

Tucker Cluster

DeKalb County School District Community Advisory Team (CAT)

Engagement Series #2

Executive Summary Report

Tuesday, September 29, 2026 | 6:00 PM – 7:50 PM

Meeting Overview

The second DeKalb County School District (DCSD) Community Advisory Team session for the Tucker Cluster had a new format. The first session focused on open listening. This session focused on reviewing specific student assignment concepts. The district's Chief Operations Officer gave the welcome and read prepared remarks. The meeting was facilitated by United Way and two scribes from KW Green Consulting LLC documented the session. The facilitator reviewed the agenda and norms in writing. No questions came up during the recap of the first session.

The evening centered on pre-recorded videos. Each video outlined an attendance-area adjustment concept. Small-group discussion followed each video. Separate videos covered elementary school Options 1, 2, and 3. Two more videos covered middle and high school Concepts A and B. Concept A would feed six middle schools into seven high schools. Concept B would feed seven middle schools into seven high schools. After each video, groups got about eight minutes to discuss. They recorded feedback on sticky notes and poster paper. Broader cross-table discussion did not happen until all options were shown.

The session closed with a short synthesis period. The facilitator asked participants what should be considered next. The facilitator closed the meeting with a preview of the final session.

Participation Summary

About 40 participants attended. They were organized into roughly ten small-group tables. The planned Gallery Walk was skipped to give groups more time to report out.

Major Themes

Capacity and utilization numbers were the most contested topic. Smoke Rise Elementary came up repeatedly as an example. It was cited as underutilized, with figures ranging from 62 to 66 percent. Several groups questioned that figure. They asked whether it accounts for ESE, ESOL, and MTSS program space. They also asked whether square footage is the right basis for the number, instead of classroom, cafeteria, and after-school capacity. Trailers came up specifically. Participants asked whether trailer space counts toward capacity. They also asked why some schools use trailers while others reportedly have open classroom space.

Transportation and geography were closely tied to the capacity discussion. Participants wanted boundaries that reflect actual bus routes and major roads. They raised specific concern about reassigning

students across the I-285/I-85 corridor. They also asked whether proximity to a closer school was being overridden by the proposed lines.

Community and program continuity concerned nearly every table. Participants worried about the social-emotional impact of split feeder patterns. They preferred keeping students together from elementary through high school where possible. Several specifically objected to placing sixth graders on a shared campus with high schoolers.

Equity and socioeconomic impact came up through concern about multifamily-housing assignments. Participants worried that concentrating on these assignments at particular schools could affect Title I status and resources. They also asked that school performance and student services, including language needs, be factored into any reassignment.

Financial transparency was a recurring question. Participants wanted clearer information on the cost and savings tied to each option. They wanted to know how savings would translate into better programming. They also asked about the specific financial implications of Concept A versus Concept B for middle and high schools.

Timing relative to the future Sequoyah High School was mentioned. It is expected to open in 2029. Several participants questioned whether changes made now might require another redistricting process soon after it opens. Some participants also wanted boundaries reconsidered in light of Tucker's recent incorporation as a city. They questioned whether attendance lines should better reflect current city boundaries.

Key Concerns

- Whether reported school utilization, such as Smoke Rise at 62 to 66 percent, reflects actual need once specialized program space, trailers, and support services are factored in.
- Transportation burden and safety of reassigning large numbers of students across major roads. The I-285/I-85 corridor was named specifically.
- Social-emotional impact of split feeder patterns. Reassignment away from established peer groups and chosen neighborhood schools was a concern.
- Placing sixth grade students on a shared campus with high schoolers under the proposed middle and high school concepts.
- Risk that Option 1's minimal changes could leave enrollment issues unresolved. Participants worried this could trigger another reassignment within a few years. They called this "change fatigue."
- Lack of clarity on the financial costs and savings tied to each option, and how savings would translate into better programming.
- Timing of reassignment relative to Sequoyah 2029 opening. A second round of changes could follow soon after.
- Concentration of multifamily-housing assignments at specific schools. This raised concern about Title I status and resources.
- Uncertainty about the future of specific school buildings and programs. Cary Reynolds Elementary, Oakcliff Theme School, and the Idlewood completion timeline were named.
- Whether reducing a school's enrollment could also reduce its specials, language programs, or other course offerings.

- Chamblee High School's reported overcrowding is not addressed through redistricting or expansion in the current options.
- Whether planning assumes DCSD's strategic waiver will be renewed, and whether projected growth in multifamily housing is factored into the numbers.

Areas of Consensus

Across groups, the absence of proposed school closures was seen as a positive. Participants broadly favored options that preserved walkable, community-based schools and existing enrollment stability. There was also wide agreement that more districtwide information was needed. Several groups said directly that they did not yet have enough data to give fully informed feedback.

Participants consistently wanted capacity measured by more than one building-level percentage. They wanted it to account for classrooms, specialized program space, common areas, and trailers. They also wanted clearer reasoning behind how the proposed boundaries were drawn. There was shared concern about disruption that seemed out of proportion to its benefit. Multiple groups questioned changes affecting only a small number of students relative to the disruption caused. There was general support for weighing transportation and proximity more heavily in any final decision.

Diverse Perspectives

Preferences among the three elementary options varied by table. One group favored Option 1. They said it made the most geographic sense and moved the fewest students. That same group acknowledged it does little to fix capacity imbalance long-term. Other groups felt Option 1 "doesn't do much." They questioned whether it solves anything beyond the next two to three years.

Option 3 drew mixed descriptions. Some called it the most balanced. Others called it the most disruptive. One account said it would cause the most change overall, including cross-cluster switches between Tucker and Lakeside high schools. Option 2 also drew mixed reactions. Some groups saw it as causing minimal disruption. Others felt it still failed to balance enrollment at Livsey Elementary. They raised specific questions about the fate of Cary Reynolds Elementary and the impact on Oakcliff Elementary.

Opinions diverged on the middle and high school concepts. One group called it a "terrible idea" for middle schoolers to share a campus with high schoolers. Another group felt the middle-to-high-school transition could actually be a more natural point for feeder changes than the elementary level. One group proposed a different approach entirely. They suggested reassigning Idlewood to the Clarkston or Stone Mountain clusters. They suggested starting boundary changes at the high school level before adjusting the elementary schools. No other group raised this idea.

Reactions to the evening's format also varied. Most groups engaged actively with the video-and-discussion structure. One group stated plainly that the video portion was a waste of valuable time. They asked for no more videos in future sessions.

Questions Raised

- Resources were reportedly not provided to Smoke Rise during the last rezoning. How can the community trust they will be provided this time?
- What percentage of current enrollment reflects students attending through school choice or emergency circumstances? Could parents who chose school choice be asked what deterred them from their zoned school?
- What is the district's target utilization or capacity goal for a school? Who is setting that goal?
- What are the financial benefits or costs of each option, including Concept A versus B for middle and high schools?
- What is the expected completion date for the Idlewood facility? What happens to the empty building at Cary Reynolds if it is vacated?
- Does Option 1, which limits change, do enough to address underlying capacity issues?
- Why were some elementary schools listed for closure under earlier Spring 2026 options, while the current Fall 2026 options leave them untouched?
- If Chamblee High School is overcrowded, why is it not included in redistricting or scheduled for expansion?
- Is current planning assuming DCSD's strategic waiver will be renewed? Has growth in multifamily housing been factored into the projections?
- Under Option 2, how would magnet students be served? Would there be a magnet program coordinator?
- Could county administrative staff obtain CDL licenses to help address the bus-driver shortage?
- Are trailers included in official capacity calculations? Why do some schools use trailers while others have available classroom space?

Additional Observations

- One of the groups stated “No more videos. The video portion was a waste of valuable time.”