

Student Assignment Project:

FAQs from Engagement Session #2 Focus Groups

Are Options 1, 2 and 3 the final choices? Why was Option 3 included if it moves so many students?

No. The options presented during Engagement Session #2 are concepts. None will be adopted exactly as drawn, and a recommendation may combine elements from several options.

Each concept was developed to test a different approach to the same enrollment challenges and help the community consider the tradeoffs.

How can we evaluate elementary options without seeing the middle and high school feeder patterns?

We heard this concern in nearly every focus group. Elementary attendance areas are the building blocks of every feeder pattern, so they were developed first.

Engagement Session #3 will show how each elementary attendance area feeds into a middle and high school, using maps as well as charts.

Will Engagement Session #3 present one option or several? Will there be a fourth session?

Session #3 will present refined options that reflect feedback received during Session #2. The current plan is to present one elementary option and several middle and high school options that use the elementary boundaries as building blocks. Feedback on the elementary boundaries will still be considered. Presenting one option does not mean those boundaries are final.

Is this a three-year fix? Will we be doing this again in a few years?

This phase of the Student Assignment Project addresses overcrowding related to new and expanded schools scheduled to open from 2027 through 2029. It is based on projects the Board has already approved and funded.

Attendance areas in a growing, changing district may need periodic adjustment. The goal is to avoid frequent changes by using reliable forecasts and clear feeder patterns. Longer-term solutions, such as new schools or additions, are handled through the District's capital planning process. Approved projects may require future attendance-area adjustments.

Is this a school closure process?

No school closure decisions are being proposed in the Session #2 options. Cary Reynolds Elementary is scheduled to close when Dresden Elementary opens, based on a decision made in 2022. As the project moves forward, additional possibilities may be considered in Session #3; no decisions have been made about those possibilities.

We also heard that including a school on a closure list can affect its enrollment and reputation for years, and that the spring 2026 process affected kindergarten enrollment at some schools. The District recognizes these concerns and will be clear about what is and is not being proposed.

Will feedback from Session #2 change anything? Can we see what people actually said?

Yes. Feedback from surveys, focus groups, public comments and Community Advisory Teams is summarized after each engagement session and posted at dekalbschoolsga.org/SAP. Session #3 materials will identify changes made in response to community feedback.

Why did the survey ask about parent engagement? Why couldn't I rank my preferences?

Some participants felt the final survey question implied that differences between schools result from parent involvement rather than leadership, staffing and resources. That was not the intent, and we appreciate the feedback.

How reliable are the forecasts? Do they account for new housing, students returning from private or charter schools, and recent enrollment declines?

Forecasts are updated as new data becomes available. As noted in the Session #1 FAQ, early materials used preliminary August data, and later phases use updated enrollment counts.

Forecasts consider birth rates, historical enrollment patterns and planned residential development. All forecasts have a margin of error, and the District uses available data to develop the most reliable projections possible.

How is capacity calculated?

The District's instructional-capacity model counts permanent classrooms, not portable classrooms, and applies a standard number of students per room. The model has been used since 2021 and is adjusted when buildings are renovated or rebuilt.

Do the "students affected" counts include students who attend choice or magnet programs elsewhere?

No. "Students affected" includes only students who live in an attendance area and attend the school assigned to that area.

Why isn't expanding Ashford Park or Montgomery one of the options?

As explained in the Session #1 FAQ, this phase is based on construction projects the Board has already approved and funded. An addition at Ashford Park, Montgomery or another school is not currently funded and could not be completed within the 2027–2029 timeframe. That does not mean expansion is off the table for the future.

Has the alternative proposal from Ashford Park families been reviewed?

Yes.

How would a dual-campus model work (Ashford Park/John Lewis or Montgomery/Nancy Creek)? Is it temporary or permanent?

Families asked for more detail before they can evaluate this model. The District will share examples of how it could be implemented, including:

- Which grades would attend each campus and how leadership would be structured
- Staffing and allotments, including specials, counselors, front-office staff and custodial staff
- Drop-off, pickup and bus routes, especially for families with children at both campuses
- PTA, clubs, after-school care and pre-K
- How DLI and other programs would continue
- Whether the arrangement would be temporary or long-term

Families who have experienced split campuses, including in the Dunwoody cluster, said they created challenges for family engagement and daily logistics. Those experiences will be considered.

Will the Cross Keys cluster get its own middle school?

This was one of the most consistent requests across focus groups, from families inside and outside the Cross Keys cluster. Many participants see it as key to resolving boundary questions elsewhere in the northern part of the District. This feedback is being considered alongside all other feedback from Engagement Session #2.

Will there be split feeders? What about three-way splits?

Clear feeder patterns are a priority. Most participants preferred one middle school feeding into one high school, and nearly all objected to three-way splits. Some said a split feeder pattern is acceptable if it keeps neighborhoods together. Session #3 will show the full feeder pattern for every option so these tradeoffs can be evaluated directly.

Why move small groups of students, or split neighborhoods along streets like Dresden Drive?

Attendance areas are built from planning units, which sometimes divide a neighborhood depending on the size and boundaries of the planning unit.

If my address is rezoned, can my child stay at their current school?

Policy AD provides a process for students who may request to remain at their current school under certain circumstances. Whether that provision applies to siblings, and under what circumstances, depends on the specific language of the policy and implementation rules.

The District should provide families with the exact eligibility requirements before they make assumptions about sibling eligibility. A request to remain at a school is not a guarantee of placement.

Why do the options do so little for the Dunwoody cluster?

Dunwoody families pointed out that some elementary schools, including newer and larger schools, have available seats, while Peachtree Middle School and Dunwoody High School are crowded.

Option 3 from Engagement Session #2 shifts students to Austin and Dunwoody elementary schools to the greatest extent possible without moving students who can walk to Vanderlyn, Kingsley and Chesnut. Moving more students into these schools would require detached, noncontiguous attendance areas and transportation to the schools. This could place a greater burden on families living in multifamily housing.

What about other District sites, such as Dresden, Briarcliff, Nancy Creek or the former Globe campus?

Participants suggested a middle school at Dresden or Briarcliff, a Lakeside ninth-grade academy at the former Globe campus, and Nancy Creek as a standalone elementary school. Nancy Creek is currently planned as swing space during construction and is expected to become available for another use in fall 2027.

How are travel time, traffic and walkability considered?

As noted in the Session #1 FAQ, transportation, traffic patterns and safety will be evaluated before a final recommendation. Participants asked that the review go beyond straight-line distance to include drive times, interstates, rail lines and industrial corridors, bus and driver needs, and safe walking routes.

When will magnet and specialty programs, including Kittredge, be part of the discussion?

Magnet and specialty programs, including Kittredge, will be discussed in Engagement Session #3.

What happens to DLI programs, like German immersion at Ashford Park or French immersion at Evansdale, if my address is rezoned?

As explained in the Session #1 FAQ, attendance-area changes and program placement are related but separate questions, and the answer can vary by program.

Why can't high-demand programs be offered at more neighborhood schools, including Cross Keys?

Many participants suggested that expanding programs such as High Achievers, magnet, STEM and DLI to more schools could reduce pressure on overcrowded clusters and give families more reasons to choose schools with available capacity. Others noted long waitlists for Kittredge, pre-K and after-school programs in the Chamblee cluster. This feedback will be shared with the District's academic leadership.

How will the District maintain school quality for students who are reassigned?

The District is committed to providing a high-quality education to all students, regardless of where they live or which school they attend.

How is the District reaching families who can't attend meetings, including the Cross Keys community?

The District offers online surveys, focus groups at different times of day, public comment sessions and Community Advisory Teams, with translated materials. The District also partners with community organizations to meet parents and families where they are.