

Engagement Session #1 Online Survey Results

August 25–September 8, 2026

2,328

respondents

81.2%

parents/guardians

1,126

written comments

96.5%

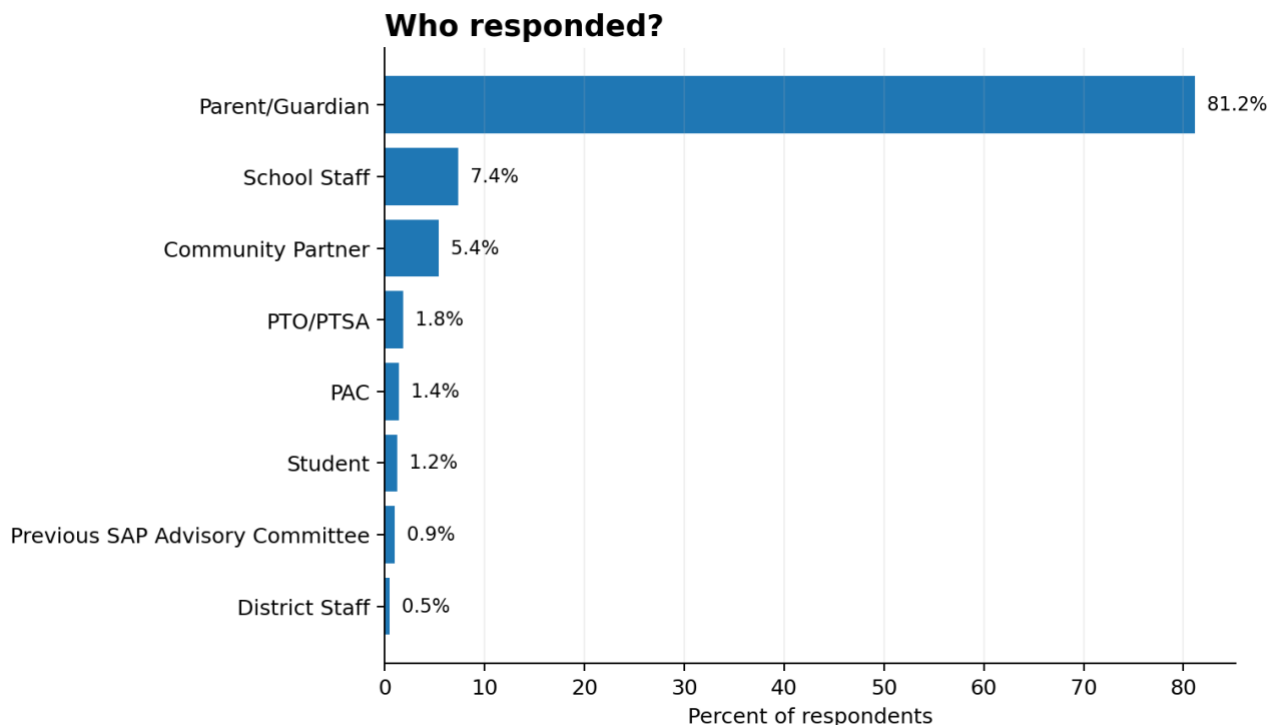
read Policy AD

Executive read

The first Engagement Session online survey drew strong participation and a highly engaged audience. The clearest signal is that respondents want the District to solve capacity challenges without losing the school-community relationships they value. The closed-ended priorities and written comments point in the same direction: preserve neighborhoods and feeder pathways where possible, protect student continuity, and pay close attention to transportation, program access and school quality.

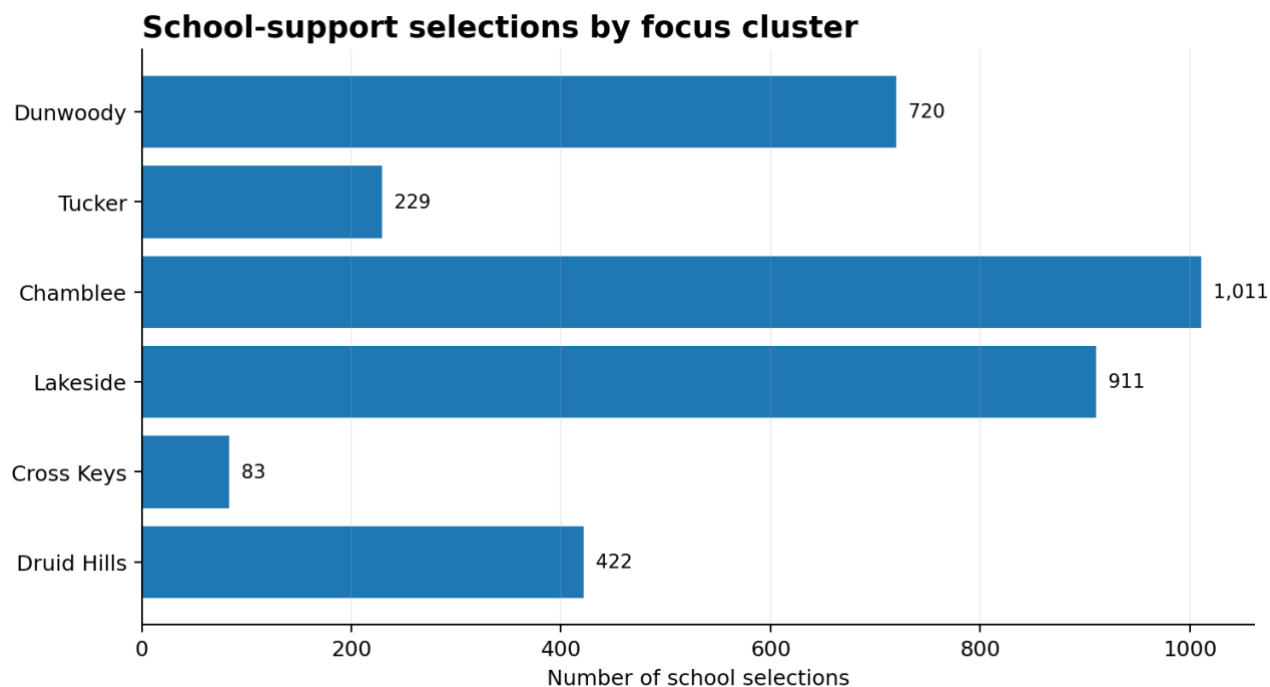
- Neighborhood integrity is the strongest stated priority: 1,705 respondents (73.2%) selected it among their top three secondary criteria.
- Feeder alignment (56.8%) and safety/traffic (48.5%) follow, well ahead of operational efficiency (19.7%).
- Participation is parent-led: parents/guardians account for 1,890 respondents (81.2%), while school staff account for 172 (7.4%).
- Future engagement potential is high: 992 respondents (42.6%) said yes and another 1,176 (50.5%) said maybe to attending future public-comment sessions.
- Written feedback is highly specific. Ashford Park, Chamblee, Lakeside, Kittredge/magnet programs and neighborhood continuity recur frequently, suggesting that respondents are not viewing the project as an abstract capacity exercise.

Who participated?

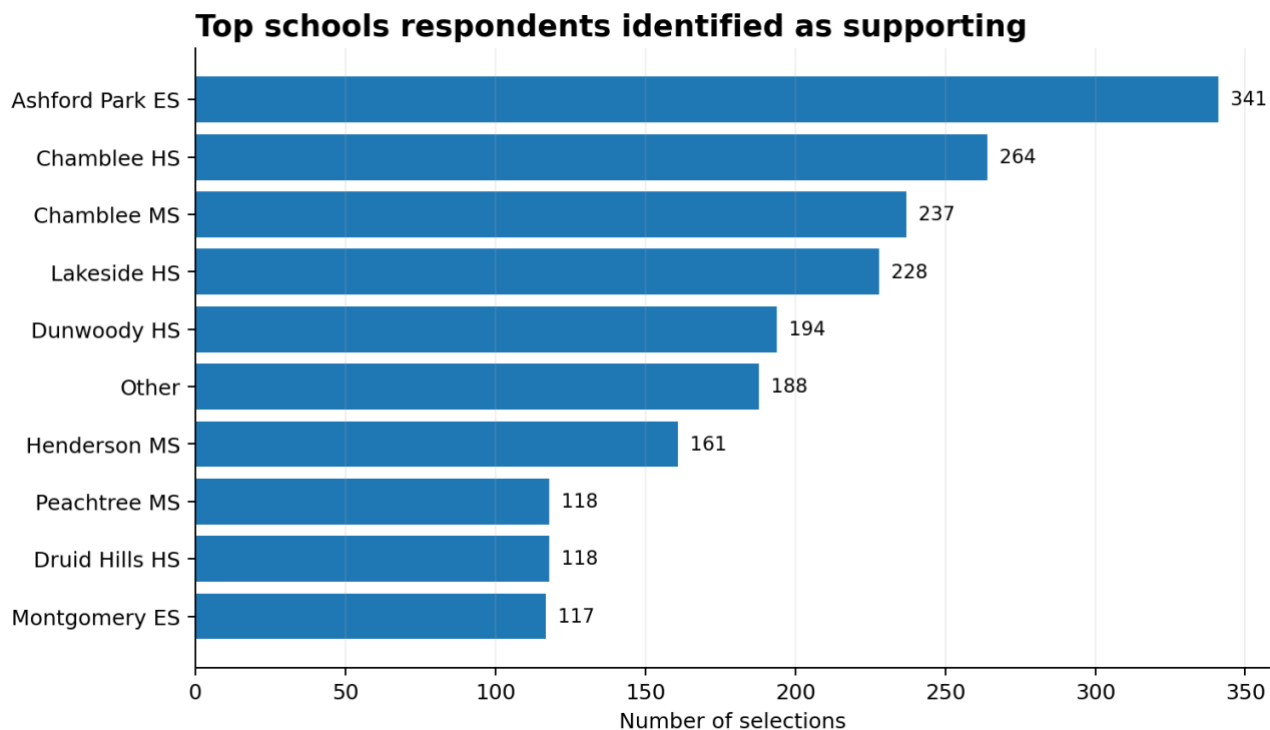


Parent/guardian participation dominates the response pool. This is important context when interpreting the results: the survey captures substantial family perspective, but relatively fewer student and staff voices.

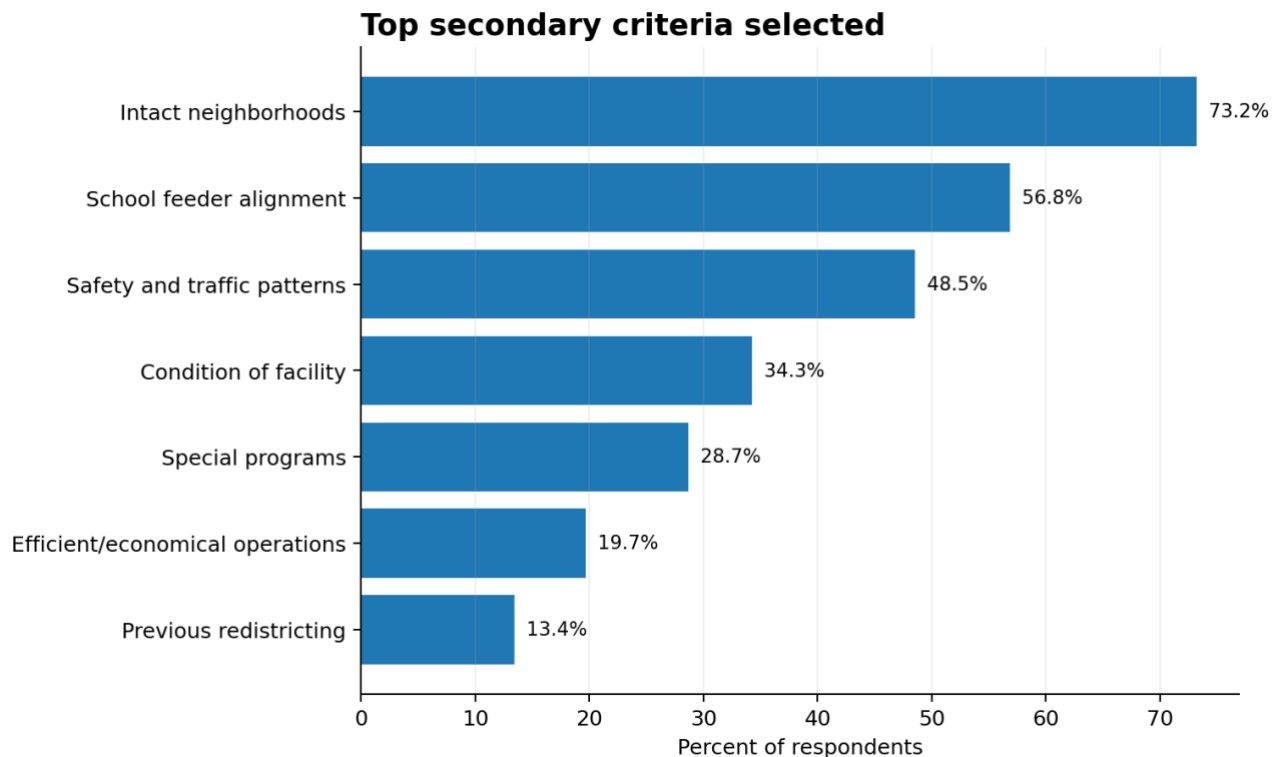
Where respondents are connected



Important note: The school-support question allowed respondents to select more than one school. Cluster figures therefore represent school-support selections, not unique respondents. The six focus clusters together account for 3,376 selections; Chamblee and Lakeside account for the largest shares.



What respondents say matters most



The hierarchy is notable. Respondents placed community continuity and feeder alignment above operational efficiency. That suggests the strongest public-facing challenge for SAP is not explaining why enrollment must be balanced; it is demonstrating how balancing can be done while minimizing disruption to students, families and established communities.

Themes in the written comments

Neighborhoods & community — appears in approximately 393 of 1126 written comments (35%).

Programs & magnets — appears in approximately 259 of 1126 written comments (23%).

Capacity & expansion — appears in approximately 214 of 1126 written comments (19%).

Feeder & cluster alignment — appears in approximately 197 of 1126 written comments (17%).

Disruption & continuity — appears in approximately 176 of 1126 written comments (16%).

Transportation & safety — appears in approximately 126 of 1126 written comments (11%).

Academic quality/performance — appears in approximately 109 of 1126 written comments (10%).

Most prominent qualitative patterns: Respondents repeatedly asked to keep neighborhoods and school communities together; minimize the number of times a student is moved; preserve feeder patterns; protect magnet, gifted and language-immersion programs; and use expansion or existing capacity before disrupting established schools. A smaller but meaningful set of comments focused on equity, academic performance, property values, transparency and confidence in the process.

Notable and surprising patterns

- The survey audience was more informed than a typical broad public survey might suggest: 96.5% said they had read Board Policy AD, and 78.2% described themselves as at least moderately familiar with SAP.
- Ashford Park is unusually prominent in the written record. It is the single most-selected school (341 selections), and the name appears in about 11% of written comments. Many of those comments advocate expansion rather than reassignment.
- Kittredge is another recurring concern even though it was not offered as a school choice in the school-support question. Several respondents specifically called for Kittredge to have representation in the process.

- Respondents are signaling willingness to stay engaged: only 6.9% said they do not plan to attend a future public-comment session.
- The feedback is not uniformly opposed to change. Some respondents explicitly support balancing enrollment and relieving overcrowding; the consistent request is that changes be transparent, geographically sensible and designed to minimize disruption.

Implications for Engagement Session #2

- Show the tradeoffs clearly. Participants want to see how each option affects capacity, travel, feeder patterns, programs and the number of students moved.
- Make continuity visible. Explain what protections, transition periods or grandfathering options could mean for students already enrolled.
- Address program pathways directly. Magnet, gifted and dual-language/immersion pathways are a recurring source of concern.
- Keep the process transparent. Several comments ask for clearer data, clearer maps and a clearer explanation of how feedback will influence the next round.

Top 10 takeaways

1. **Protect neighborhood integrity wherever possible.**
This was by far the strongest secondary criterion: **73.2%** selected intact neighborhoods. Any proposed boundary should clearly explain why it crosses or divides an established neighborhood.
2. **Show how feeder patterns will be preserved—or why they must change.**
56.8% selected school feeder alignment. Families appear to care about the continuity of the educational pathway, not simply the elementary or middle school assignment in isolation.
3. **Make student stability a central consideration.**
The written comments repeatedly raised concerns about disruption, continuity and moving students away from established schools and communities. The District should evaluate **how many students are affected, for how long, and at what grade levels.**
4. **Demonstrate that every change actually addresses capacity.**
The purpose of boundary changes needs to remain clear: **Where will overcrowding be relieved, by how much, and when?** Proposed changes should be accompanied by understandable enrollment and capacity projections.
5. **Treat programs as part of the assignment equation—not an afterthought.**
“Programs and magnets” emerged as one of the strongest themes in the written comments, appearing in roughly **23% of comments.** Families are concerned about access to specialized programs, including magnet and language programs. Boundary changes should show what happens to program access.
6. **Don't separate transportation from boundary decisions.**
48.5% selected safety and traffic patterns as a consideration, while transportation and safety appeared repeatedly in comments. A boundary that looks logical on a map may create significant transportation, traffic or walkability problems in practice.
7. **Explain why some schools are more affected than others.**
The response pool was heavily concentrated around certain schools—particularly **Ashford Park, Chamblee, Chamblee Middle and Lakeside.** The District should be prepared to explain the enrollment dynamics and potential impact at the school level, not just at the cluster level.
8. **Recognize that the community is informed—and expects specifics.**
96.5% of respondents said they had read Policy AD, and **78.2%** said they were at least moderately familiar with SAP. This is not a starting-from-scratch audience. Future engagement should move beyond explaining *that* boundaries can change and focus increasingly on **why a specific change is being considered and what it accomplishes.**
9. **Build the engagement strategy around email and direct school communication.**
88.6% identified email as a preferred way to receive updates—far ahead of every other option. School meetings, text messages, School Messenger and community meetings also matter. The District should not rely primarily on social media or the website to communicate complicated boundary proposals.
10. **Don't mistake opposition to a particular change for opposition to solving overcrowding.**
This may be the most important strategic takeaway. The comments suggest that many respondents understand the need to address enrollment pressures, but want solutions that are **geographically sensible, transparent, minimally disruptive and protective of community and program connections.** The question for Engagement Session #2 should therefore become: