



SAP Frequently Asked Questions

2/26/25



A Message from the Student Assignment Team

*DeKalb County School District has come together to address the committee's questions regarding **buildings**, **boundaries**, and **programs**, ensuring that the responses align with the mission and vision of SAP. It's important to note that only questions directly related to these core objectives will be prioritized in the answers. To ensure all relevant concerns are addressed, we strongly encourage committee members to complete the exit tickets and data worksheets in full. These documents are where all questions have been compiled, and they serve as the primary tool for tracking and responding to inquiries. Your participation in this process is crucial for the success of our discussions.*



Buildings

Questions	Answers
Can all buildings properly meet the needs of all students? Adaptive resources, counseling, social work, etc.?	All school facilities meet the requirements stated by GADOE. Most facilities can be modified to accommodate new requirements, though it is generally true that older facilities tend to be smaller and have less space available to adapt to new requirements.
What is the timeline to finish the new Sequoyah MS / HS?	The MS is set to open in 2027 - likely August. High School is set to open the following year (2028), according to the principal.
How can we eliminate teachers on mobile stations and students in modular units?	We can continue to build new facilities, expanding existing schools, and redistributing students to balance enrollment. Temporary solutions like optimizing modular units or repurposing spaces can be implemented while advocating for additional funding and community support. Additional scheduling strategies at schools may also reduce the need for modular classrooms.
Can we increase the parking capacity at schools, particularly high schools, to accommodate teachers, staff, and students?	Any time parking areas can be improved, which may require increasing its size, we will make every effort to support that task in accordance with local building codes and ordinances.



Is it necessary for special / exceptional programs to have their own buildings, or can they be combined (in neighborhood schools or in a "special / exceptional programs" building)?	This will be reviewed as we reimagine DCSD.
Stadiums	
What would be the timeline and cost to maintain the upkeep for current versus new stadiums?	DCSD is in the process of completing an athletics field audit. Costs for upgrades and building new or existing athletic fields are being reassessed.
Does DCSD have enough land to build a new stadium? If so, where?	New stadiums can be feasibly constructed at several existing DCSD properties.
How are facilities used by non-DCSD students/youth organizations? What revenue is/could be generated?	Outside organizations can engage in a DCSD Facility Use Agreement. There is a fee structure based on usage and time.

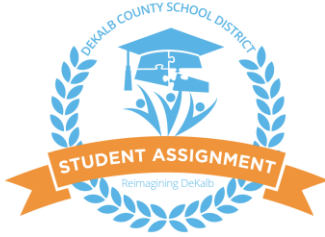


Not enough fast-paced CTAE opportunities district-wide. Can you balance out the north and the south? Could you build a third CTAE in the center? Could it be Avondale High School by Walmart? We would need modified scheduling and transportation.	CTAE pathways are being evaluated, and adjustments will be made based on industry recommendations and student interests. We will also use data collected from the SAP process. Most middle and/or high school facilities can be improved to ensure any required physical infrastructure is available for CTAE programs. However, CTAE specific improvements are expensive in both money and space, so it is important that CTAE focused improvements support a clear District-wide vision for delivering CTAE programming.
Can any of the vacant buildings be utilized? - where are these buildings?	DCSD currently does not have any "vacant" buildings. All facilities are currently being used in an instructional or operational support role.



If Pre-K3 were offered and housed in existing elementary locations, how would this affect the daily schedule and logistics of the building?

We need to assess whether the buildings have sufficient capacity to accommodate these young learners without overcrowding existing classrooms and common spaces. The principal's prior experience with early childhood education becomes relevant, as managing a Pre-K3 program requires specialized knowledge of developmentally appropriate practices and safety protocols. Community interest and needs within the school's boundaries should be analyzed to determine if there is sufficient demand for Pre-K3 services. Transportation presents a unique challenge, as three-year-old children are not permitted to ride regular school buses, requiring families to arrange alternative transportation methods. The physical layout of the building requires careful consideration. Classrooms designated for Pre-K3 should ideally include bathrooms or be near the Pre-K3 classes. These spaces need to be equipped with age-appropriate furniture designed for three-year-olds. Additionally, we should consider having adequate storage space for supplies and how to accommodate these young children during lunch periods. Safety is paramount, requiring carefully planned classroom layouts with appropriate spacing for movement and activities. The outdoor play area should be easily accessible from the Pre-K3 classrooms and equipped with age-appropriate equipment.



Boundaries

Questions	Answers
Would DCSD consider super clusters?	The committee can explore many variations to recommend. DCSD is open to our suggestions.
Are parents applying to IB programs for the program or for the school zoning?	Both. Some parents apply for IB to get their scholars out of their zoned neighborhood schools; whereas others are interested in IB for the potential impact for post-secondary studies.
DCSD Community	
What is the role of schools in strengthening communities with metrics that go beyond just academic achievement?	Schools play a vital role in building strong connections among students, families, and community members, creating a supportive and trusting network. By embracing the community and fostering collaboration with stakeholders, schools can cultivate an environment that nurtures trust and strengthens partnerships, effectively bridging the gap between the school and the broader community.
How can schools and residents collaborate to strengthen bonds within a community?	Host community events like festivals, health fairs, or family nights at school, partner with local business and organizations to provide services. Host specific events based on the needs of the community including mental health, food, clothing, and housing insecurities, school attendance, etc.



How can/could we integrate communities into their neighborhood schools, so they are familiar with the campus, its condition, its offerings?	Schools can integrate communities into their neighborhood schools by showcasing the various programs and initiatives that the school has that support the whole child. Schools can create a welcoming culture that fosters learning and embraces diversity. Most importantly, schools can reassure the community by establishing and maintaining a safe environment for all students.
Why doesn't the county offer transportation services to all school choice programs? (Only theme and magnet that currently receive transportation.)	Transportation is provided to all schools and (choice) programs as required and in accordance with Board Policy, State, and Federal Regulations. Additional service will be evaluated based on feasibility and allocated resources.
Could the line that determines North or South Tech programs be changed?	We will use feedback from SAP process to evaluate current student access to DHST-N and DHST-S. Transportation and travel time is also a consideration. In addition, we would need to ensure that traditional high school scheduling allows students access.
Exceptional Programs	



Should we reconsider where Exceptional Programs are located?	Our special education programs are currently housed in the most appropriate locations to ensure a Free Appropriate Public Education is provided to all scholars. Special education program locations are carefully considered when it is evident that additional classroom space is needed to support students that require clustered regional services. Before a location is confirmed, the Division of Student Services collaborates with several Divisions to ensure the recommendation aligns with the district's goals of maintaining accessibility, equity, and appropriate support for students. As the District considers locations for special education programs, the proximity to the student's homes, availability of staff, school capacity to house the classroom and maintaining a continuum of services across the District, are all heavily considered.
Are Exceptional Programs located near the students they serve?	SB10 allows for scholars to be served where there is seat availability. Additionally, on an annual basis, the Department of Exceptional Education reviews the location of special education programs to ensure that required services are available in most traditional schools or a school closely positioned.



Is there a need for additional Exceptional programs in the south of the county?

Yes, the south end of our district faces several challenges, including declining enrollment and a notable lack of diversity in educational programming. The existing programs have become dated and may no longer align with the community's evolving interests and needs.

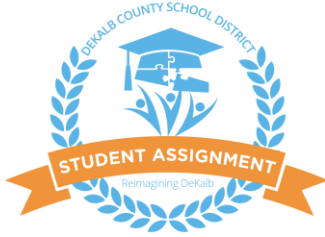
Analysis suggests several specific types of schools could effectively serve the south area. These include STEAM and STEM-focused programs, which would emphasize science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Another Elementary School of the Arts could provide more creative opportunities. A Dual Immersion School would offer valuable language learning experiences.

Regarding Exceptional Education programs, as a substantial number of students are evaluated to determine eligibility for special education services or as students with disabilities are returning to the District, there continues to be a growing need for regionalized special education programs across the District.

New Sequoyah HS/MS	
Are the boundaries already drawn?	No, this recommendation will come from SAP.



How many students will move to the new school? What schools are they pulled from?	The school can hold 3000-3200. and any combination that we need to accommodate MS and HS. It is adaptable to all K-12 facility requirements. The recommended boundary changes will come from SAP.
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Programs

Questions	Answers
Program Need & Criteria	
What are the criteria for determining the need of a program?	We are uncertain on what criteria the district used to determine the current programs; however, theme schools were created to alleviate overcrowding in certain areas of the district. When new instructional programs are being considered, the local school partners with the school community and district to determine the need based on data and potential impact on student achievement.
What determines whether or not programs continue each year?	Enrollment: Currently we do not have a process to determine if programs will continue or not from year to year.
What are the criteria for a school being included on the HB251 list?	HB251 seats are made available based on the forecasted utilization of the school for the next school year. To ensure that HB251 students do not result in overcrowding, fewer seats are made available as the school's forecasted utilization increases. Also, more seats are being made available to higher grades as higher grades have a lower impact on future enrollment.



Program Effectiveness & Impact	
How do we measure the “effectiveness” or “impact” of programs?	Currently, there is no metric in place to do this. We are attempting to do this moving forward, through extracting data based on OOA Codes. This will allow us to extract data from all schools and compare enrollment, continuation in programs, academic performance, attendance, etc. We should also partner with accountability to further explore.
How are students performing in school choice schools vs neighborhood schools?	The District has over twenty public-facing dashboards that contain data for all schools across DeKalb County. The data includes attendance, discipline, FTE enrollment, state assessments, national assessments, and state accountability metrics. Schools can be compared using the metrics available on these dashboards. The dashboards are accessible here: https://www.dekalbschoolsga.org/data-dashboards/
How often are programs evaluated for effectiveness?	The District currently has contracts with external partners to conduct four audits/evaluations. Those audits are evaluating the following: the English Language Learner (ELL) program, the district curriculum, technology programs utilized by schools, and a district Equity audit. There is currently not a set cycle for program evaluations.
Can we evaluate school choice like charter schools?	State law requires that all non-charter schools are evaluated using the state accountability system. The school system can add supplemental types of internal analysis to rank, compare, and evaluate schools.



Program Retention	
Is there data / can we obtain data on why students opt out of attending / leave a school choice school?	We do not currently track why families choose to leave a school choice program unless they complete a hardship request form. The hardship forms are not solely used for this purpose, so this data would not be accurate.
Dual Language Immersion	
Why doesn't language immersion continue beyond elementary?	Language immersion continues through middle school. The students are no longer in a dual language immersion program once they enter high school. Currently, the DLI students matriculate as a cohort to the high school. Lakeside High School (French) and Chamblee High School (German) are serving students who completed DLI programs. Once students enter high school, the students take advanced level language courses such as Level V, Level VI, Advanced Placement, and/or Dual Enrollment.



Why / How are certain languages chosen and how were the schools chosen for these programs?	In 2011, the Georgia Department of Education extended the invitation to school districts to apply to participate in the Dual Language Immersion Program. DCSD's application was submitted and approved. DCSD was awarded 3 of the first 6 public DLI programs in Georgia. From 2011-2013, DCSD participated in the statewide meetings to prepare for the launch of the DLI programs in 2013. During the three-year preparation phase, DCSD met with all elementary schools, selected schools based on interest and data, and trained administrators and teachers. The languages were pre-determined by GADOE at that time. DCSD launched French and German DLI programs initially. The Spanish DLI program was introduced later.
How do we determine what languages are taught in our DL programs?	The languages were pre-determined by GADOE at that time. DCSD launched French and German DLI programs initially. GADOE established global and state partners to support the launch of the DLI programs in Georgia. When DCSD introduced the Spanish DLI programs at two schools, the elementary principals and their local school communities expressed an interest and made a commitment.
Theme Schools	
What is the value of Theme schools?	The value of the District's Theme Schools is that they offer a comprehensive, interdisciplinary education program in a highly structured setting that includes required parent volunteer hours and mandatory



	uniform dress codes in a traditional theme school setting.
Could there be more MS options and a HS option?	The Student Assignment Project (SAP) process is designed to reimagine DCSD as it relates to programs, boundaries, and buildings using more complete data analysis, and examine student assignments holistically relating to programs, boundaries, and buildings. The District knows that this is a critical and necessary process in the longstanding effort to balance enrollment, provide equitable access to high-quality education and programs, and ensure proper building use. The SAP Committee will review where school choice programs are placed throughout the district and if their placement is equitable in meeting the needs of the community.
Do theme schools still serve the same purpose as intended when they were created?	Yes. Each of the six elementary and one middle Traditional Theme Schools still serve the same purpose of providing programs based on high expectations, parental involvement, and the interest to pursue challenging learning experiences.
Montessori	
Would it make sense to add another Montessori school?	This is a twofold response. In the North, no, as the numbers are not increasing; however, the possibility of offering an option on the South end may serve beneficial, if funded properly, with professional development embedded for teachers and leaders.



Why does Montessori stop at 5th grade?	Currently, DCSD only offers Montessori at the elementary school level. If Montessori expands to include a middle school model, the community must be involved because of the impact on the residential students.
Why do we need a Montessori model in Dekalb County? Has the program outlived its purpose?	During the period of financial hardship, DCSD eliminated some of the Montessori programs based on low enrollment. Program evaluations were completed at Briar Vista and Huntley Hills during the 2021-2022 school year. Reports are available.
General Program Questions	
How are gifted children, who do not qualify for gifted, catered to?	Gifted Education within Georgia is governed by Georgia Department of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education Program for Gifted Students. Within this, there are gifted education service delivery models stipulated for students identified for gifted services. In all cases (whether gifted-identified or not), parents/guardians should contact their child's teacher and/or school principal to learn more about academic and curricular program offerings and delivery models within each classroom and school - as well as how those address the needs of each learner. You can learn about Gifted Education with DCSD at the website: www.DeKalbSchoolsGA.org/Gifted



What happens if the federal DOE is eliminated and federal policy no longer supports or shapes local policy?	The District will comply with any regulatory changes where required by Federal, State, or Local law.
Can we change the name of school choice to combat confusion of voucher programs, sometimes also known as school choice?	This is guided by our current board policy.
Have we considered including elements of language immersion, Montessori, STEAM, IB and other “specialty programs” in every school?	Elements of these programs exist in every school. Students have access to world languages. STEM/STEAM principles are embedded in the standards and curriculum. Also, students are exposed to integrated lessons that incorporate and connect with global issues.
Why does Evansdale’s Magnet program start at Kindergarten when others start in 3rd grade?	Community input may have driven this decision at the implementation phase of the program. In the most recent years seat availability for magnet has been zero. Evansdale currently has 1 student enrolled under the magnet OOA.
How can we better market school choice to parents?	Host annual school expo, communication posting on the district website, universal banner, Infinite Campus Portal Family Dashboard banner, school websites' banner, ensure families know what options their scholars have based on performance.



Where is data showing the racial and ethnic demographics applying for school choice programs?	The School Choice application does not collect racial or ethnic information.
What is the difference between IB & Magnet?	All program descriptions are displayed on the school choice website.
Who determines where school choice programs are located?	Typically, the initiative begins with existing principals recognizing community demand, working in collaboration with their area teams. The DeKalb County School District Board must ultimately approve any new programs, considering both community interest and practical implementation factors. The Curriculum and Instruction team plays a crucial role in designing these programs, ensuring they balance district educational standards with community and student interests.
Who are the program leads at the district level for school choice programs (i.e. Dual Language, Montessori, etc.)?	Mr. Jacob Vuiller - Dual Language Immersion; Mrs. Stephanie Brown-Bryant - Montessori (During the budget cuts years ago and the diminishing number of Montessori schools, the position was eliminated; therefore, the Director supports specialized programs.)