

DEKALB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
STUDENT ASSIGNMENT PROJECT
Reimagining DeKalb

DeKalb County School District
October SAP Update

Presented by: Sarita Smith

DeKalb County School District

Vision

To reimaging 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

SAP Guidance

Special program placed in DCSD

Attendance boundary school (neighborhood school) criteria

Recap – September & October

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
- Share out

10/8/25

- Reviewed the continued goal related to program placement
- Shared community feedback
- Working groups completed worksheets
- Share out

10/22/25

- Welcome from active superintendent
- Review policy AD
- Understand criteria from education leaders
- Review attendance boundary data
- Working groups completed worksheets
- Share out

SAP Guidance to Build Preliminary Recommendations

Program Placement

- Programs should be in attendance boundary schools to the greatest extent possible
- Specialized criteria for programs placed outside of an attendance boundary school (stand-alone building)
    - Specialized Student Needs – Programs designed to serve students whose educational needs cannot be fully met in a traditional school setting (e.g., Special Education Centers, Alternative Programs).
    - Specialized Instructional Expertise – Programs that require educators with unique certifications or expertise aligned to the program's instructional model or theme (e.g., Arabia Mountain's environmental focus).
    - Non-Traditional Grade Configurations – Schools or programs that operate outside standard grade band structures (e.g., K–8, 4–6, 4-8 configurations such as Kittredge, Wadsworth, DAA, and Montessori programs).

Attendance Boundary Schools (neighborhood schools) Criteria Top six (6) criteria that is important for SAP to consider for prioritizing attendance boundary schools

- Building Utilization
- Program Alignment: Keep pathways coherent (e.g., ensure elementary schools feed consistently into middle and high schools)
- Resource Distribution: Ensure equitable access to high-quality facilities and educational opportunities
- Facility Condition
- Neighborhood Cohesion
- Geographic proximity and travel time / transportation impact

25-26 Timeline

Sept – Dec '25 • Welcome back • Reviewed and created guidance for scenario building related to program placement and criteria for attendance boundary schools • Scenario and metrics review and feedback.	**January '26** • SAP will share preliminary recommendations (program placement and buildings) and community feedback for consumption and edits	**Feb – April '26** • Sharing preliminary recommendations with the community at large for consumption and feedback • Process community feedback and measure against the guiding principles to determine any edits or updates
May '26 • Share final recommendations (program placement and buildings) and implementation timeline with the board for action	**Summer '26** • Begin boundary adjustment planning based on recommendations	**Fall '26** • Community consumption and feedback on boundary adjustment preliminary recommendations • Board action on boundary adjustments

Dispelling Myths

SAP Recommendations are being implemented Fall 2026

- SAP is not making any recommendations that will begin Fall 2026. Please refer to the timeline on the website.

SAP is recommending closing magnet schools and programs

- SAP is assuming all program remain based on the current enrollment trends and will make recommendations on program placement and the development of an evaluation system for school choice.

SAP committee member have been coerced into what the district wants

- The only guidance provided by the district was the SAP vision, number of consolidations, and to following the board policy. Staff members attend SAP meetings to provide context based on their areas of expertise and Ms. Smith is a facilitator of the project.

SAP committee members are not from the community

- SAP committee members represent many areas of the district and DeKalb community.

SAP has inaccurate data

- SAP is reviewing data from our student information system, planning department, the last comprehensive mater plan, school choice enrollment over time, private and charter school enrollment over time, research related to redistricting and programs, and much more. There is always a margin of error in data, but we do have enough data to know we are operating too many buildings, and our programs are not consistently offered or accessible to all families.

SAP is not concerned about the climate culture, and wellbeing of students

- Operating a more efficient school system will, over time, support all students in DCSD. Particularly, as it pertains to academic resources and services.

Community Feedback

What's Next

SAP Committee Meeting

- ~~September 10th & 24th~~
- ~~October 8th & 22nd~~
- November 5th & 19th
- December 3rd & 10th

Virtual Community Town Hall Meetings

- ~~Saturday, October 25 @ 1:00pm~~
- ~~Tuesday, October 28 @ 6:30pm~~
- Saturday, December 13 @ 1:00pm
- Tuesday, December 16 @ 6:30pm

Operations/Planning/HPM Data Meeting Coming Soon

SAP Chats

- ~~Thursday, October 9 @ 6:30pm~~
  - This meeting was cancelled due to an emergency Board Meeting.
- ~~Thursday, October 23 @ 6:30pm~~
- Thursday, November 6 @ 6:30pm
- Thursday, November 20 @ 6:30pm
- Thursday, December 4 @ 6:30pm

Student Assignment Project (SAP) Website