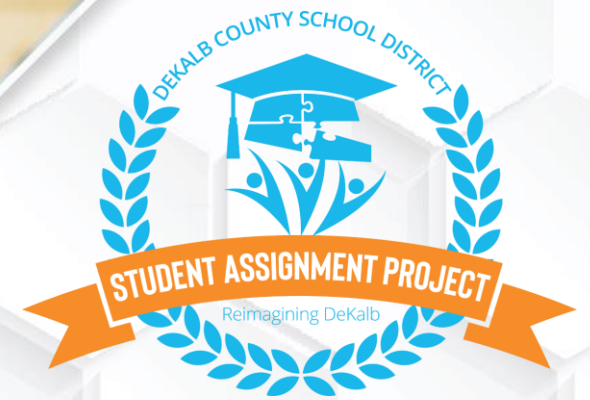




DeKalb County School District September SAP Update

Presented by: Sarita Smith



DeKalb County
School District

Vision, Purpose & Non-Purpose, and Timeline

Vision

To reimagining DCSD by considering **programs**, **boundaries**, and **buildings** holistically, using data, and reviewing every 5 years to align with E-SPLOST.

This comprehensive planning process will help position **ALL** our students upon graduation to **E**nroll, **E**mploy, engage in **E**ntrepreneurship, or **E**nlist.



SAP Advisory Purpose and Non-Purpose

Purpose

- **Serve as a critical thought partner in assessing systems related to buildings, boundaries, and programs.**
- Serve as a critical thought partner in assessing DCSD's current student assignment procedures and policies.
- Provide impartial recommendations suited to dismantling structural inequities.
- **Use data to make informed decisions and recommendations.**
- Recommend ways for DCSD to become fiscally efficient.
- Review and recommend ways to **reimagine** DCSD programs and offerings so all students have a quality education.
- Recommend boundaries, buildings, and programs suited for the current and projected enrollment.

Non-Purpose of the Advisory

- To make **final decisions** regarding policy or standard operating procedures related to DCSD.
- **To determine the daily operations of schools or programs.**
- To direct DCSD to make specific changes within the purview of the Board of Education.
- **To make decisions that only impact specific children or communities.**

SAP is the WHAT not the HOW





Spring 2024 – Fall 2024:
Kick-off and SAP
Committee Selection

1

Fall 2024 – Spring 2025:
SAP Planning, Committee Meetings,
Data Analytics, & Committee Guiding
Principles Development

2

Fall 2025 – Winter 2026:
SAP Committee Reimagining, Mapping,
Preliminary Recommendations,
& Community Feedback

3

Spring 2026:
Community Review and
Final Recommendations

4

Fall 2026 – Fall 2030:
SAP Implementation Begins

5

September Recap

Recap - Two September Meetings

9/10/25

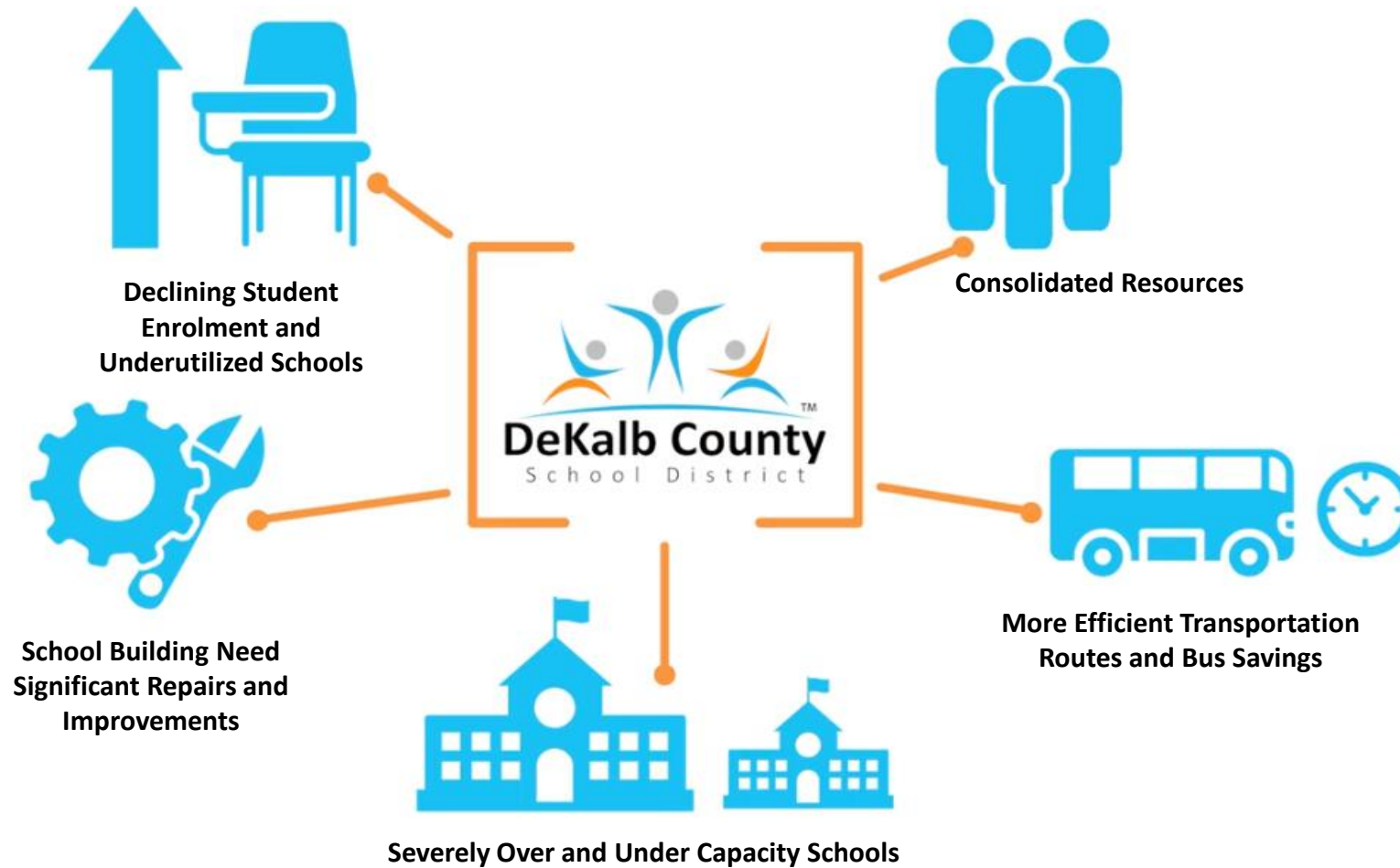
- Welcome Back
- Timeline
- Reviewed Challenges and 5 Reasons
- Action Items
- Collaborations

9/24/25

- Introduced HPM School Dashboard
- Reviewed the Big Question related to program placement
- Reviewed current programs
- Working groups completed worksheets
- Shared out



Five Reasons We Need SAP



SAP Call To Action

By January 2026

- Determine how programs are placed; in separate buildings or neighborhood schools?
- What criteria should be used to determine the placement of special programs?
- Determine how we prioritize which buildings and boundaries need adjustment (Planning School Metrics).
- Determine specific ES/MS/HS need to be consolidated/ repurposed.
- Determine what we can or should do with other buildings or property.
- Develop a few general recommendations for communities to review and provide feedback.

By May 2026 – *select members and staff will be on the collaborative committee*

- Review community feedback and determine if tweaks or changes are necessary.
- Create final recommendations.



THE BIG QUESTION:

Should DCSD's special programs be offered in a few schools across the district, or placed within neighborhood schools?



Big Question Defined

DCSD's special programs should be offered in a few schools across the district

- Specific stand-alone facilities would be designated to house special programs with those facilities being distributed throughout the district
- Each of these buildings may house multiple programs
- Special programs will only be housed in non-neighborhood schools

DCSD's special programs should be offered in neighborhood schools

- A program within a school model means that a specialized program (like STEM, Montessori, dual language, or arts) is offered inside a regular neighborhood school
- Special programs will only be housed in neighborhood schools

Committee Feedback

Take aways from 9/10/25 meeting related to program placement

- Stakeholders want **clear, transparent, and comprehensive data** on enrollment, capacity, program effectiveness, cost, and equity. They are especially concerned about **program placement fairness, ROI, and student outcomes**, and want the district to use this data for **long-term planning and community trust**.

Take aways from 9/24/25 meeting related to program placement

- Participants want **smaller, better-facilitated groups, more data and clarity on program models and outcomes**, and **greater equity in program distribution**. They emphasized that effective process and transparent data are essential before making program or school redesign decisions.



SAP Says

Hybrid program school model where programs are offered in neighborhood schools in a super cluster

DCSD should not offer specialty programs in K-5 to become more efficient

Minimum number of students committed to a program

We have to be creative about how we offer programs in neighborhood schools, so all students have access

A hybrid model within district regions, so all schools have access to quality academics

Depletion of teacher and student talent when there are stand-alone program buildings

Programs that require special equipment may require a stand-alone building

A limited diversity of programmatic opportunities in a cluster model.

Difficult to have this question without program outcomes

There are programs that do need separate facilities (examples: DSA/DAA, CTAE)

Creatively rotate students based on specialized programs

No school choice beyond specialized needs until middle school

Programs should be fluid and evaluated on a 5-year basis

All schools in DeKalb should be excellent options for students!

Community Feedback

- 1. Preserve Chamblee Cluster Alignment:** Many parents strongly oppose rezoning Ashford Park and surrounding neighborhoods out of the Chamblee Middle/High School cluster. They stress the importance of academic alignment, particularly access to AP and advanced programs not currently offered at Cross Keys.
- 2. Protect Gifted, Magnet, and Language Programs:** There is widespread support for continuing School Choice options, including the German Immersion (GI), magnet, and gifted programs. Parents credit these with driving school improvement and providing critical opportunities for high-achieving students.
- 3. Keep Neighborhoods and Communities Intact:** Families want to avoid being split across different schools, emphasizing the social and community impact. They cite shared activities, sports teams, and long-standing ties between Ashford Park, Drew Valley, and other Brookhaven neighborhoods.
- 4. Academic Quality and Equity Concerns:** Parents fear being rezoned to lower-performing schools (e.g., Montclair, John Lewis, Woodward) with significantly lower test scores. They argue that this move would reduce academic opportunities and unfairly disadvantage children in high performing zones.



Community Feedback

5. Opposition to Rapid Implementation and Lack of Transparency: Concerns are raised about the rushed timeline, lack of clear data, and poor communication from DeKalb County School District. Many ask for more time, input, and transparent planning before decisions are finalized.

6. Avoid Redistricting as a Quick Fix for Overcrowding: Instead of redrawing boundaries, many suggest expanding or upgrading facilities (e.g., Ashford Park and Montgomery) to accommodate growth without disrupting high-functioning school communities.

7. Maintain Consistent Academic Pathways: Families have planned their children's education (and often home purchases) around current school clusters. Disrupting this pathway, particularly for those already in gifted/magnet programs, is seen as destabilizing and unfair.

8. Negative Impact on Property Values and Enrollment Stability: Homeowners are concerned that redistricting will reduce home values and prompt an exodus to private schools or different districts, thereby weakening both the public school system and community fabric.



Community Feedback

9. Community Investments at Risk: Parents highlight the time, effort, and fundraising they've poured into their current schools. They argue redistricting would dismantle years of progress and parent engagement in building strong school cultures.





Community Feedback



What's Next

Committee Meeting, October 8

- Finalize program placement consensus
- Consider special circumstances for program placement
- Review programs not meeting new criteria

Committee Meeting, October 22

- Review neighborhood school projections
- Analyze maps and HPM supporting data

Virtual Community Town Hall Meetings

- Saturday, October 25th @ 1:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 28th @ @ 6:30 p.m.

Chat w/ SAP Virtual Meeting, October 9th and October 23rd
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.



[Student Assignment Project \(SAP\)](#)
[Website](#)

