



Student Assignment Meeting Summary

9/10/2025

VIRTUAL

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Meeting Agenda

- ✓ Welcome
- ✓ A message from the Superintendent
- ✓ Meeting Norms, Purpose, & Vision
- ✓ 24/25 Recap & Updated Timeline
- ✓ The Challenge
- ✓ Why It's A Challenge
- ✓ The Possible Solution
- ✓ Action Items
- ✓ Data and HPM
- ✓ Guiding Principles
- ✓ Complete exit ticket

Key Takeaway

The Student Assignment Project focuses on addressing the challenges of declining student enrollment and the implications for resource allocation within the district. Ms. Sarita Smith, Executive Director of Student Assignment, presented an updated timeline and discussed the introduction of HPM as a new partner to enhance collaboration. The meeting emphasized a hybrid format to support work-life balance while maintaining engagement through teamwork and resource sharing. Smith highlighted the importance of community involvement in shaping recommendations related to school buildings, boundaries, and programs, stressing the need for data-driven decision-making aligned with established guiding principles.

Smith outlined the complexities of implementing changes in DeKalb County, particularly in light of the significant number of empty seats in schools, which currently totals over 18,000. This situation has led to stretched resources and increased costs for



taxpayers, necessitating boundary changes and potential school consolidations. The discussion included the financial implications of operating under-enrolled facilities and the need for effective communication with families about the benefits of proposed adjustments. Smith emphasized that while changes may be necessary, they aim to improve educational environments and resources for all students.

The meeting also addressed the broader context of declining enrollment, attributing it to factors such as housing insecurity, a decreasing birth rate, and a reduction in international families. Smith noted that these trends disrupt traditional family dynamics and contribute to the challenges faced by the district. The committee will be tasked with determining program placements and establishing criteria for prioritizing school adjustments, with a focus on community engagement and collaboration with HPM to ensure informed decision-making.

To foster transparency and address community concerns, Smith proposed implementing feedback forms and regular open forums. The discussion highlighted the need for clear communication regarding potential teacher relocations and the financial challenges associated with empty seats. Smith acknowledged the complexities of estimating savings from school closures and the importance of strategic decisions in managing resources effectively. The meeting concluded with a commitment to keep stakeholders informed through monthly updates and a virtual newsletter aimed at reaching a broader audience.

Updates on HPM Partnership & Timeline Adjustments

The ESPLOST funding vote has been moved to November 2026, necessitating preliminary recommendations by January 2026. This change aims to allow HPM and the operations team to prepare their five-year local facility plan in time for the draft resolution.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, September 24, 2025 @ Lakeside HS