



DATE: September 8, 2025
TO: School Board Members
FROM: Mary Elizabeth Davis
Superintendent of Schools
SUBJECT: Annual Report - - Critical Overcrowding

The SY2025-26 Cherokee County Inventory of School Housing (CCISH) shows the impact of enrollment growth patterns/shifts and indicates several areas where additional classroom space will soon be needed.

Additionally, SY2025-26 marks the 13th consecutive year during which none of the School District's schools are considered "critically overcrowded," reflecting long-standing successful management practices and School Board Policies governing student enrollment growth forecasts, school construction project planning and student attendance area decisions.

The attached chart uses this school year's 20-day enrollment count (August 28, 2025) to measure the percentage of overcrowding. School Board Policy defines "critically overcrowded" as when a school exceeds 140% of its enrollment capacity and meets other criteria, including use of all existing portable classrooms. Pursuant to the School Board's Critical Overcrowding Policy (FDBD), the impact of actual student enrollment is evaluated annually after the 20th day of classes, which is when attendance traditionally peaks, to determine critically overcrowded schools and what, if any, action is needed.

The effort to eliminate "critical overcrowding" in the School District began in 2001, with an aggressive, multi-tiered Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (Ed-SPLOST) plan proposed by a Blue Ribbon Committee of community leaders and approved by the School Board for inclusion on a local ballot referendum. This plan to "bond" future sales tax revenue, which has been extended four times by voters over the past 20 years, continues today with new construction, strategic land purchases, facility renovations, replacement school buses and emerging technologies for students and staff.

Unfortunately, if portable classrooms were not available, four schools (down from eight last year) would currently be operating at 100% or more of their capacity. It should be remembered that, while portable classrooms provide relief for classroom instruction, they do not alleviate overcrowding in media centers, cafeterias, restrooms and hallways, as well as not resolving (and sometimes exacerbating) shortages in critical resources such as lockers, parking and recess/playground areas. The schools are: Ralph Bunche Center, Creekland MS,

E.T. Booth MS, and Teasley MS. None of the traditional schools are operating at over 110%.

Staff continues to analyze this new data to determine recommendations that may be needed to address overcrowding in preparation for the next school year(s). Data is compiled and analyzed year-round to monitor not only enrollment growth, but also the local real estate market, development trends, local birth rates and other demographics...in order to best determine when and where new and/or replacement school facilities are needed.

Again, it should be noted that since the 2001 Blue Ribbon Committee's findings, all new and replacement school construction and renovations in the School District have been funded primarily by Ed-SPLOST revenue, which was renewed during the November 2021 general election. As such, current overcrowding and capacity issues will be alleviated through construction of the Cherokee HS Replacement and Woodstock HS Classroom Additions. Also, with our high schools ranging in enrollment from 1,834 to 2,778 students, Auxiliary Gymnasium Construction at Creekview HS, Sequoyah HS and River Ridge HS would result in all six of our high schools possessing a second gymnasium, which is critical space for both curricular and extracurricular programming.

Finally, staff is conducting a classroom space utilization study and a comprehensive residential zoning/future student population projection report in order to determine priorities as we look toward development of the next five-year facility plan. Since our construction efforts dating back to 2001 have focused primarily on the construction of classrooms to address overcrowding, the District will now couple that focus with an assessment of age and condition to ensure a focused effort on maintenance and upkeep of facilities, mechanical systems, and renovation projects.

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Attachment

cc: Superintendent's Cabinet
Principals
Assistant Principals
School Board Attorney

2025-2026 Cherokee County Inventory of School Housing

School Name	Facility Enrollment Capacity ¹			SY2025-2026 20 Day Enrollment	Percentage Overcrowding		Portable Classrooms
	As Constructed ²	Special Programs ³	With Portables		Without Portables	With Portables ⁴	
Arnold Mill ES (K-5)	1,100	1,068	1,068	747	70%	70%	0
Avery ES (K-5)	1,175	1,150	1,150	1,042	91%	91%	0
Ball Ground ES (PK-5)*	1,175	1,131	1,131	641	57%	57%	0
Bascomb ES (K-5)	1,062	1,038	1,038	819	79%	79%	0
Boston ES (K-5)	862	800	875	601	75%	69%	4
Carmel ES (K-5)	1,100	1,056	1,263	892	84%	71%	12
Clark Creek ES (K-5)	1,200	1,175	1,175	1,132	96%	96%	0
Clayton ES (K-5)	312	312	431	292	94%	68%	8
Free Home ES (K-5)	850	800	800	288	36%	36%	0
Hasty ES (PK-5)*	1,175	1,137	1,175	1,025	90%	87%	2
Hickory Flat ES (K-5)	925	906	1,006	872	96%	87%	6
Holly Springs ES (PK-5)*	1,100	1,068	1,068	853	80%	80%	0
Indian Knoll ES (K-5)	1,200	1,163	1,163	856	74%	74%	0
Johnston ES (PK-5)*	750	750	883	543	72%	61%	8
Knox ES (K-5)	1,200	1,175	1,175	828	70%	70%	0
Liberty ES (K-5)	1,175	1,137	1,337	879	77%	66%	12
Little River ES (K-5)	1,518	1,506	1,506	1,191	79%	79%	0
Macedonia ES (K-5)	862	862	862	691	80%	80%	0
Mountain Road ES (K-5)	725	687	687	352	51%	51%	0
Oak Grove ES (PK-5)*	775	750	750	515	69%	69%	0
Ralph Bunche Center (PK)*	100	100	100	111	111%	111%	0
R. M. Moore ES (PK-5)*	1,062	1,038	1,088	970	93%	89%	4
Sixes ES (K-5)	891	883	883	665	75%	75%	0
Woodstock ES (K-5)	1,175	1,137	1,200	1,078	95%	90%	4
Creekland MS (6-8)	1,412	1,375	1,512	1,432	104%	95%	8
Dean Rusk MS (6-8)	1,675	1,600	1,600	1,517	95%	95%	0
E. T. Booth MS (6-8)	1,562	1,538	1,643	1,656	108%	101%	6
Freedom MS (6-8)	1,200	1,187	1,187	852	72%	72%	0
Mill Creek MS (6-8)	1,562	1,525	1,525	1,406	92%	92%	0
Teasley MS (6-8)	1,562	1,518	1,518	1,554	102%	102%	0
Woodstock MS (6-8)	1,362	1,275	1,275	1,032	81%	81%	0
Cherokee HS (9-12)	3,480	3,360	3,360	2,778	83%	83%	0
Creekview HS (9-12)	2,225	2,163	2,268	2,018	93%	89%	6
Etowah HS (9-12)	2,575	2,518	2,518	2,247	89%	89%	0
River Ridge HS (9-12)	2,075	2,050	2,025	1,834	89%	91%	0
Sequoyah HS (9-12)	2,400	2,363	2,363	2,054	87%	87%	0
Woodstock HS (9-12)	1,975	1,925	2,375	1,854	96%	78%	22

Total Overcrowding Percentage	
Without Portables	With Portables
78%	75%
94%	92%
89%	86%
< 90%	90% - 99%
100% - 139%	> 140%

Notes:

* Enrollment numbers include P3 and P4 students where applicable.

¹ Capacity calculations based on State Instructional Unit Capacity Charts

² Original Facility Construction IU Designation

³ Adjustments are calculated to accommodate specialized classrooms that operate at a limited capacity based on usage

⁴ If/when school capacity is extended by the use of portables, the capacity of core areas (e.g., media center, cafeteria, hallways, kitchens, restrooms, etc.) is not expanded.

Total ES % Overcrowding	78%	75%
Total MS % Overcrowding	94%	92%
Total HS % Overcrowding	89%	86%