



Superintendent's Proposal to Address Budget Deficit

October 19, 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 \$12 million 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.

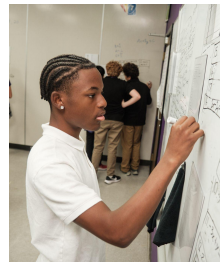
We must make thoughtful, long-term decisions that protect what students need most to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Our proposal strengthens Tulsa Public Schools now and into the future, responds to the immediate budget challenge, and is aligned to community preferences and expectations for their children.

After our eight community listening sessions and over a year of shared community engagement with the board, we know we need to address two critical realities:

1. We must continue dramatically accelerating student learning. This means increasing access to highly qualified, certified teachers and the programming and extracurricular activities that engage young people.
2. Our financial reality demands a proactive response. Failure to act is not an option.

Focusing on the student experience



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+ responses to Fall 2025 strategic plan/bond survey

2,200+ responses to Fall 2026 budget survey

5 cross-functional summer working groups

After reviewing comment cards from our in-person sessions and the 2,202 responses on our community survey thus far, the following trends emerge:

1. 63% of respondents identified as a family member of a TPS student. The majority were parents of elementary students.
2. 80% of participants rated a high quality teacher as one of their top 3 priorities
3. Following the 9/21 board meeting, the response to the question about fewer schools with more consistent services or more schools with reduced services remains a similar trend: 51% chose fewer schools, 31% chose more schools, and 18% were unsure.
4. Respondents emphasized academic quality, preserving programs, and access to services, including special education, counseling, arts, and extracurricular activities.

“All students should have qualified teachers and access to all the programs TPS has to offer. It isn’t fair that some schools have IB, AP, and special electives and others struggle to keep teachers from one year to the next.”

Survey results as of October 16, 2026

We have 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

This year 6,119 students at 21 schools do not have dedicated teachers for music and art.



Enrollment Landscape and TPS Budget Reduction Efforts

Other Communities Facing Declining Enrollment

NEWS > LOCAL NEWS > CUYAHOGA COUNTY

New report projects continued CMUSD enrollment decline over next decade

The report was prepared for CMUSD 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

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



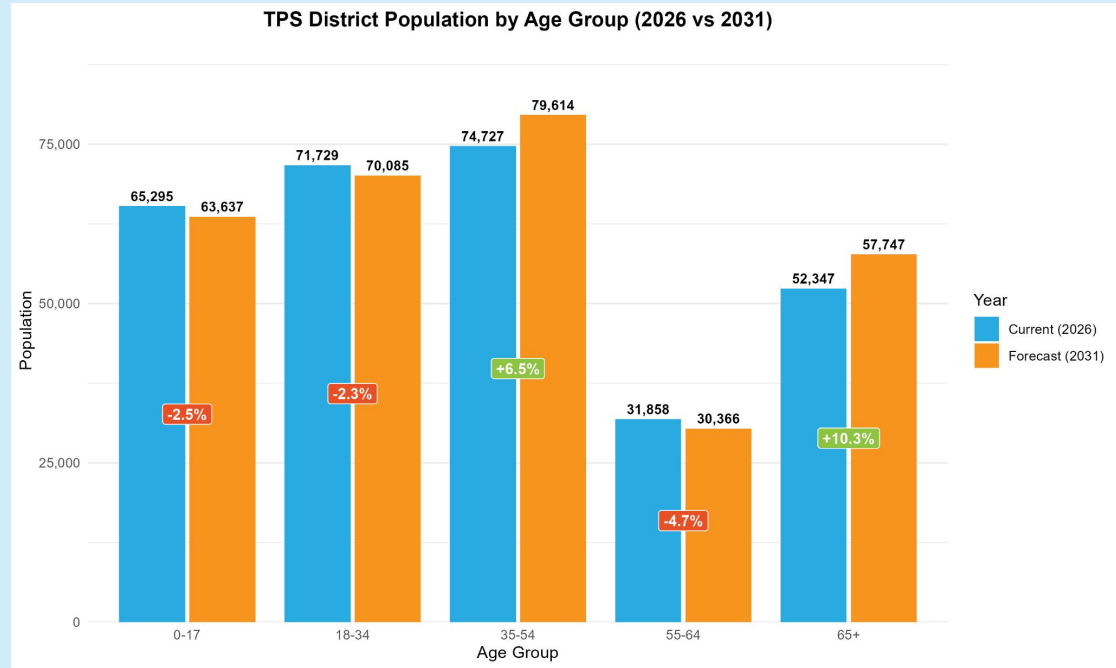
KGUN 9 > NEWS >
COMMUNITY INSPIRED JOURNALISM >
MIDTOWN & DOWNTOWN NEWS

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.

Tulsa's population is growing while the number of children is declining.

As a result, the number of public school students over the coming years will likely continue to decline.

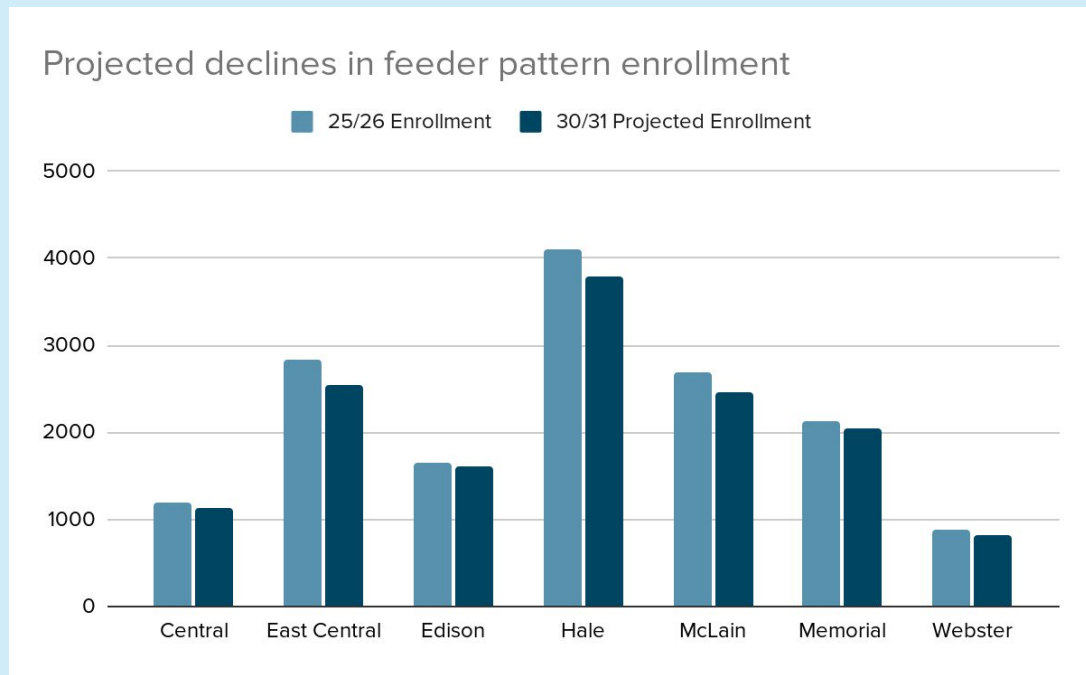


Source: [Esri, Updated Demographics 2026/2031](#)

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.

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

This will lead to continued declines in per pupil funding.



Tulsa Public Schools has taken a multi-step approach to address our budget challenge.

When we first began our efforts to reduce the structural deficit two years ago, we followed a simple sequence:

- Reduced or eliminated vendor contracts and outside services
- Eliminated roles at central office and reduced department budgets
- Reviewed site costs to identify efficiencies

We are now at a point where closing the budget gap requires addressing decisions that impact sites. Over the next several years, we will continue looking for ways to be more efficient with the way we provide a quality learning experience to every student.

Tulsa Public Schools Budget Reduction Efforts

NEWS > LOCAL NEWS

Tulsa Public Schools ends partnership with Reading Partners

NEWS

Tulsa school district to eliminate 50 roles, focusing on student-first resources

Tulsa Public Schools plans to eliminate 50 administrative positions by June 30, aiming to redirect resources toward student needs, according to a district statement. The decision reflects ongoing efforts to prioritize educational outcomes amid fiscal challenges.

DAVID PROCK
FEBRUARY 19, 2026 05:30 PM • 1 MIN READ

SCHOOLS & FAMILIES

Tulsa Public Schools considering closures and salary freezes as district shares an update on budget woes

by Anna Colletto September 8, 2026

Facebook X LinkedIn Email

SCHOOLS & FAMILIES

Tulsa Public Schools administrative layoffs just the 'first round' of cuts, district says

by Anna Colletto February 23, 2026

Facebook X LinkedIn Email

Tulsa Public Schools board approves sale of nine surplus properties

Mar 24, 2026 Updated Mar 26, 2026 1

TPS asks for public feedback for potential cuts in the wake of a \$12 million budget shortfall

Public Radio Tulsa | By Angel Ford
Published September 10, 2026 at 10:03 AM CDT

Facebook X LinkedIn Email

Details of the District's Proposal

We are proposing school closures as the primary method to meet the \$12 million identified in the Board Resolution. These annual savings would be realized each year beginning in 2027-28 (FY28).



**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: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Continued movement of eligible items out of the general fund- Reduced salary costs (primarily through attrition)- Reduced non-salary costs by department leaders

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 applied consistent criteria across every school, balancing building conditions, location, and opportunities for students.

When schools had similar enrollment and utilization, we considered building conditions, available capacity, and opportunities to strengthen in-demand programs. These recommendations are not easy, but they are intended to strengthen the long-term effectiveness and efficiency of our district.

Example decision points:

- Springdale and Sequoyah - we considered building conditions and long-term facility costs alongside a desire to centralize dual language programming at an expanded Felicitas Mendez International School.
- Hoover and MacArthur - MacArthur's larger facility and location alongside Hale Middle School and Hale High School creates opportunities for connections to the career academies in the feeder.
- Dolores Huerta and East Tulsa consolidations - combining nearby East Tulsa schools fills buildings that have room to spare, costs less to run, and creates more consistency in student experiences and programs.

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

Elementary Site Closures	Secondary Site Closures	Other Building Changes
<p>Anderson Elementary</p> <p>Bell Elementary</p> <p>Dolores Huerta Elementary</p> <p>Greenwood Leadership Academy</p> <p>Hoover Elementary</p> <p>Kerr Elementary</p> <p>Key Elementary</p> <p>Marshall Elementary</p> <p>Mitchell Elementary</p> <p>Peary Elementary</p> <p>Robertson Elementary</p> <p>Sequoyah Elementary</p> <p>Springdale Elementary</p> <p>Unity Learning Academy</p>	<p>Central Middle School</p> <p>Thoreau Demonstration Academy</p> <p>Tulsa MET MS/HS</p>	<p>Central would evolve into a Polytechnic High School with multiple career academy pathways.</p> <p>Felicitas Mendez International School would relocate to the Anderson building.</p> <p>GLA/Academy Central building would continue to serve students in the SOAR Academy.</p> <p>Thoreau building would be repurposed by Tulsa Public Schools.</p>

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.

Enrollment and building capacity for recommended sites

School	10.1.25 Enrollment	Building capacity	Building use
ANDERSON ELEMENTARY	381	602	63%
BELL ELEMENTARY	342	674	51%
CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL	242 (589 w/ HS)	986	60%
DOLORES HUERTA ELEMENTARY	326	513	64%
GREENWOOD LEADERSHIP ACADEMY	255	582	44%
HOOVER ELEMENTARY	283	638	44%
KERR ELEMENTARY	334	697	48%
KEY ELEMENTARY	296	625	47%
MARSHALL ELEMENTARY	265	605	44%
MITCHELL ELEMENTARY	344	664	52%
PEARY ELEMENTARY	250	444	56%
ROBERTSON ELEMENTARY	226	513	44%
SEQUOYAH ELEMENTARY	373	743	50%
SPRINGDALE ELEMENTARY	370	628	59%
THOREAU DEMONSTRATION ACADEMY	360	675	53%
TULSA MET MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL	121	290	42%
UNITY LEARNING ACADEMY	242	536	45%

We used consistent methodology to inform school boundary changes.

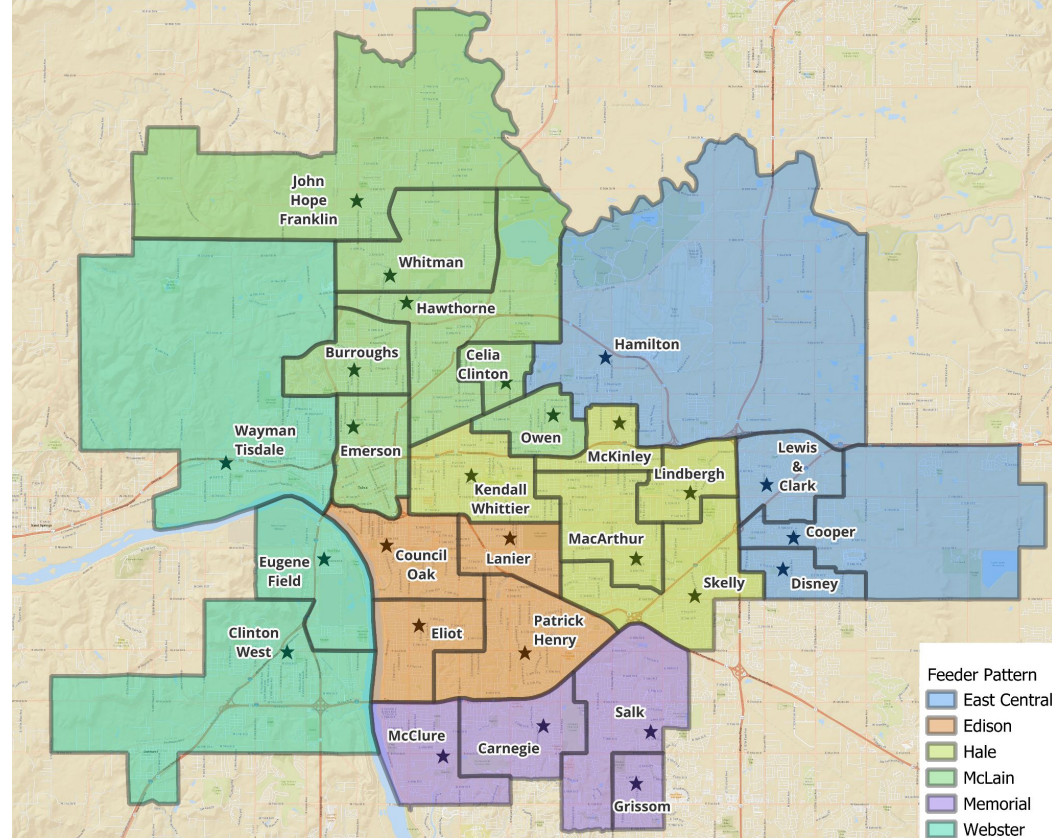
Methodology

- Prioritized identifying a school with the shortest geographic distance from the student's home address
- Targeted building use of 85% or less at receiving sites to allow for any unanticipated future growth
- Considered natural geographic or physical barriers (e.g. railroads, major roadways)

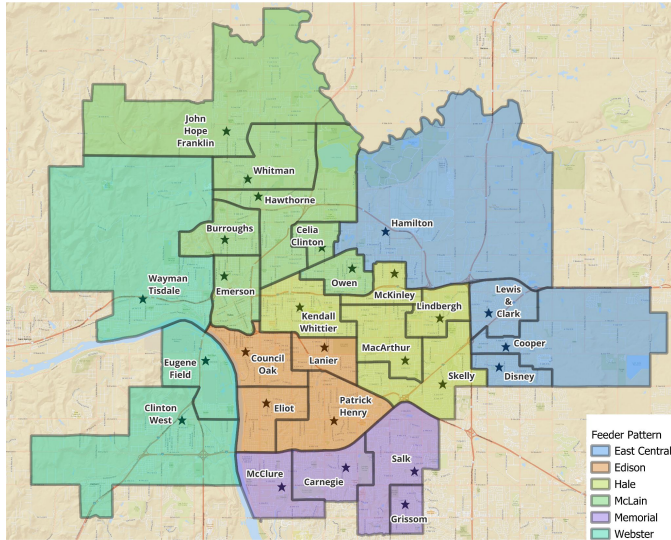
Proposed elementary school boundaries and feeder patterns

Our final proposal includes one change to school boundaries presented on Sept. 21. Salk's entire boundary will feed into the Memorial feeder pattern.

This higher-resolution map is posted on our website at tulsaschools.org/planning. We will update Find a School before the 27-28 enrollment window.



These recommendations result in more consistent and financially sustainable building use while providing flexibility for unexpected enrollment shifts.



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

Feeder Pattern	Current building use (based on 9.5.26 enrollment)	Proposal building use (based on 9.5.26 enrollment)
Webster	58.2% (1541/2649)	78.3% (2178/2781)
McLain	54.5% (3843/7045)	75.9% (4647/6121)
East Central	59.1% (4180/7077)	82.4% (4537/5509)
Hale	58.5% (5539/9469)	75.6% (5159/6825)
Edison	87.8% (3741/4259)	89.5% (3810/4259)
Memorial	61.6% (3446/5595)	80.9% (3531/4365)
Magnets	88% (5690/6466)	92.4% (5581/6038)
Central: Polytechnic High School and virtual programs	52.2% (1678/3216)	97.3%* (959/986)

Understanding Full Operating Cost by School Site

Each fiscal year, we track the total cost to operate every school site in the district.

However, individual building costs were not a driving factor in the consolidation proposal.

Tonight's recommendations only reduce a portion of individual site costs. Most of the annual spend will follow students to their receiving schools, ensuring a quality student experience at every site.

Fiscal Year 2026 Actuals	Total Cost	Salary	Non-Salary
ANDERSON ELEMENTARY	3,955,384	2,970,707	984,677
BELL ELEMENTARY	3,491,512	2,654,480	837,032
CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL	3,028,380	2,368,731	659,649
DOLORES HUERTA ELEMENTARY	3,313,874	2,563,496	750,378
GREENWOOD LEADERSHIP ACADEMY	2,327,166	1,705,709	621,457
HOOVER ELEMENTARY	3,111,688	2,476,884	634,804
KERR ELEMENTARY	3,599,858	2,867,382	732,476
KEY ELEMENTARY	2,853,184	2,062,064	791,120
MARSHALL ELEMENTARY	2,647,401	2,062,064	585,337
MITCHELL ELEMENTARY	3,131,541	2,472,297	659,244
PEARY ELEMENTARY	3,015,740	2,442,486	573,254
ROBERTSON ELEMENTARY	2,902,569	2,262,859	639,710
SEQUOYAH ELEMENTARY	4,159,950	3,161,746	998,204
SPRINGDALE ELEMENTARY	3,363,681	2,657,132	706,549
THOREAU DEMONSTRATION ACADEMY	3,745,143	2,811,696	933,447
TULSA MET MS/HS	2,524,698	2,159,407	365,291
UNITY LEARNING ACADEMY	2,696,835	2,111,694	585,141
Total Cost	53,868,604	41,810,834	12,057,770

What happens if we do nothing?

- The district requires a \$48 million fund balance to sustain daily operations.
- Without the \$12 million in savings, the gap carries into next year's budget and the one after.
- Enrollment is projected to decline in every feeder pattern. Without action, we project six more elementary schools will fall below 60% building use in the next 1-2 years.
- In the fall of 2028 we will be unable to pay employees.

	Revenue	Expenditures	Fund Balance	Deficit
2025-26	358,521,632	368,999,875	74,611,353	(10,478,243)
2026-27	354,610,678	372,205,597	56,016,434	(17,594,919)
2027-28	352,270,927	362,177,830	34,109,531	(21,906,903)
2028-29	349,252,069	366,177,830	5,183,770	(28,925,761)
2029-30	346,908,701	370,177,830	(30,585,359)	(35,269,129)

A decision this evening helps us chart a path for our TPS team members to transfer into roles that align with their expertise and certifications.

Our \$8.5 million estimate assumes stable enrollment (based on 2025-26 enrollment and spending data) and is a conservative projection to ensure we are predicting true annual, structural savings.

The staffing plan anticipates a change of approximately 212 roles between 2025–26 and 2027–28, with normal attrition expected to account for most, if not all, of this change.

Role	2025-26 positions	2027-28 planned positions	Change
Teachers	1,327.5	1,249	-78.5
English language development teachers	159	120	-39
Gifted and talented teachers	42.5	32.5	-10
Itinerant fine arts teachers	13.5	11.5	-2
Pre-K teaching assistants (176-day)	131	130	-1
Teaching assistants (172-day)	31	27	-4
TRAICE teaching assistants	2	1	-1
Paraprofessionals	8	5	-3
Librarians	66	49	-17
Principals	61	44.5	-16.5
Assistant principals	37	44	7
Deans	2	2	0
Counselors (176-day)	48	41	-7
Counselors (181-day)	8	9	1
Counselors (186-day)	23	23	0
Counselors (201-day)	11	8	-3
Counselors (206-day)	9	9	0
Nurses	14.5	12.9	-1.6
Health assistants	54	37	-17
Principal secretaries	62	45.5	-16.5
Clerks (182-day)	48	43	-5
Clerks (195-day)	31	33	2

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 Annual Savings

\$2.6 million

**Potential Long-Term
Savings**

(not factored into
recommendation estimate)

\$0.9 million

To project operational cost savings, we looked at the biggest cost drivers and used historical data and conservative assumptions.

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



Addressing Community Input

Community members signaled that they want us to reduce district spending. Central office teams cut \$12.6 million in salary and non-salary costs over the past two years.

Over two years, \$12.6 million in central office spending reduction:

- **\$6.6 million** from a reduction of nearly 100 filled and unfilled roles
- **\$4.3 million** in contracts from FY25 to FY26
- **\$1.7 million** in department budget savings in FY26

Central Office will make an additional \$1.5 million in cuts as a part of this recommendation.

Cuts at central office alone are insufficient to address our budget challenge.

Community feedback is clear. 51% of those surveyed say school closures and consolidations, while difficult, are better than increasing class sizes or reducing key services.

There are 846 traditional elementary classrooms in TPS right now.

91% of these classes are at or below the target ratio.

Combining schools also combines their federal funding, so a principal has more to spend on roles that directly serve students, such as reading specialists, additional teachers, and social workers.

This proposal does not change the staffing plan, but it does give individual sites more flexibility to add the positions they need.

Families want to know what school they would attend next year with this proposal.

Every family is assigned a “school of right” or a home school. Families will be able to use the map, already on our tulsaschools.org/planning website, and we are designing a school look up tool that makes it easy to enter your home address.

Families would also have the option to apply through our Enroll Tulsa window for 2027-28.

We're ready to support our families to understand their options and get excited about their school community for next year.

Families with students in special education need clarity on the impact to programs, and we are working ahead to ensure they have it.

- We've already identified the 682 special education students impacted by the proposal and shared it with our Special Education Team.
- Team leaders reviewed student IEPs at impacted schools to ensure continuity of service.
- If the proposal is approved, we will begin contacting every family of a special education student to ensure they have the support they need for a strong start in 2027-28.

Families will continue to have access to the full continuum of services their students need and deserve.

Taking care of Team Tulsa is a top priority in our proposal. The sooner a decision, the sooner we can match impacted staff with an aligned role.

No changes would take effect until the 27-28 school year.

As soon as the proposal is approved, our Talent Management team is ready to launch a full support plan to match each impacted employee with a role that fits.

Support will include meet-and-greets, matching processes, and hiring supports. We're learning from other cities as well who included public reports on the percent of team members matched to a role.

We stand ready to do the same.

We expect many of our staff to continue providing excellent instruction and support to the same students and families in their new school communities.

Retaining Team Tulsa is a priority. We will have a collaborative and communicative process to support our staff.

LISTEN TO EMPLOYEES

Collaborate with employees to collect their preferences and individual needs early, including following students, feeder patterns, geographic location, and preferred transfer sites.

COLLABORATE WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Partner with AFT, TCTA, and district teams to align messaging, clarify expectations, and communicate staff assignment guidance grounded in contract and policy.

COMMUNICATE CONSISTENTLY

Maintain ongoing updates to reduce uncertainty, strengthen transparency, and help employees make informed assignment decisions.

CERTIFIED TEACHER PLACEMENT

Facilitate teacher placement while balancing employee preferences, instructional needs, feeder patterns, geography, and student continuity whenever possible.

SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL PLACEMENTS

Coordinate placements for site-based support professionals, including aspiring educators, office staff, child nutrition, paras, TAs, and maintenance team members

FINALIZE EARLY & PREPARE

Finalize and communicate placements as early as possible to support employee stability, retention, smooth transitions, and school operations

Coupled with site-based roles, impacted employees will have the opportunity to explore district-level positions.

Families told us transportation is a priority, and the district is already planning ahead for 2027-28.

Planning ahead for 2027-28:

- We can sustain routes for all eligible students **and** provide targeted, additional routes for students with unique geographic barriers (like highways and railroads) on their route to school.
- Preliminary analysis shows that projected average ride time for students will be the same or less than current routes.
- During the enrollment window, families will be required to register for transportation services to make our routing more efficient and effective.
- The City of Tulsa has publicly committed to support the district in addressing walk hazards for our students by leveraging crossing guards, walking school bus, signage, MTTA, etc.

We can use available resources at receiving schools to support the transition.

We have \$7.4 million in our building fund reserve that must be used for bond-eligible projects. Our finance and operations teams are prepared to support receiving school sites to identify projects that will ensure we are ready on the first day of the 27-28 school year to welcome new students.

For example: \$25 million in the 2026 bond is currently planned for renovation and construction projects at Springdale, Hoover, and Marshall. These dollars can be repurposed to buildings receiving students to maximize future-facing investments.

At the end of the day, our dollars can go further when we consolidate them into a few buildings rather than spreading those resources across our current portfolio.

Our community has successfully repurposed school facilities in the past to meet other community needs. Our board has an established process to surplus and sell buildings.

When a school is closed, our district is committed to maintaining and securing the facility. This includes mowing, maintenance, and security monitoring.

Board Policy 5402 allows the board to consider what other community needs can be addressed with school district buildings and property. Key priorities like housing, affordable childcare, or community centers are recurring themes in community meetings.

The board makes decisions based on community input, and any dollars earned from building sales can be invested in current school sites.

Buildings impacted by recommended closures and consolidations

Buildings that would continue to serve students or would be repurposed for other TPS district use	No specific proposed repurposing at this time
Anderson Greenwood Leadership Academy / Academy Central Thoreau	Bell Dolores Huerta Hoover Kerr Key Marshall Mitchell Peary Ralph J. Bunche (current site of Mendez) Robertson Sequoyah Springdale Unity Learning Academy Tulsa MET MS/HS



**Looking
Forward**

We are committed to attracting and retaining families in Tulsa Public Schools.

This proposal responds to the immediate challenge ahead of us. We also are seeking to add students, not only cut costs.

We believe we can do this by:

1. Expanding virtual offerings to out of district students
2. Exploring additional ways to expand seats at in-demand programs
3. Executing on the investments we committed to in the 2026 Bond (especially our College and Career Academies and Fine Arts/Athletics)

The resolution timeline the board approved supports a critical path forward to strong launch to the 2027-28 school year.

An October decision provides a significant planning advantage for the district compared to a decision made later in the school year. District teams need enough time to prepare for:

- The 2027-28 Enrollment Window opening in January. Impacted families need enough time to understand their options, explore new school communities, and make choices for their students.
- Finalizing key information about site programming and resources (like before/after care programming) that families need to make choices
- Contacting families about special education transitions
- Updating systems for accreditation, scheduling, and other technical items
- Mapping out transportation routes and addressing walk route concerns
- Confirming our school calendar and bell times
- Supporting talent transitions for impacted staff
- Planning for and implementing construction projects

Our district convened a cross-functional transition team to start mapping the hundreds of interconnected decisions we will need to make in the coming weeks to implement the proposal.

**Family
Transition
Support**

Supports families most
impacted by this proposal

**Talent Support
for Staff at Both
Impacted and
Receiving Sites**

Supports members
of Team Tulsa

**Operational
Planning for a Strong
Start to the 27-28
School Year**

Ensures we don't miss
a beat entering the 27-28
school year

The Board's Resolution and Timeline ensure the district has time to execute transitions for our staff and families.

Implications to consider:

- Without the \$12 million in savings, the gap carries into next year's budget and the one after.
- Enrollment is projected to decline in every feeder pattern. Without action, six more elementary schools would fall below 60 percent building use in the coming years.
- The alternatives are worse: larger class sizes, salary freezes for all employees, cuts to counseling, tutoring, field trips, athletics and fine arts, and reduced transportation, including ending magnet transportation and widening walk zones.
- Continued uncertainty will amplify the strain already experienced by staff both at sites and those supporting them. Attention can refocus on executing a strong 2026-27 school year and preparing for next year.
- A decision tonight lets the district name receiving schools and notify families before winter break, ahead of the January enrollment window. A delay pushes any change to 2028-29 and adds another year to the deficit.

Our proposal strengthens Tulsa Public Schools now and into the future, responds to the immediate budget challenge, and is aligned to community preferences and expectations for their children.

After our eight community listening sessions and over a year of shared community engagement with the Board, we know we need to address two critical realities:

1. We must continue dramatically accelerating student learning. This means increasing access to highly qualified, certified teachers and the programming and extracurricular activities that engage young people.
2. Our financial reality demands a proactive response. Failure to act is not an option.