



TO: Dr. Angel Turner, Superintendent
FROM: Dr. Charmekia McCoy, Chief of Academics & Schools Management
DATE: June 23, 2025
RE: Update on SAP III – Early Childhood Center

Objective: X **Information** Discussion Follow-up Decision

This memo provides an update on the Early Childhood Center (ECC) of Phase III of the Student Assignment Project (SAP). The purpose of SAP III–ECC is to evaluate and redesign our early childhood programming to ensure it is more equitable, accessible, and inclusive for families with children from birth to age five. The central question guiding this work is: *How do we expand preschool programming options to better serve our community and provide a more inclusive model?* Specifically, this includes offering both half-day and full-day program options and exploring the consolidation and expansion of current preschool and family programs for children aged 0–5.

The work of SAP III–ECC has focused on two major areas.

- Part 1 examined the risks associated with the district’s current subrecipient model, including whether District 65 has the capacity to absorb program slots currently managed by outside providers. The board considered four options and voted at the February 24, 2025, board meeting to conclude its subrecipient agreement at the end of SY 2026-2027, effective June 30, 2027.
- Part 2, as detailed below, considered how to expand to a comprehensive 0–5 service model. This included evaluating options for full- and half-day programming, identifying the increased need for support for students with disabilities, and exploring sustainable solutions to meet projected demand.

The process began with a community survey to gather input from families and gauge interest in expanded early childhood services. Based on the results, a diverse group of participants joined in a series of four planning meetings focused on both parts of the ECC work. These sessions provided a space for reviewing data, identifying needs, and shaping priorities and recommendations.

Four key priorities emerged from the SAP III–ECC process:

- **Priority A is the redesign of the Joseph E. Hill (JEH) Early Childhood Center** to create internal coherence and alignment across 0–5 programming under one

centralized model. This includes coordinating services, schedules, and instructional supports to better meet family needs.

- **Priority B focuses on the expansion of the SEED program** to serve a growing population of students with high needs and developmental delays. This includes addressing staffing, space, and specialized service delivery.
- **Priority C aims to increase access to early childhood programs in neighborhood schools** by expanding 3–5-year-old programming across more sites. This will improve accessibility and reduce transportation barriers for families.
- **Priority D is centered on the absorption of students currently served by subrecipient programs**, thereby building the district’s internal capacity to directly serve children ages 0–5 and reduce reliance on external partners.

Throughout this work, several operational considerations emerged. Space limitations continue to present a major challenge to program expansion. Stakeholders identified programming needs as the top priority, followed by staffing, and then facilities, finance, and transportation.

On May 27, 2025, the ECC team presented the priority considerations from the SAP III-ECC process to the SDRP Programs Subcommittee and will be brought forth to the board for future discussion.

Based on the findings, we are proposing consideration of a phased implementation plan, subject to additional analysis to better determine feasibility.

Phase I, beginning next school year, the team will focus on targeted in-house shifts that utilize existing resources and facilities to strengthen coherence and capacity. Through beginning to merge the 0-3 and 3-5 staffing organizational structures, and facilities. These initial steps will establish a foundation for broader transformation.

Phase II, anticipated over the next 2–3 years, includes the potential expansion of early childhood programming to 2-3 additional buildings across the district. This longer-term phase will require more detailed analysis, particularly in the areas of facilities and financial impact. This work will be necessary to fully understand feasibility, and implementation must be carefully considered in alignment with broader SDRP planning efforts.

We believe this roadmap for District 65 is responsive to SDRP priorities and represents a meaningful step toward delivering an early childhood experience rooted in equity, access, and excellence for all students and families.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or for further discussion on our next steps.