Cedar Rapids Community School District

BOARD WORK SESSION

January 12, 2026

WHY NOW?

Cedar Rapids Community School District

Budget deficit

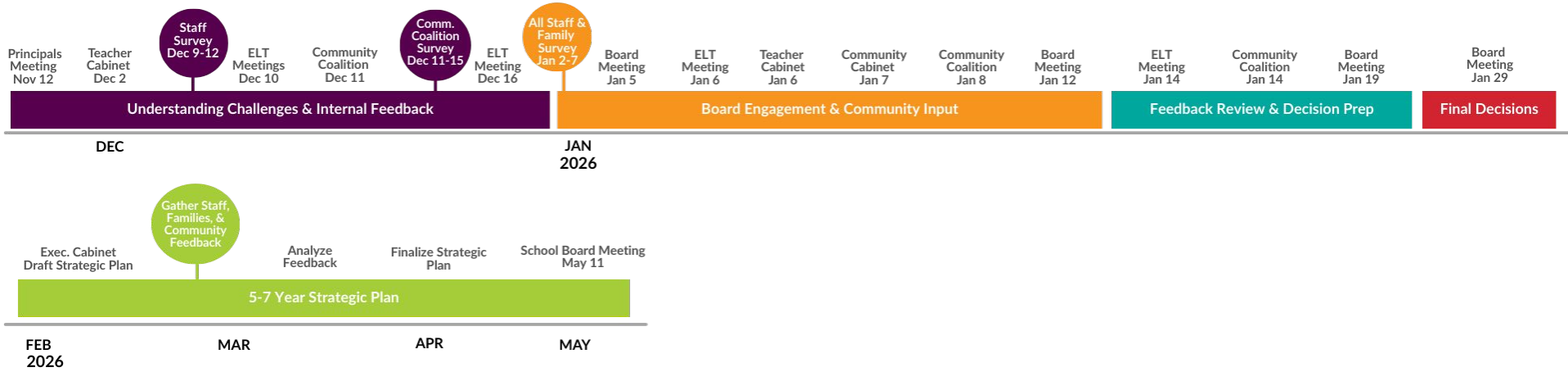
- $4M in **current** deficit spending
- $4-5.5M in **anticipated** enrollment loss for SY26-27
- $4.8M in **potential** teacher and staff salary raises
- *$2.8M if **staffing remains the same**

Additional Support Needed

- Opportunities for students fine arts across levels ($650,000)
- Behavioral support for our large elementaries ($435,000)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Cedar Rapids Community School District



More than 17,000 Stakeholders Engaged To Date

COMMUNITY VOICE

Cedar Rapids Community School District

1. **Slowdown, adjust timeline, get it right:** Staff and families feel the *timeline is too rushed*, asking for a a full year for planning, logistics, and communication that includes a deep dive on staffing and the placement process for our staff. There are concerns that a *phased rollout* will create *inconsistency*, with suggestions to implement all changes *simultaneously* (e.g., Fall 2027) after a year of planning.
2. **Additional support in bigger buildings -** lar*ger, consolidated schools* need adequate support staff (administrators, librarians, counselors) to serve larger student bodies.
3. **Feeder Patterns:** Concerns exist that the realignment will worsen existing divides within the city and must be examined carefully.
4. **Cut at the ELSC:** There is a recurring demand for budget cuts to first target the central administration (**ELSC**) by reducing administrative positions and salaries *before* closing schools and cutting school staff.
5. **Transition Support:** Staff demand *clear, open, honest, and timely communication*, shared with staff *before* the media. Overall, employees want the administration to *listen* to their concerns and *involve them* in the planning process.

KEY DECISIONS

Cedar Rapids Community School District

Key Drivers	Questions to Consider	Cost of Options		
Balance Budget - FY26 Deficit	**(required)**	$4,000,000		
Right Size Staffing	**What staffing adjustments are needed to account for lost enrollment?**	**Do not right size teachers**	**Partial right sizing**	**Right size teachers**
		$2,800,000	$1,400,000	$0
Salary Increases	**How much will raises be?**	**3% Raise**	**2% Raise**	**1% Raise**
		$4,855,992	$3,237,328	$1,618,000
Enrollment	**How many students will enroll out of the district?**	**Lose 700 students**	**Lose 600 students**	**Lose 500 students**
		$5,600,000	$4,800,000	$4,000,000
Revenue - State Supplemental Aid	**How much should we plan to receive in state supplemental aid (SSA)?**	**2%**	**1%**	**0%**
		$1,287,721	$1,287,721	$1,287,721
Additional Support		**Add All**	**Partial**	**None**
	Support for large elementary schools	$435,000	$217,500	$0
	Full time, school-based elementary specials	$650,000	$325,000	$0
	Total Additional Deficit	**$17,053,271**	**$12,692,107**	**$8,330,279**

OUTCOMES

Cedar Rapids Community School District

- **Revisit the intermediate model.**
- Understand the process for determining viability of school buildings in an intermediate model.
- Generate preferred feeder scenarios to review on 1/19 with resident zoned boundaries.
- Review additional cost savings recommendations.

PROPOSED MODEL

Cedar Rapids Community School District

Current Reality

- PreK – 1 Building
- K-5 – 18 Buildings
  - *Pre-K offered at some sites*
- 6-8 - 6 Buildings
- 9-12 - 5 Buildings
- Polk Alternative

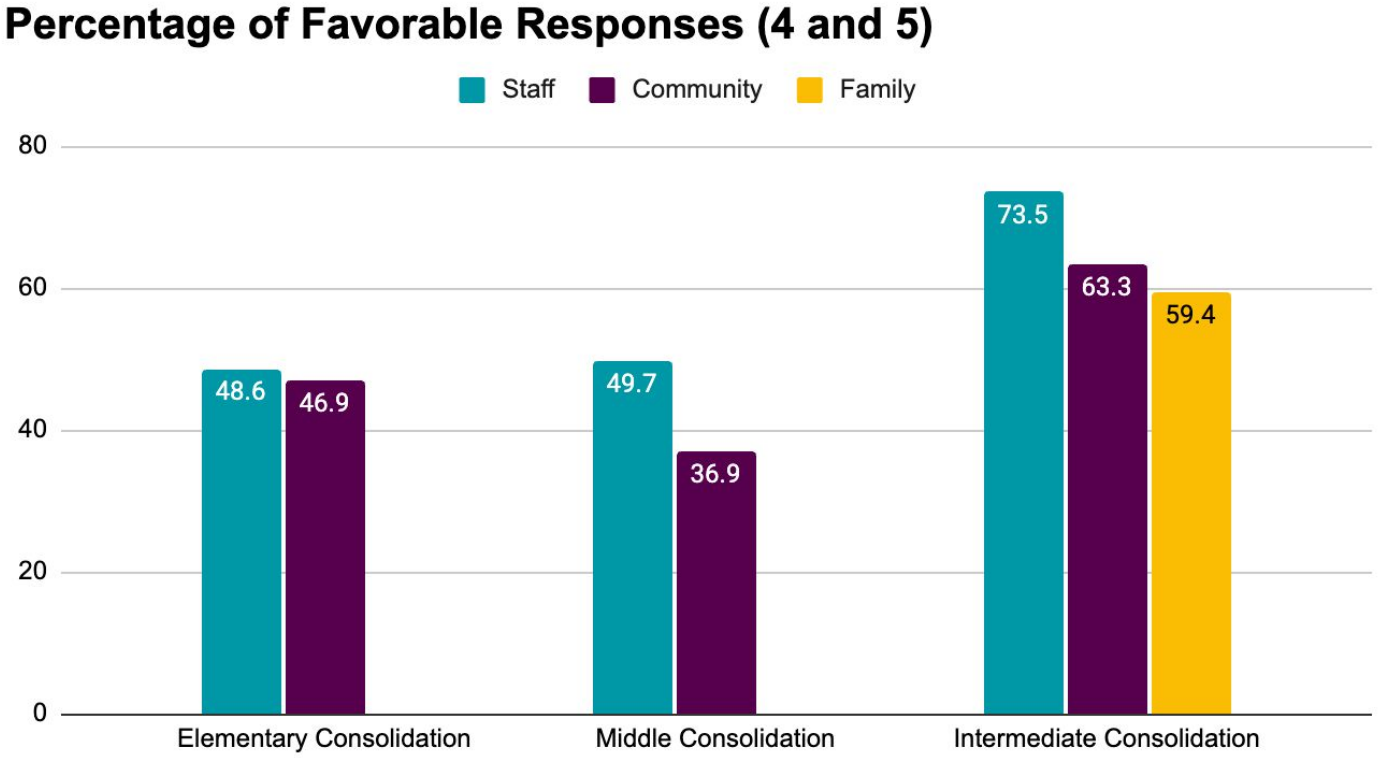
- **31 Total Buildings**

Intermediate Model

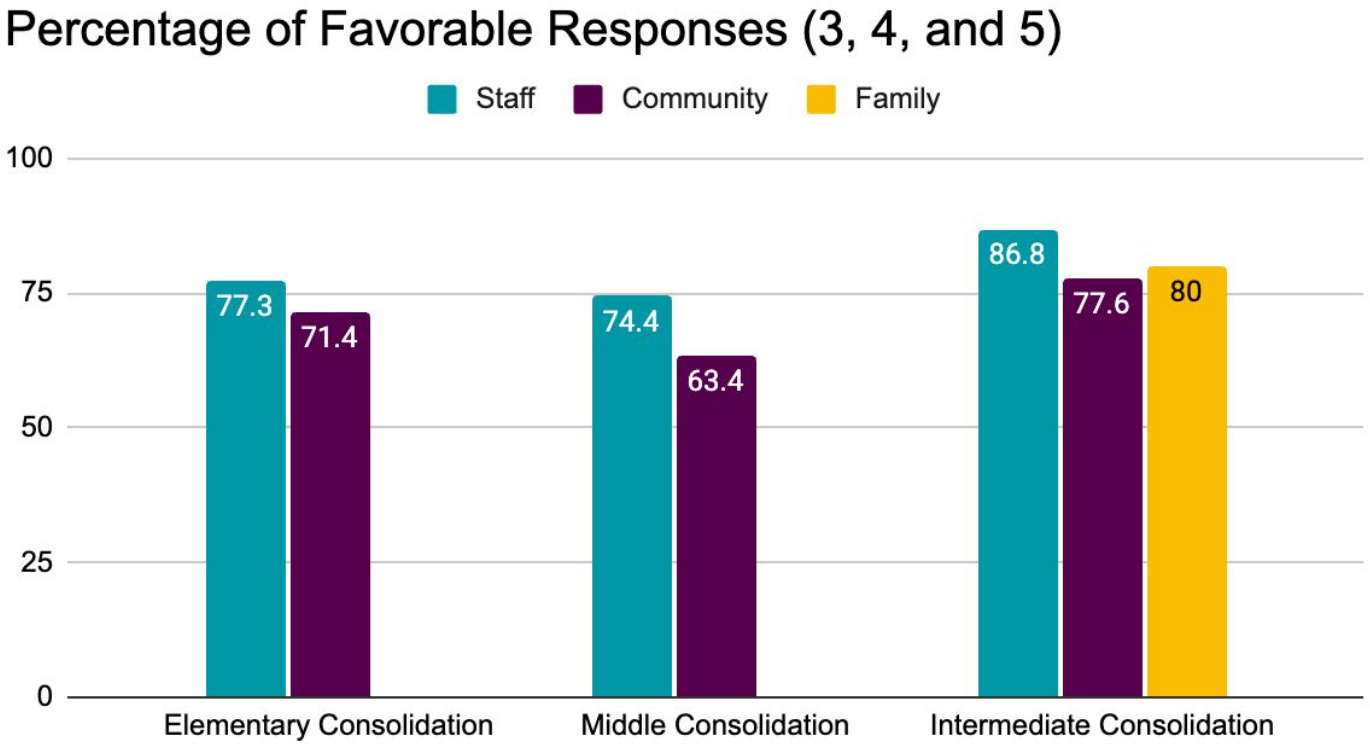
- PK-4 – 12 Buildings
  - *Pre-K offered at all sites as well as paid full day*
- 5-6 – 3 Buildings
- 7-8 – 3 Buildings
- 9-12 – 5 Buildings
- Polk Alternative

- **24 Total Buildings**

STAFF, FAMILY, & COMMUNITY COALITION VOICE



STAFF, FAMILY, & COMMUNITY COALITION VOICE



BENEFITS OF LEVELS

Cedar Rapids Community School District

- **Developmental Appropriateness** (*Cook et al, 2008*)
  - Less exposure to “teenage” behavior for 5th/6th graders
  - Keeps SEBH instruction more age focused across an entire building
- **More Targeted Instructional Focus** (*CALDER Center, 2025; Alspaugh, 1998*)
  - Reduced daily transitions for 6th grade
  - 7/8 building becomes more focused on preparing students for high school
- **Teaming**
  - Student Flexibility and Options - More students per grade allows for more strategic grouping (ex. certifications currently limit 6th grade students)
  - Allows for “teaming model” in 5th-8th grades, which focuses on grade level vs. content collaboration (*Gallop and Walton Family Foundation, 2025*)
  - Teacher Burnout - Teachers express less burnout from “relationship burnout” and “solo-teaching” in an intermediate model (*Corbin et al., 2019; ASU Next Education Workforce, 2025*)
- **Increased Support and Resources**
  - Fewer dollars wasted on inefficient buildings and stretched model of support
  - Allocation of staff in our large elementaries and intermediate schools

TRANSITION CONSIDERATIONS

Current Model: School Transitions



Total # of Transitions = 2

Proposed Model: School Transitions



Total # of Transitions = 3

Students already experience multiple transitions.

The number of transitions between buildings is consistent PK-12. The number of changes in friend groups is reduced from 3 to 1.

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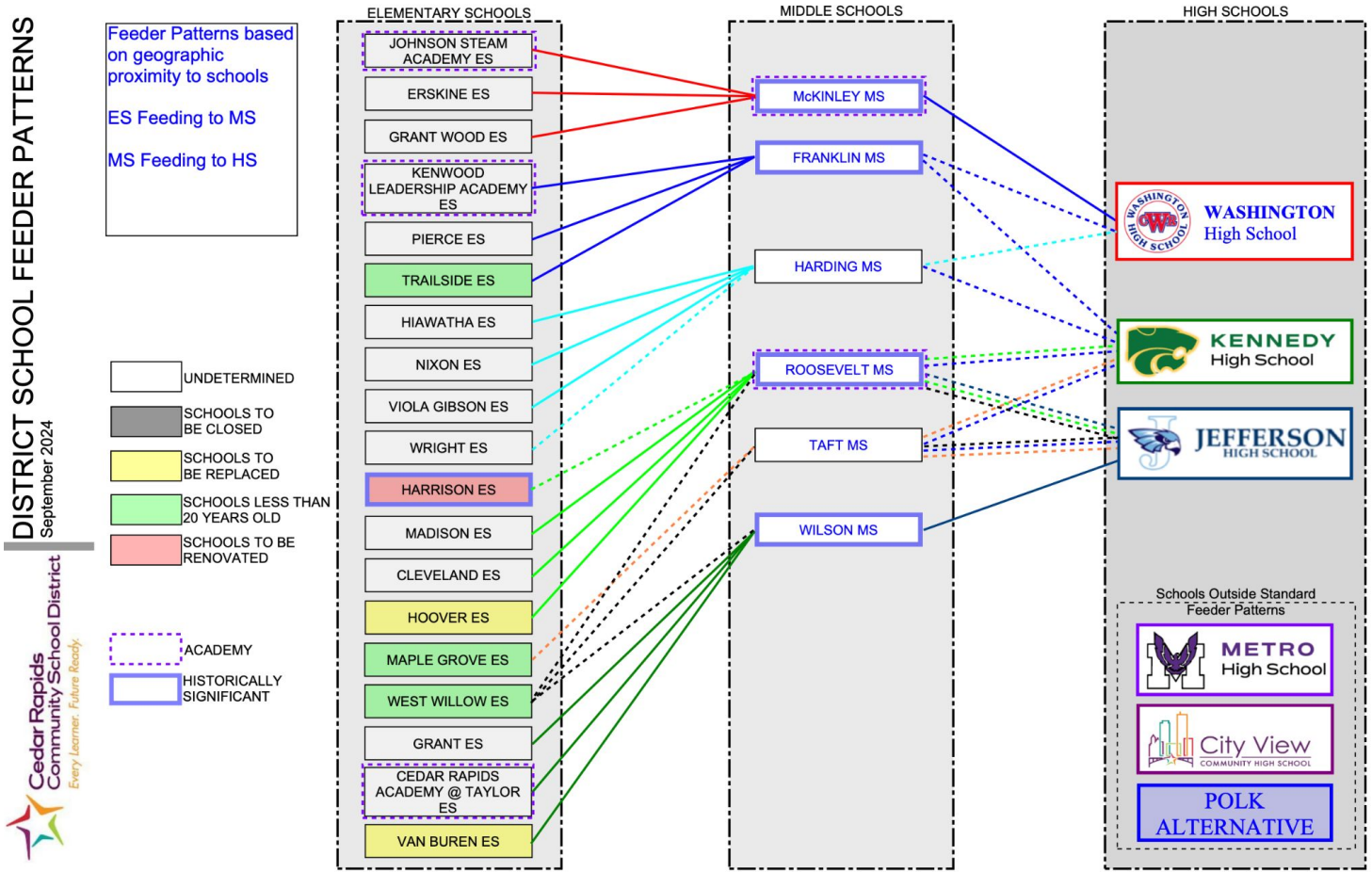
CURRENT TRANSITIONS



TRANSITION CONSIDERATIONS

- **Transition Dip** (Rockoff & Lockwood, 2010; West & Schwerdt, 2012)
  - Each transition can have an impact on student achievement because students are focused on:
    - Navigating new building
    - Identifying peer groups
    - Forming relationships with adults

- **How to reduce/eliminate transition dip** (Associate for Middle Level Education; UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools)
  - Implement “vertical PLCs”
    - Possible in true feeders
  - Consider “looping” of administrator and counseling staff
  - Create strong “handoff” process with “shadow” or “move-up” days
  - Create a stable friend group
    - Possible in true feeders

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BENEFITS OF TRUE FEEDERS

- **Peer Group Stability**
  - PK in Elementary Schools
  - One joining of peer groups from other elementaries in 5th grade
  - Students stay together with friends and classmates from PK - 12th Grade
- **Fine Arts and Athletics in 5th and 6th Grade**
  - More Competitive Intramural/Intradistrict Sports
  - Start Band, Orchestra, Vocal, Show Choir in 5th Grade
- **Building competitive programs by building teams across levels**
  - Increased student enrollments and consistent teams will make our activities more competitive.
- **Behavior - Age appropriate behaviors, consistent expectations**
  - Allows high schools, middle schools and intermediate schools to work collaboratively scaffolded expectations
- **High School Identity and Pride**
  - Sense of connection (ex. parades, spirit weeks, pride)

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BENEFITS OF PRE-K–4TH GRADE

Benefits

- Eliminates building transition between PK and Kindergarten
- PK will be offered in every elementary school
- Paid full day will be able to be offered as well in each building
- More equitable access across the District for families
- Age considerations.

Considerations

- Truman students and staff redistributed among all areas of school district
- Ensuring PK spaces in every school.

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CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

1. **Transition**
   a. Permits: Must provide opportunities for families impacted by changes to permit to schools.
   b. Continuity: If a student is on a permit, continuity in the school of choice
   c. Intentional supports for transitions within feeders

2. **Additional support**
   a. Improved fine arts and athletics in intermediate schools
   b. Additional behavior supports in our PK-4 buildings
   c. Teacher teams

3. **Communication**
   a. We must clearly lay out timelines, and provide every family a clear understanding of school path for their address.

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OUTCOMES

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- Revisit the intermediate model.
- **Understand the process for determining viability of school buildings in an intermediate model.**
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CONSOLIDATION PROCESS

GOAL: Create a sustainable footprint to match CRCSD's current enrollment and maximize resources to support students from their first day of school to graduation by creating true feeder patterns from PK to 12th grade for each of our comprehensive high schools (Washington, Kennedy, Jefferson).

IDEAL CAPACITY: In order to maximize space, this proposal aims to align our buildings with these enrollment targets for maximum efficiency:

- Elementary (PK–4): 500 students
- Intermediate (5–6): 700 students
- Middle School (7–8): 700 students
- High School (9–12): 1,400 students

Classroom Size Maximums:

- PreK– 20; K– 25, 1st-2nd– 26; 3rd-4th– 28
- 5th-6th – 28
- 7th-8th– 28

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CRITERIA FOR CREATING SCHOOL RESIDENT ATTENDANCE ZONE BOUNDARIES

Consolidation Criteria (select up to 3)	Responses	Percentage
Location: Geographic location of the schools within the community.	536	58.2%
Student Count: Number of students in each building (enrollment balance).	525	57%
Physical Condition: The current state/infrastructure of the school buildings.	509	55.3%
Cost Savings: Operational cost savings and fiscal efficiency.	341	37%
HS Boundaries: High School boundaries remain the same.	308	33.4%
Other *(Individual write-in responses)*	78	8.5%

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THE PROCESS & CRITERIA

GUIDING PARAMETER: Create a true feeder system. All options create a true feeder pattern.

STEP 1: Determine the viability of buildings within our current inventory

Criteria 1: (NEW) Capacity - How many students can each building hold?
OLD: Student Count: Number of students in each building (enrollment balance).

Criteria 2: Physical Condition - What is the infrastructure quality of the building?

Criteria 3: Cost Savings - What is the operational cost of each building?

THE PROCESS & CRITERIA

STEP 2: Build resident attendance zones

Criteria 4: Location - Geographic location of the schools within the community.

Criteria 5: NEW: Enrollment Balance - Resident attendance zones create balanced enrollment in each feeder. *OLD: Student Count - Number of students in each building (enrollment balance).*

Criteria 6: HS Boundaries: High School boundaries remain the same.

Criteria 7: Academic needs: Enrichment opportunities and special populations**.**

THE PROCESS & CRITERIA

Guiding Parameter: Create a true feeder. All options create a true feeder pattern.

Step 1: Determine the viability of buildings within our current inventory

Consolidation Criteria	**Defining & Scoring** *(high score = better)*
Capacity - How many students each building hold? (Student Count)	**Classroom Space -** Analyzed number of classes, gyms, and spaces within each building (portables were included)
Physical Condition - What is the infrastructure quality of the building?	**Physical Condition Score -** ADA Access (0, 1, 2) Necessary Improvements (0-5)
Cost Savings - What is the operational cost of each building?	**Cost Savings Score-** Operational Cost per square foot (Gas, Electricity, Water, Alarm Monitoring, Garbage/recycling, Work Order Costs)

SCHOOL SCORES

Area 1	1: Capacity	2: Physical Cond.	3: Op. Cost	Total
Trailside	18	7	3	28
KLA	17	1	1	19
Grant Wood	12	1	2	15
JSA	13	0	2	15
Erskine	9	2	3	14
Wright	10	0	1	11



What do you notice or wonder?

Area 2	1: Capacity	2: Physical Cond.	3: Op. Cost	Total
***New* Hoover**	18	7	4	29
***New* Van Buren**	18	7	4	29
West Willow	18	7	4	29
CRA	15	1	2	18
Grant	11	4	2	17
Cleveland	8	0	2	10
Area 3	**1: Capacity**	**2: Physical Cond.**	**3: Op. Cost**	**Total**
Maple Grove	18	7	3	28
***New* Harrison**	18	7	4	29
Viola Gibson	18	6	3	27
Hiawatha	17	5	3	25
Nixon	15	0	2	17
Pierce	9	0	3	12

THE PROCESS & CRITERIA

Is the process clear?
Are we missing anything?

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AREA 1 - FEEDER IDEAS

Grade Level	IDEA 1	IDEA 2	BOARD IDEAS
Elementary Buildings (PK-4)	• Trailside • Kenwood • Erskine • Grant Wood	• Trailside • Kenwood • Erskine • Grant Wood • Johnson	
Intermediate School Building (5-6)	Franklin	Franklin	
Middle School Building (7-8)	McKinley	McKinley	
9-12 Grade HS Building	Washington	Washington	
Schools to Close	• Wright • Johnson • Truman ELC	• Wright • Truman ELC	

AREA 2- FEEDER IDEAS

Grade Level	IDEA 1	IDEA 2	BOARD IDEAS
Elementary Buildings (PK-4)	• Van Buren • Hoover • West Willow • Grant	• Van Buren • Hoover • West Willow • Grant	
Intermediate School Building (5-6)	Wilson	Wilson	
Middle School Building (7-8)	Roosevelt	Taft	
9-12 Grade HS Building	Jefferson	Jefferson	
Schools to Close	• CRA • Cleveland	• CRA • Cleveland	

AREA 3- FEEDER IDEAS

Grade Level	IDEA 1	IDEA 2	BOARD IDEAS
Elementary Buildings (PK-4)	• Maple Grove • Harrison • Viola Gibson • Hiawatha	• Maple Grove • Harrison • Viola Gibson • Hiawatha	
Intermediate School Building (5-6)	Taft	Roosevelt	
Middle School Building (7-8)	Harding	Harding	
9-12 Grad HS Building	Kennedy	Kennedy	
Schools to Close	• Nixon • Pierce	• Nixon • Pierce	

ADDITIONAL IDEAS

- Leave it as is
- PreK-4th Grade, **5-8 Middle Schools**, 9-12 HS
- Various feeder pattern configurations within current inventory

OUTCOMES

Cedar Rapids Community School District

- Revisit the intermediate model.
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FEEDER EXERCISE

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Using the viable buildings from the current building inventory, create potential feeder options.

Choose: (4) PK-4, (1) 5-6, and (1) 7-8. *Buildings need not stay in their current areas.*

	Washington	**Jefferson**	**Kennedy**
PK-4			
5-6			
7-8			

26-27 COST SAVINGS RECOMMENDATIONS

Last Week	Overall Savings
Instructional Empowerment	$ 1,300,000.00
Grant Wood AEA Contracts	$ 627,000.00
Mentoring and Induction	$ 420,000.00
Consulting	$ 400,000.00
Personify Health	$ 120,000.00
Travel	$ 250,000.00
Food Related Purchases	$ 75,000.00
Insurance Stipend Phase-Out	$ 500,000.00
Building Budgets *(based on enrollment)*	$ 104,000.00
ELSC Reductions	$ 500,000.00
School Consolidations	$ 6,000,000.00 **when fully implemented*
ESTIMATED REDUCTIONS	**$ 10,296,000.00**

This Week	Overall Savings
CRVA, HomeSchooling, City View	$215,000
Community Partners	$150,000
Special Education	$ 2,000,000
Software	$ 300,000
Freeze curriculum purchases	$ 1,075,800
Backpack/Supplement based on enrollment	$208,384
Staffing Model	$2,800,000
Salary Increases	
ESTIMATED REDUCTIONS $6,749,184.00	

We are not recommending outsourcing for the 26-27 school year.