

Board of Education Retreat Redistricting Criteria Development Session

February 9, 2026 | 3:30–5:30 p.m.

The Dublin City Schools Board of Education held a two-hour facilitated retreat on February 9, 2026, as part of Phase 1 of the high school redistricting process. Planning NEXT, the District’s contracted facilitation partner, led the session.

Jamie Greene with Planning NEXT opened the session by sharing the purpose of the retreat: to develop a shared understanding of Board Policy 5120 and to articulate how the Board interprets and prioritizes the policy factors that must guide redistricting for implementation in the 2027–2028 school year.

Greene asked each Board member to introduce themselves and share one word describing how they currently feel about redistricting.

- **Chris Valentine** – “Challenged”
- **Tara Seward** – “Determined”
- **Tiffany deSilva** – “Hopeful”
- **Amy Messick** – “Encouraged”
- **Elizabeth McClain** – “Opportunity”

He then reviewed the overall plan:

1. The Board will suggest criteria to consider.
2. Planning NEXT will test those criteria through focus groups and a statistically valid survey.
3. The Board will refine and select final criteria based on community feedback.
4. Attendance maps will then be developed in accordance with Board-approved criteria.

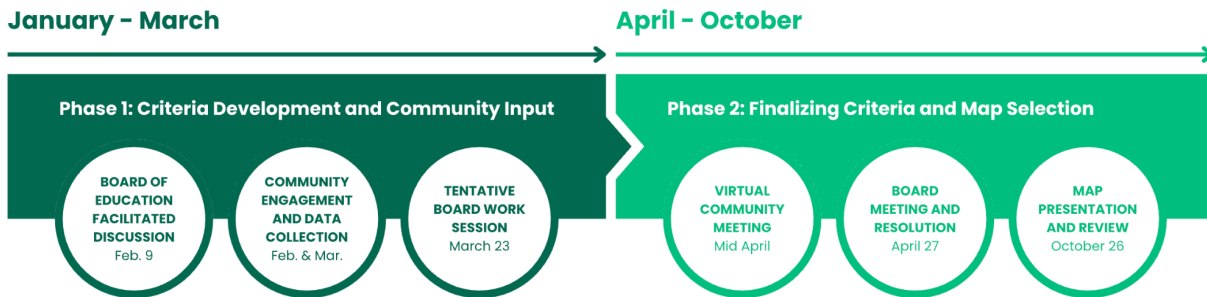
Greene clarified that Planning NEXT is not determining the criteria. Their role is to help the Board define its own criteria and test them with stakeholders.

Sarah Bongiorno with Planning NEXT summarized Board Policy 5120 for the group. She noted that 5120 states that the Superintendent assigns students to schools within the District consistent with the best interests of students and/or the best use of the resources of this District. She shared that the policy requires consideration of:

- A. Student enrollment and building capacity
- B. Safe student transportation and travel
- C. Convenience of access to schools
- D. Financial and administrative efficiency
- E. Effectiveness of the instructional program
- F. Other relevant factors, including those required by law

Bongiorno also reminded Board members that the following may **not** be used in the redistricting process: race, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, special education status, immigration status, or sex.

Bongiorno outlined a two-phase process and community engagement structure, including focus groups and a statistically valid survey.



Greene defined the difference between “factors” and “criteria”. He noted that the criteria may be qualitative or quantitative.

Tara Seward asked what the Board learned from the previous redistricting process that could inform this one.

Dr. Marschhausen explained that in the previous process, multiple criteria were used but were not ranked or weighted. Because they were treated equally, it became difficult to create a map that satisfied all criteria simultaneously.

Amy Messick stated that priorities should be ranked before map-making begins.

Tiffany deSilva requested clearer definitions of criteria, noting that short descriptions are open to interpretation.

Chris Valentine suggested moving forward with a fresh approach rather than relying on past efforts.

Planning NEXT placed six easels around the room, labeled A–F to correspond with the Policy 5120 factors. Each Board member was given large Post-it notes and asked to independently write their interpretations of each factor. Members were asked to write one idea per note and place them on the corresponding easel. Planning NEXT then reviewed each note aloud, invited clarification, and grouped similar ideas into themes.

A. Enrollment and Capacity

Discussion included:

- Distributing approximately 2,000 students evenly across buildings.
- Planning proactively to avoid repeated redistricting.
- Accounting for projected growth before implementation.
- Balancing enrollment.

Chris Valentine emphasized considering growth in the northwest corridor and potential City of Columbus development.

Amy Messick noted that accounting for growth may require at least one high school to begin below 2,000 students.

Dr. Marschhausen stated that Jerome may need to start smaller than the other two high schools to accommodate projected growth.

B. Student Transportation and Travel

Discussion included:

- Keeping students near their closest school where feasible.
- Considering time on bus and traffic safety.
- Preserving walk zones (students currently within a one-mile radius who are not bused).
- Balancing convenience and financial efficiency.

Tara Seward expressed that current walkers should not lose walk status.

Amy Messick emphasized establishing a reasonable maximum bus ride time. She clarified that increases in ride time are acceptable as long as they do not exceed a defined maximum threshold.

Board discussion noted that the current longest ride times range approximately 35–40 minutes from first pickup to arrival.

C. Convenience of Access

Discussion included:

- Proximity to home and peers.
- Maintaining feeder patterns and minimizing unnecessary school splits.
- Close access to schools where feasible.

D. Financial and Administrative Efficiency

Discussion included:

- Accounting for fiscal growth.
- Avoiding increases in net district costs.
- Using resources responsibly so student needs are met equitably.
- Avoiding unnecessary staffing or transportation inefficiencies.

E. Effectiveness of the Instructional Program

Board discussion was extensive in this category. Discussion included:

- Protecting academic outcomes and performance measures.
- Considering graduation rates, star ratings, and proficiency scores.

- Ensuring access to mental health resources.
- Avoiding concentration of needs in one building.

Members supported testing criteria related to academic outcomes not being adversely affected.

Tara Seward expressed concern about concentrating economically disadvantaged students in one building and stated that economic diversity should be considered. She raised questions about reviewing IEPs, giftedness, and 504 plans, and asked whether race could be examined after maps are created to assess unintended impacts.

Tiffany deSilva and **Amy Messick** clarified that race and protected characteristics cannot legally be used in redistricting decisions.

Dr. Marschhausen explained that while economic indicators such as rental versus owner-occupied housing, home values, or subsidized housing can be reviewed for context, they must not be used as proxies for race, as doing so could create legal risk.

Amy Messick asked how “adverse impact” would be defined and measured. She emphasized ensuring equal access to course offerings and extracurricular opportunities, stating that students at each high school should have comparable scheduling opportunities.

Chris Valentine supported ensuring equitable educational and athletic opportunities across all high schools.

Greene reiterated that while race cannot be used as a criterion, ensuring all students have access to opportunities is a legally sound approach.

F. Other Relevant Factors

Discussion included:

- Preserving feeder patterns.
- Avoiding splitting middle schools more than twice
- Minimizing repeated disruption to the same students
- Considering anticipated future middle school development
- Minimizing overall disruption
- Evaluating whether prior redistricting moves negatively affected outcomes

Amy Messick noted that minimizing disruption may conflict with other priorities such as enrollment balance.

Planning NEXT distributed adhesive dots to each Board member. Members were asked to identify the top considerations within each category that should be tested with focus groups and survey participants. Areas receiving strong support included:

- Accounting for future growth
- Comparable academic outcomes
- Preserving feeder patterns
- Maintaining walk zones

- Establishing maximum bus ride expectations
- Ensuring equal access to programs and opportunities
- Avoiding increased net fiscal cost

Greene noted that some criteria are inherently in competition and may require weighting rather than equal treatment.

Amy Messick asked how Planning NEXT would frame competing criteria with the community to ensure understanding that not all priorities can be fully satisfied simultaneously.

Tara Seward emphasized data-driven decision-making and minimizing personal bias.

Dr. Marschhausen emphasized the importance of districtwide input rather than neighborhood-based advocacy. He stated that all redistricting information would be published on the district website to ensure transparency.

Tiffany deSilva asked about individuals participating in multiple focus groups if they qualify under more than one category. It was confirmed that no one would be allowed to participate in more than one focus group.

Bongiorno shared that next steps will include:

- Conducting focus groups to better understand community priorities and values regarding redistribution of students
- Administering a statistically valid survey in partnership with Paul Fallon Research.
- Running the focus groups and survey as parallel efforts to gather both qualitative and quantitative data.

Bongiorno reported that approximately 27 focus groups have been identified at this time.

Dr. Marschhausen clarified that the identified groups were selected intentionally to prioritize participants with a districtwide perspective. He noted that these groups have previously engaged with the District and are not solely focused on individual family or neighborhood interests.

Board members asked additional logistical questions regarding focus group implementation.

Dr. Marschhausen stated that the current plan is to hold focus groups at the Dublin Virtual building, which has a large conference space and adequate parking.

Board members discussed whether neighborhood-based groups should be divided by geographic area.

Dr. Marschhausen noted that survey data will allow cross-tabulation by voter precinct or geographic region. Greene indicated that additional geographic sampling options may be explored with Paul Fallon Research, including potential randomized neighborhood sampling.

The Board was again advised that findings from focus groups and the Fallon poll will be summarized and presented to inform the refinement and prioritization of final criteria prior to map development.

Tiffany deSilva moved to recess the meeting for dinner. **Chris Valentine** seconded. The motion carried.