Board of Education
SDRP Phase 3: Part 1 Update

June 23, 2025

EVANSTON/SKOKIE
SCHOOL DISTRICT 65

Every Child, Every Day, Whatever it Takes

SDRP Background

Evolution/Phases of Structural Deficit Reduction Plan

FY24	FY25	FY26	FY27 and Beyond
Identification	**Phase I: Immediate Cuts**	**Phase II: Stabilize**	**Phase III: Sustainability**
Began in February 2024 Identified and approved $6.5M in reductions for FY25	**Hiring Freeze** Eliminated vacant positions Purchased Services reductions Developed SDRP Framework (includes stakeholder engagement)	**$13.2M in Reductions** Stakeholder Engagement & Decision-making: December 2024 January 2025 Goes into effect: July 1, 2025	**$10-15M in Reductions** Stakeholder Engagement & SDRP Committee Work: Began February 1 and will remain ongoing Goes into effect: July 1, 2026

Revisiting the Need for Budget Reductions

Our current reality (if no action taken)

	FY21 actuals	FY22 actuals	FY23 actuals	FY24 actuals	FY25 budget	FY26 with no action
Surplus/Deficit	$3,288,685	$6 ,099,923	-$7,918,262	-$8,531,093	-$13,590,541	-$16,675,563

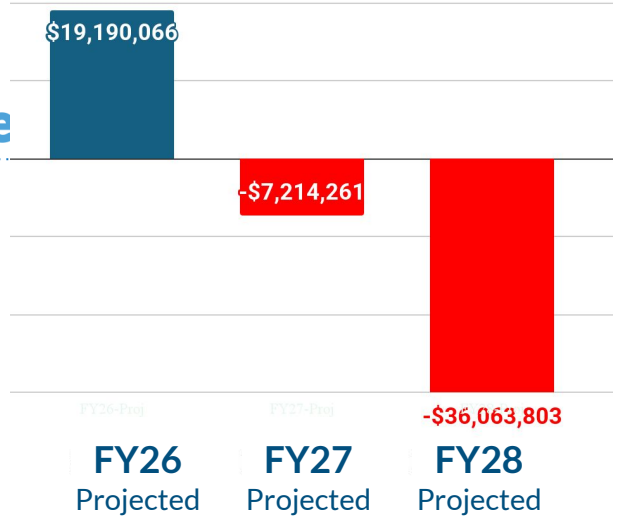
Projected Days Cash on Hand



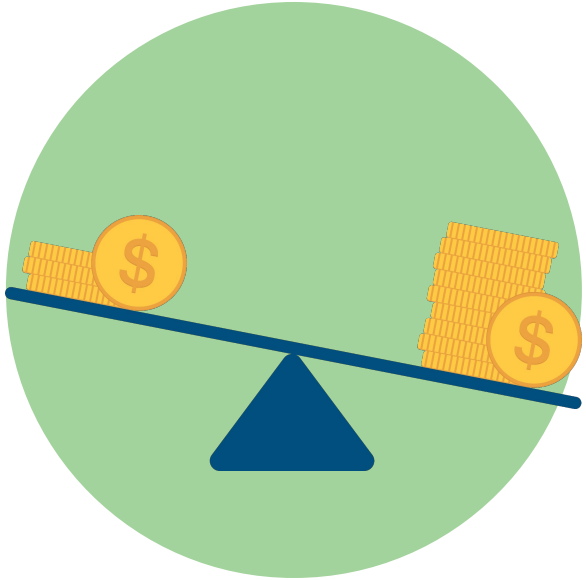
FY25:	71
FY26:	36
FY27:	-13
FY28:	-63

Projected Fund Balance





Why consider the need for consolidation/closures?



Ensuring long-term Financial Stability



Buildings in Need of Significant Repairs and Improvements



Declining Student Enrollment and Underutilized Schools

Why are we considering the need for consolidation/closures?



$189 Million
operating budget

$20 Million
in operational reductions over the past two years

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

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



18 School Buildings
(+Foster) with 1.2M sq ft of building space

8 Square Miles
D65 Attendance Boundaries

79 Years Old
(average building age)

$188 Million
in recommended facility repairs/improvements

Poor or Very Poor
building conditions



6,193 Students
declining enrollment for the next 10 years (aging population)

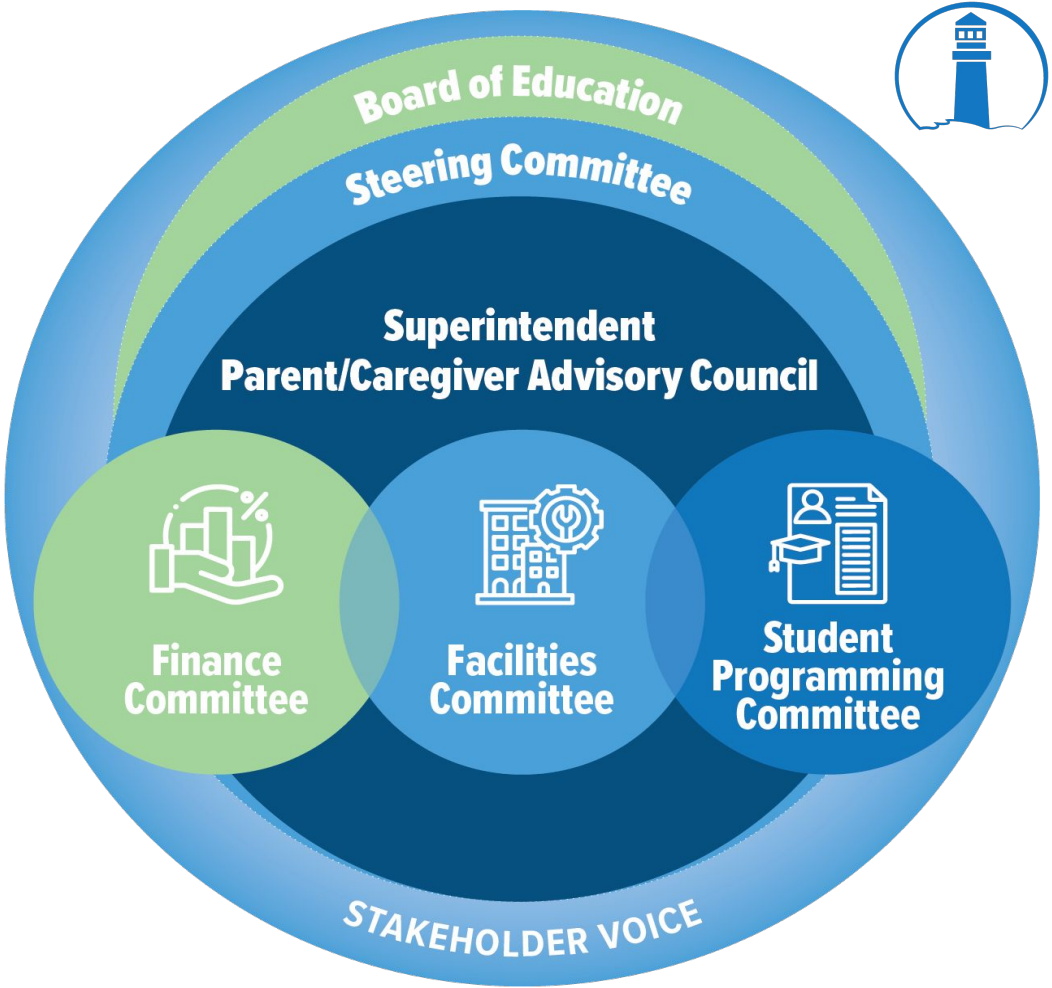
65% Occupancy
school building occupancy

Decreasing # of Youth
2020 Census indicates a decreasing # of youth under 13

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

SDRP Phase 3 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.
  - 16 schools represented on SPAC.
  - 45 parents/caregivers, community members, and staff on SDRP
- All aspects are rooted in stakeholder voice and input.



Subcommittees' Purpose

Provide feedback into the following areas:



Finance

Budget deficit and return to financial sustainability



Facilities

Declining enrollment and aging facilities



Programs

Student programming in alignment with the District's finances and facilities challenges

Additional Context for Committee

Other items to ground subcommittee work include:

- **Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA)**
  - Assess how proposed actions impact students/families
  - Encourages equity-focused decision making

- **District 65 Sustainability Plan**
  - Assess long-term operational costs through the sustainability lens

SDRP Finance Subcommittee

Presenters:

Kevin Jackson, Parent / Caregiver
Mary Ramatowski, Parent / Caregiver
Tamara Mitchell, SFO, Chief Financial Officer/CSBO

Finance Subcommittee Purpose

Purpose: Provide feedback on the District's budget deficit and return to financial sustainability.

Part 1 Focus: Develop a comprehensive list of options to address the structural deficit and facility improvement needs.



Finance Subcommittee Members - Thank you!

Tamara Mitchell
Staff, *Committee leader*

Crystal Barriga
Parent/Caregiver

John Brady
Parent/Caregiver

Shane Cary
Parent/Caregiver

Shawn Connolly
Staff

Charles Dan
Parent/Caregiver

Kelly Farley
Parent/Caregiver

Svetlana Gayares
Parent/Caregiver

Dr. Susan Harkin
Student-Centered Services Consultant

Erik Hehrmann
Parent/Caregiver

Kevin Jackson
Parent/Caregiver

Brad Jones
Parent/Caregiver

Kevin Miller
Community Member

Sonja Moulton
Staff

Jason Orloff
Parent/Caregiver

Johanna Peterson
Parent/Caregiver

Mary Ramatowski
Parent/Caregiver

Thomas Weber
Community Member

Finance Subcommittee Meeting Topics

Date	Topics
6/18/2025	• Finalized draft of potential revenue enhancements and expenditure reductions to address the structural deficit • Created a list of additional information needed to create scenario options for BOE
6/4/2025	• Continued review of financial levers available to D65, small group work to run scenarios that would determine the feasibility of school closures using all known data available
5/21/2025	• Developed understanding of Racial Equity Impact Assessment, group activity centered around making reductions and finding funding for capital needs
5/7/2025	• Discussion and identification of financial levers to address capital needs
4/23/2025	• Discussion of purchased services, transportation, and potential financial consequences, assumptions, and vulnerabilities of cost reductions
4/9/2025	• "School Finance 101," including revenue sources, expenditure categories, and the evidence-based funding formula

What the Finance Subcommittee Learned

- Issue stems a back to at least 2003
- Financial challenge is greater than anticipated
  - Financially
  - Operationally
  - Facilities
- Current economic conditions will exacerbate the financial challenge
- To address the financial challenge, it may be necessary to close 4 schools
- Building utilization is at 65%
- Enrollment projections validated this will continue
- Lack of integrated operating plan
- Need to continue working on community trust / understanding of issues
- District may not be able to afford it enhanced services offerings

Structural Deficit / Facility Improvement Need Options

Revenue Enhancements

1. Bonds/Life Safety for Capital (*n*=4)
2. Operating Rate (*n*=3)
3. Rent Spaces (*n*=2)
4. Selling Schools
5. Paid Preschool (*n*=2)
6. District Right at School
7. Sponsored Buses to cover costs



Expenditure Reductions

1. 2-4 School Closings (*n*=4)
2. Temporary shutdown of schools
3. Early education buses
4. Solar ponds
5. Purchases Services -10 to -30%
6. Instruction/Administration/Support Services -10%
7. Data Processing -$750k



4 subgroups developed these options, "*n*=#", it indicates how many subgroups listed this option.

Additional Areas to Review in the Fall

When we come back in the fall, we will have a better handle on the following expenditures and opportunities to reduce spending in these areas as part of the overall **$12.5M of reduction** for SDRP: Phase 3.

The specific expenditure will include but not be limited to the following areas:

- Data Processing/Software Costs
- Annual Outsourced Staffing Costs
- Special Education Services
- Community Services (Preschool/Head Start)
- Transportation
- Other Purchased Services

Next Steps

- Provide additional information on specific items with dollar amounts
- Continue exploring and identifying all potential revenue enhancements and expenditure reductions
- Build a model to develop scenarios taking into account:
  - Potential school closures
  - Funding sources for current and future master facility/HLS projects
  - Address the structural deficit

Note: All plans reviewed and considered by the BOE should work towards developing an integrated operational plan that will provide a long-term solution to the district's financial sustainability.

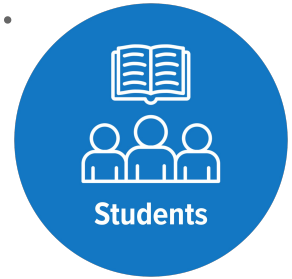
SDRP Programs Subcommittee

Presenters:
Terri Shepard - Community Member
Cara Wellvang - Parent/Caregiver

Programs Subcommittee Purpose

Purpose: Provide feedback on optimizing student programming in alignment with the District's finances and facilities challenges

Part 1 Focus: 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.



Programs Subcommittee Members - Thank you!

Dr. Katie Speth - Staff, Committee leader
Dr. Trisha Baker - Staff
Liz Berliant - Parent/Caregiver
Erin Booker - Community Member
John Brownlee - Staff and Parent/Caregiver
Natalie Copper - Staff
Melissa Denton - Parent/Caregiver
Clare Donnovan Scane - Parent/Caregiver
Dr. Susan Harkin - Student-Centered Services consultant
Jessica Isaac - Parent/Caregiver
Jessica Lang - Parent/Caregiver
Max Levasseur - Parent/Caregiver
Michelle Meekins Cooney - Community Member
Carla Orduno - Parent/Caregiver
Matthew Roberts - Parent/Caregiver
Melissa Rosenzweig - Parent/Caregiver
Terri Shepard - Community Member
Jaimie Wallace Butcher - Parent/Caregiver
Cara Wellvang - Parent/Caregiver
Henry Wilkins - Parent/Caregiver

Programs Subcommittee Members - Thank you!

Dr. Katie Speth
Staff, Committee leader

Dr. Trisha Baker
Staff

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Parent/Caregiver

Erin Booker
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Student-Centered Services Consultant

Jessica Isaac
Parent/Caregiver

Jessica Lang
Parent/Caregiver

Max Levasseur
Parent/Caregiver

Dr. Charmekia McCoy
Staff, Committee Support

Michelle Meekins Cooney
Community Member

Carla Orduno
Parent/Caregiver

Matthew Roberts
Parent/Caregiver

Melissa Rosenzweig
Parent/Caregiver

Terri Shepard
Parent/Caregiver

Jaimie Wallace Butcher
Parent/Caregiver

Cara Wellvang
Parent/Caregiver

Henry Wilkins
Parent/Caregiver

Special thanks to Dr. Adrian Rivera-Rodriguez for research support.

Program Subcommittee Meeting Topics

Date	Topics
6/18/2025	• Reviewed data from poster exercises and ranked the top priorities for each program
6/4/2025	• Deep dive on the early childhood programming available in District 65, including its history, enrollment, and data
5/21/2025	• Deep dive on the Two-Way Immersion (TWI) program, including its history, enrollment, and data
5/7/2025	• Deep dive on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Literary and Fine Arts School (magnet school), including its history, enrollment, and data
4/23/2025	• Deep dive on African Centered Curriculum magnet program, including its history, enrollment, and data
4/9/2025	• Building shared understanding of the programs across D65, including ACC, TWI/Dual Language, early childhood, and magnet programming

What the Programs Subcommittee Learned

- Our process included reviewing academic, SEL and demographic data for each program.
- The TWI/Dual Language and Early Childhood presentations also included outcomes from the SAP III process
- The committee then analyzed data and information using the following guiding questions
  - 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?

Next Steps: Dual Language/TWI Recommendations

Consider establishing/maintaining at least one TWI program in every middle school feeder pattern, with a focus on historically underserved neighborhoods.

- Double strands in TWI buildings and feeder patterns may help strengthen instructional depth, facilitate collaboration, and ensure equitable access to services across Evanston.

Maintain the 67/33 classroom composition and prioritize walkable access for TWS students, particularly across hazard zones wherever possible.

- Ideal TWI classroom composition is 50% native Spanish-speaking students and 50% native English-speaking students and, however in real world practice that is not always possible. The dual language model does have flexibility which allows for a composition as low as 33% native English-speakers or 33% native Spanish-speakers (a 67/33 split between language groups) and still retain model integrity

Minimize disruptions to existing TWI communities. If changes are necessary, involve TWI families early and ensure the transition preserves program quality and cultural integrity.

- To further strengthen TWI programs, invest in recruiting, training, and retaining certified dual-language educators and Spanish-speaking school leaders

Next Steps: African Centered Curriculum Program

Find ways to align/replace the general education program in the 5th Ward Foster School with the ACC to reduce travel burdens and increase enrollment.

- Improve program visibility through outreach and communication
- Integrate STEAM-focused learning within the ACC framework by developing interdisciplinary units that highlight contributions of Black innovators in science and the arts, while maintaining the curriculum's cultural and historical core. This alignment could broaden support for ACC and meet dual-community goals of rigor and cultural relevance.

Strengthen communication strategies/outreach initiatives to build broader awareness of ACC.

- Provide accessible, culturally relevant materials that explain the curriculum's benefits and outcomes. Consider info sessions and testimonials from ACC families and educators.

Conduct equity impact analyses before any program relocations or consolidations.

- Center the voices of historically marginalized families in decision-making. Build a data-informed implementation plan with clear metrics for student success, community engagement, and financial sustainability. Publish regular progress updates.

Next Steps

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Literary and Fine Arts School

Keep the K-8 model at King Arts and continue to build a strong, welcoming school community.

- Make sure all students see their cultures and identities reflected in what they learn. Protect the arts spaces like the theater and dance

If changes are made to school choice or transportation, make sure students from all neighborhoods can still get to King Arts.

- This could include bus options for certain areas or allowing some families to continue attending even if transfer rules change. Clearly explain any new rules or options to families.

Early Childhood Recommendations

Expand Neighborhood-Based Early Childhood Access

- Transition Preschool for All (PFA) and other programs into neighborhood schools where possible, to reduce transportation barriers.

Conduct Data-Informed Facility and Programing Planning

- Use residence, birth rates, and program outcome data to determine where programs should expand or consolidate. Prioritize areas where families need access most.

Strengthen Program Branding, Communication, and Family Choice

- Launch a targeted outreach and rebranding effort to inform families of available early childhood programs, especially culturally responsive options.

SDRP Facilities Subcommittee

Presenters:
Elliott Dudnik, Parent / Community Member
Seth Weinert, Parent / Caregiver
Dr. Stacy Beardsley, Assistant Superintendent of Accountability
Kirby Callam, Director of Strategic Project Management

Facilities Subcommittee Purpose

Purpose: Evaluate and provide feedback on the District's declining enrollment and aging facilities.

Part 1: Gain an understanding of and analyze data from the demography report, master facilities plan, school capacity vs. utilization, educational adequacy, and attendance boundaries to develop criteria and weighting for any potential school closings.



Facilities Subcommittee Members - Thank you!

Dr. Stacy Beardsley - Staff, Committee leader
Kirby Callam - Staff, Committee Support
Dr. Trisha Baker - Staff
Laura Buchanan - Community Member
Shaska Dice - Parent/Caregiver
Elliott Dudnik - Community Member
Kate Ellison - Parent/Caregiver
Christopher Fedak - Parent/Caregiver
Dr. Gregg Fuerstenau - Student-Centered Services consultant
Patrick Hoyt - Parent/Caregiver
Kenneth Itle - Parent/Caregiver
Brian Johnson - Parent/Caregiver
Eric Rosenberg - Parent/Caregiver
Bill Steinbach - Parent/Caregiver
Seth Weinert - Parent/Caregiver
Erin Wesiberg - Parent/Caregiver
Dan Whiteley - Parent/Caregiver
Bridget Wild - Parent/Caregiver

Facilities Subcommittee Members - Thank you!

Dr. Stacy Beardsley
Staff, Committee leader

Kirby Callam
Staff, Committee Support

Dr. Trisha Baker
Staff

Laura Buchanan
Community Member

Shaska Dice
Parent/Caregiver

Elliott Dudnik
Community Member

Kate Ellison
Parent/Caregiver

Christopher Fedak
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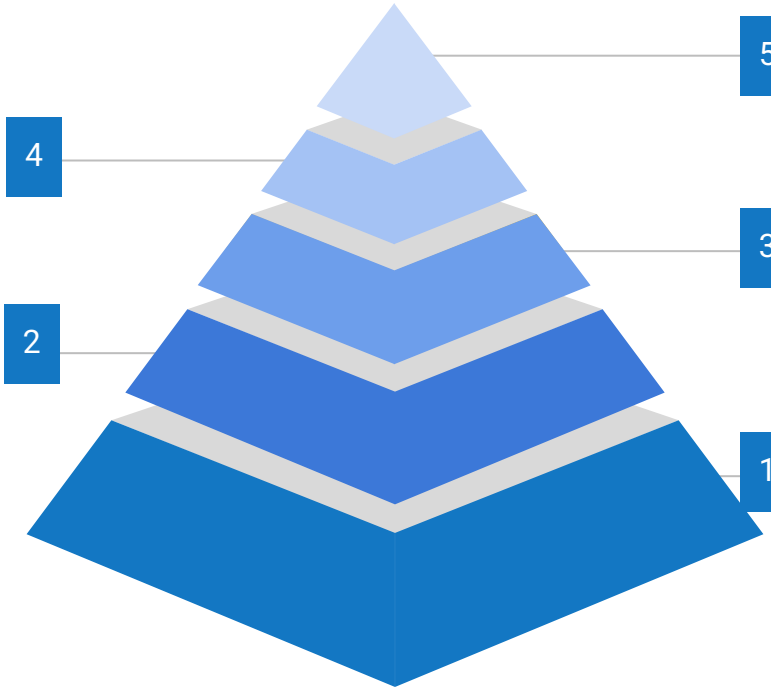
Dan Whiteley
Parent/Caregiver

Bridget Wild
Parent/Caregiver

Finance Subcommittee Meeting Topics

Date	Topics
6/18/2025	Finalize categories, criteria and weighting.
6/4/2025	Continued building group consensus around potential school closure/consolidation criteria and categories
5/21/2025	Group consensus building around potential school closure/consolidation criteria and categories
5/7/2025	Review of feedback from community engagement sessions, review of enrollment data, and continued discussion on criteria from a REIA lens
4/23/2025	Developed understanding of Racial Equity Impact Assessment, revisited Master Facility Plan, and evaluated possible Phase III data/criteria
4/9/2025	Building shared understanding of the Master Facilities Plan, demography report

Process



5 Iterate 2.0 to Finalize Categories, Criteria and Weighting

4 Data Dive 2: Deepening our Knowledge and Aligning to Purpose

3 Iterate and Wonder

2 Data Dive: Develop Foundational Knowledge

1 Connect and Focus

Equity

Minimize disproportionate impact on any historically marginalized stakeholder groups

Number of students changing schools	= # of students/# of District students	Scale of 1 to 5 across the range of data.
Who is impacted?	Of the students who are moving to a new school: = # of Black students moving/# of students moving = # of Latino students moving/# of students moving = # of FRL students moving/# of students moving = # of IEP students moving/# of students moving = # of EL students moving/# of students moving	Scale of 1 to 5 across the range of data.

* **Note:** Based on 2024 demography information with Foster school.
Change considerations should draw on future structure not past/current structure.

Geography

Minimize the difficulty of a student getting from home to school

Walkability (*scenario dependent*)	= # students within "walkable" distance of newly assigned school/total students in school (SDRP Facilities recommending 0.75 miles)	Scale of 1 to 5 across the range of data.
IDOT Hazards (*scenario dependent*)	= # of students who must cross an IDOT hazard/total number of students in school (within the 1.5 mile state guideline)	Scale of 1 to 5 across the range of data.
Transportation needs and cost (*scenario dependent*)	= % of students that would qualify for transportation (ISBE Guidelines)	Scale of 1 to 5 across the range of data.
Geographic proximity of adjacent schools	= Average distance the three closest adjacent schools	Scale of 1 to 5 across the range of data.

Building Functionality

Building features and amenities fit for current and future needs

Current ADA Compliance/Equitable Accessibility	**= % accessible by quartiles**	Scale of 1 to 5 across the range of data.
Are the cafeteria and gym separate spaces?		Yes or No
# of teaching stations /classrooms for use	**=count of teaching stations from MFP**	Scale 1-5 1. 15 or less 2. 20 or less 3. 25 or less 4. 30 or less 5. 31 or more

Building Income

Maximize potential revenue opportunities

Income potential
Real Estate Assessment
(Sample items for consideration)

- Architectural/Historic Landmark Status limiting use
- Zoning

= Calculation TBD
Income Potential

- Landmarks
- Zoning

Scale of 1 to 5 across the range of data.

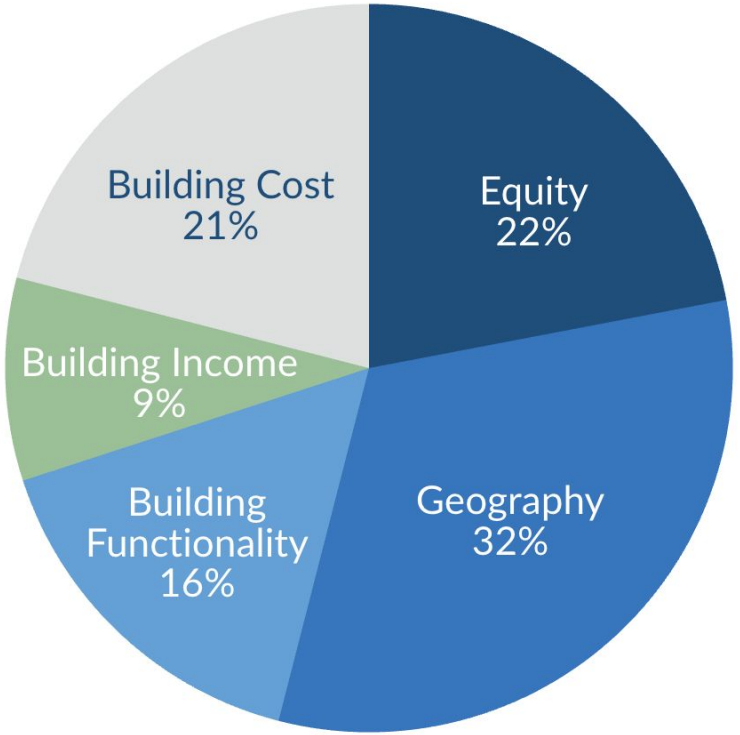
Building Cost

Maximize operating cost savings, minimize capital expense costs

Capital expenses for updates	**= Calculation TBD** • Expense for updates	Scale of 1 to 5 across the range of data.
Monthly facility operating costs	**= Normalized cost** • Facility Operating Cost - Normalized	Scale of 1 to 5 across the range of data.

Category Weighting

Category	Weight
Equity	22%
Geography	32%
Building Functionality	16%
Building Income	9%
Building Cost	21%



Looking Forward



Community Conversation
Kingsley Elementary
2300 Green Bay Road, Evanston
6:00pm



Community Conversation
Dr. Jorge and Luz Maria Prieto Community Center
430 Asbury Ave., Evanston
9:30am - (childcare available)

Community Engagement Events to Share the Categories and Criteria and Hear Feedback

Send a stakeholder survey with a short overview of the categories and criteria to gather feedback.

Develop school scorecards

Building modeling scenarios using the outputs from the school scorecards to identify schools for modeling.

Engage with the Facility Subcommittee to test and gather feedback on data sheets and scenarios.

Present scenarios at the School Board in late September.

SDRP Phase 3: Timeline

Structural Deficit Reduction Plan Timeline

April 2025
Stakeholder Engagement
(in-person meetings/online survey)

Meeting summaries shared on District 65 website

April-June
Analyze feedback

SDRP Committee Work

June 2025
Finalize/present criteria to stakeholders and board

July-August
Development of school closure/consolidation scenarios for input

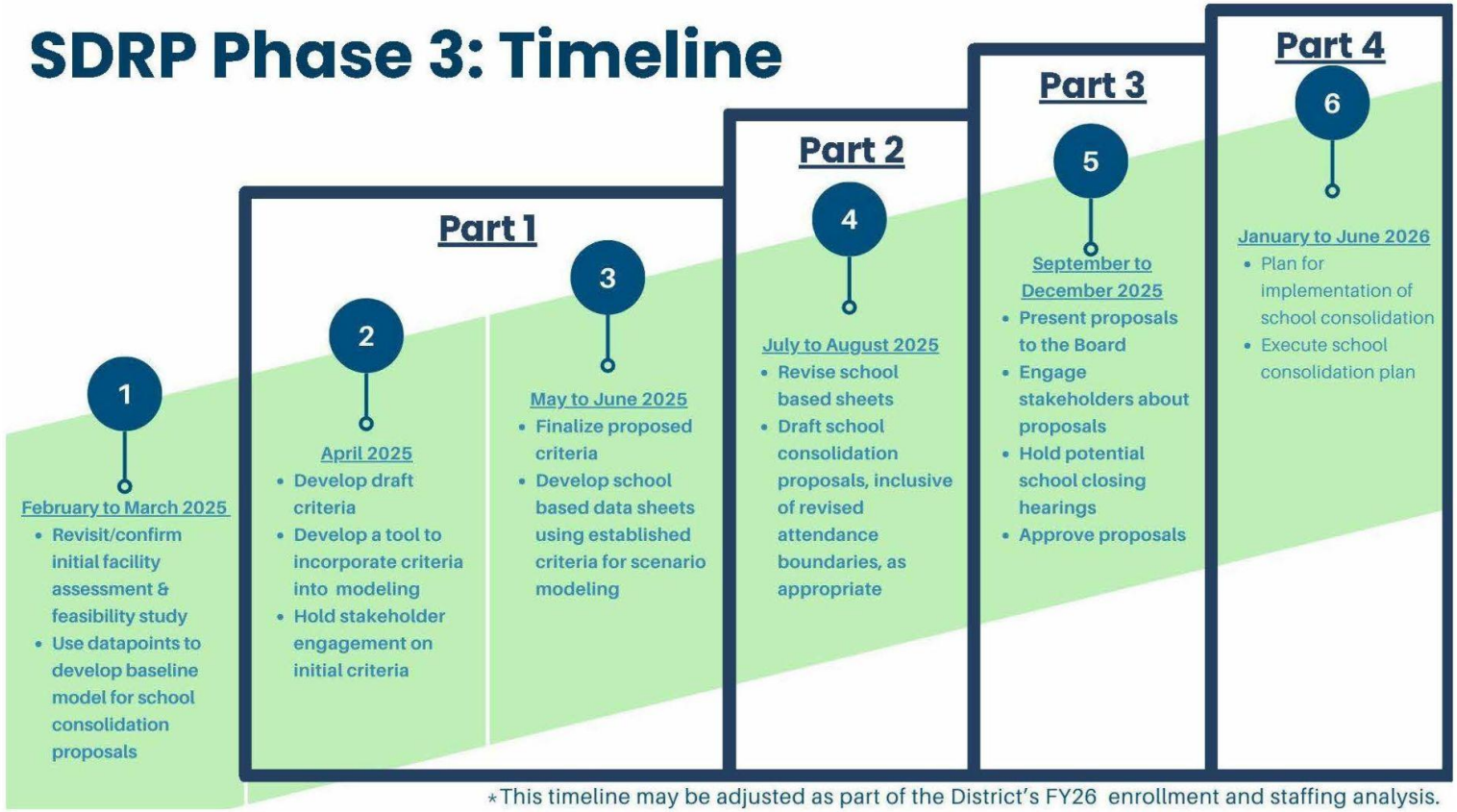
September-October
Stakeholder input on scenarios (1st & 2nd rounds)

November
Board decision on scenario

December 2025
Public Hearings *(potential closures)*

2026-2027
Approved scenario in effect

SDRP Phase 3: Timeline



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

Part	Dates	Group	Work
1	Apr-Jun 2025	Community Steering Committee (CSC)	Establish SDRP 3 framework for programs, facilities and finances
2	Jul-Aug 2025	Internal Steering Committee	Develop preliminary scenarios grounded in CSC framework
3	Aug-Oct 2025	Community Steering Committee	Provide feedback on preliminary scenarios
3	Oct 2025	Internal Steering Committee	Finalize scenarios based on CSC feedback
3	Nov 2025	Board of Education	Votes on scenarios (tentative)
4	Jan-Aug 2026	Internal Steering Committee	Implement scenarios











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

