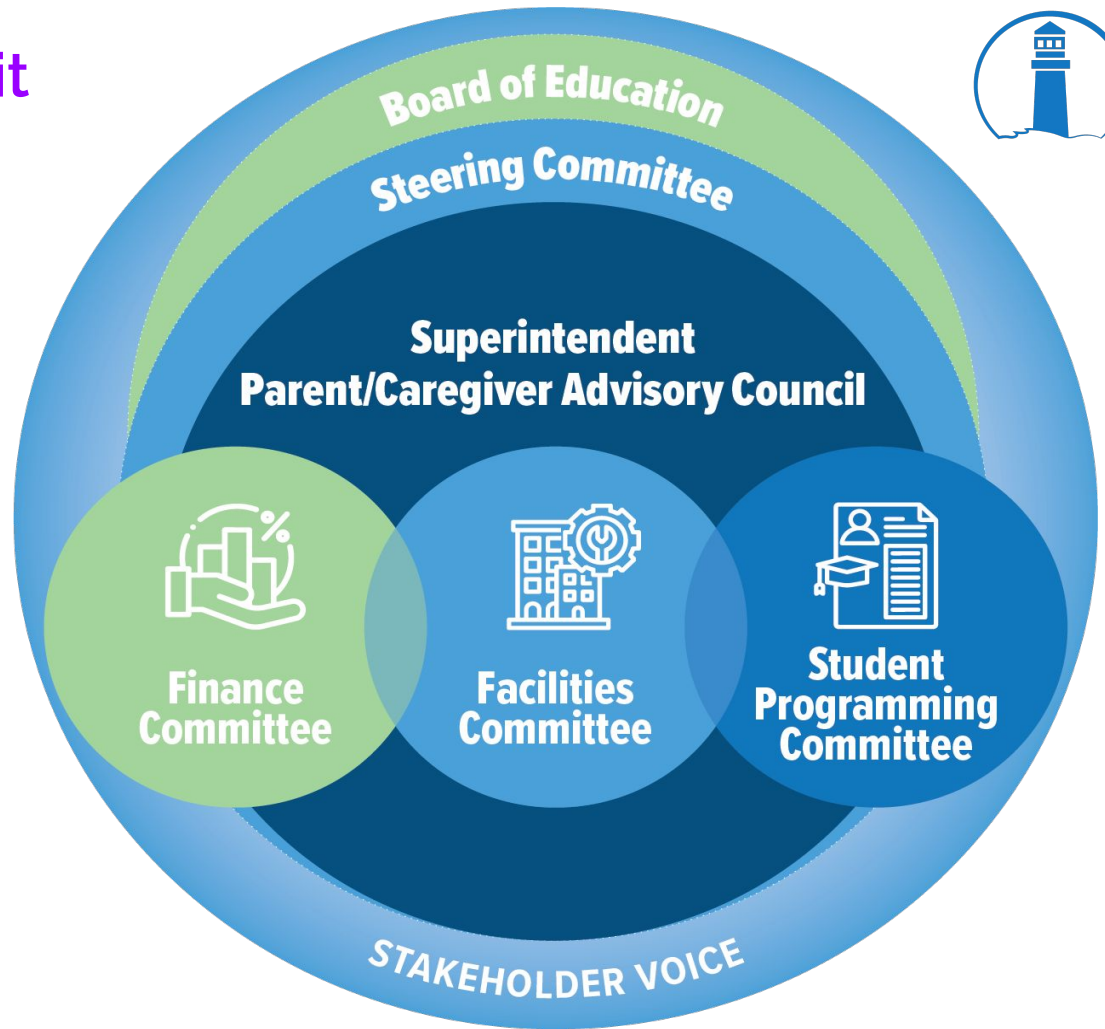
Other Input: SAP, SPAC, Stakeholder Feedback Surveys and Engagement

Goal: Facilitate various community engagement avenues to garner input and feedback regarding the D65 structural deficit and return to financial sustainability

SDRP Ecosystem- Revisit



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



Update on Stakeholder Engagement



- Analysis conducted through Northwestern - School of Education and Social Policy
- Utilized by SDRP Committees and Superintendent Parent/Caregiver Advisory Council
- **Now available online!** district65.net/sdrp

Online Survey



140 Responses



557 Ideas



n/a

In-Person Stakeholder Engagement Sessions



~260 Participants



330 Ideas



545 sticker ratings

In-Person Sessions Exit Survey Responses

96.6% - purpose of the meeting was clear and well-communicated

93.2% - information presented helped build my understanding of the topic(s) discussed

93.2% - voice and perspectives were heard and respected

84.8% - understand what the next steps are and how to stay engaged

Equity Criteria Themes



Student Needs & Support Services

- Ensuring all students—particularly those with unique learning or life circumstances—have access to the resources and support they need. This includes special education services, mental health supports, and high-quality instruction across all schools.

Accessibility & School Proximity

- Importance of maintaining neighborhood schools to ensure that students can safely attend school near their homes.
- Concerns included how school closures would impact transportation, walkability, and access to buildings and specialized programs

Geographic and Resource Distribution

- Distribution of resources across neighborhoods. Concerns about neighborhood equity—ensuring all communities have access to high-quality, well-resourced schools regardless of zip code or school location

Excellence Criteria Themes



Staff & Community Support

- Sustained investments in recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers, adequate classroom support, and ensuring manageable class sizes
- Greater access to social workers, aides, and special education professionals

Curriculum & Classroom Quality

- Ensuring all students have access to high-quality curriculum, engaging instruction, and well-resourced learning environments
- Consistent access to enrichment programs such as dual language (TWI), tutoring, and accelerated learning, as well as hands-on learning experiences in the arts, physical education, and science
- Equitably equipped with modern instructional tools, technology, and materials

Maintaining High Academic Standards

- Commitment to upholding rigorous academic expectations across schools
- Consistent standards, high-quality instruction, and equitable access to enrichment and acceleration opportunities

Effective Use of Resources: Finance Themes



Cost-Effectiveness & Spending Accountability

- Importance of long-term financial sustainability; transparent and strategic about how funds are allocated

Building Age and Maintenance Costs

- Cost concerns with maintaining and upgrading school facilities
- Questioned whether it made financial sense to keep aging buildings open given the burden of deferred maintenance and the capital investments required to ensure safety, accessibility, and modern learning environments

Long-Term Enrollment and Planning

- Strategic, long term planning & decisions on school closures / resource allocation
- Rather than relying solely on current enrollment, urged the district to consider future demographic shifts, housing development trends, and the potential for enrollment growth in historically under enrolled neighborhoods.

Effective Use of Resources: Facilities Themes



Efficient Use of Space & Population

- Importance of aligning school building capacity with actual enrollment
- Some schools are significantly underutilized while others face overcrowding, resulting in inefficient use of district resources

Long-Term Sustainability & Flexibility

- Avoid short-sighted decisions that may limit future options. Instead of permanently closing schools based on current enrollment trends, consider strategies that preserve facilities for potential future use—such as leasing, partial use, or repurposing buildings.



SDRP Phase 3: Committee Updates

Finance Subcommittee Purpose



Purpose:

The Finance Subcommittee will analyze financial impacts, including costs, savings, staffing, and budget sustainability.

Responsibilities:

- Assess the financial impact and integrate the work of all subcommittees across various scenarios.
- Assess district financial data, funding sources, and cost-saving opportunities.
- Explore potential referendum options and the related outcomes of those scenarios.
- In collaboration with HR, identify staffing efficiencies and transition costs.
- Evaluate facility maintenance and operational expenditures.
- Develop a financial transition plan for the consolidated district.

Finance Subcommittee Journey



School Finance 101

April 9

- Our sources of revenue
- Our categories of expenditures
- Fund accounting explained
- Revisiting our “why”
 - Structural deficit
 - Facilities needs w/no funding source
- Expenditure Q&A

Risks & Vulnerabilities

April 23

- School Finance 101 continued
- Expenditure Q&A
- What are potential unintended consequences of cost reductions?
- Which financial assumptions carry the most risk?
- Where might the plan be most financially vulnerable?

Sustainability As Strategy

May 7

- The D65 math problem:
 - Structural deficit
 - Facilities needs
- Funding sources
 - Fund balance
 - Operating budget
 - Referendum bonds
 - Life safety bonds
 - DSEB bonds
 - Lease certificates

Finance Subcommittee - What's Next



- Expenditure Analysis
 - Analyze facilities maintenance & operations expenditures
- Scenario Building
 - How do we incorporate expenditure reductions, revenue generation, and financing options to move toward a sustainable financial future?
 - How will we do so in the most equitable way possible to minimize unintended consequences?
 - How will we ensure reductions in one area don't result in greater costs elsewhere?

Programs Subcommittee



Purpose

The Programs Subcommittee will inventory district programs, evaluate their effectiveness, and make recommendations to the facilities committee. The subcommittee will provide input around a cohesive plan that optimizes program placement and ensures equitable access to educational opportunities.

In every meeting we:

- Review relevant data aligned to program
 - Impact - academic & SEL
 - Demand - enrollment and applications
 - Facilities - unique facilities needs for each program
- Gather feedback from the Programs Subcommittee to inform next step

Programs Subcommittee



Programs being evaluated

- African Centered Curriculum - April 23rd
- King Arts Magnet - May 7th
- Dual Language/TWI - May 21st
- Early Childhood - June 4th
- Final Report - June 18th

Our process

- At each meeting program teams will present information and data about their specific program
- Committee will use guiding questions to analyze the program
- Our goal is to make recommendations for the facilities committee
- We are not policy setting
- We are not cutting programs

Programs Subcommittee



Guiding questions driving our analysis

- Are our specialized programs (e.g., early childhood, dual language, arts, African-centered) located where families need and want them?
- What does the data tell us about student residence patterns, and how does program location affect access and travel time for families?
- Which programs are producing the strongest student outcomes, and what facility or location factors contribute to their success?
- How would school or program relocations, closures, or consolidations impact students, families, and equitable access to specialized programs?
- How can we optimize use of space and resources while ensuring programs have the necessary facilities and support to maintain quality?



Facilities Subcommittee Purpose:

The Facilities Subcommittee will use data about enrollment, facilities, and finance/budget to support the development of a long term facility plan in District 65, including enrolled schools and plans for preventive maintenance and renovations informed by the District sustainability plan, school code, and school board policy.

Our Responsibilities:

- ***Use the data from the master facilities plan and demography report as inputs to develop criteria for the school consolidation and/or closure.***
- Assess feasibility and cost of site renovation.
- Plan for potential school closures, repurposing, or expansions.
- Ensure compliance with safety, accessibility, and zoning regulations.
- Develop a facilities transition plan that minimizes disruption
- Assess outcomes of asset disposition (e.g., sale of partial or whole parcels).

Committee Authority:

This committee will operate as follows:

- Advisory rather than decision-making capacity
- Does not manage implementation details or timelines
- Not responsible for financial analysis or facility assessments
- Focused on process integrity and community impact rather than operational logistics

Facilities Subcommittee Journey



Demography and Master Facility Plan Introduction April 9

- Grounding to our purpose and process.
- Review and process facility conditions and enrollment forecasts.
 - 2021/2024 demography reports.
 - Introduction to the Master Facility Plan Data
- Input on additional data inputs.

Deeper Dive with an Equity Lens April 23

- Introduced the REIA tool to the group and assessed how to considering this in our process.
- Developed deeper understanding of the MFP and demography data.
- Begin to draft criteria in small groups.
- Gathered additional data requests.

Community Input and Density Maps May 7

- Introduced the feedback from the community engage sessions and survey.
- Review density maps for King Arts and different groups of EL students.
- Returned to drafting criteria in small groups.
- Gathered additional data requests.

Facilities Subcommittee - What's Next?



Facility Walkthroughs

- A subgroup of the team is engaging in facility tours to get a deeper sense of building conditions, mechanicals, and common area comparisons.

Input from the Superintendent Parent/Caregiver Advisory Committee (SPAC)

- Share input from the SPAC on categories and criteria as another data point.

Category and Criteria Development

- Team consolidates to develop a comprehensive set of categories and criteria to support modelling of potential school closing scenarios.
- Team also arrives on a building “must have” or prioritization list on building components.

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Questions?
