



Superintendent's Proposal to Address Budget Deficit

September 21, 2026



ABOUT OUR DISTRICT

MISSION

Our students lead through literacy, are empowered through experience, and contribute to their community.

VISION

We honor the diversity, creativity, and passion of our students, elevating every student to be designers of their destiny.

The July 27 Board Resolution requires that we bring forward recommendations by October 19 for financial savings of at least \$12M while prioritizing access to opportunities for students across the district.



OUR COMMITMENTS

We are focused on what students need and deserve in every school, consistently across the district, to continue to accelerate student outcomes and opportunities.

Our vision prioritizes access to programs, stable staffing, enrichment, supports, and student readiness for academic success.

We must make thoughtful, long-term decisions that protect what students need most to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

We have spent the past 12+ months engaging with students, staff, and community to clarify our aspirations for TPS.



What should be true across TPS

Every student:

- Belongs and feels supported
- Builds strong foundational skills
- Sees a meaningful future and pathway
- Has access to high-quality experiences and opportunities

Every teacher:

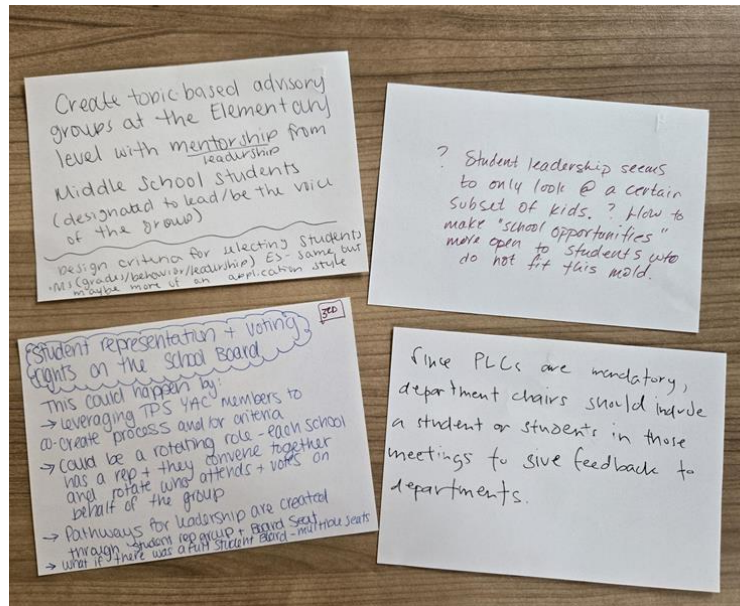
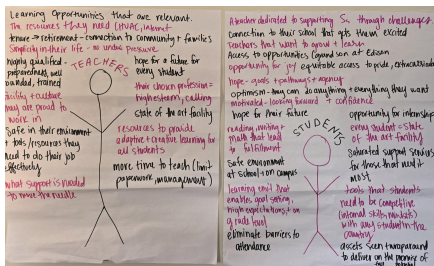
- Belongs to a strong community of peers
- Feels valued, respected, and proud of their contributions
- Has the tools/support to succeed
- Can build a sustainable career

Over 50 community engagement sessions

1,000+ survey responses

5 cross-functional summer working groups

Engagement to Support Strategic Planning



Strategic Plan and Engagement Timeline

Aug '25 - Nov '25
Community Engagement
for next Bond and
Strategic Plan

Jan '26 - Apr '26
Central Office budget review
of salary and non-salary cuts

Jun '26 - Jul '26
Convened
Effectiveness
Through Efficiency
Committee

Aug '26 - Sep '26
Continued planning and
community engagement
in response to board
resolution

**Committee includes community members representing business, public service,
parents/families, and philanthropic organizations.**

June 2
Review of *Graduate Promise*, lessons from the community, and overview of financial data.

Discussion of potential trade offs when making budget decisions.

June 18
Review of site data and consideration of how the trade offs would be applied to make decisions.

Discussion of decision making criteria.

July 9
Presentation from the City of Tulsa Planning Office.

Continued review of site data and first round of feedback on potentially impacted sites.

July 16
Completion of review of site data and suggestions.

Input on how to approach broader community engagement to shape decisions.

After reviewing comment cards from our in-person sessions and the 697 responses on our community survey thus far, the following trends emerge:

1. A highly qualified teacher is the highest rated priority out of the 9 on the survey.
2. The most common trends in comment feedback were to avoid increasing class sizes (88/426 comments) and the importance of retaining strong teachers (88/426). The class size increase options were 3 of the 4 lowest rated items on the survey.
3. When asked to choose between fewer schools with more consistent services or more schools with reduced services, 65% said fewer schools, 18% said more schools, and 16% said unsure.
4. Closing and consolidating schools was the highest ranked option on the survey.
5. Families want more information about the implications of our choices on things like transportation, program offerings, and special education services.



District Enrollment Landscape



Other Communities Facing Declining Enrollment

NEWS > LOCAL NEWS > CUYAHOGA COUNTY

New report projects continued CMSD enrollment decline over next decade

The report was prepared for CMSD and the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission

Tulsa-area public schools challenged by state's historic decline in students

Feb 3, 2026 Updated Jul 2, 2026 2

1 of 3

Education

New report paints a dismal picture for Fresno Unified as student exodus picks up steam

The analysis reviewed by FresnoLand was put together by SchoolWorks, a consultant group working for FUSD.



by Diego Vargas
July 29, 2026

Wichita school district enrollment falls again, reflecting nationwide trend

KMUW | By Suzanne Perez

Published October 3, 2025 at 2:53 PM CDT

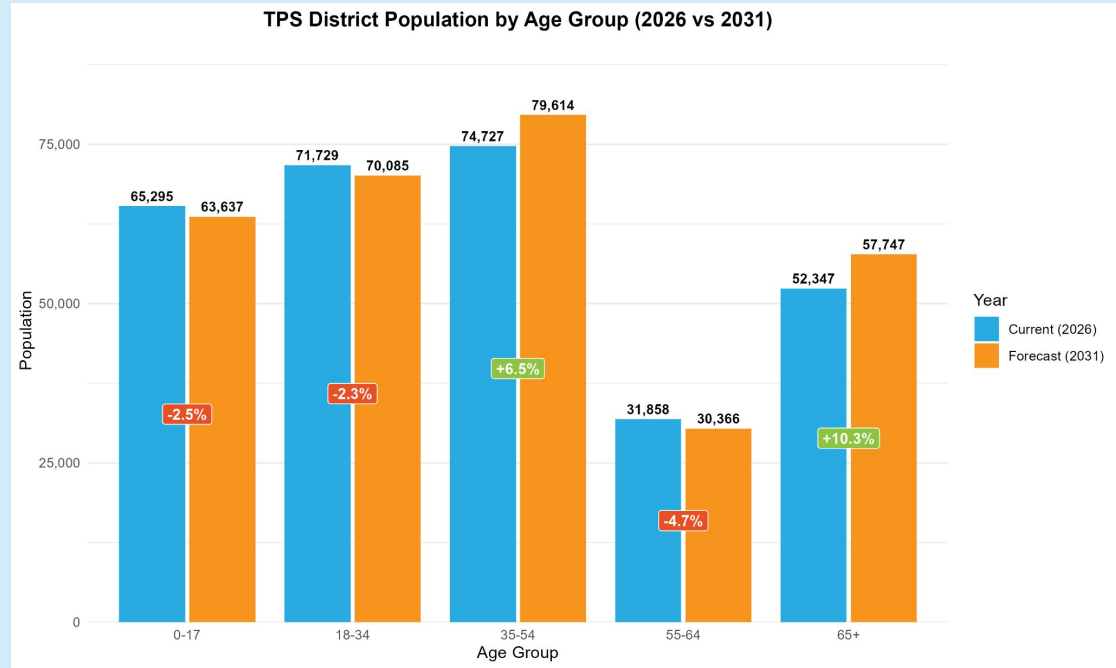


KGUN 9 > NEWS >
COMMUNITY INSPIRED JOURNALISM >
MIDTOWN & DOWNTOWN NEWS

Tucson Unified faces tough choices as district sits at 58% capacity

A TUSD analysis shows roughly 28,000 empty seats across the district, prompting discussions about school closures, consolidations, and what comes next for families.

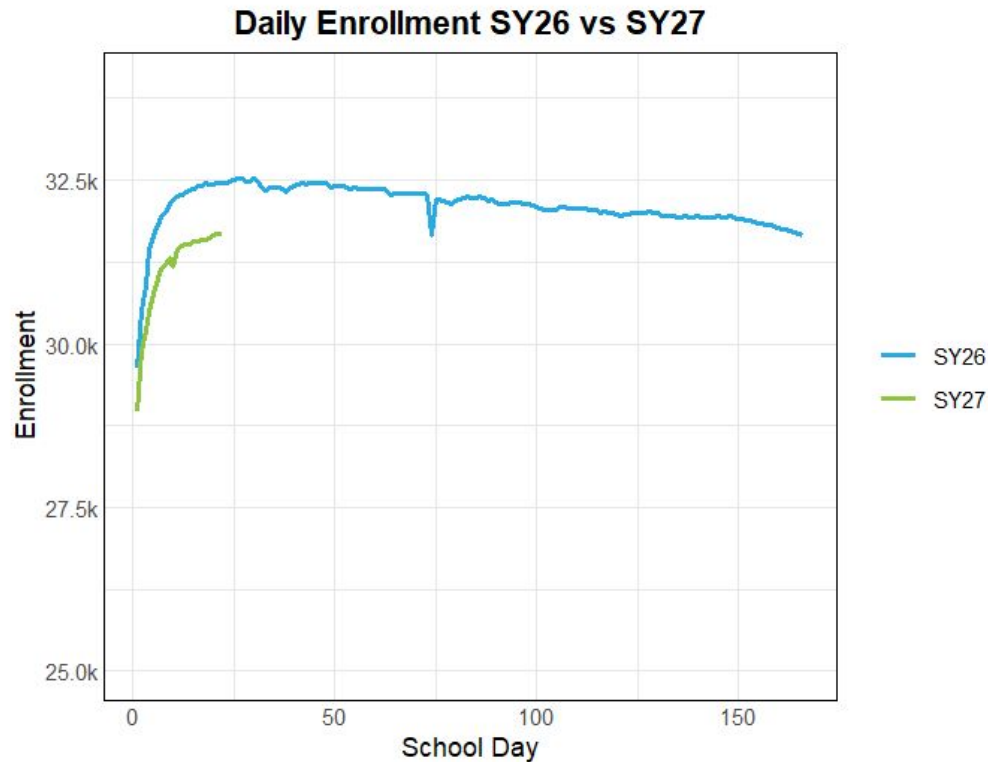
The City of Tulsa Planning Office uses industry-standard population projections data which suggests a 2.5% decline in children over the next 5 years.



Source: [Esri, Updated Demographics 2026/2031](#)

Esri provides an Updated Demographics advanced demographics dataset for the United States. This dataset is developed by Esri and includes source material supplied by the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, and public and private data sources.

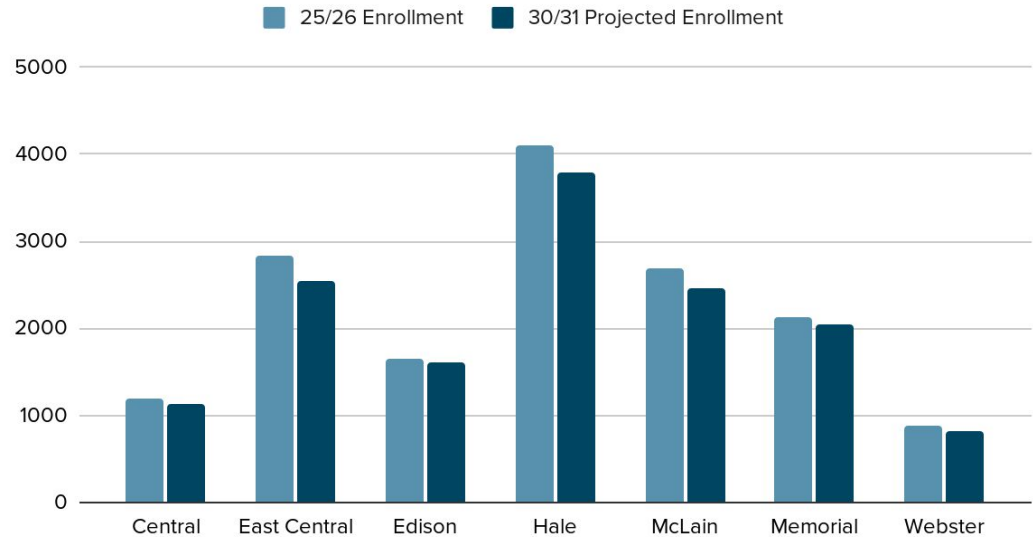
TPS enrollment data is trending in a similar direction. When we look at our enrollment this year compared to the same time last year, we are down by 779 students as of September 18, 2026.



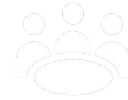
Based on current trends, we are predicting declines in enrollment in every feeder pattern.

Continued declining enrollment

Projected declines in feeder pattern enrollment



Reductions for 27-28 are an important step to bring our expenses into alignment with our revenue. This will require ongoing attention over the coming years.



A challenge and an opportunity

Our district will approach this challenge as an opportunity to think differently about our portfolio of schools:

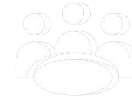
- How can we continue to improve offerings for our current students and families?
- Where can we expand seats for in-demand programs?
- Where can we be strategic in seeking out additional sources of revenue?
- How else can we better deploy our staff and resources to serve young people?



District Financial Context



Even after proposed closures, there will be seats available in our buildings. We want to pursue pathways to offer additional seats at in-demand programs.



Continued declining enrollment

- At our current staffing levels, it would take around **2,600 additional students** to balance our budget.
- We did not extend an offer to **around 150** out-of-district students in last year's enrollment window that were on the waitlist, and we hope to recoup some revenue by expanding seats to these families.
- We are committed to more robust recruitment and expansion of our most in-demand school offerings, but these initiatives alone would not be enough to address the structural deficit.

We took two critical first steps to address the structural deficit:

1. Eliminated or reduced contracts

2. Reduced roles at central office

Ongoing cost reduction efforts

- Eliminating or significantly reducing contracts
 - From FY25 to FY26, we've eliminated \$4.3M in contracts
- Realizing \$1.7M in department budget savings
- Eliminated district office positions (both filled and unfilled)
- Continuing to ensure consistent implementation of school site staffing plan
 - Our school staffing plan ensures that the number of positions at school sites scales with the number of students enrolled, special caseloads, and the number of buildings.
- Ongoing intentional use of various funding sources
 - Shifting all child nutrition program costs to child nutrition fund
 - Shifting applicable insurance coverages to building fund
 - Utilizing applicable bond funds for appropriate software and curriculum purchases
 - Sunsetting certain services to outside entities to reduce internal infrastructure spend

Every central office department reduced positions this spring.



District office reductions

Cabinet aimed to make decisions grounded in three criteria.



- **Student outcomes** - In what ways do these roles impact student achievement?
- **Reduction in complexity/duplication of services** - Are there departments where overlapping or duplicative services are contributing to complexity and spend?
- **Fiscal responsibility** - Given our current fiscal landscape, is the service this role or team delivers being done in the most efficient method possible? Can we justify the expense?

Example:

Team Schools eliminated the Instructional Leadership Director (7), Data and Continuous Improvement Partner (6), and Leadership Development Coach (6) positions. We created 8 School Leadership Director positions—and filled 7— for a net impact of -12 positions.

The fund balance functions as the district's savings account.



Maintaining
financial stability

- TPS relies on its fund balance to manage cash flow throughout the year.
- The district needs approximately **\$48 million** in fund balance to remain financially stable.
- While the fiscal year begins in **July**, the majority of revenue is not received until **January**.
- Fund balance covers payroll and operating costs from July through December, before that revenue arrives.
- **Without a healthy fund balance, TPS cannot meet payroll and other financial obligations until revenue is received.**



Details of the District's Proposal



We have made intentional choices around what NOT to include that are consistent with community feedback.



Options not recommended

We ensured that the proposal is both:

- (1) consistent with state and federal law and
- (2) aligned with community sentiment.

At this time, our proposal does not include:

- Changes to the current staffing plan; we are not pursuing increases in the student-to-teacher ratio as a budget reduction method.
- Disruption to special education and multilingual learner services
- Salary freezes for any district employees

With all of these factors and community feedback considered, we are proposing school closures as the primary method to meet the \$12 million identified in the board resolution.



**Proposal
details**

Savings	Identified Action
\$11.1 million	Closing 14 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 1 alternative program
\$1.5 million	Directive to central office department leaders to identify \$1.5 million in additional non-salary or salary savings for the upcoming fiscal year by: - Continued movement of eligible items out of the general fund - Reduced salary costs (primarily through attrition) - Reduced non-salary costs by department leaders

We've stated across our community sessions that it is important to us to make critical investments in the student experience.



Improved student experiences



Ensure dedicated Art, Music, and PE teachers at every elementary school



Increase the number of students with access to a highly qualified teacher



Maximize every dollar for every student - including stronger support to sites



Expand access to in-demand programs in Tulsa Public Schools

**We are able to serve students more efficiently
with the same Board-approved staffing plan.**



**Consistent
staffing plan**

**Of the \$11.1 million realized through the
proposed closures:**

\$8.5 million	Staffing Plan Allocations
\$2.6 million	Operational Costs

**Our current Board-approved Staffing Plan's
student-to-teacher ratios are:**

Elementary (K-2): 24:1

Elementary (3-5): 28:1

Middle: 29:1

High: 33:1

Consolidation can combine students and resources while maintaining consistent staffing plan ratios.

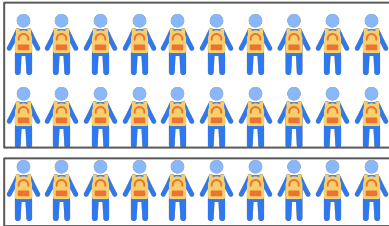


Consistent
staffing plan

* Current 1st grade student-to-teacher ratio is 24:1



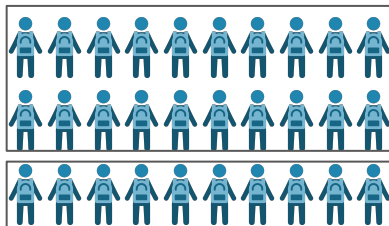
School A



30 1st graders
2 teachers
2 classrooms



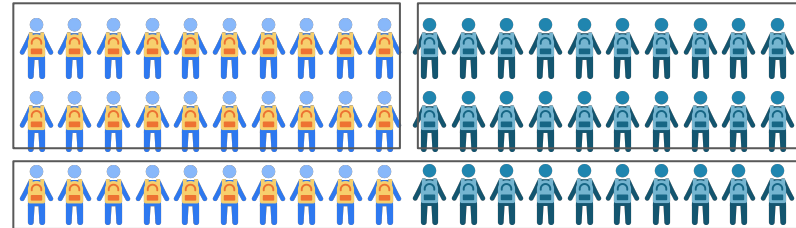
School B



30 1st graders
2 teachers
2 classrooms



Combined School



60 1st graders
3 teachers
3 classrooms

Operational costs are a small proportion of the total savings. We calculated this using historical data on building closures based on a set of assumptions.



**Operational
cost savings**

Initial Savings
\$2.6 million
Deferred Savings
\$0.9 million

Non-Salary Assumptions:

- 65% in Maintenance
- 5% in Child Nutrition
- ~\$375K in Property Insurance
- 75% in Utilities
- 5% in Other Operations coded items

Salary Assumptions:

- The majority of changes in staffing levels can be navigated through attrition
- 50% in Maintenance
- 25% in Child Nutrition

There were four primary criteria and supporting data that shaped our proposal for school closures.

Primary Criteria

- Student enrollment
- Enrollment trends
- Building size and use
- Physical location of the building and a safe walking path to school

Supporting Data

- Student outcomes
- Unique program offerings (e.g., Montessori)
- Student demographics and needs at each site
- Historic retention/transfer data
- Distance students travel to school
- Number of school options nearby
- Physical barriers that impact walking safety (railroad tracks, highways, geographic features)

We are proposing 14 elementary, 2 middle, and 1 alternative site for closure or consolidation.

Elementary Site Closures	Secondary Site Closures	Other Building Changes
Anderson Elementary Bell Elementary Dolores Huerta Elementary Greenwood Leadership Academy Hoover Elementary Kerr Elementary Key Elementary Marshall Elementary Mitchell Elementary Peary Elementary Robertson Elementary Sequoyah Elementary Springdale Elementary Unity Learning Academy	Central Middle School Thoreau Demonstration Academy Tulsa MET MS/HS	Central High School would be an Alternative High School Hub. Felicitas Mendez International School would relocate to the Anderson building. GLA/Academy Central building would continue to serve students in the SOAR Academy. Thoreau building would be repurposed by Tulsa Public Schools.

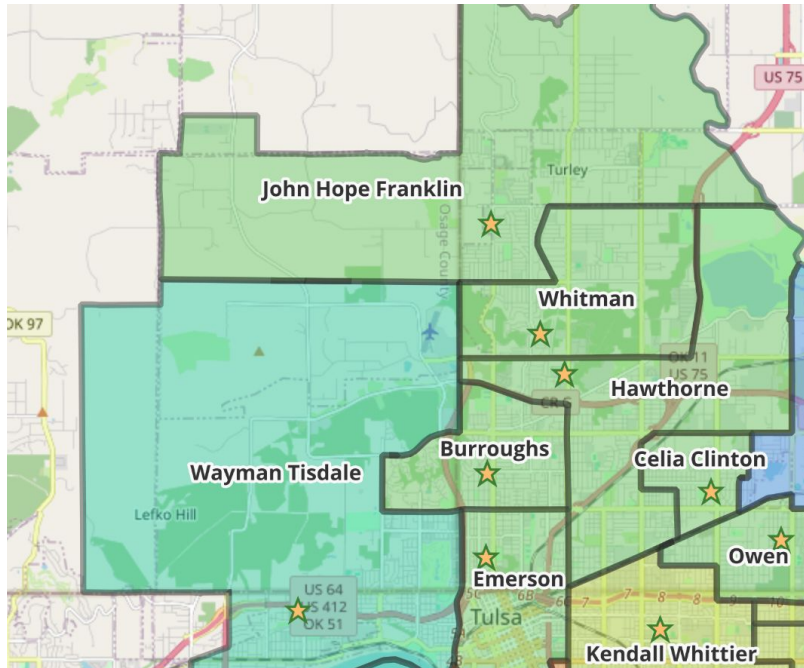
All sites included in our proposal **enrolled fewer than 400 students** and had **building use under 65%**. None of the sites listed here are projected to have enrollment increases in the next several years.

We used consistent criteria to inform school boundary changes.

Methodology

- Prioritized identifying a school with the shortest geographic distance
- Targeted building use of 85% or less to allow for any unanticipated future growth
- Considered natural geographic or physical barriers (i.e. railroads, major roadways)

Elementary Group 1: Anderson, Greenwood Leadership Academy, and Unity Learning Academy

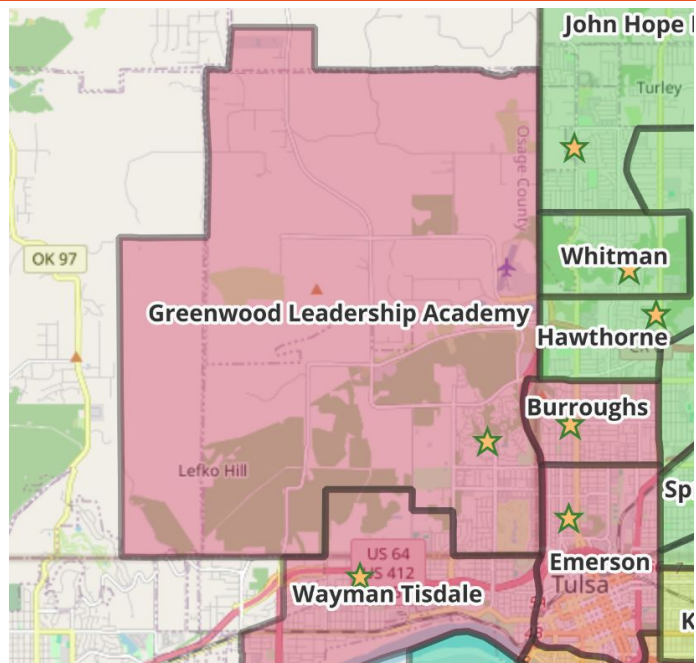


854 students impacted

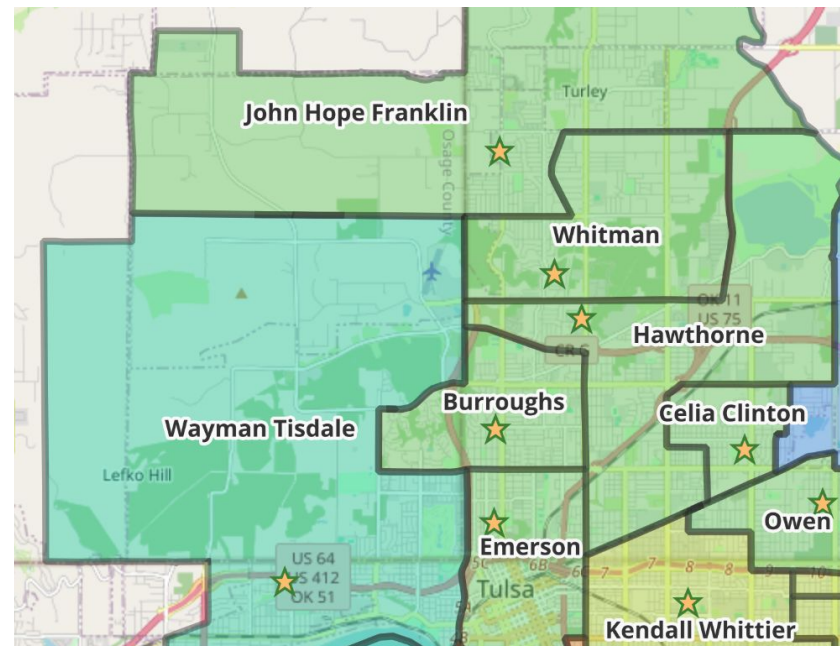
686 families impacted

Closing Site	Welcoming Sites
Anderson Elementary*	Hawthorne Elementary and Whitman Elementary
Greenwood Leadership Academy*	Wayman Tisdale Fine Arts Academy, Burroughs Elementary, John Hope Franklin Elementary
Unity Learning Academy	Celia Clinton Elementary and Hamilton Elementary

Elementary Group 1: Anderson, Greenwood Leadership Academy, and Unity Learning Academy

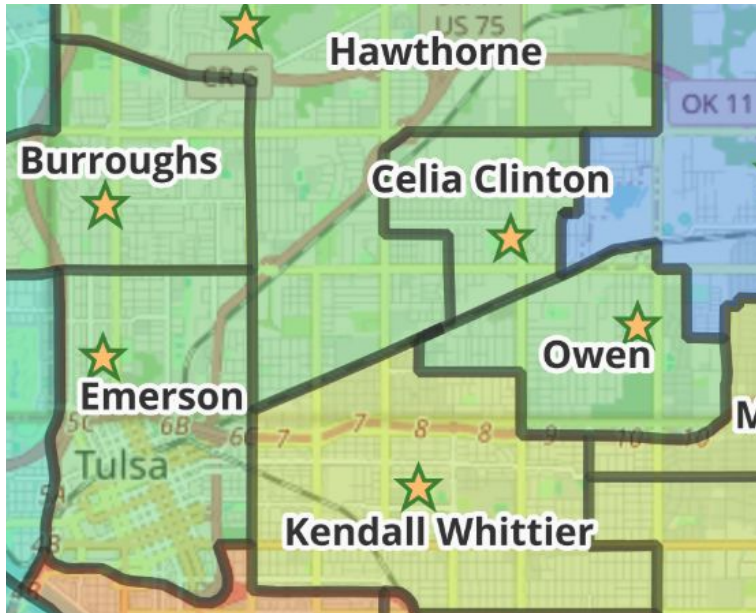


current



proposed

Elementary Group 2: Springdale and Sequoyah

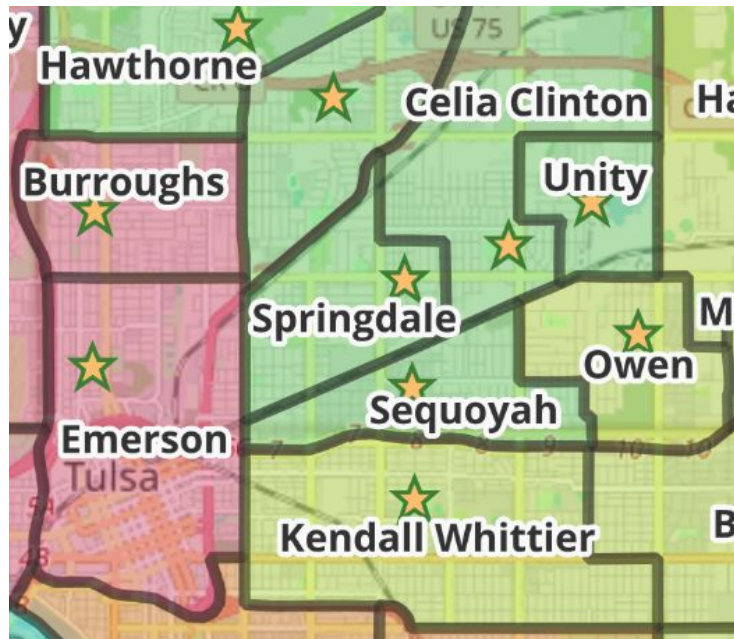


658 students impacted

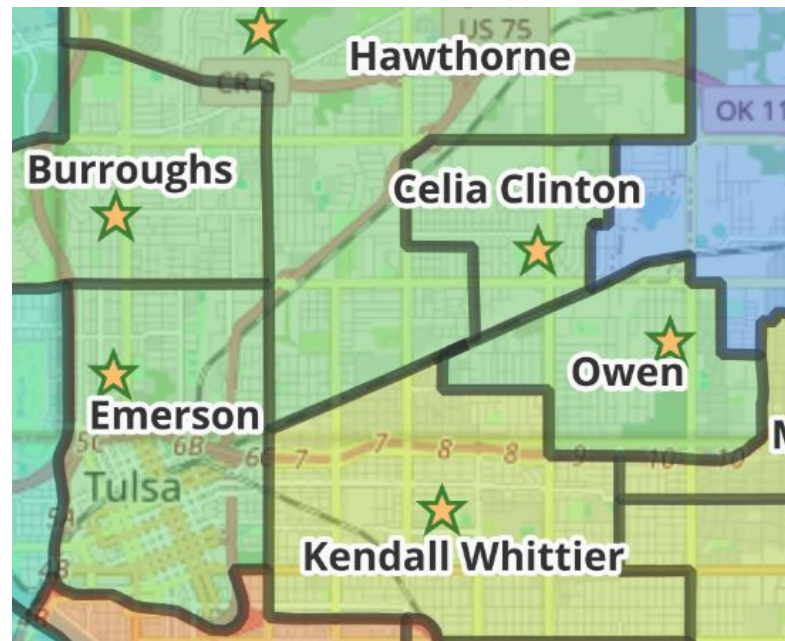
550 families impacted

Closing Site	Welcoming Sites
Springdale Elementary	Felicitas Mendez International School (current dual language students have preference), Hawthorne Elementary
Sequoyah Elementary	Kendall-Whittier, Owen Elementary, Felicitas Mendez International School (current dual language students have preference)

Elementary Group 2: Springdale and Sequoyah

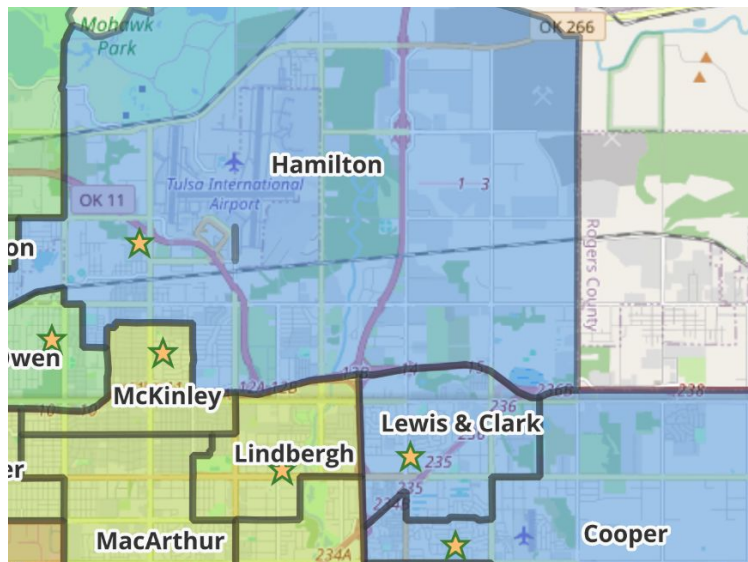


current



proposed

Elementary Group 3: Mitchell, Kerr, and Bell

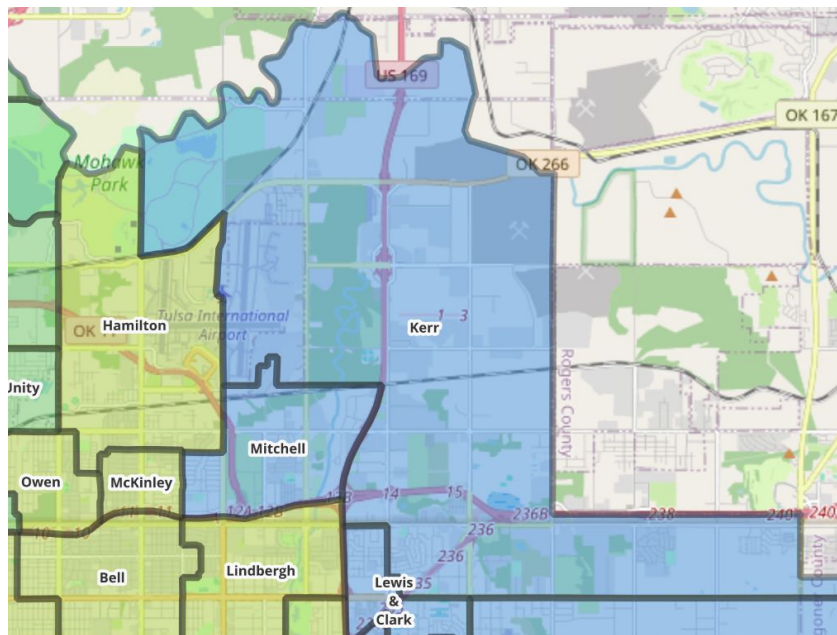


941 students impacted

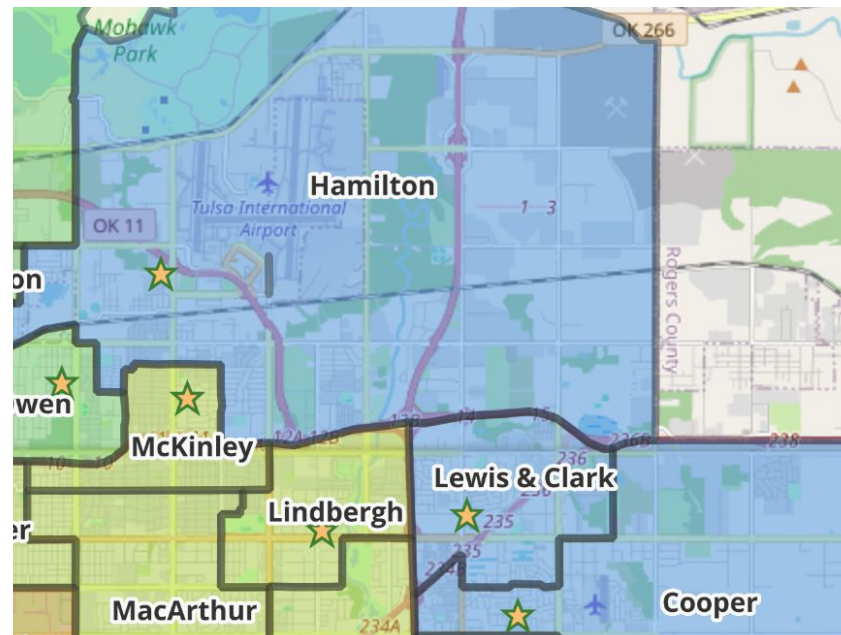
792 families impacted

Closing Site	Welcoming Sites
Mitchell Elementary	Hamilton Elementary
Kerr Elementary	Lewis and Clark Elementary, Cooper Elementary, Hamilton Elementary
Bell Elementary	MacArthur Elementary, McKinley Elementary

Elementary Group 3: Mitchell, Kerr, and Bell

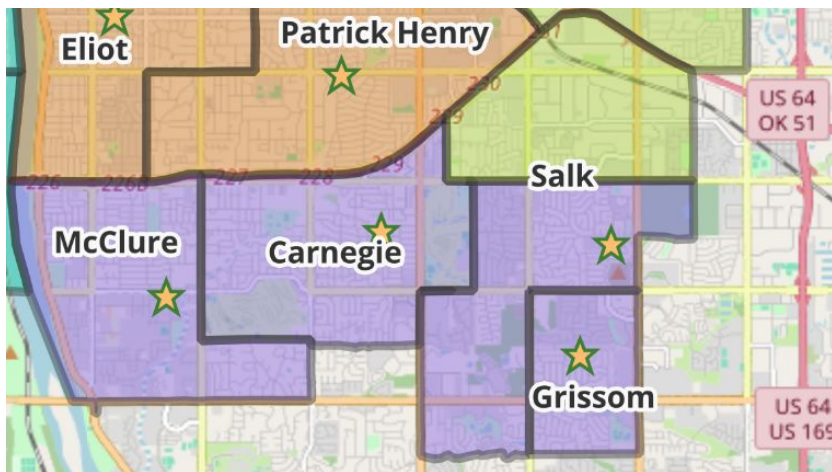


current



proposed

Elementary Group 4: Key and Marshall

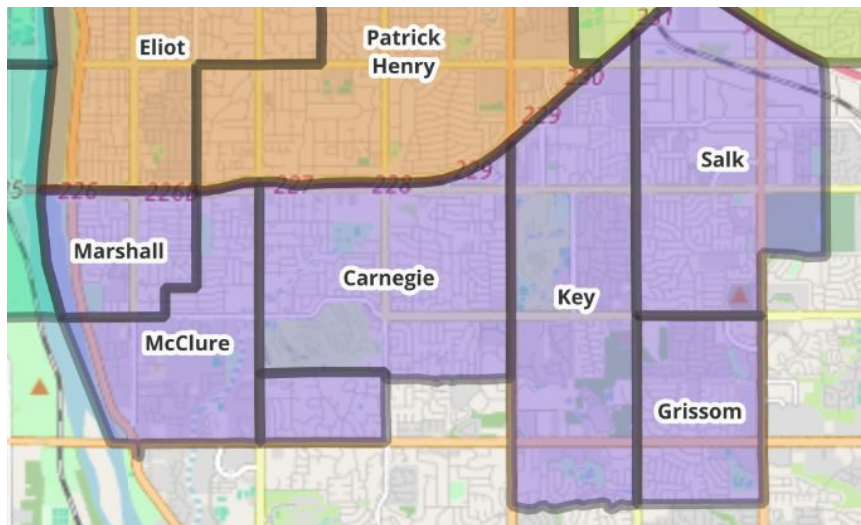


538 students impacted

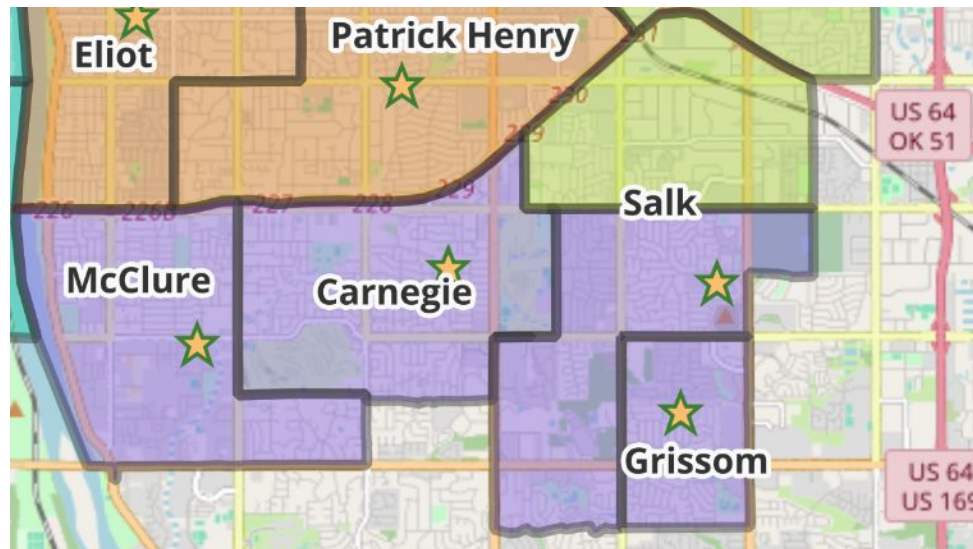
443 families impacted

Closing Site	Welcoming Sites
Key Elementary	Salk Elementary, Carnegie Elementary, McClure Elementary
Marshall Elementary	McClure Elementary

Elementary Group 4: Key and Marshall

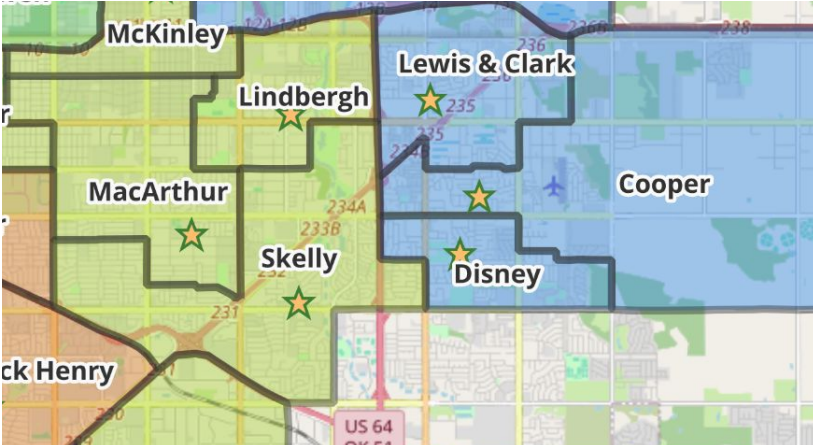


current



proposed

Elementary Group 5: Dolores Huerta, Hoover, and Peary

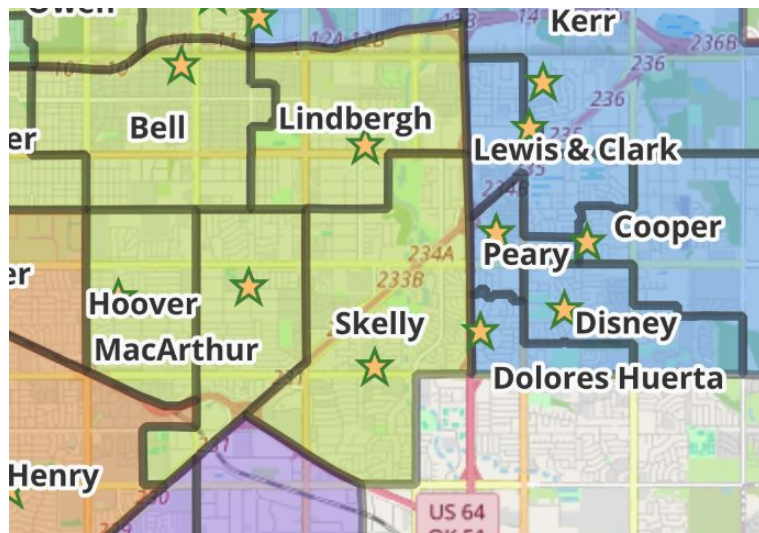


787 students impacted

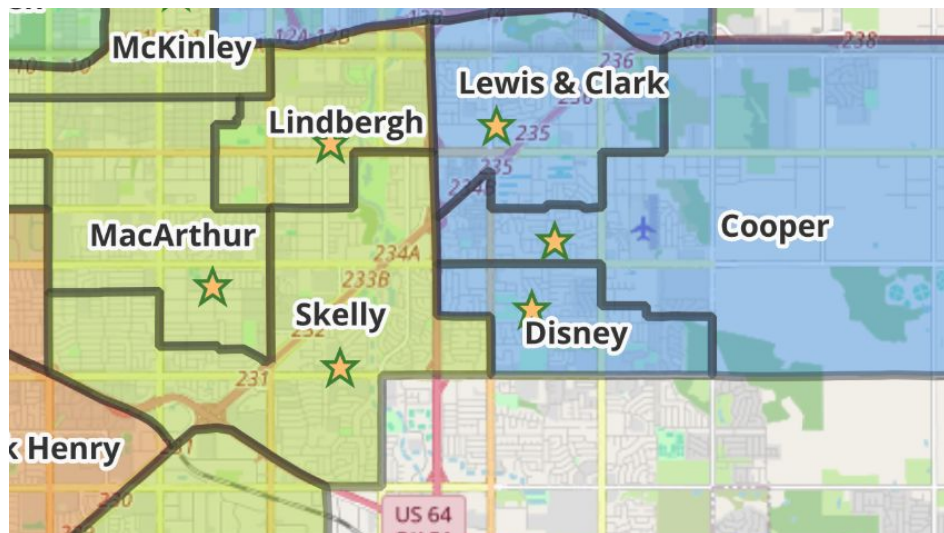
732 families impacted

Closing Site	Welcoming Sites
Dolores Huerta Elementary	Skelly Elementary, Disney Elementary
Hoover Elementary	Skelly Elementary, MacArthur Elementary
Peary Elementary	Cooper Elementary, Disney Elementary

Elementary Group 5: Dolores Huerta, Hoover, and Peary

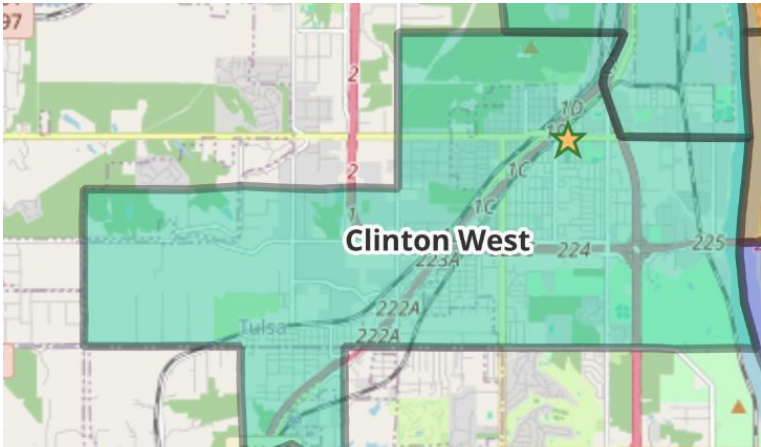


current



proposed

Elementary Group 6: Robertson

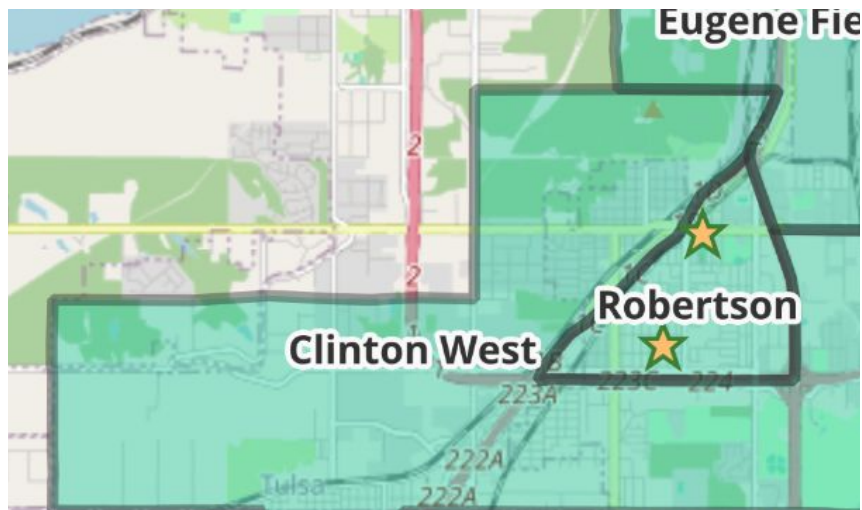


228 students impacted

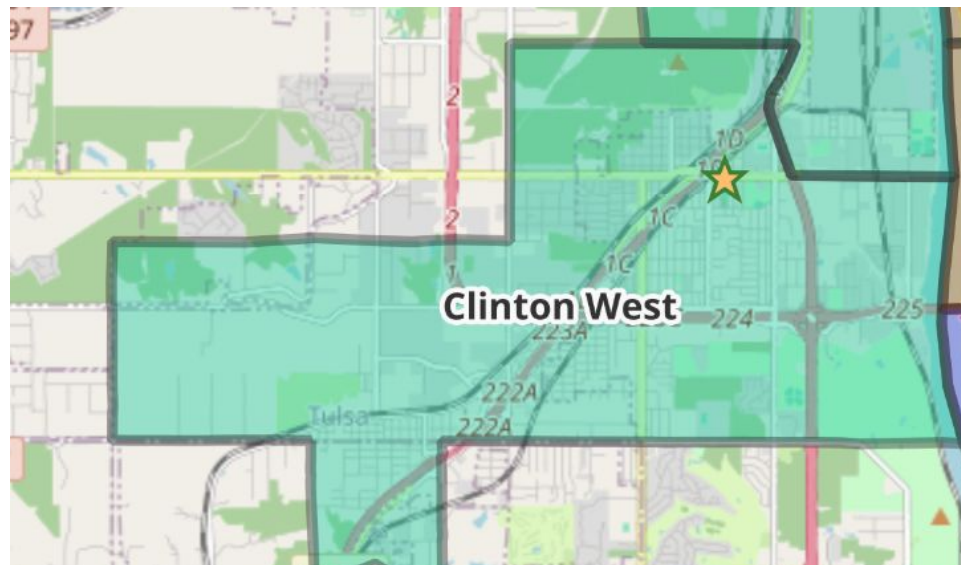
181 families impacted

Closing Site	Welcoming Sites
Robertson Elementary	Clinton West Elementary

Elementary Group 6: Robertson

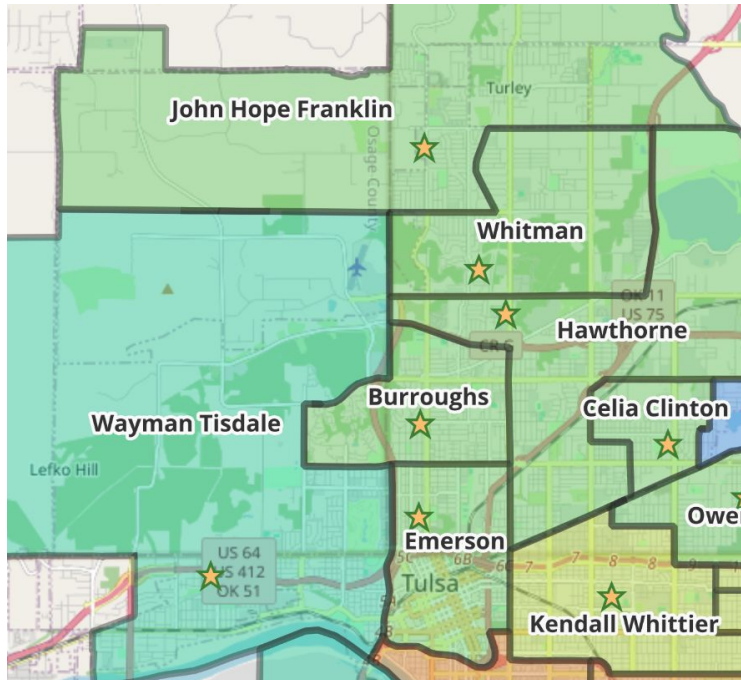


current



proposed

Secondary Groups 1 and 2: Thoreau Demonstration Academy, Tulsa MET Middle and High School, Central Middle School



720 students impacted

653 families impacted

Closing Site

Thoreau Demonstration Academy

Tulsa MET Middle and High School

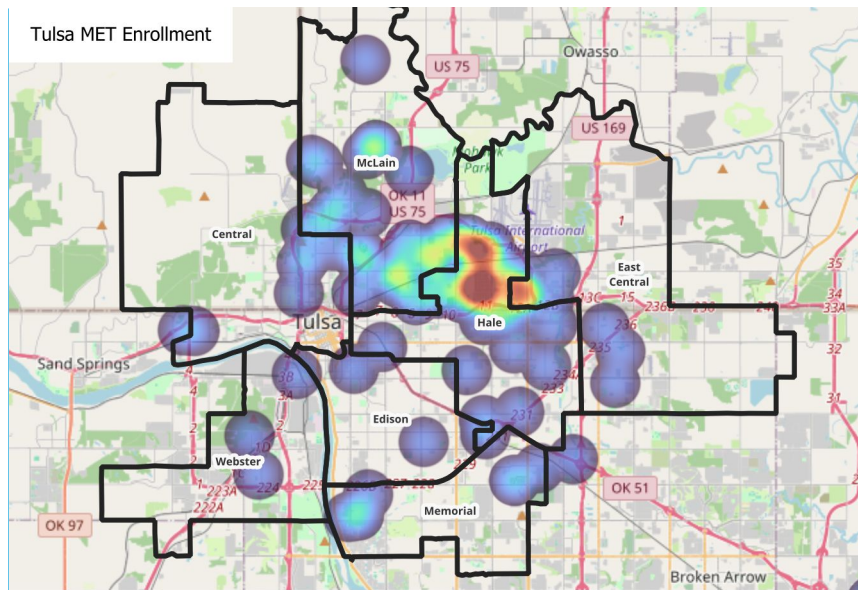
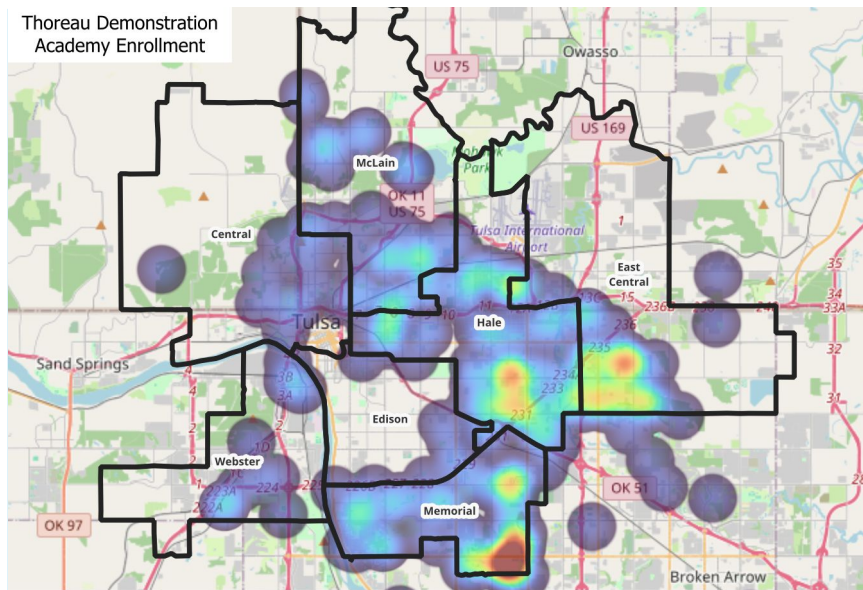
Central Middle School

Welcoming Sites

Students return to home school or participate through the School Enrollment Window for the 27-28 School Year

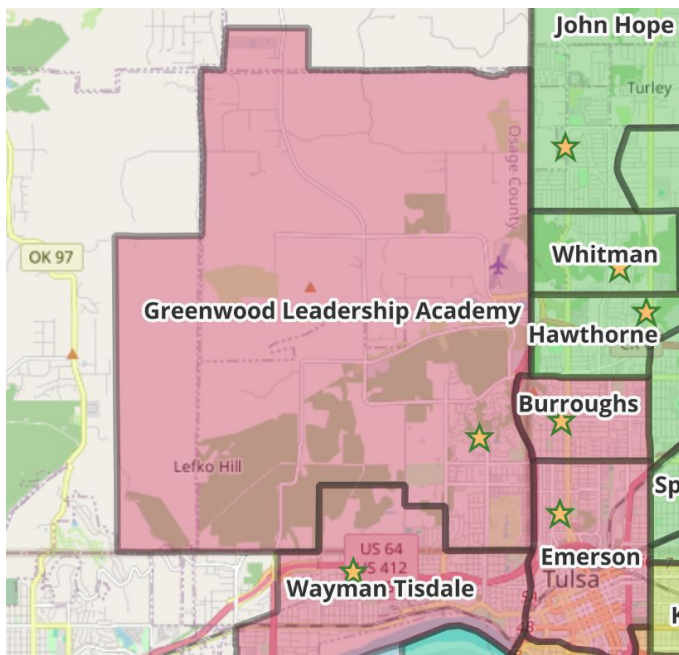
Monroe Middle School, Webster Middle School

Secondary Group 1: Thoreau Demonstration Academy and Tulsa MET Middle and High School

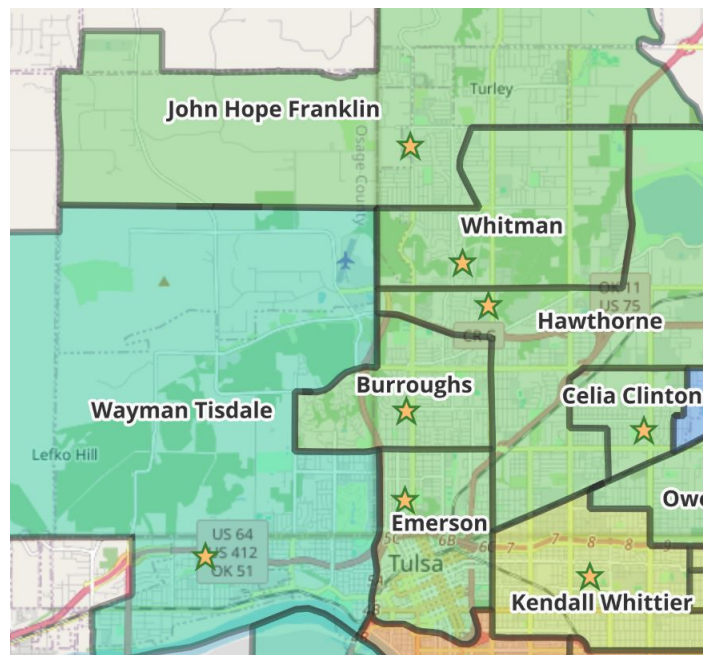


Secondary Group 2: Central Middle School

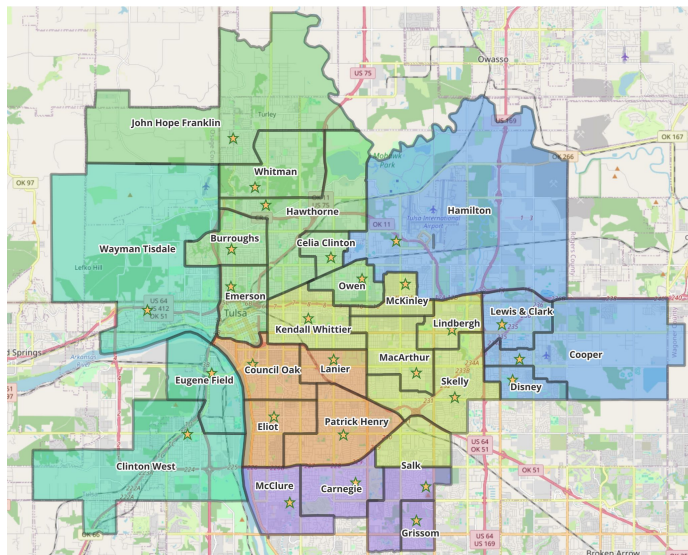
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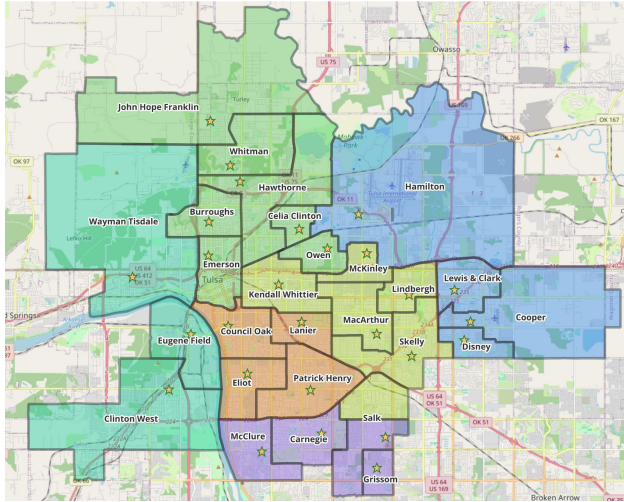


Across all recommendations, there are a few shifts in feeder patterns for elementary to middle and high schools.



Feeder	New or Shifting Schools
Webster	Wayman Tisdale (from Central)
McLain	Burroughs and Emerson (from Central) Owen (from Hale)
East Central	Hamilton (from Hale)
Hale	Salk north of 51st Street (from Memorial)

Across all recommendations, there are a few shifts in feeder patterns for elementary to middle and high schools.



*~70% of proposed Central students are in virtual programs and would not attend a physical location every day.

Feeder	Current building use	Proposal building use
Webster	58.2% (1541/2649)	77.2% (2147/2781)
McLain	54.5% (3843/7045)	75.2% (4601/6121)
East Central	59.1% (4180/7077)	82.4% (4540/5509)
Hale	58.5% (5539/9469)	77.6% (5295/6825)
Edison	87.8% (3741/4259)	89.5% (3810/4259)
Memorial	61.6% (3446/5595)	77.8% (3395/4365)
Magnets	88% (5690/6466)	92.4% (5581/6038)
Central as an Alternative High School Hub	52.2% (1678/3216)	105.3%* (1038/986)



Approach to Reductions

We believe most of the loss in positions can be navigated through attrition; if a reduction in force is needed, we follow established procedures based on district policy and negotiated agreements.

We are beginning to develop implementation plans to ensure that we are prepared if the board adopts this proposal. We know that families will have early questions that deserve timely answers.



**Planning for
Implementation**

Questions we would address before winter break

- **Home School:** What is my child's new home school? Does this change my student's middle or high school?
- **Transfers Requests:** I'm currently a transfer student at X school, can I request a different school?
- **Before/After School Programming:** Which sites will have before/after care available?

Questions we would address later

- **School Calendar and Bell Times:** What changes, if any, will we make for 27-28 to the school calendar and school start/end times?
- **Transportation:** What options will be available to me? Where will the bus stop be?

We are developing implementation plans to ensure that, if the board adopts this proposal, we are prepared. We know that families will have early questions that deserve timely answers.



**Implications for
School Bond Dollars**

How will this impact the bond that was recently approved? Every dollar that families and Tulsa community members approved will go towards students. If there were upgrades, construction, or materials flagged for individual sites impacted by the proposal, those will be redirected to receiving sites. We will engage our bond oversight committee to support these decisions.



Summarizing our Proposal and Signaling What's Ahead



The decisions we've proposed enable us to ensure more consistent, high quality experiences in our schools.



Improved student experiences



Ensure dedicated Art, Music, and PE teachers at every elementary school



Increase the number of students with access to a highly qualified teacher



Maximize every dollar for every student - including stronger support to sites



Expand access to in-demand programs in Tulsa Public Schools

We've made some intentional decisions as part of this proposal to expand seats at high quality or in-demand options. We will need to keep considering options like this to draw in new students to TPS.



Improved student experiences



**Expand access to
in-demand programs in
Tulsa Public Schools**

- Expanding seats at Felicitas Mendez International School
- Co-locating some of our virtual offerings in a “High School Hub” at Central High School, and exploring other future options to add in demand career tech options in the same building

Over the next several weeks, we are continuing community sessions to answer questions about this proposal and learn key information to support further planning.



Continued Listening Sessions

Tell us what matters most to you: complete the survey through Oct. 16



- Multiple opportunities to attend Community Information Sessions:
 - Tuesday, September 29
 - Tuesday, October 6
 - Wednesday, October 7 (Spanish only)
 - Thursday, October 8
 - Monday, October 12
 - Wednesday, October 14

More information: tulsaschools.org/planning