

Exceptional Student Education Programming

Updates for FY26

April 16, 2025
5:30-6:30PM

Lohren Carter-Nzoma, Assistant Superintendent

Nidia Ashby, Chief of Schools



Overview ESE Programming



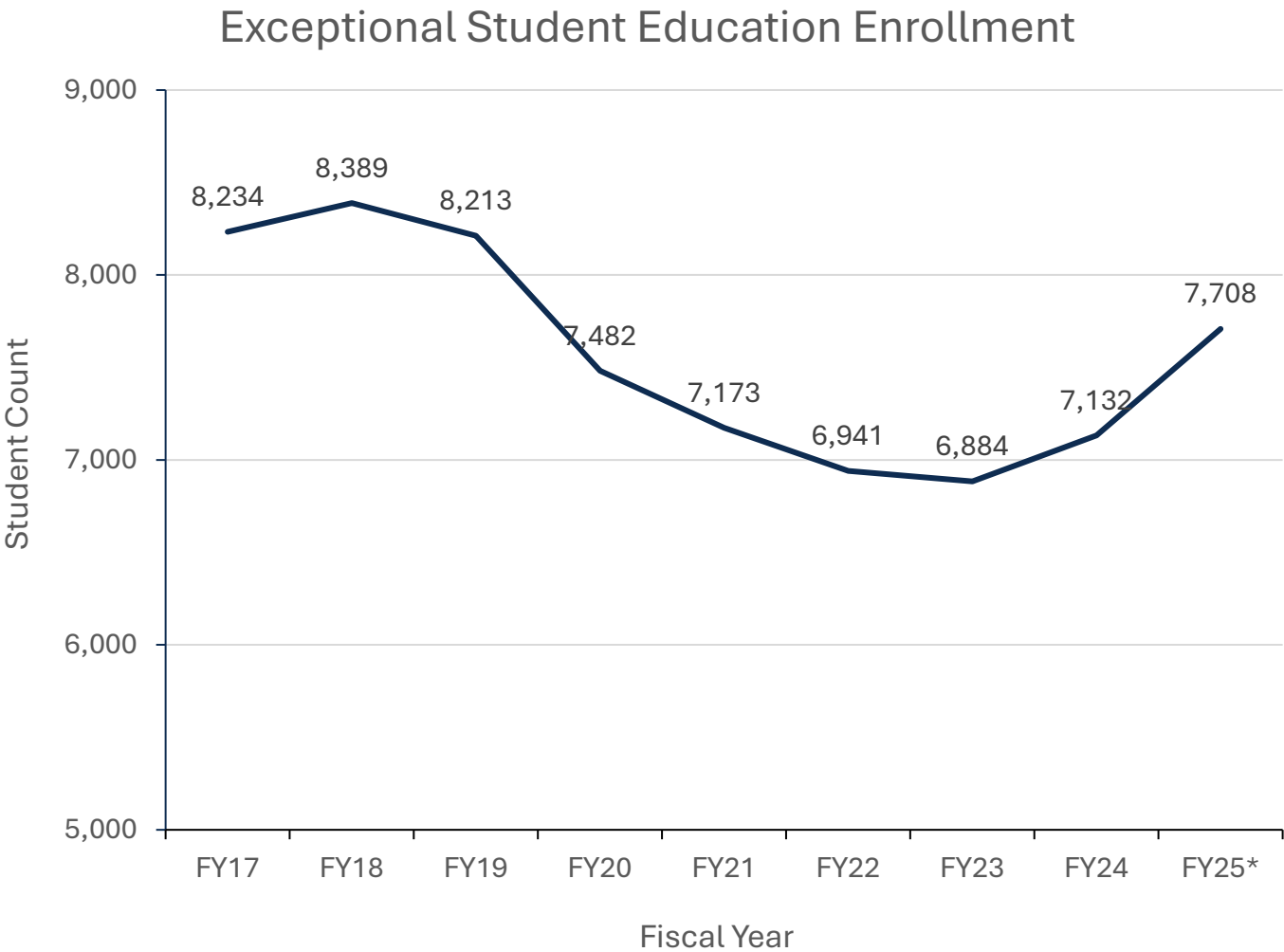
The District is legally required to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students as outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Some students have disabilities considered to be in the moderate to severe range and are working toward a Certificate of Completion (COC). These students are eligible to receive services through age of 26. These students may receive programs and services in either a comprehensive school or one of our separate facilities based upon their least restrictive environment (LRE).

The majority of students with an IEP are on a course of study leading to a high school diploma receiving programs and services to support their access to the general education curriculum.

Based on the IEP students may receive pull-out supports including:

- Resource Room
- Speech and Language
- Social Work
- Other Ancillary Services – Audiology, Nursing, Occupational and Physical Therapy, Orientation & Mobility, etc.

Overall ESE Student Enrollment



The District saw a decrease in ESE student enrollment from FY 2020 to FY 2023 of 1,505 students. The enrollment decline coincided with the overall enrollment decline due to the pandemic. While general education students returned faster, ESE enrollment only started to rebound in FY 24 and is projected to increase again in FY 25 to 7,708 based on enrollment as of March 1, 2025.

The total includes all students receiving services including those in fully self-contained programs and those who only need minor supports. It also includes students served by the District in Private Non-Public schools, Homebound students, and early intervention programs.

**ESE student data reported to MDE annually. This includes students served in District schools, Private Non-Public schools, Homebound students.*



ESE District Self-Contained Classroom Programs



The District provides students with more intense needs, but who are still mainstreamed in general education schools are serviced in self-contained classrooms. The District currently has 174 self-contained program classrooms in 60 schools across the District. The programs include:

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Early Childhood Program (ECSE)
- Emotional Impairment (EI)
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing Program (DHH)
- Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) and Moderate Cognitive Impairment (MOCI)
- Physical Health or Other Impairment (POHI)
- Visual Impairment (VI)

Students who need more intensive support (including Severe Cognitive Impairment and Severely Multiply Impairment) receive services at one of our Center Based Program schools.

- **K-8:** Keidan, Moses Field and Turning Point
- **High School:** Jerry L White and Turning Point
- **Post High School:** Charles Drew and Diann Banks

ESE Self-Contained Student Enrollment



The District is currently serving 2,092 self-contained ESE students in 174 self-contained classroom programs at 60 general education schools across the District. This total does not include the students served in one of 6 center-based program sites, nor does it include students at our general education schools receiving Resource Room or Speech only supports.

Overall, the District has seen an increase of 197 students in ESE self-contained classrooms since we have returned from the pandemic. The biggest increases have been with Autism Spectrum Disorder (127) and Moderate Cognitive Impairment (52).

Program	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26
Autism Spectrum Disorder	311	369	411	438	496
Early Childhood Program	143	128	165	142	180
Emotional Impairment	80	48	46	47	50
Deaf Heard of Hearing	68	59	77	87	102
Mild Cognitive Impairment	1,124	1,144	1,125	1,170	1,188
Moderate Cognitive Impairment	77	125	146	129	180
Physical or Other Health Impairment	82	85	86	73	105
Visual Impairment	10	6	4	6	10
Total	1,895	1,964	2,060	2,092	2,311

ESE Funding



The District receives local, state and federal funding to support ESE programs.

- **Local:** Wayne County RESA has a local millage to provide funding for center-based programs through Act 18 funding. (\$45M, includes \$8M in one-time revenue)
- **State:** Michigan provides base per pupil allocation, 70% reimbursement of ESE Transportation costs, and a 28.42% reimbursement of prior year expenses not covered in the base per pupil allocation. (\$97M)
- **Federal:** The District receives Medicaid reimbursements based on eligible services provided as well as funding through IDEA program. (\$24M, includes \$9M of Medicaid Revenue)

The District is mandated to provide services as outlined in the student Individual Education Plan (IEP) to ensure access to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

- **Personnel (Salary & Benefits):** Costs for teachers, aides, ancillary staff, and administrators (\$150M)
- **Discretionary:** Costs for contracted vendors, materials, supplies, and other costs (\$9M)
- **ESE Transportation:** Costs for District Van Drivers, Bus Aides, and school bus and small vehicle contracts. (\$19M)

Based on the available one-time and recurring revenue and expenditures the District general fund contributed \$12M to cover the costs. Real cost is \$20M if not for the \$8M one-time funding from RESA.

Opportunity to Solve Ongoing ESE District Challenges

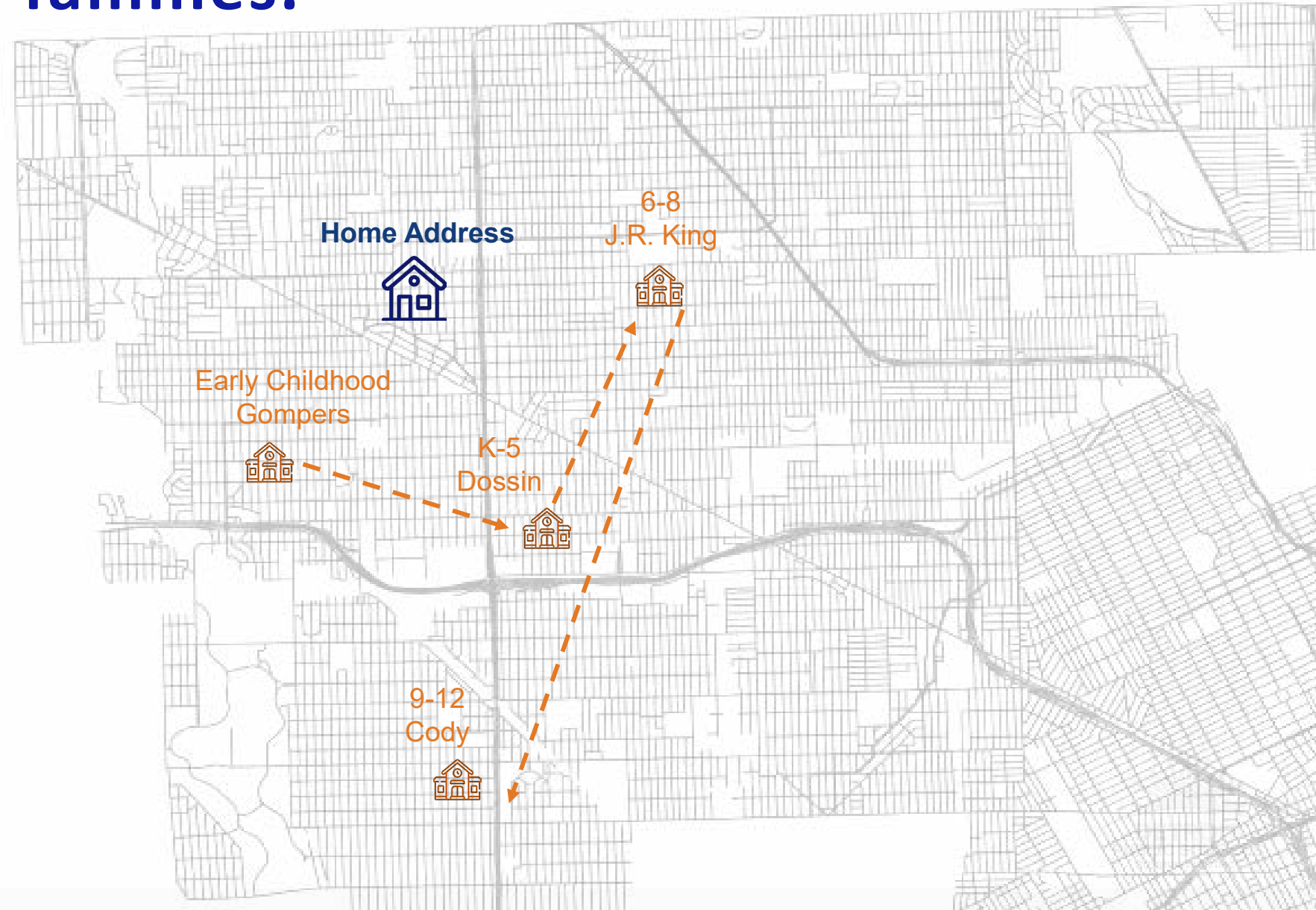


The District has responded to increasing ESE enrollment by adding classrooms as students enroll across the District. This process has led to students being bussed across the city, and students having to switch schools' multiple times due to lack of program continuity due to placement and staffing. Here are the challenges:

- **Expand Programming to offer PK-8:** 171 self-contained ESE classrooms operate in 60 schools. Nearly half of the schools do not offer K – 8 programs, meaning the students have to switch schools up to 3 times before they get to high school.
- **Lack of ESE Programming Options in all Feeder Patterns:** Students are being bussed across the city due to lack of available program in their feeder patterns. The District is currently bussing 2,718 ESE students nearly 1 million total miles a year at a total cost of \$22M per year.
- **Wrap Around Services:** Nearly all ESE ancillary staff (Nursing, OT, Speech, Social Work) who support the identified programs are split among multiple schools, limiting their ability to address issues as they occur daily, increasing their time spent commuting and losing intervention time.
- **Stretched Staffing which can Affect Services:** Without stronger concentration of services, the District cannot ensure certified teachers at all schools. This impacts quality programming which hurts IEP compliance, parent customer service, and student achievement.

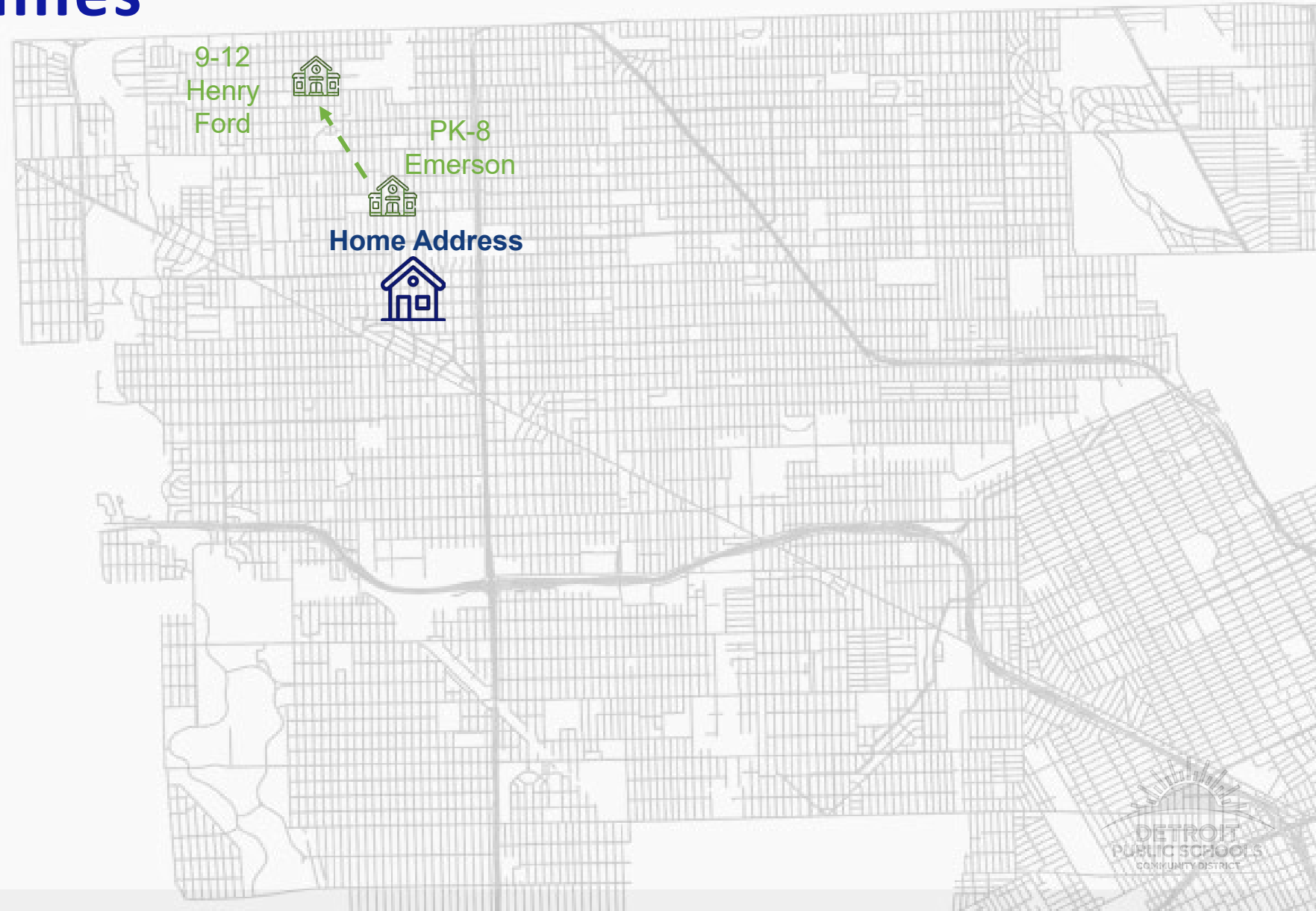
Current program locations do not provide continuity for students and families.

One student living in NW Detroit in a MiCi program changes schools 4 times from early childhood to 12th grade based on current program placement—often being bussed long distances around the city to different neighborhoods.



But we could provide much more continuity for students and families

With a realignment of program locations, that same student could go to PK-8 at Emerson and move to Henry Ford for high school, eliminating multiple school changes and reducing transportation time.



Goals of Realignment



The District is proposing new program placement that will increase our ability to provide exceptional services for our most fragile students. The proposal will:

- Ensure every classroom is fully staffed with teacher and support staff.
- Reduce the travel time for families, by offering programs in their High School feeder pattern. Reduce average travel from 4.31 miles to 2.51 miles.
- Move to 5-day a week programming for our ESE Pre-K students.
- Ensure PK-8 students can remain at their school.
- Increasing wrap around services.

Based on the proposed plan, we will have 185 classrooms in 38 schools across the District to ensure available and consistent programming across the city, instead of 174 classrooms in 60 schools.

Additional Program Support Sites



By aligning and coordinating programs, the District will be able to provide increased services for families and staff at targeted sites. Schools with 8 or more classrooms will have supplemental services:

- An additional ESE certified Assistant Principal to supervise the programs.
- Fully assigned ESE ancillary staff including – Social Worker, OT, Speech, and Nurse.
- Additional ESE Paraprofessional to cover absences and/or support crisis response.
- Additional Parent Outreach Coordinator to engage and support ESE families.
- Locations with EI programs will also receive additional behavior support.
- Each ESE classroom will continue to receive \$500 in discretionary budget from ESE department.

The additional program supports will improve student evaluation and re-evaluation process, streamline transportation needs, increase overall programmatic support, improve parent customer service, and enable additional professional learning for staff. This strategy is in alignment with MDE and Wayne RESA's focus on maintaining students in their least restrictive environment.

Next Steps for Parents of Students Affected By The Shift



After this meeting:

- **Affected** parents and families will receive direct communication via email and phone regarding additional parent meetings if their student(s) will be impacted, no later than May 15, 2025.
- **Affected** parents and families will have additional opportunities to engage with feedback sessions to provide further input.
- **Affected** parents and families will be invited to attend a special event open house at the receiving buildings in collaboration with receiving building administrators and the Exceptional Student Education Department prior to the end of the school year.

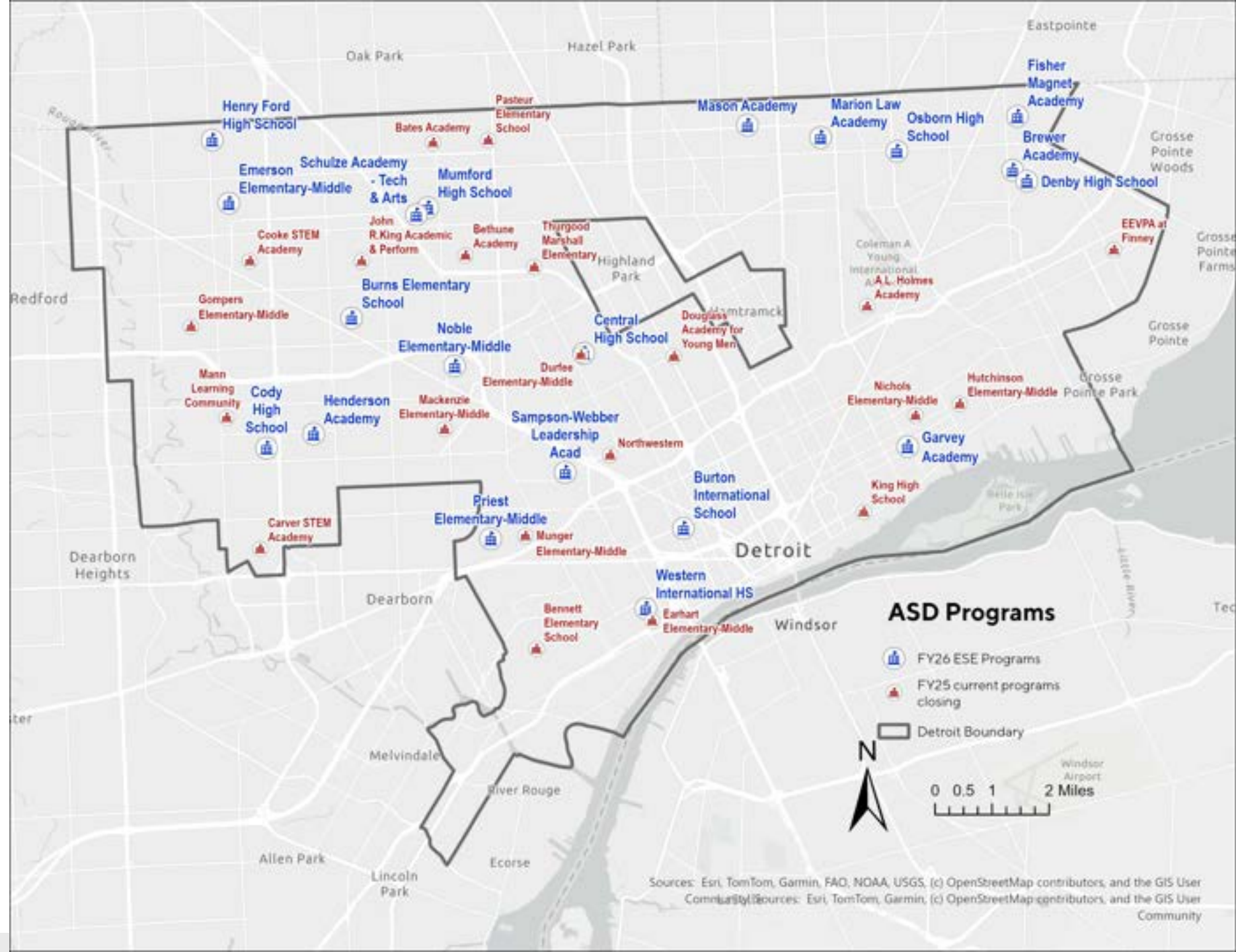
*Please join one of our ongoing virtual **Parent Engagement Office Hours** *Each Thursday either 10AM-11AM or 4PM-5PM beginning April 24, 2025 until June 8, 2025.* [Join by clicking here.](#)

Appendix – ESE Sites

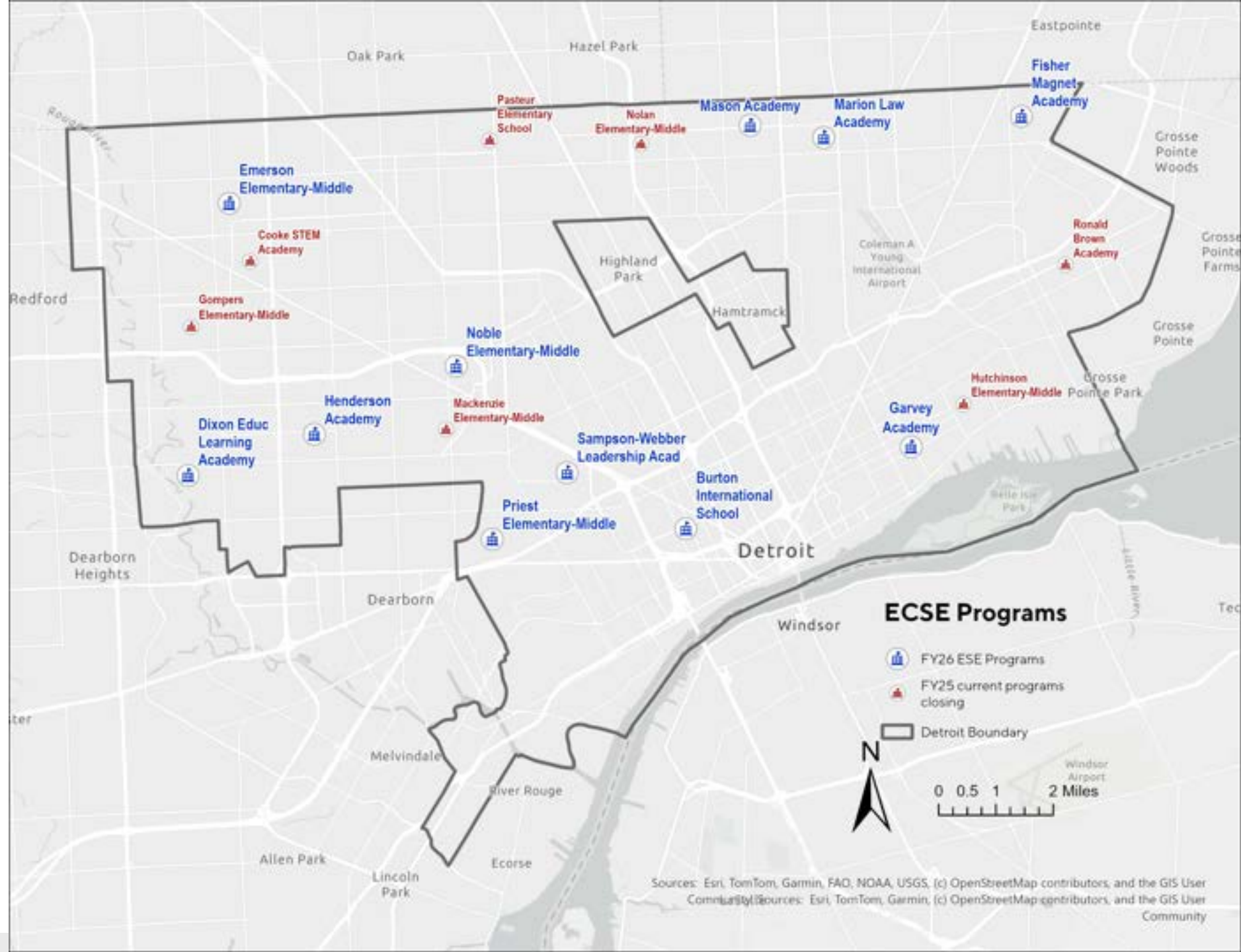


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Autism Spectrum Disorder Proposed Classrooms

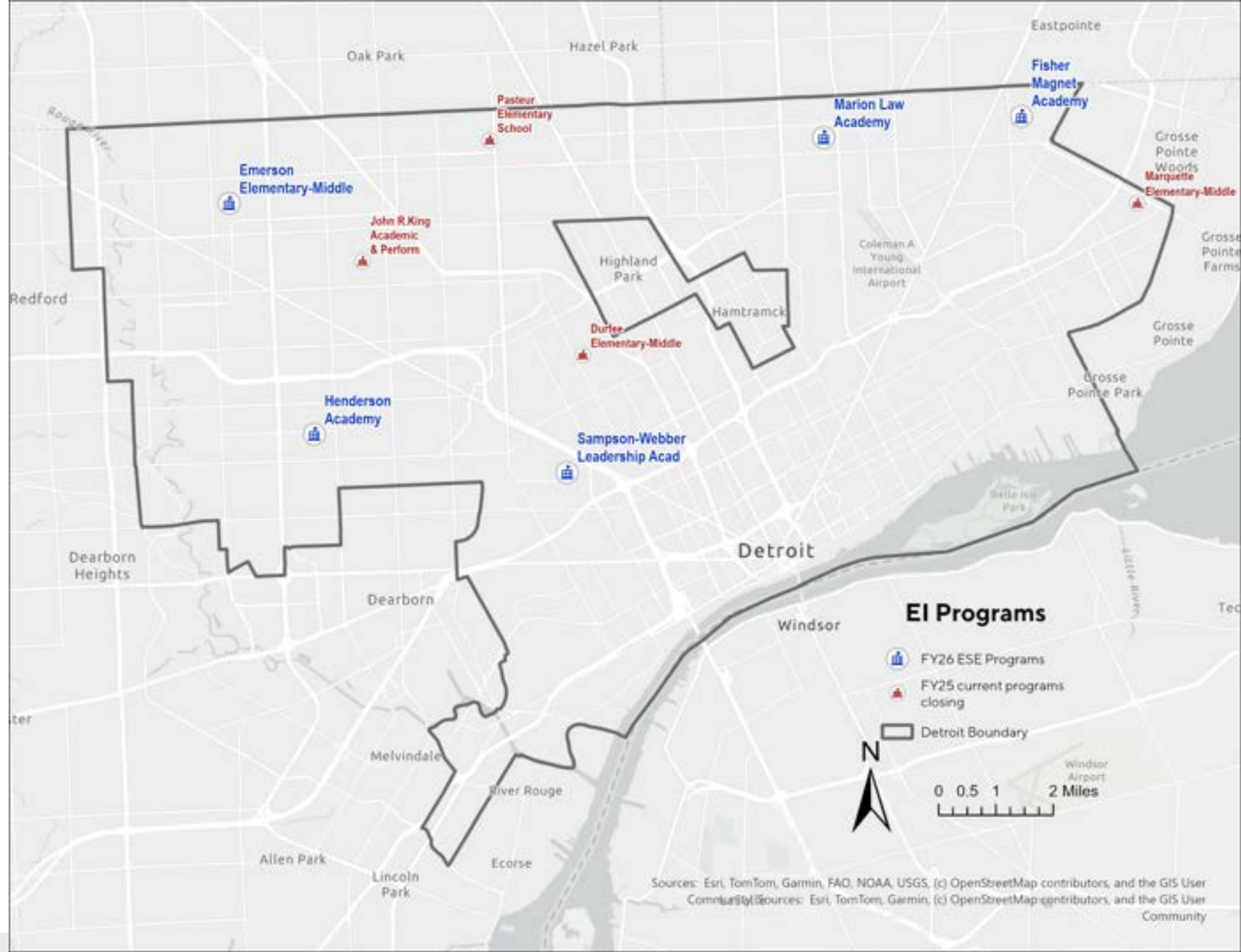


Early Childhood Program Proposed Classrooms



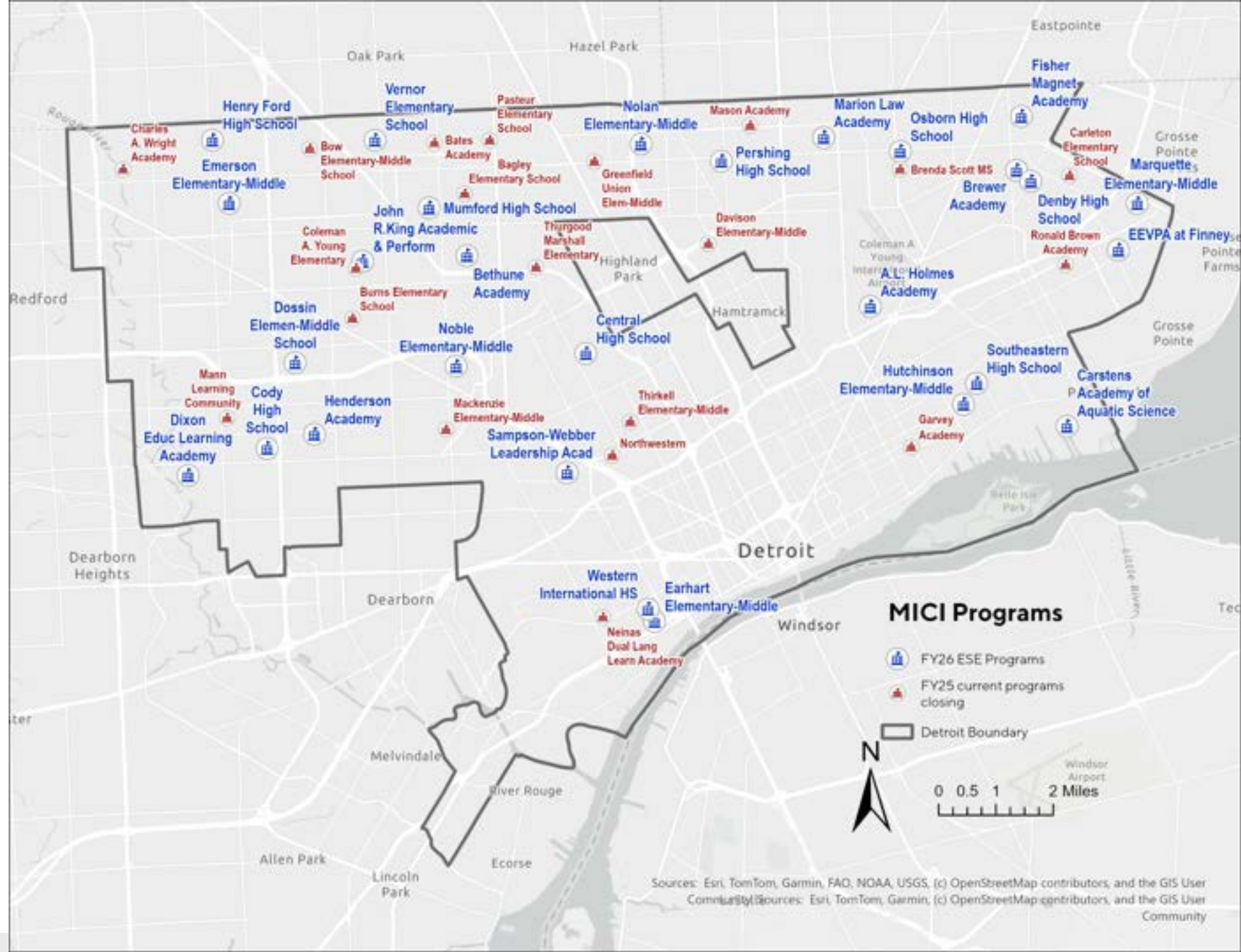
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Emotional Impairment Proposed Classrooms



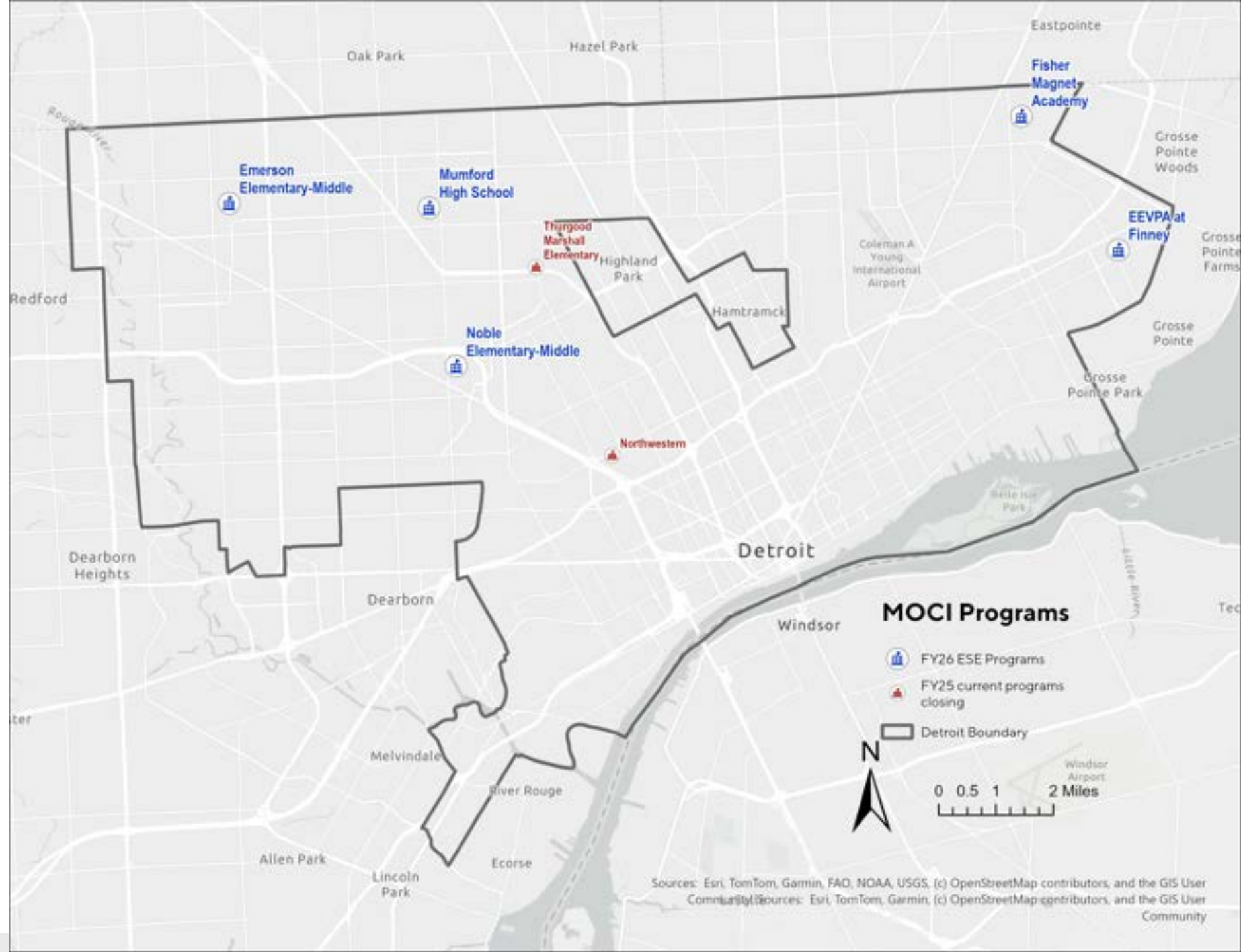
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Mild Cognitive Impairment Proposed Classrooms



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Moderate Cognitive Impairment Proposed Classrooms



Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Physical and Other Health Impairment, and Visual Impairment Program Classrooms

Deaf & Hard of Hearing Programs: Will remain at the same locations.

- Bunche
- Davison
- Detroit School of the Arts

Physical and Other Health Impairment Programs: Will shift to the following schools.

- Marcus Garvey – remain at Marcus Garvey
- Noble – students from Henderson will shift to Noble

Visual Impairment Programs: Will remain at the same location.

- Golightly Educational Center



Q&A



Q&A

