


DeKalb County School District™

# DCSD Facility Scenarios for Feedback

# WHY

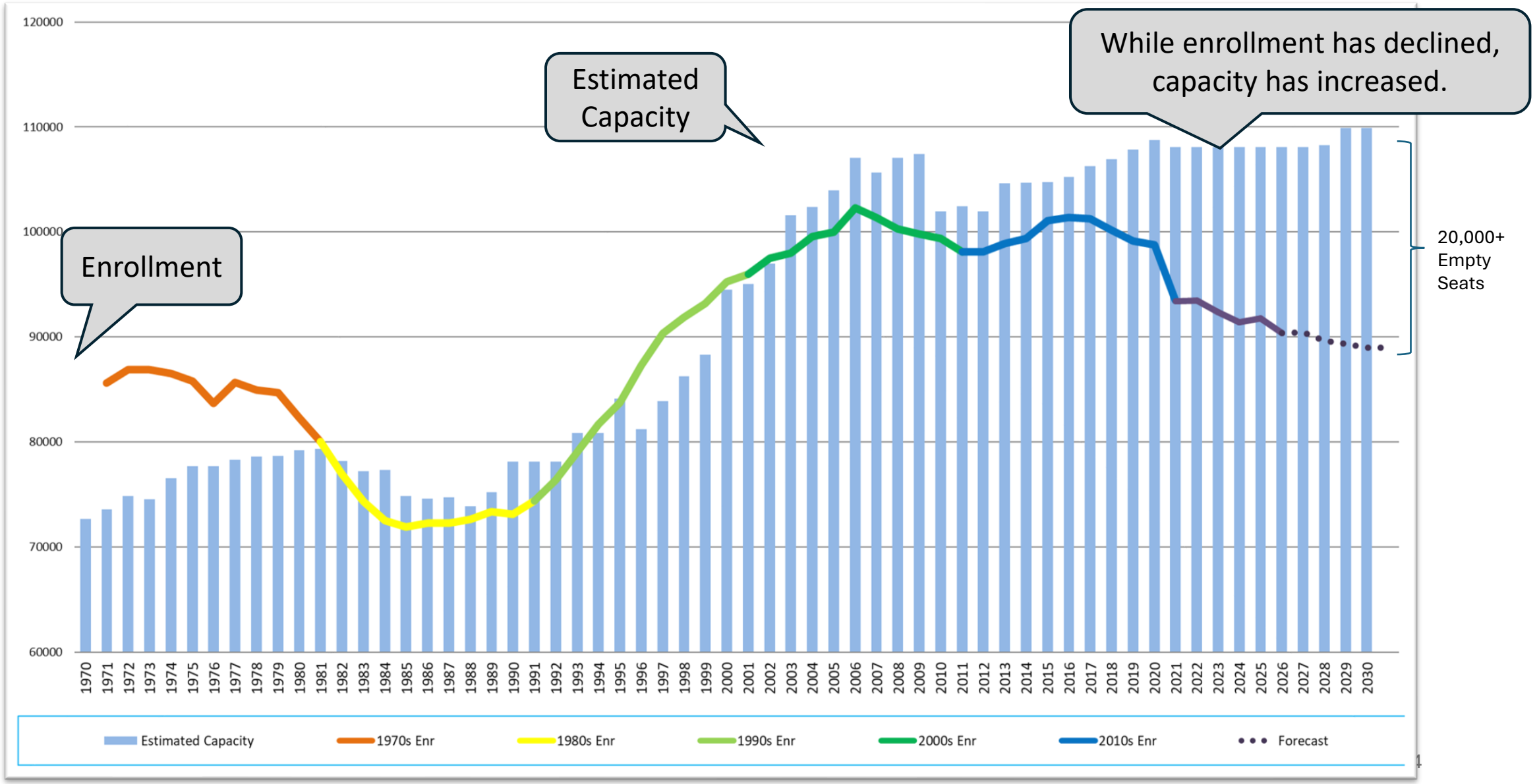
# The Students Are Why

The DeKalb County School District (DCSD) is built for 110,000 students. Today we serve 92,000, and enrollment is projected to decline further.

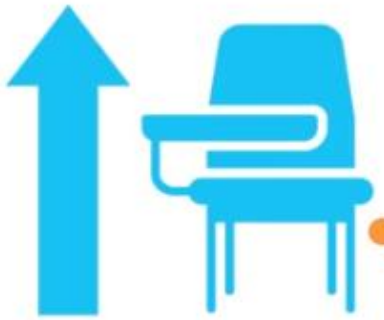
The Student Assignment Project (SAP) is **our commitment to invest resources where they matter most, in classrooms with students**, not in empty seats. **This is about being educationally focused and cost avoidance, creating a district where every child has access to strong academic programs, well-resourced schools, and meaningful opportunities to learn and grow, regardless of where they live.**

SAP's work and community feedback will shape DCSD for the next generation. This is our moment to analyze the data, listen to our communities, and design a district that is more efficient, inclusive, and stronger.

# Historical Context



# Five Reasons Why



Declining Student Enrollment and Underutilized Schools



Consolidated Resources

DeKalb County School District™



School Building Need Significant Repairs and Improvements



More Efficient Transportation Routes and Bus Savings



Severely Over and Under Capacity Schools

# Five Reasons Why

**IF** we better manage the declining student enrollment and have fewer underutilized school …**THEN** we can improve support for diverse learner needs through more intentional differentiation and targeted interventions.

**IF** we have less school building that need significant repairs and improvements … **THEN** we can actualize cost avoidance to reinvest in fewer buildings with a greater impact.

**IF** we balance the capacity at our schools …. **THEN** we can enhance access to instructional and student-support resources as balanced capacity allows schools to more effectively utilize spaces, staff, and materials.

**IF** we have more efficient transportation routes … **THEN** we can reduce student commute times with schools located closer to home, leading to less time on buses and more time for learning, rest, and family engagement.

**IF** we have fewer buildings to operate overall … **THEN** we can consolidate resources, increase investment in educators and specialized staff, expand academic, social-emotional, and behavioral supports for students.

# Buildings -> Boundaries -> Programs

**Phase 1**

**Start with Buildings (Capacity & Condition)**

- Facilities set the non-negotiable limits for any plan.
- Physical capacity, condition, and location determine where seats actually exist.
- Ensures decisions support class size, safety, accessibility, and instructional quality.

**Phase 2**

**Then Set Boundaries (Align Enrollment to Capacity)**

- Attendance zones balance enrollment with available space.
- Primary mechanism to address overcrowding and underutilization.
- Promotes geographic coherence, equity, and manageable travel times.

**Place Programs Last (Build on Stable Structures)**

- Programs are most effective when built on fixed building and boundary decisions.
- Can expand or shift once capacity and enrollment are stable.
- Prevents misalignment and ensures equitable, sustainable access.

# Below Minimum Program State Funding Elementary School

## Enrollment ≤ 450:

**Fully Funded**



Principal

Half Nurse

**District Subsidized**



Half A. Principal



Media Specialist



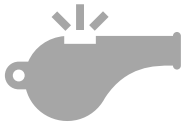
Guidance



Art Teacher



Music Teacher



P.E. Teacher

**"The goal of District funds is program enhancement, not program subsidy."**

**Example Only*

# Minimum Program State Funding Elementary School

## Enrollment ≥ 450:

**Fully Funded**


Principal


Half A. Principal


Half Nurse

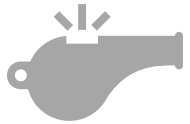

Media Specialist


Art Teacher


Guidance

**District Subsidized**


Music Teacher


P.E. Teacher

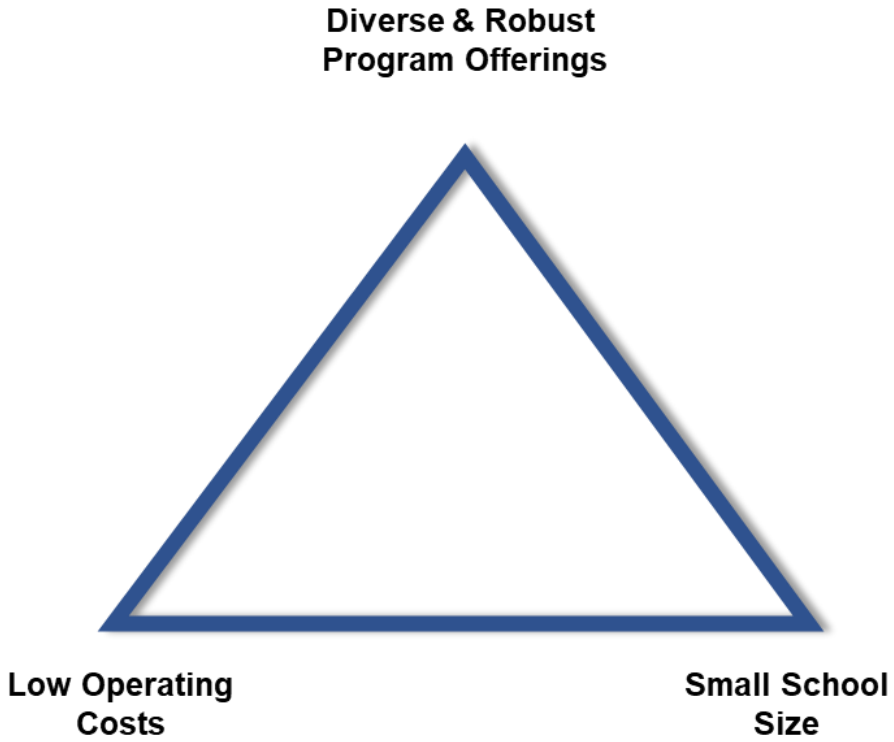
**Example Only*

# Decision Triangle

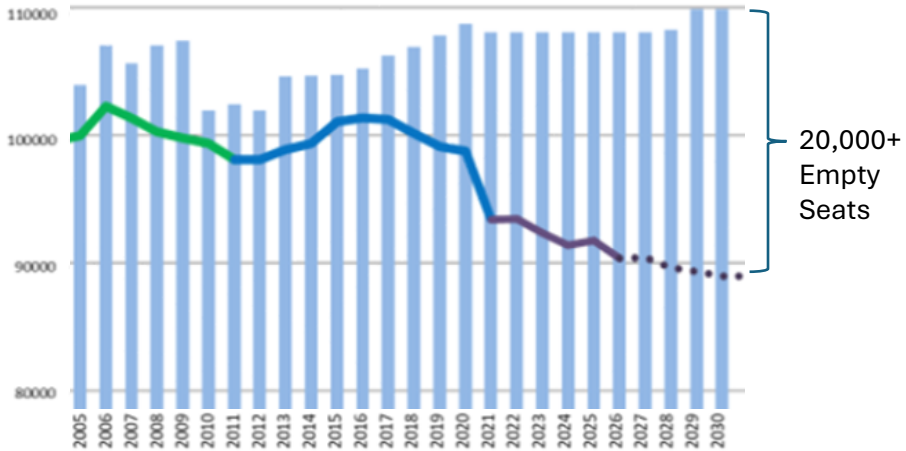
- If a district wants **Low Operating Costs** with **Robust Program Offering**, it is difficult to have **Small School Size.**

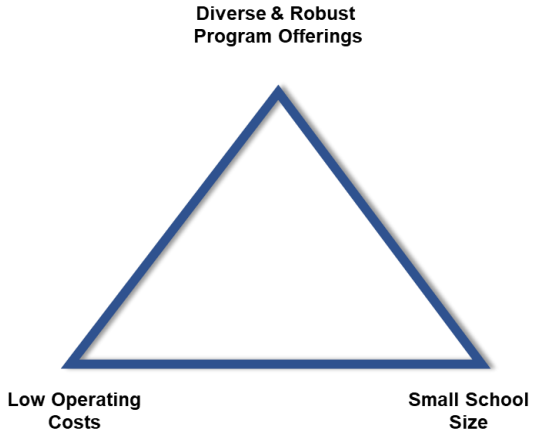
- If a district wants **Small School Size** and **Low Operating Costs**, it is difficult to offer **Robust Program Offering**.

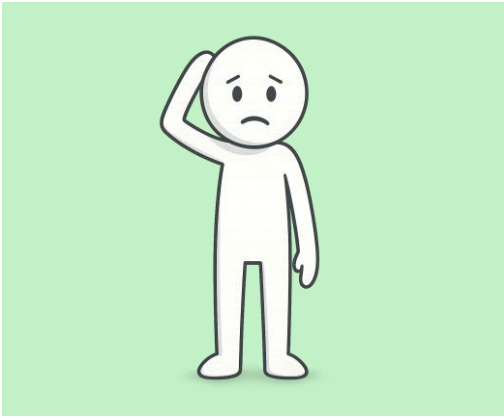
- If a district wants **Robust Program Offerings** **with Small School Sizes, it is difficult to have Low Operating Costs**.



# Where We Are Going, Why Are We Doing This



- Resources are already spread across too many facilities
- Enrollment is going to continue to fall
- Resources will continue to decrease due to fall in enrollment
- Without changes in facilities, fewer resources will be stretched even thinner, impacting student

DeKalb County School District
STUDENT ASSIGNMENT
Reimagining DeKalb

DeKalb County School District

# WHAT IS THE PROCESS

# SAP Committee

This work began with a **150-member advisory committee** that launched a comprehensive and aligned Student Assignment Project (SAP). The goal of this effort is to thoughtfully reimagine DCSD's programs, attendance boundaries, and school facilities using more complete and consistent data. The process is designed to occur on a five-year cycle to align with the district's ESPLOST planning.

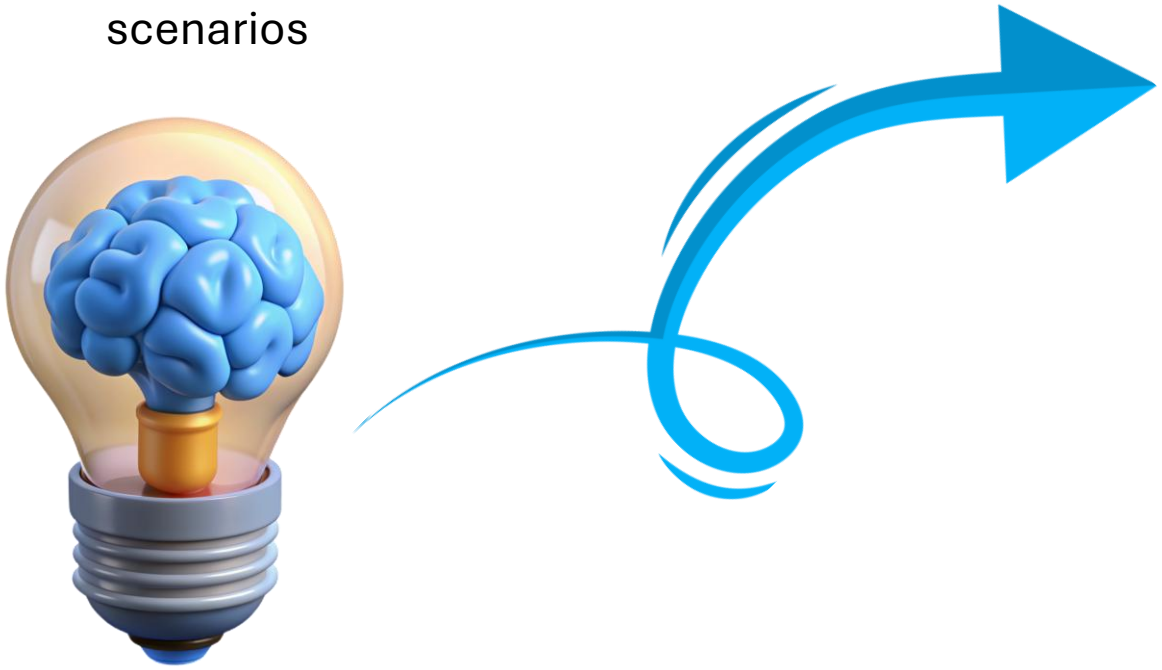
The advisory committee met monthly by area to build a shared understanding of school buildings, attendance boundaries, and school choice programs. Through this work, the committee established guiding principles for each of these focus areas and reviewed a wide range of data to inform its discussions and recommendations.

Beginning in fall 2025, the committee transitioned to meeting as a full group with a more targeted focus on providing guidance to the district's operations team and HPM consultants as they develop and refine potential scenarios.

All things SAP can be found on our website
SAP Website

# Operations and HPM

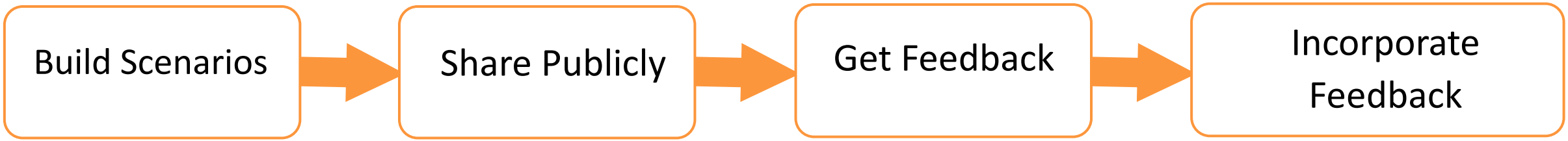
SAP Planning and Guidance is shared with the HPM Consulting group to develop scenarios



- HPM consulting group is working directly with DCSD operations, the SAP team, and committee.
- The HPM Consulting Group will lead the scenario and community engagement phase between Jan –May.
- HPM will work with the internal SAP committee and DCSD communication team to incorporate community feedback into future iterations.

# Community Feedback Loop

SAP Guiding Principles - Feedback Loop: February – May




**Scenario Survey:**

- Built by HPM
- Available in 15 languages
- QR code and url

**Feedback Compilation:**

- HL Strategy, independent third party, compiles all feedback from surveys and meetings, and provides reports to DCSD and HPM
- DCSD shares feedback with stakeholders

**Additional Feedback Tools:**

- In-person focus groups for targeted audiences as needed

# Board Engagement and Vote

The Board will review Student Assignment Project (SAP) updates monthly to stay informed, review progress, and provide feedback.

Final recommendations for Board consideration and action are anticipated in late fall 2026.

# HOW

# Planning with the Public

- This is the **first round** of scenarios. They are **high-level ideas** meant to start conversation and gather feedback.
- **Nothing is decided yet.** Nothing is off the table.
- These are **not final plans**. Community input is needed before anything moves forward.
- It's okay if this raises more questions than answers — that's part of the process.
- Community feedback will be included throughout so the final plan reflects community priorities as much as possible.
- Community voices matter **just as much as the data** in this work.
- Future rounds of scenarios will include **more detail and clarity**.

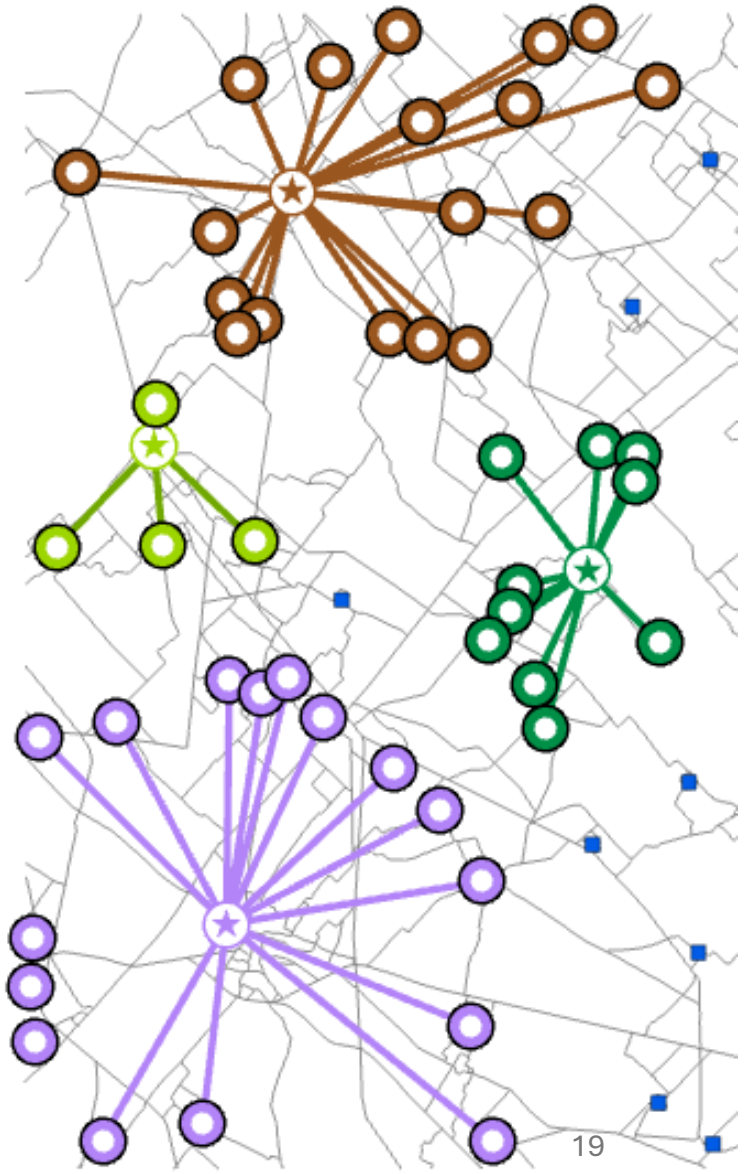
# How Were Scenarios Developed

**Parameters used to develop scenarios**

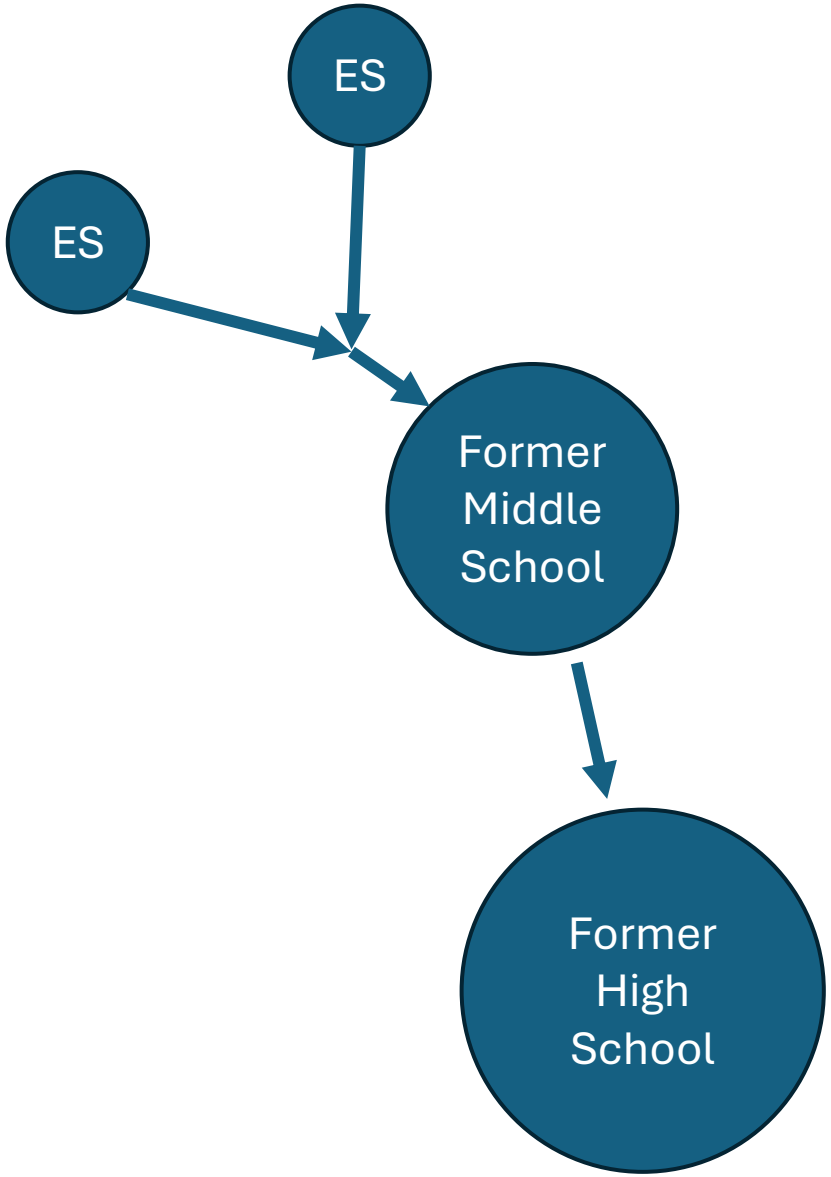
- Proximity of facility locations to student centers
- Proximity of facilities to other facilities
- Educational Adequacy (includes capacity)
  - 24 elementary schools are currently below 600 student capacity.
- Cascading to use our best buildings with the most capacity
- Recent investment in facilities

**Important Consideration**

- When thinking geographically, everything is impacted by everything else.  This means when you take a school offline, you need to re-evaluate the impacts on the entire system.
- These scenarios are intended to generate discussion, more refined options based on feedback will come later.



# Cascading Use




**Cascading Use**

- High School becomes a Middle School
- Middle School becomes an Elementary School

**What this means**

- Using a cascading approach allows us to maintain more robust portfolio of buildings in anticipation of any future changes.
- It also allows for a more dynamic school experience for elementary and middle school students.
- This shifts the impact of consolidations down to the elementary level.

# INITIAL FACILITY SCENARIO

## *Conversation Starter and Feeback Form*

# Facility Reuse Plan

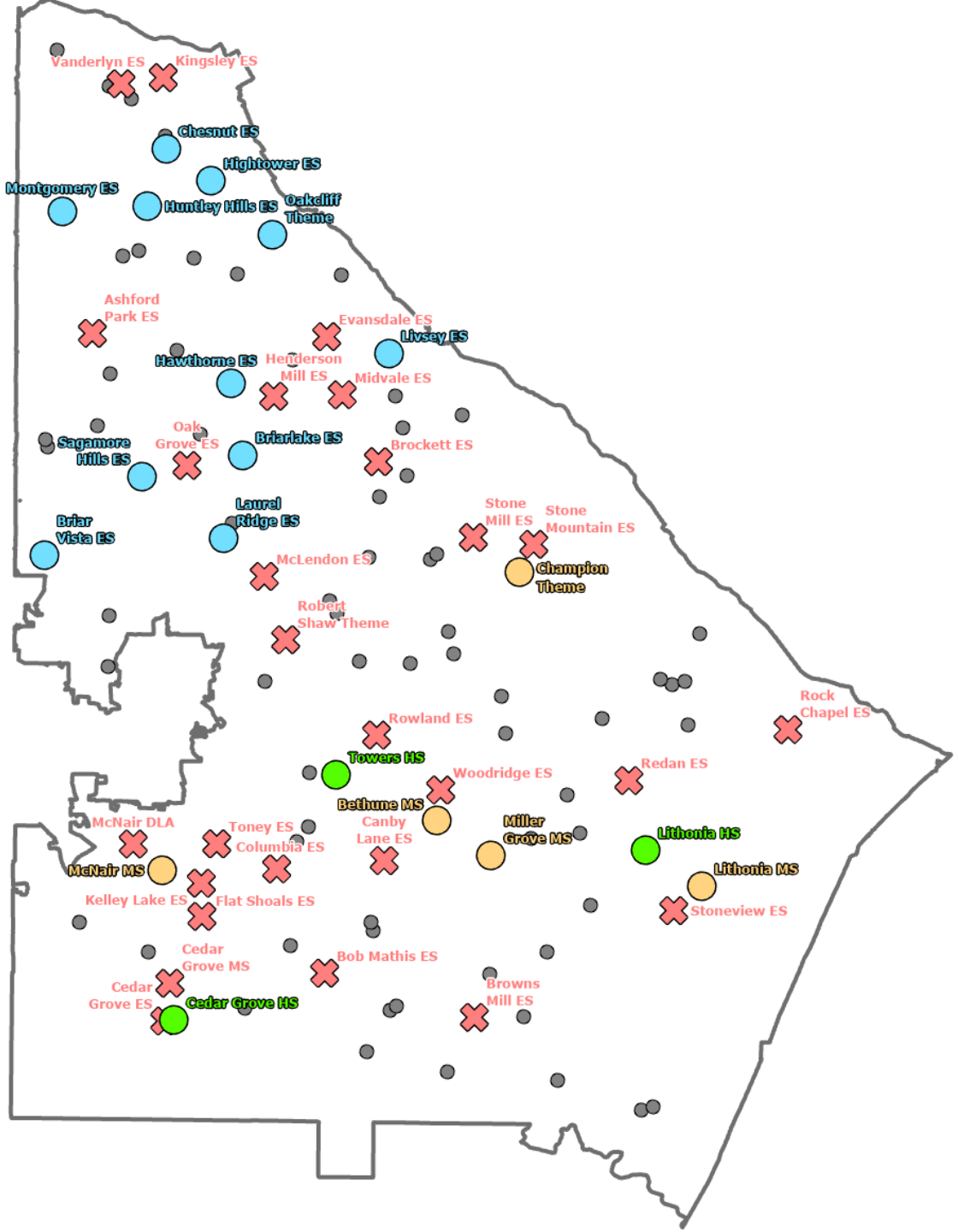


**For facilities that are ultimately recommended to close, after all iterations and feedback, there will be dedicated process to determine what happen them.**

**Possible actions include but are not limited to:**

- Repurpose for a non-instructional district use (e.g. office space)
- Use for expanded early childhood programs
- Work with other public entities for alternative use.
- Land Bank for future use of the site (demolish the building and plant grass).

# Initial Facility Scenario




- **Potential High Schools Converted to Middle**
- **Potential Middle Schools Converted to Elementaries**
- **Potential Closures**
- **Potential Capacity Expansion Projects**
- **No Change in School Use**

*Changes would be implemented gradually over 6-8 years.*

# Facility Scenario

| | Current | Scenario 17 HS | Delta from Current |
|---|---|---|---|
| ES Capacity | 52,188 | 44,844 | (7,344) |
| ES Enrollment (2030) | 39,556 | 39,556 | - |
| ES Utilization | 75.8% | 88.2% | 12.4% |
| MS Capacity | 23,430 | 20,130 | (3,300) |
| MS Enrollment (2030) | 17,731 | 17,731 | - |
| MS Utilization | 75.7% | 88.1% | 12.4% |
| HS Capacity | 31,954 | 27,955 | (3,999) |
| HS Enrollment (2030) | 24,757 | 24,757 | - |
| HS Utilization | 77.5% | 88.6% | 11.1% |
| Total Capacity | 107,572 | 92,929 | (14,643) |
| Total Enrollment (2030) | 82,044 | 82,044 | - |
| Total Utilization | 76.3% | 88.3% | 12.0% |

**Remaining High Schools:**
Arabia Mountain, Chamblee, Clarkston, Columbia, Cross Keys, Druid Hills, Dunwoody, Lakeside, Miller Grove, McNair, MLK, Redan, Sequoyah, Stephenson, Southwest DeKalb, Stone Mountain, Tucker

**Remaining Middle Schools:**
**Cedar Grove HS, Lithonia HS**, **Towers HS**, Chamblee MS, Chapel Hill MS, Columbia MS, Druid Hills MS, Freedom MS, Henderson MS, Peachtree MS, Redan MS, Salem MS, Sequoyah MS, Stephenson MS, Stone Mountain MS, Tucker MS

**Remaining Elementary Facilities:**
**Bethune MS, Champion Theme MS**, **Lithonia MS**, **McNair MS**, **Miller Grove MS**, Allgood ES, Austin ES, Avondale ES, Barack Obama ES, Bouie Theme, Briar Vista ES, Briarlake ES, Chapel Hill ES, Chesnut ES, Doraville United ES, Dresden ES, Dunaire ES, Dunwoody ES, EL Miller ES, Fairington ES, Fernbank ES, Flat Rock ES, Hambrick ES, Hawthorne ES, Hightower ES, Huntley Hills ES, Idlewood ES, Indian Creek ES, John Lewis ES, Jolly ES, Laurel Ridge ES, Livsey ES, Marbut Theme, Montclair ES, Montgomery ES, Murphey Candler ES, Narvie Harris Theme, Oak View ES, Oakcliff Theme ES, Panola Way ES, Peachcrest ES, Pleasantdale ES, Princeton ES, Rainbow ES, Rockbridge ES, Sagamore Hill ES, Shadow Rock ES, Smoke Rise ES, Snapfinger ES, Stephenson ES, Woodward ES, Wynbrooke Theme

**Closed or Repurposed Facilities:**
Ashford Park ES, Bob Mathis ES, Brockett ES, Browns Mill ES, Canby Lane ES, Cedar Grove ES, Cedar Grove MS, Columbia ES, Evansdale ES, Flat Shoals ES, Henderson Mill ES, Kelley Lake ES, Kingsley ES, McLendon ES, McNair DLA, Midvale ES, Oak Grove ES, Redan ES, Robert Shaw Theme, Rock Chapel ES, Rowland ES, Stone Mill ES, Stone Mountain ES, Stoneview ES, Toney ES, Vanderlyn ES, Woodridge ES

**Grade band conversions**
**Additions**

# How we got here – High Schools

**We started with High Schools because they are the most strategic long-term assets.**

Forecasted enrollment shows that by 2030, we will have 4 high schools worth of excess seats.  This scenario reduces 3 high schools.

- Towers HS has the lowest educational adequacy and is in close proximity to the larger more adequate Columbia HS.

- Cedar Grove HS has low educational adequacy and is in close proximity to the larger and more adequate McNair HS.

- Lithonia HS is smaller and in very close proximity to the larger and newer Miller Grove HS.

# How we got here – Middle School

Forecasted enrollment shows that by 2030, we will have 5 middle schools worth of excess seats. Converting 3 high schools to middle schools, gives us 8 middle schools of excess seats. This scenario converts 5 middle schools to elementaries and closes 1.

- **Because of cascading use, McNair MS, Bethune MS, Miller Grove MS, and Lithonia MS all convert to elementaries.**
- **Champion Theme MS converts to an elementary because it is the least educationally adequate middle school (the program will move to a new location).**
- **Cedar Grove MS closes due cascading use and excess elementary capacity in the area.**

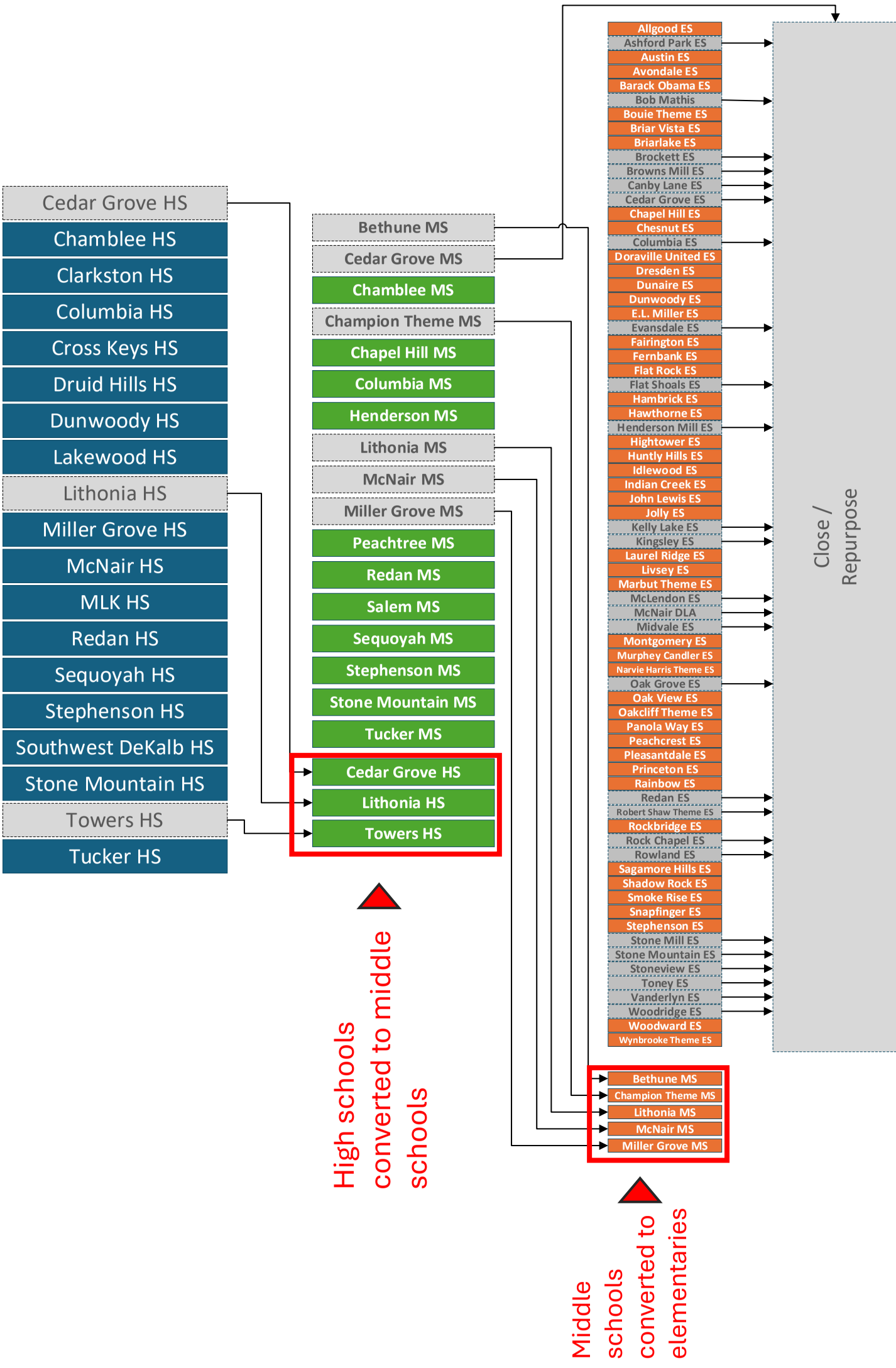
# How we got here – Elementaries

Forecasted enrollment shows that by 2030, we will have 20 elementaries worth of excess seats. Converting 5 middle schools to elementary schools, gives us at least 10 elementaries of excess seats. This scenario closes 25 elementaries.

- **Elementaries in areas with underutilization close due to excess capacity in the area along with cascading use.**
- **Elementaries that are appropriately placed and well utilized have proposed facility additions.**
- **Elementaries that have low educational adequacy and are in close proximity to schools with excess capacity or planned addition are proposed to close.**

# Cascading Use Diagram





# Schools and Facilities Not Listed

We recognize that certain schools and facilities are not included, as they are being addressed through separate actions based on building or programmatic needs. Adequate placement for all students and programs will be incorporated in future iterations.

# Grade Configuration Scenarios

# Grade Band Scenarios – Traditional PK-5 / 6-8 /9-12

**Example Feeder Pattern**




| Benefits | Challenges |
|---|---|
| • When schools are well-enrolled, promotes larger cohorts of students resulting in larger numbers for enhanced programming.<br>• Allows for three tiers of transportation requiring fewer buses.<br>• Its familiar<br>• School environments are aligned with students cognitive, social, and emotional stages. | • When schools are under-enrollment, resources can be spread thin between multiple facilities.<br>• Multiple school transitions between PK-12<br>• Less grades per building increases the chance of families spreading between multiple buildings. |

- PK-3 / 4-5 / 6-8 / 9-12 is a possible variation of this grade configuration

# Grade Band Scenarios – PK-8

**Example Feeder Pattern**

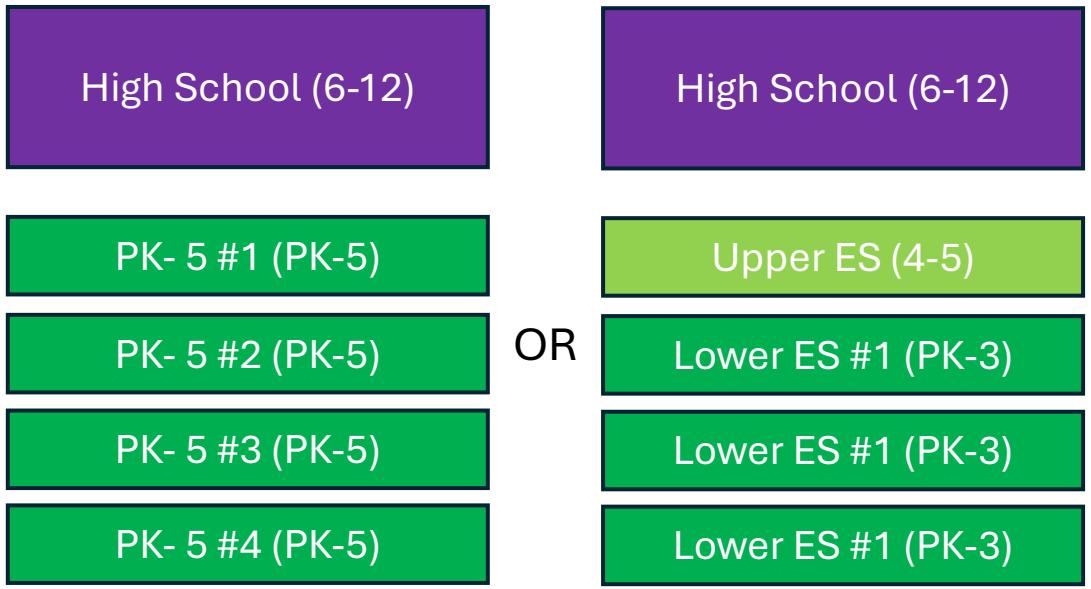



- This configuration requires a 9-12 high school.
- A PK-8 requires an enrollment of at least 900 to be operationally efficient

| Benefits | Challenges |
|---|---|
| • Allows more vertical access to curriculum (advanced elementary students can take middle school coursework)<br>• More students in larger buildings is more operationally efficient.<br>• Potentially only one transition<br>• More grades means siblings are more likely to be in the same building longer<br>• Creates a more integrated vertical structure where students can build longer lasting relationships. | • Middle school programming may not be as robust as it would be at a traditional middle school do to smaller cohorts of students.<br>• Due to smaller cohorts at middle grades, extra-curriculars may look different.<br>• May require additional staff certifications.<br>• Existing elementary and middle schools may need some modification to serve grades PK-8.<br>• Moving to a two-tier system would potentially require more buses and drivers.<br>• Some students may struggle with the abrupt transition from 8$^{th}$ to 9$^{th}$ grade.<br>• Challenges around the students at different developmental stages in the same facility. |

# Grade Band Scenarios – 6-12

**Example Feeder Patterns**

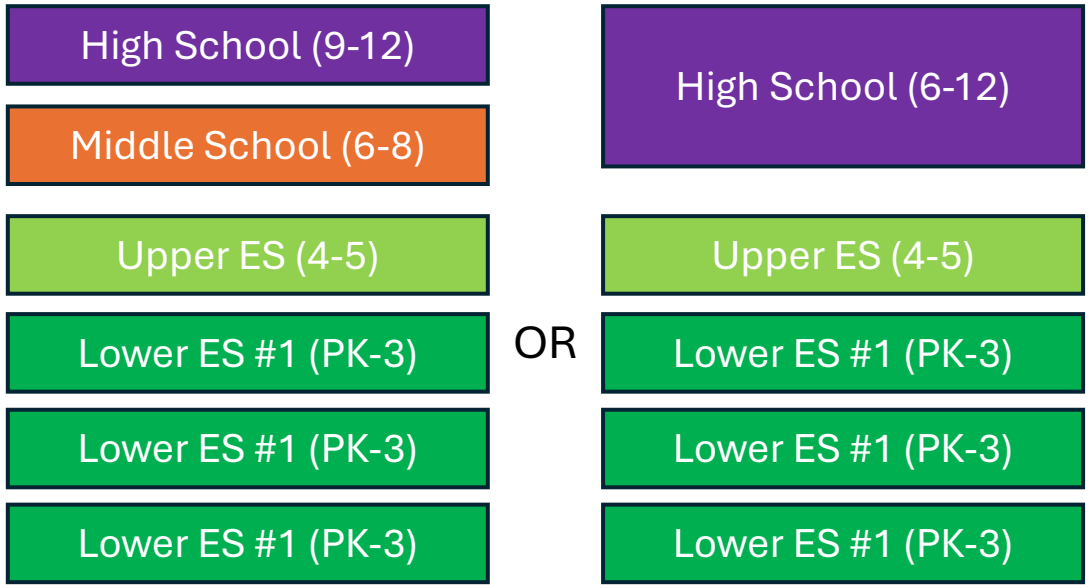



| Benefits | Challenges |
|---|---|
| • Allows more vertical access to curriculum (advanced middle school students can take high school coursework)<br>• More students in larger buildings is more operationally efficient.<br>• Potentially only one transition<br>• More grades means siblings are more likely to be in the same building longer<br>• Allows for preservation of all existing high school communities.<br>• Creates a more integrated vertical structure where students can build longer lasting relationships. | • Smaller cohorts resulting in lower numbers for enhanced programming.<br>• Due to smaller cohorts, extra-curriculars may look different.<br>• May require additional staff certifications.<br>• Moving to a two-tier system would potentially require more buses and drivers.<br>• Challenges around the students at different developmental stages in the same facility. |

- This can work with both PK-5 and PK-3 / 4-5 models

# Grade Band Scenarios – PK-3 / 4-5

**Example Feeder Patterns**




- This can work with both Traditional 6-8 / 9-12 or 6-12

| Benefits | Challenges |
|---|---|
| • Allows for more focus on early literacy and foundational skills by having more resources focused on those grades in one building.<br>• Allows buildings with lower enrollment to operate more efficiently compared to other grade configurations with lower enrollment.<br>• Works best in areas where schools are in close proximity so students can be on the same route to both schools.<br>• By having larger cohorts, there is more opportunity to align students with staff that may be better suited to differentiated learning needs. | • Additional transition can cause academic disruption.<br>• Existing facilities may need some modification to serve the PK-3 / 4-5 configuration.<br>• Potentially adds another transition<br>• Higher likelihood that siblings would be in multiple buildings.<br>• Shorter amount of time for staff to form lasting relationships with students. |

# Examples of Grade Band Changes

## Cross Keys Cluster

- Once Sequoyah HS opens, Cross Keys will not have a natural middle school. If that whole cluster transitions to PK-8 / 9-12. There is no need to have a middle school.

## Alternative to Converting High Schools to Middle Schools

- Converting a high school with excess capacity to a 6-12 campus can better utilized those buildings and keep more high school clusters. As an example, instead of Cedar Grove HS converting to a middle school to feed into McNair HS, both Cedar Grove and McNair high schools could convert to 6-12 campuses.

## PK-3 / 4-5 (Lower and Upper Elementary)

- The Dunwoody cluster used to run this configuration. City Schools of Decatur currently runs a similar configuration (PK-2 / 3-5).

# How to Provide Feedback

- **Think districtwide and long-term:** This plan considers *all* DCSD students and will shape the district for decades. Please be specific about the schools, areas, and concerns you're addressing.

- **Provide respectful, actionable feedback:** Personal attacks or threats will not be tolerated and will be removed. Feedback should be submitted through the online survey so it can directly inform the next phase.

- **Multiple ways to engage:** The survey will be monitored in real time, common themes will be used to develop an FAQ, and additional feedback options will be offered to ensure broad access and participation.

**WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK**

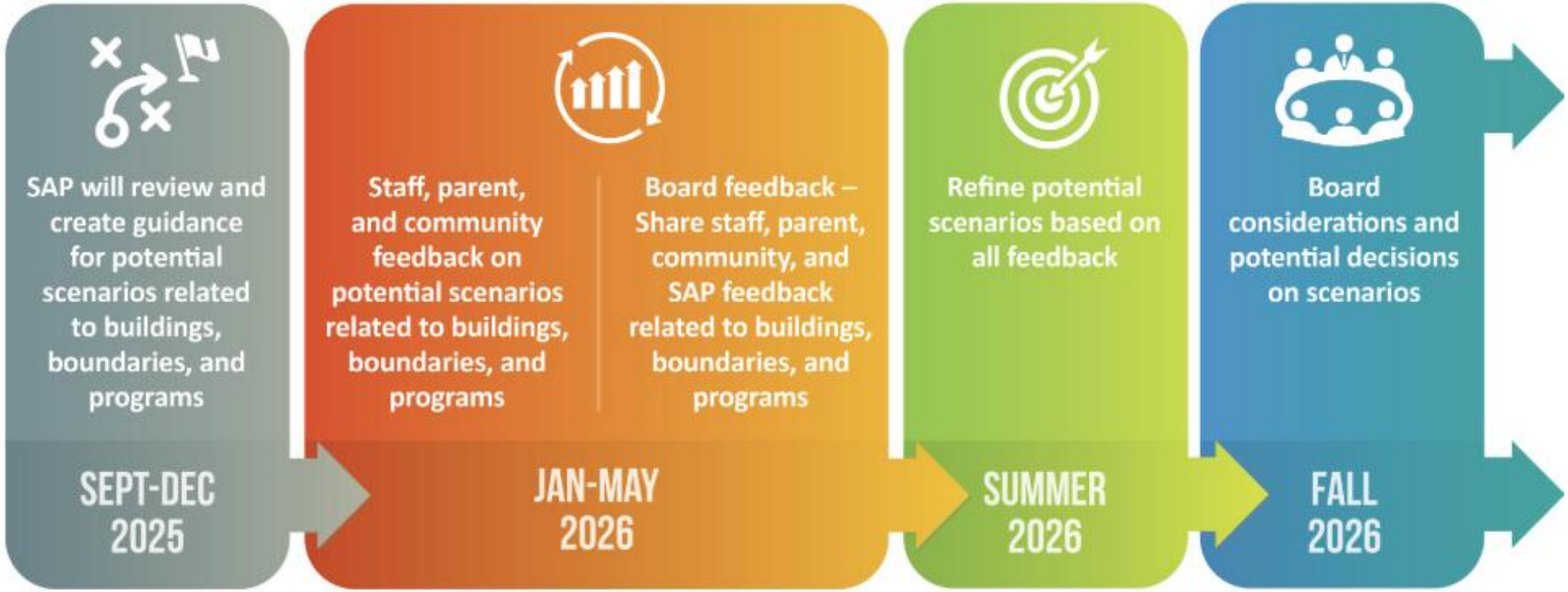


DeKalb County School District

# WHEN

# Expanded Student Assignment Project Timeline

*January 7, 2026*



# SAP (Student Assignment Project) Feedback Sessions

Families and community members are invited to learn about the Student Assignment Project (SAP) and share feedback on potential school closure and consolidation scenarios.

**Your voice matters. Join us for these upcoming sessions:**

## February Regional Meetings

### Virtual Meetings
**Register:** https://bit.ly/SAPmtgFeb2326

| | |
|---|---|
| **12:00 PM** | **Feb 23** Central Region |
| **12:00 PM** | **Feb 24** Southwest Region |
| **12:00 PM** | **Feb 25** Southeast Region |
| **12:00 PM** | **Feb 26** North Region |

### In-Person Meetings
(No registration required)

| | |
|---|---|
| **6:00 PM** | **Feb 23** AIC |
| **6:00 PM** | **Feb 24** Cedar Grove High School |
| **6:00 PM** | **Feb 25** Martin Luther King Jr. High School |
| **6:00 PM** | **Feb 26** Cross Keys High School |

## March Regional Meetings

### Virtual Meetings
**Register:** https://bit.ly/SAPmtgMar2326

| | |
|---|---|
| **12:00 PM** | **Mar 23** North Region |
| **12:00 PM** | **Mar 24** Southeast Region |
| **3:00 PM** | **Mar 25** Southwest Region |
| **12:00 PM** | **Mar 26** Central Region |

### In-Person Meetings
(No registration required)

| | |
|---|---|
| **6:00 PM** | **Mar 23** Lakeside High School |
| **6:00 PM** | **Mar 24** Columbia High School |
| **6:00 PM** | **Mar 25** Martin Luther King Jr. High School |
| **6:00 PM** | **Mar 26** AIC |

