



REIMAGINING SECONDARY EDUCATION

Public Report & Implementation Plan

An Innovative Approach to College & Career Readiness

October 2026

<https://www.redclayschools.com/schools-programs/reimagining-secondary-education>

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Executive Summary

The Red Clay Consolidated School District is undertaking a comprehensive redesign of its secondary school system to ensure all students graduate prepared for college, career, and life. This initiative—Reimagining Secondary Schools—addresses long-standing structural challenges that limit student opportunity and system effectiveness.

Over 25 years, the district expanded from five to seven high schools and from six to eight middle schools without corresponding enrollment growth. As a result, more than 1,500 secondary seats remain unfilled, and several schools operate below the sustainable enrollment necessary to provide robust academic programs, extracurricular offerings, and career pathways. At the same time, access to advanced coursework, career and technical education (CTE), and student opportunities varies significantly by school, often determined by enrolled school rather than student interest or readiness. Reimagining Secondary Schools responds to these challenges with a clear, student-centered vision built on three priorities:

- Equitable access to opportunity for every student
- Balanced and sustainable school enrollment
- Aligned programming from middle school through postsecondary experiences

At the center of this redesign is the launch of the Thomas McKean Innovation Center in August 2028, a districtwide hub for career-connected learning. The Innovation Center will provide access to high-demand career pathways, industry-recognized credentials, and work-based learning experiences. Students will remain enrolled in their home high schools while participating in specialized programming through coordinated school schedules and operations.

The plan also includes:

- Alignment of attendance zones to create clear feeder patterns and strengthen school communities
- Two fully enrolled comprehensive high schools, enabling expanded Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, athletics, arts, and extracurricular programs
- Expansion of workforce-aligned pathways supported by partnerships with industry and postsecondary institutions
- Strategic program realignment, including relocation of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme to Skyline Middle School to support balanced enrollment

A detailed implementation plan is already underway, guiding the district through final design, community engagement, system development, student transition, and full operational launch. The anticipated impact is significant:

- Expanded access to 20+ career pathways and credentialing opportunities for high school students
- Stronger, more comprehensive high schools with broader programming
- Increased alignment between student interests, workforce needs, and postsecondary pathways.
- More efficient use of district resources and facilities
- Improved equity in access, experience, and outcomes for all students

This initiative represents a strategic shift toward a more coherent, equitable, and future-focused secondary system. Through careful implementation and continued community engagement, Red Clay is building a model that ensures every student has access to meaningful opportunities and a clear pathway to success.

A Message from the Superintendent

Dear Red Clay Community,

Red Clay, Delaware’s largest public school district, serves a diverse student population that requires adaptable, innovative, and impactful learning pathways. It is our responsibility to ensure all students graduate ready to excel in higher education, future careers, and a dynamic world.

To fulfill this commitment, the Red Clay Board of Education approved the recommendations of the Red Clay Attendance- Zone and Programming Committee. Starting August 28, 2028, Thomas McKean High School will be reimagined as the Thomas McKean Innovation Center through expanded partnerships with local colleges, universities, and the business community.

The Innovation Center will provide coursework in the following areas:

- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Industry-standard credentialing programs
- Early college credit opportunities

The second recommendation approved the relocation of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme to Skyline Middle School.

These strategic updates directly support Red Clay’s 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, empowering us to equip every graduate for success on their chosen path—whether that involves pursuing higher education, acquiring trade skills, joining the military, or entering the workforce directly.

On April 15, 2026, the board approved a resolution to postpone the implementation of the Reimagining Secondary Education, including the McKean Innovation Center (MIC), to Ensure Adequate and Equitable Planning, Community Engagement, and Supportive Student Transition.

This temporary delay provides a valuable opportunity to sharpen our plans, strengthen dialogue with our community, and ensure the thoughtful, successful execution of these approved initiatives.

We are eager to move forward with this crucial planning phase to bring our shared vision to life, and we are deeply grateful for your ongoing support, partnership, and commitment to the success of all Red Clay students.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hugh Broomall
Interim Superintendent of Schools
Red Clay Consolidated School District

The Case for Change

Red Clay's current secondary structure reflects significant inefficiencies that directly affect student opportunities and school performance. Over the past two decades, the district expanded from five to seven high schools and from six to eight middle schools without corresponding enrollment growth. The result is:

- More than 1,500 empty secondary seats
- Multiple schools are now too small to sustain robust programming

This under-enrollment, combined with fragmented enrollment patterns, limits access to core opportunities such as:

- Advanced Placement and dual-enrollment courses
- Athletics (particularly sub-varsity development)
- Career and technical education pathways
- Electives and co-curricular offerings

Each of these opportunities depends on reliable enrollment levels to operate effectively.

Compounding this issue is the fact that high school attendance zones have not been updated since 2002, creating misaligned feeder patterns in which neighborhoods are split across multiple secondary schools with no clear vertical articulation between middle and high school zones.

Together, these conditions demonstrate an urgent need to redesign both the district's attendance boundaries and its secondary program structure to ensure strong, equitable, and sustainable learning environments for all students.

Enrollment and Facility Utilization

- The district operates 7 high schools and 8 middle schools without enrollment growth
- Several buildings operate below optimal capacity
- Course offerings vary significantly by school due to enrollment differences

Program Access and Equity Gaps

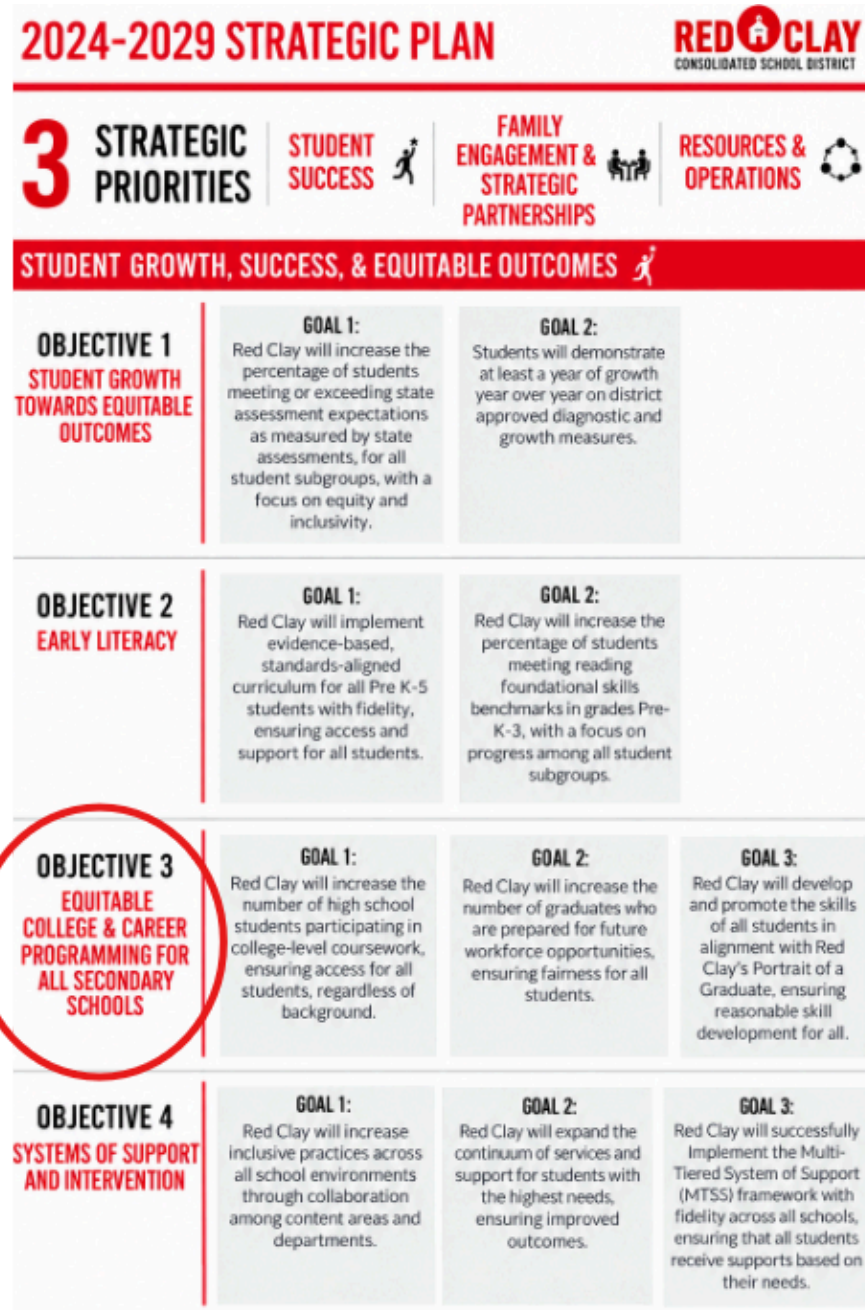
- Advanced programs and specialized pathways are not evenly distributed
- Students' opportunities are often determined by school assignment rather than interest or readiness

Workforce Alignment

- Existing structures limit the district's ability to:
 - o Scale work-based learning
 - o Build sustained partnerships with industry
 - o Provide consistent, high-quality career-connected experiences

Strategic Plan Alignment

The Reimagining Secondary Education Model reflects our ongoing commitment to the goals outlined in Red Clay’s Strategic Plan 2024-2029. Guided by all four strategic objectives for Student Growth, Success, & Equitable Outcomes, we place special emphasis on Objective 3—ensuring equitable, high-quality college and career programming for every secondary student. This work strengthens our promise to provide remarkable opportunities and pathways that prepare all learners for success.(view full strategic plan [here](#))



Committee Work and Board Action

The district conducted a multi-year evaluation of secondary programming and enrollment patterns before making recommendations.

Key steps in the process included:

- [District Taskforce: AI duPont High School Enrollment Decline](#) (January 2023 – June 2023)
 - Taskforce Key Recommendation: The School Board should consider high school attendance zones and the importance of enrollment as it relates to programming in comprehensive high schools.
- District Analysis – Secondary Attendance Zones (June 2024 – September 2024)
 - [School Board presentation](#) included:
 - Current attendance zones
 - Current feeder patterns
 - Attendance by physical residence
 - Secondary enrollment history
 - Additional contributing factors
 - Initial recommendations
- Secondary Attendance-Zone & Programming Committee
 - In November 2024, the Red Clay Board of Education established the Secondary Attendance-Zone & Programming Committee to evaluate the enrollment, programming, and attendance zones of Red Clay secondary schools and to make recommendations to the school board at the July 2025 board meeting. In doing so, the committee was to consider:
 - Strong and balanced enrollment across schools
 - Impact of Attendance Zone changes
 - Align boundaries to K-8 attendance zones when possible
 - Consider Geography and Neighborhood Schools when possible
 - Equitable access to quality education for all students
 - Advantages and challenges of each recommended option through data analysis, community feedback, and research
- Scope of the Committee:
 - Data Analysis: Review current enrollment data, optimal capacity of schools, and geography of schools and students
 - Legal and Policy Review: Ensure recommendations comply with all applicable local, state, and federal regulations
 - Stakeholder Engagement: Collect feedback from stakeholders, including parents, students, teachers, and community members, to inform recommendations
 - Recommendation Report: Present a final report to the school board outlining rationale
- The committee:
 - Maintained open communication with the school board, district leadership, and key stakeholders
 - Provided progress updates to the school board upon request
 - Engaged with the community members through open meetings, a town hall, and a survey

- o Maintained a public facing [district webpage](#) posting all meeting agendas, minutes, slides, data, and other supporting documents
 - o *Meetings were open to the public, held virtually via Zoom, and recorded.*
- Committee Membership- The committee included district administrators, board members, and school leaders, as outlined by RCCSD Board Policy 9003. The committee was comprised of district representatives, school board members, and building representatives:
 - o School Board Representatives:
 - Jose Matthews, President - District D
 - Victor J. Leonard, Sr. - District C (former)
 - Kecia T. Nesmith, Ed.D. - District F (former)
 - o District Administrator Representatives:
 - Mark Pruitt, Committee Chair, Director of Secondary Schools
 - Tawanda Bond, Ed.D., Sr. Director, Teaching & Learning
 - Shawn Snyder, Director, Information Technology & Choice
 - o Building Administrator Representatives:
 - Reginald Worlds, Principal, McKean High School
 - Jason Bastianelli, Former Principal, H.B. DuPont Middle School
 - Kendra Todd-Dixon, Principal, Conrad Schools of Science
 - o Red Clay Education Association Representatives
 - Emily Carroll
 - Thomas Brucker
 - Jodi Muffley
 - o Public Representatives
 - District A - Val Gould- Community Member
 - District B - Caitlin Merto- Parent
 - District C - Eric Sanford- Parent
 - District D - Madeleine Reitemeyer- Community Member
 - District E - Jennifer Recchiuti- Parent
 - District F - Amin Farooqui- Parent
 - District G - Antonio Gomes- Parent
- Expectations for Members
 - o Commitment: Committee members were expected to attend all scheduled meetings and actively participated in discussions and tasks
 - o Objectivity: Members approached the task with an open mind, focusing on the overall needs of the district and community rather than individual interests
 - o Collaboration: Members worked collaboratively, respecting diverse perspectives and expertise
 - o Communication: Members served as liaisons to the groups they represent, ensuring that all voices were heard and feedback was brought back to the committee

Summary of Meetings

From January through June 2025, the committee engaged in a structured, data-driven process to examine enrollment patterns, program access, and long-term sustainability across the district. The work began in January with a comprehensive analysis of historical and current data, including 25 years of enrollment trends, attendance zone configurations, feeder patterns, and the impact of charter and magnet schools. The committee also examined how enrollment levels influence access to advanced coursework, Career and Technical Education (CTE), extracurricular activities, and athletics.

In February, the committee expanded its analysis to include middle school enrollment trends, long-range state projections through 2050, and school capacity considerations. This deeper review revealed several key findings: feeder patterns had not been updated since 2002; multiple schools, including Skyline and Alexis I. duPont High School, experienced notable enrollment declines; and overall district enrollment remained relatively stable despite an increase in the number of schools. Additional concerns included fragmented attendance zones in the City of Wilmington, reduced transportation options, and inconsistent access to programs across schools.

With these findings in mind, the committee began brainstorming a wide range of potential solutions. Ideas focused on improving alignment and equity, including restructuring attendance zones into clearer feeder patterns, redistributing students more evenly, and ensuring consistent access to academic and extracurricular opportunities. More transformative concepts also emerged, such as repurposing a high school into an innovation or technical center, expanding K–12 or 6–12 configurations, consolidating middle school programs, and increasing virtual learning opportunities.

In March, the committee refined its focus, reaching unanimous consensus on three guiding priorities: aligning high school attendance zones with middle school feeders, distributing students more equitably across schools, and committing to equitable programming for all graduates. The group also explored innovation center models from across the country and heard from district leadership regarding the financial, operational, and programmatic implications of proposed changes.

April's work centered on evaluating the relevance, feasibility, and impact of proposed ideas. The committee reviewed research on optimal school size and configuration, analyzed findings from a recent CTE audit, and engaged in structured group work to assess each proposal's relevance and practicality. This led to a formal straw poll to help narrow the focus. The results showed the strongest support for the creation of an Innovation Center and the consolidation of a middle school program, while several other ideas were removed due to limited support or feasibility concerns.

Committee Member	A. Innovation Center	B. Relocate CSW	C. JDS as 6-12 Magnet	D. K-8 at Warner	E. 8 to 7 MS Programs	F. JDMYP to Skyline	G. AHM to AIH 6-12 Campus	H. Choice Bussing for all	I. Virtual 6-12 Program	J. Reduce Enroll at Cab & CSS
Jason Bastianelli		1		1	1	1				
Tawanda Bond	1			1	1	1				
Thomas Brucker	1				1		1		1	
Emily Carroll	1		1			1			1	
Amin Farooqui	1		1		1	1				
Antonio Gomes	1	1	1		1					
Val Gould	1		1	1				1		
Victor Leonard	1				1	1		1		
Jose Matthews										
Caitlin Merto	1		1	1				1		
Jodi Muffley	1	1					1		1	
Kecia Nesmith					1	1		1	1	
Mark Pruitt	1			1	1	1				
Jennifer Recchiuti	1	1	1							1
Madeleine Reitemeyer				1	1			1	1	
Eric Sanford	1		1		1				1	
Shawn Snyder	1			1	1	1				
Kendra Todd-Dixon	1				1	1			1	
Reginald Worlds	1		1		1				1	
Totals- 18 Possible	15	4	8	7	13	9	2	5	9	0

Figure 1. Committee Straw Poll Results

Later in May, the committee finalized its initial recommendations. These included reducing the number of attendance-zone high schools by one and establishing the Thomas McKean Innovation Center, consolidating middle school programs from eight to seven, and relocating the John Dickinson Middle School (MYP) program to Skyline to allow for increased high school enrollment at The John Dickinson School. The committee also agreed to include a future reevaluation of middle school attendance zones, particularly in Wilmington, to address ongoing concerns about equity and alignment.

In June, the committee reviewed community feedback gathered through town halls, surveys, and student focus groups. While this feedback informed discussion and reflection, no additional motions achieved sufficient support to alter the initial recommendation. The process concluded with a comprehensive plan grounded in data, stakeholder input, and a commitment to equitable access, positioning the district to better align resources, programs, and opportunities for all students.

A summary of community feedback can be found [here](#).

Why the Plan Was Selected by the Committee

The Reimagining Secondary Education Plan strengthened district programming while creating balanced enrollment across schools.

The plan:

- Created stronger and more balanced enrollment across middle and high schools
- Aligned high school attendance zones with K–8 feeder patterns
- Prioritized geographic coherence and neighborhood schools when possible
- Expanded equitable access to educational opportunities for 6th-12th grade students

- Highlighted McKean as a centrally located flagship campus

Opportunities for students include:

- Expanded Career and Technical Education pathways
- Industry-recognized credential programs
- Early college credit opportunities
- A broader range of elective offerings
- Expanded athletics and sub-varsity programs
- Stronger extracurricular and co-curricular opportunities

Because it provides a flexible and future-focused structure, the Thomas McKean Innovation Center allows Red Clay to:

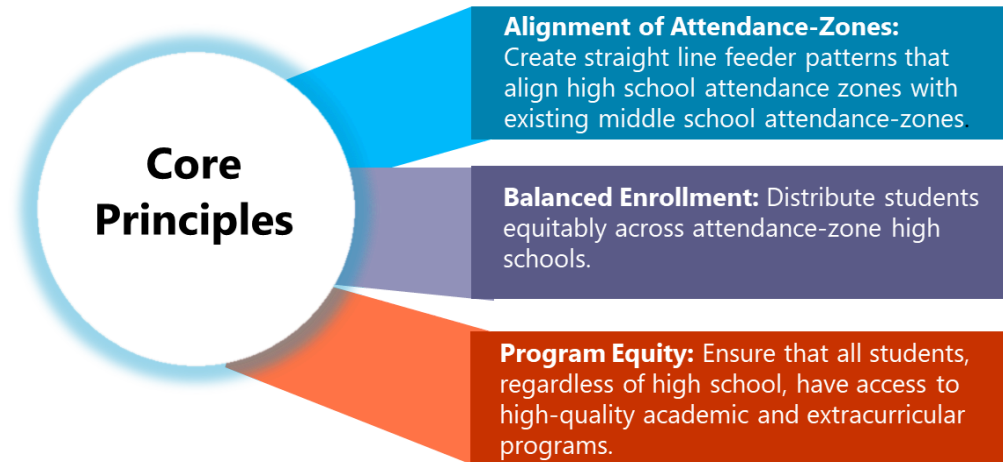
- Utilize facilities more efficiently
- Expand career pathways aligned with workforce demand
- Provide work-based learning opportunities and industry partnerships
- Expand dual enrollment and credentialing opportunities
- Allow students from across the district to access specialized courses

The Innovation Center would not replace comprehensive high schools. Instead, it would complement them by centralizing programs that benefit from specialized facilities, equipment, and industry partnerships.

This structure also allowed the district to adapt programming over time as the labor market evolves.

Board Action

At the July 9, 2025 school board meeting, the district [presented](#) the work of the committee. The presentation included the following recommendation for board action:



Program Change #1: “Thomas McKean Innovation Center”

Thomas McKean High School will be reimagined as the Thomas McKean Innovation Center. In August 2027, the flagship campus will provide Career & Technical Education (CTE) programming, industry-standard credentialing coursework, and early college credit opportunities through expanded partnerships with the business community and local colleges/universities. As part of this change:

- The number of comprehensive high school attendance-zone schools will be reduced from three to two: Alexis I. duPont High School and The John Dickinson School, allowing for increased enrollment and more robust academic and extracurricular offerings
- The Meadowood program at McKean will relocate to AI duPont High School to align its attendance zone with grade-level peers at HB duPont Middle School
- Short shuttle bus transportation would be provided from AI High and Dickinson to the McKean Innovation Center

Program Change #2: The International Baccalaureate MYP at Skyline Middle School

To allow for increased high school enrollment at The John Dickinson School, the MYP middle school program will relocate from Dickinson to Skyline Middle School, allowing for a more balanced enrollment across Red Clay middle schools.

Additional Recommendations for Future Consideration

- **Middle School Attendance-Zones:** Reevaluate middle school attendance-zones, especially as they pertain to the Warner Elementary School community, to improve feeder pattern continuity and equity
- **Virtual High School Programming:** Explore the development of virtual high school coursework to expand flexibility and learning opportunities for Red Clay students

The school board passed the motion by a 5-2 vote.

The Impact of Under-Enrolled Schools

High School Enrollment and Capacity

One of the committee's central findings was that Red Clay's overall high school enrollment had remained relatively stable while the number of high school programs and available seats had increased. Figure 2 compares 2003 with 2025 and shows that district high school enrollment only grew from 4,505 to 5,019 students while available high school seats increased from 4,800 to 6,030. Over the same period, the district moved from five to seven high schools.

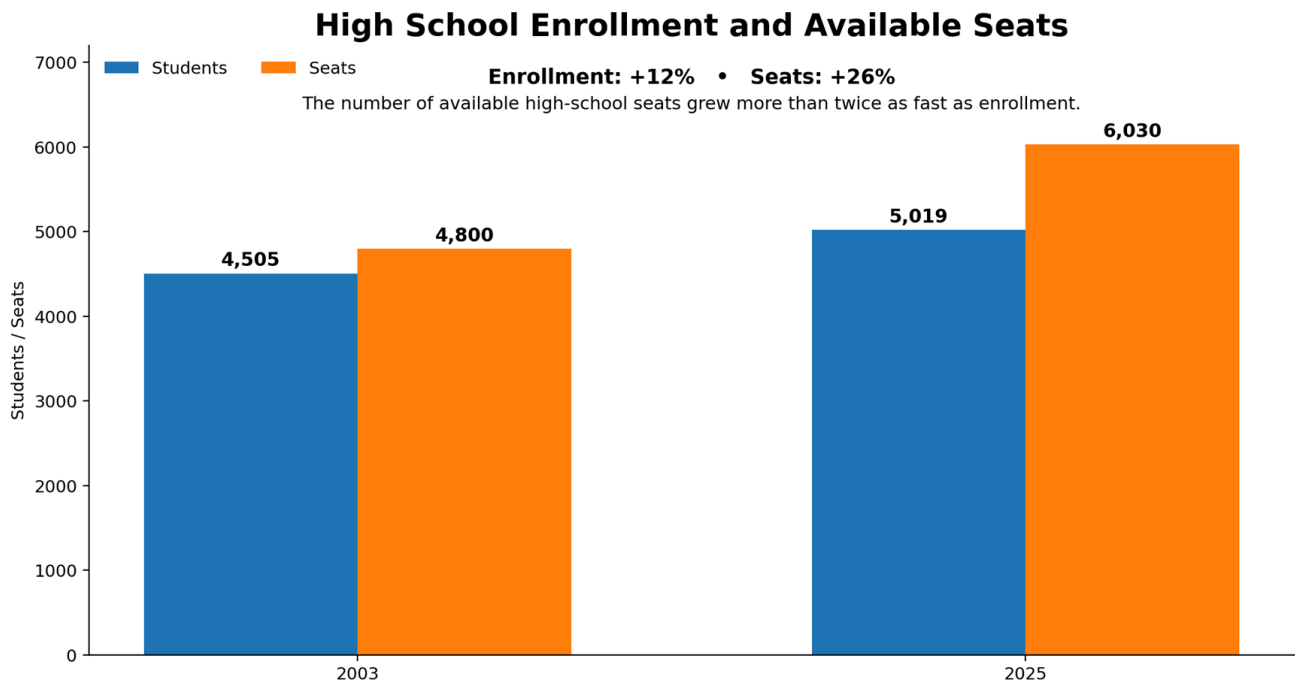


Figure 2. High school enrollment and available seats, 2003 and 2025, using figures presented to the committee.

The change is more pronounced within the district's comprehensive attendance-zone high schools. In 2003, 3,225 students attended the three comprehensive high schools. By 2025, that figure dropped 2,341. The data suggests that the district's challenge was not simply total high school enrollment. Rather, enrollment was distributed across more schools than it had been two decades ago. With overall enrollment remaining relatively constant but the number of seats and schools increasing, one or more schools became under-enrolled resulting in a strain on resources and programming.

The University of Delaware's Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research conducted a comprehensive study of student enrollment trends and projections through 2050 (Figure 3), providing important implications for the long-term planning of school districts throughout northern Delaware. By examining historical enrollment patterns, demographic changes, population trends, and student enrollment choices, the study provides a foundation for understanding how student populations may change over the coming decades. For districts such as Red Clay, these projections reinforce the importance of proactively evaluating school capacity, facility utilization, attendance zones, staffing, and academic programming to ensure that resources are aligned with anticipated enrollment. Importantly,

even where overall district enrollment remains relatively stable, shifts in where students live and which schools they attend can create significant enrollment imbalances among individual schools. The study underscores the need for school districts to move beyond short-term enrollment management and adopt a comprehensive, long-range approach to facilities and educational programming that promotes fiscal responsibility, equitable access to opportunities, and sustainable school operations.

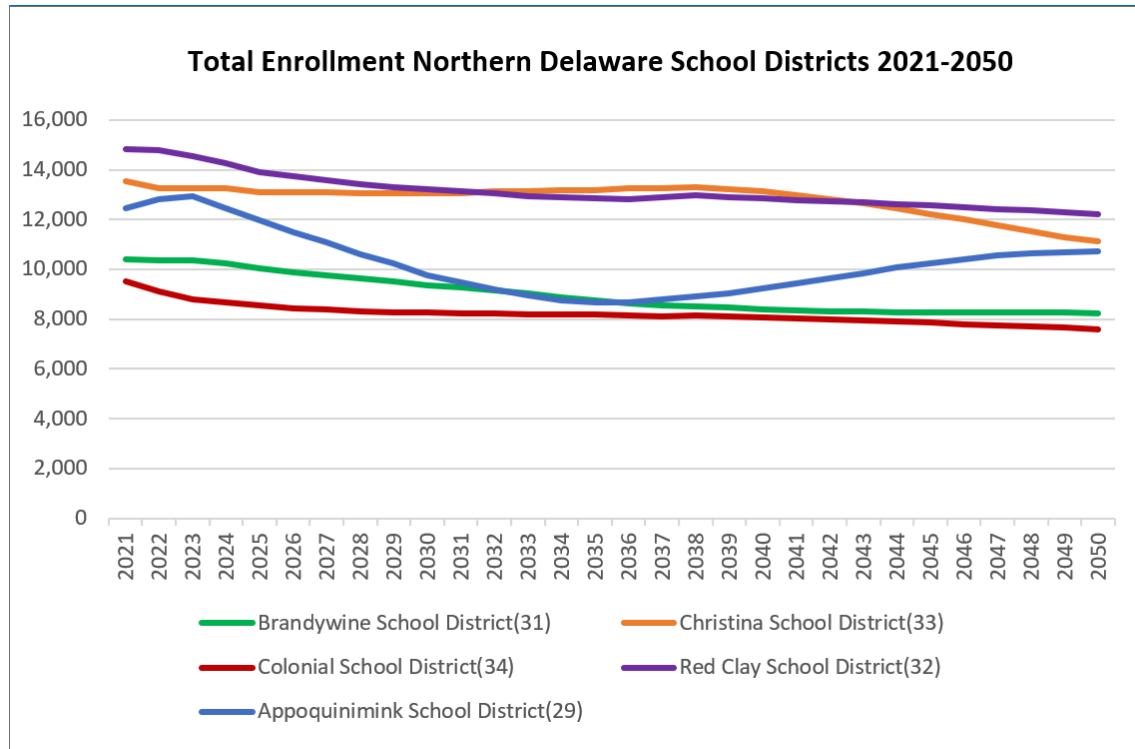


Figure 3. Source- UD Center for Applied Demography & Survey Research

Enrollment Drives Programming in Attendance-Zone High Schools

Enrollment is not simply a measure of how many students attend a school; it is a fundamental driver of what a comprehensive attendance-zone high school can reasonably offer. Attendance-zone schools are expected to provide a broad high school experience for every student assigned to them. To sustain that breadth, schools need enough students to populate advanced courses, electives, career pathways, athletic teams, and other extracurricular opportunities. Figure 4 illustrates the substantial differences in college-access coursework while similar patterns are visible across interscholastic athletics (Figure 5).

College Access Course Offerings 2024-2025

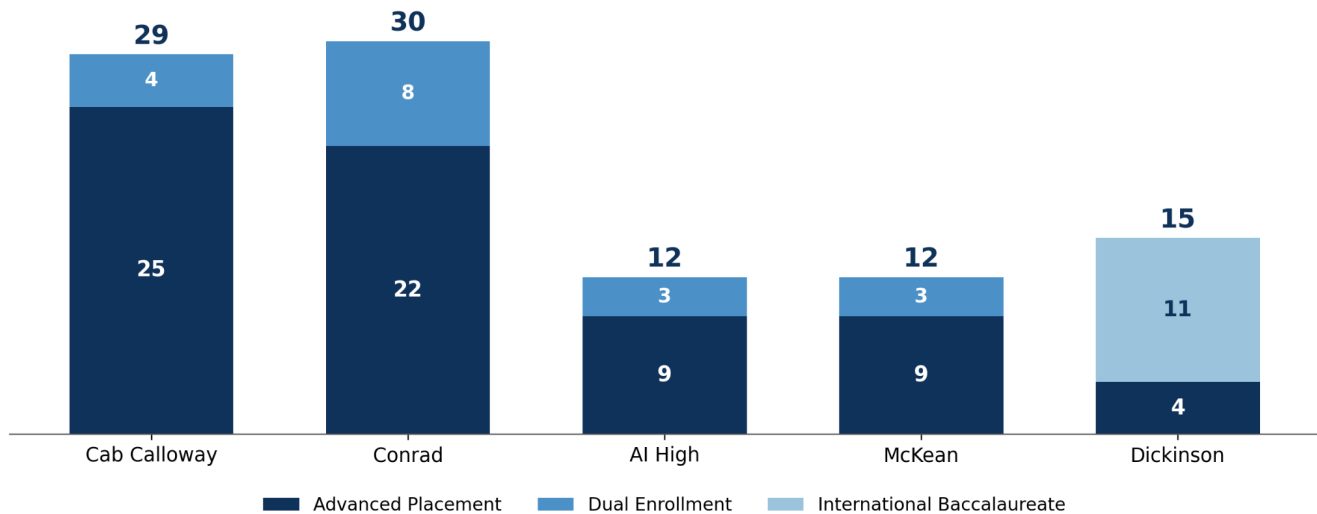


Figure 4. Access to College Coursework Offerings

Interscholastic Athletic Offerings 2023-2024

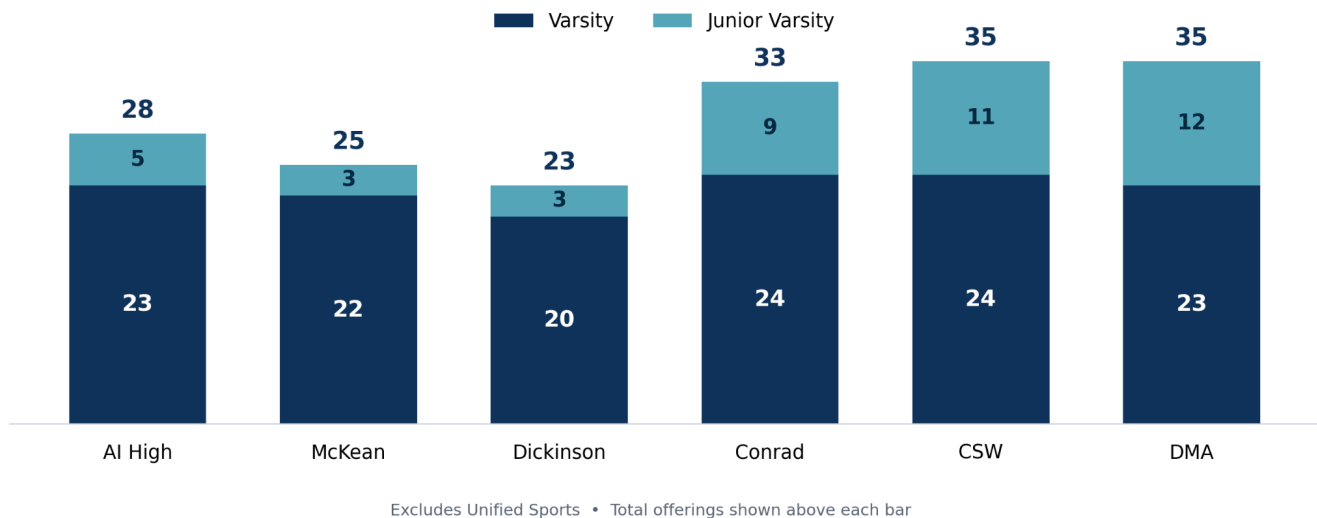


Figure 5. Access to Interscholastic Athletics Offerings

For attendance-zone schools, balanced and sustainable enrollment should therefore be understood as more than a boundary or facilities issue. It is a programming strategy. A larger and more sustainable student base creates greater opportunity to run multiple course sections, offer specialized electives, maintain viable athletic teams, and provide students with a comprehensive high school experience. Conversely, dividing a relatively stable pool of students among more schools can reduce the number of students available to support those opportunities at each individual campus.

Enrollment Context

School	Current Enrollment	State A-Z Rank	Highmark Since 2000
Alexis I. duPont High School	543	25th of 25	1,416 (2010)
Thomas McKean High School	917	17th of 25	1,215 (2002)
The John Dickinson High School	760	21st of 25	995 (2002)
Alexis I. duPont Middle School	411	33rd of 34	585 (2000)
Skyline Middle School	385	34th of 34	880 (2016)*
Stanton Middle School	496	30th of 34	721 (2004)

Figure 6. *Skyline was over-enrolled by approximately 100 students because of 2015 attendance-zone changes.

High School Attendance-Zone Changes

The proposed attendance-zone changes are intended to address long-standing fragmentation in secondary feeder patterns while supporting the broader goals of Reimagining Secondary Education. High school attendance zones were last updated in 2002. Since that time, the district has expanded from five to seven high schools and from six to eight middle schools, while secondary enrollment has remained relatively constant. The current configuration therefore includes attendance-zone boundaries that do not consistently align with middle-school feeder patterns and can divide school communities.

The recommendation is grounded in three core principles: alignment of attendance zones, balanced enrollment, and program equity. The goal was to create straighter feeder patterns between middle and high schools, distribute attendance-zone enrollment more equitably, and strengthen each high school's ability to offer a comprehensive academic, athletic, extracurricular, and career-readiness experience.

Additional considerations used in developing the recommendation include geography and neighborhood schools, school capacity, space for the Meadowood Program, demographic composition, and the role of school choice. The full presentation to the school board from April 15, 2026 can be found [here](#).

Current Conditions

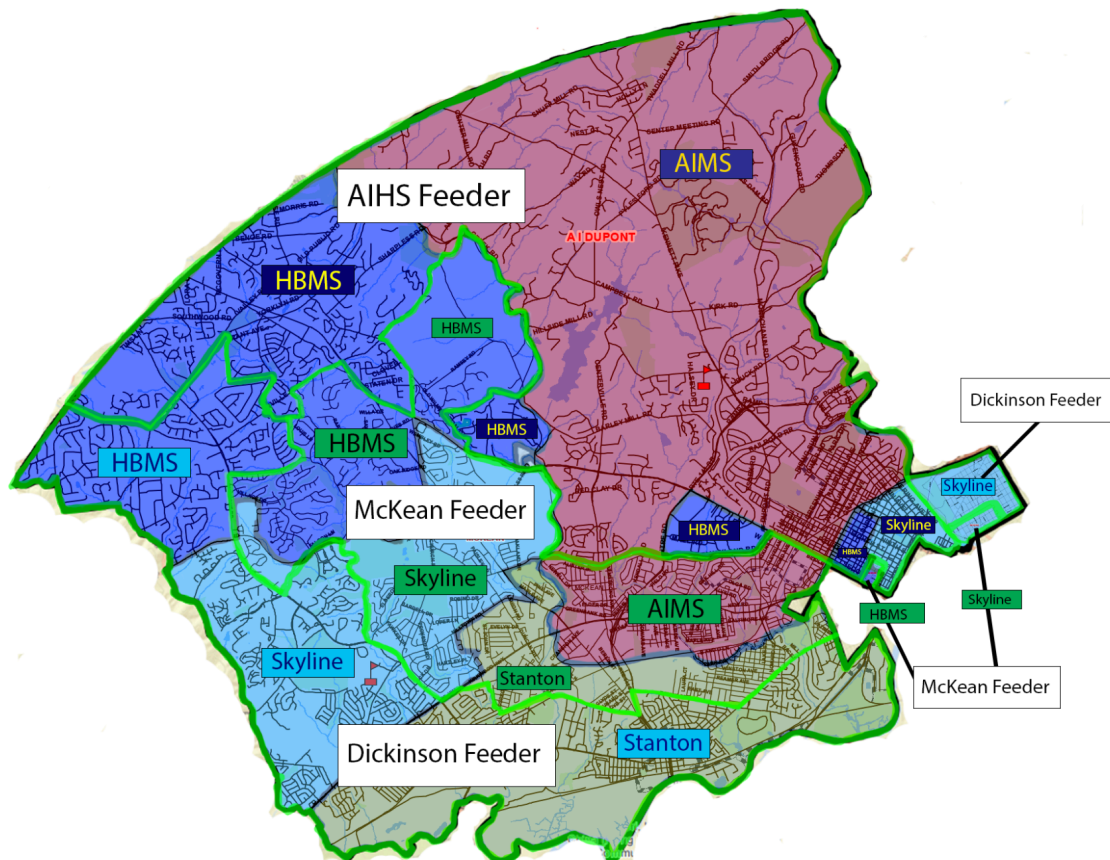


Figure 7. Current middle- and high-school attendance-zone relationships. Green borders delineate high-school feeder boundaries; middle-school zones are shown within them.

Figure 7 illustrates the complexity of the district's current secondary attendance zones by overlaying high school boundaries onto middle school boundaries. The map highlights how middle school attendance zones intersect with multiple high school attendance zones, resulting in fragmented feeder patterns and a lack of clear, linear pathways from middle school to high school.

While elementary-to-middle school feeder patterns are generally linear and predictable, the transition from middle to high school is significantly more complex, with students from individual middle schools dispersing across multiple high schools (See Figure 8). These cross-cutting feeder patterns disrupt the continuity of established student relationships, complicate academic and programmatic alignment, and make it more difficult for schools to develop cohesive educational pathways from grades 6 through 12.

As Red Clay considers the future of its secondary schools, establishing more coherent and predictable feeder patterns presents an opportunity to strengthen student transitions, improve academic continuity, create stronger school communities, and support a more equitable and sustainable system of secondary education.

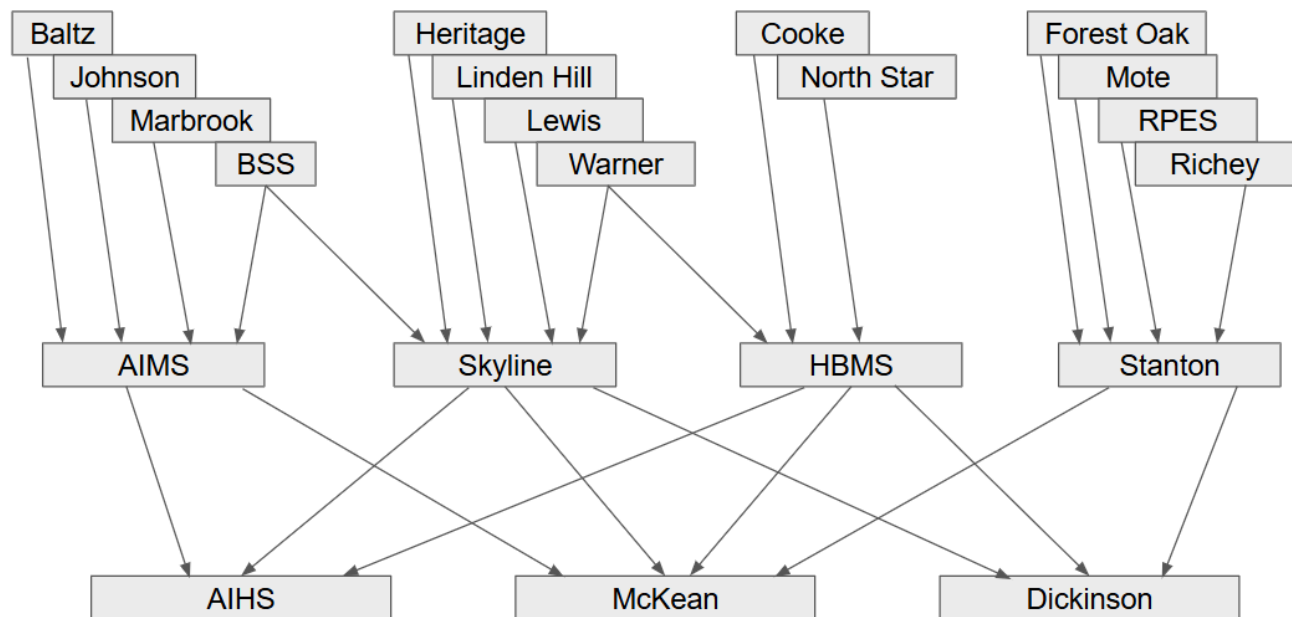


Figure 8- Current Red Clay Feeder Patterns K-12

Recommended Attendance-Zone Structure

Under the recommendation, the high-school feeder structure would be simplified around existing middle-school attendance zones. The proposal would establish the following feeder assignments beginning in 2027-2028:

High School Attendance Zone	Middle-School Attendance-Zone Assignments
Alexis I. duPont High School	Alexis I. duPont Middle School HB duPont Middle School Skyline Middle School - City portion
The John Dickinson High School	Skyline Middle School - Suburb portion Stanton Middle School

Figure 9. Recommended high-school attendance zones by feeder pattern.

Geographic Changes

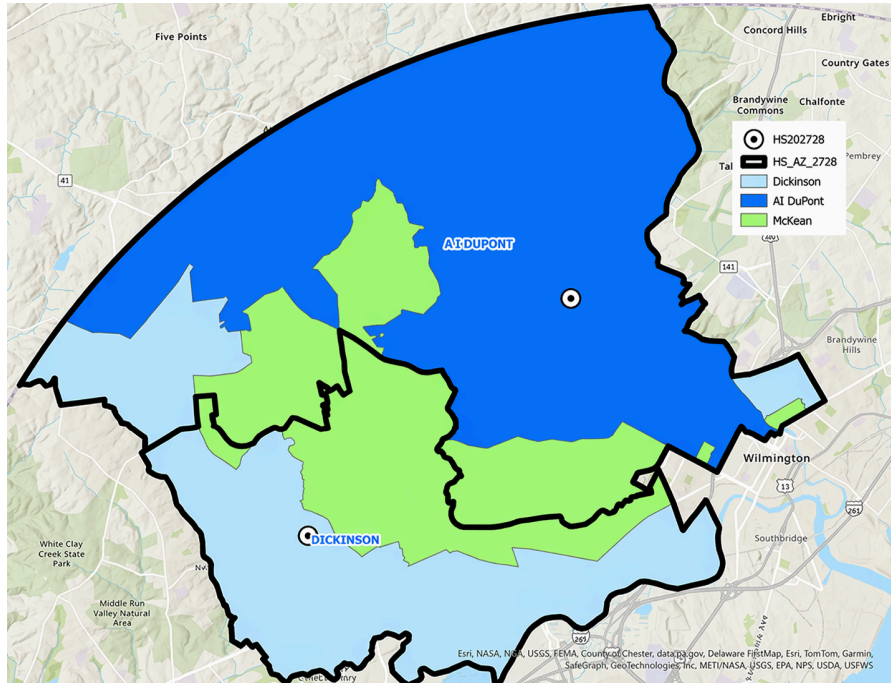


Figure 10. Geographic areas of two new high school attendance-zones with the former McKean zone in green.

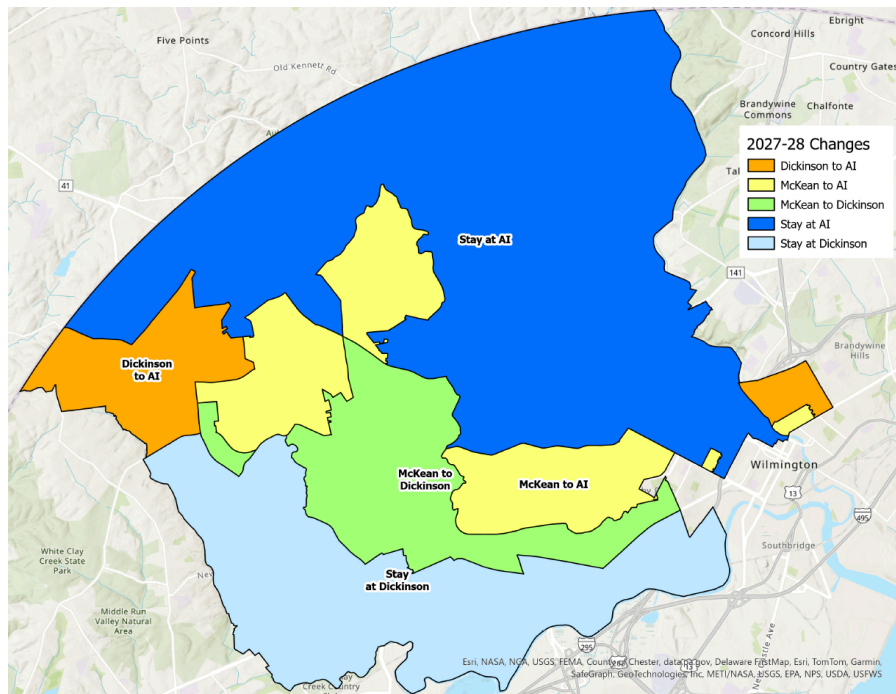


Figure 11. Geographic areas of proposed changes. The map distinguishes areas that remain in their current zone from areas proposed to move between Dickinson, McKean, and Alexis I. duPont.

The proposed attendance-zone changes establish more consistent and nearly linear feeder patterns between middle and high schools, creating clearer and more predictable educational pathways for students and families. With the exception of Skyline Middle School, the proposed boundaries significantly reduce the number of middle school communities divided among multiple high schools, strengthening continuity, school identity, and the transition from middle to high school. While a fully linear feeder structure was a desired outcome, maintaining some flexibility in the Skyline attendance zone was necessary to achieve a more balanced distribution of students across the district's high schools. This approach recognizes that feeder-pattern alignment must be considered alongside projected enrollment, school capacity, facility utilization, and the equitable distribution of educational opportunities. The proposed configuration represents a deliberate balance between establishing stronger feeder patterns and ensuring that high schools maintain sustainable enrollment levels necessary to support robust academic programming, extracurricular opportunities, and efficient school operations.

School	Current	Projection	High Projection
Alexis I. duPont High School	543	1,124	1,284
The John Dickinson High School	760	916	1,045
Thomas McKean High School	917	N/A	N/A

Figure 12. Enrollment projections presented with the recommended changes. The presentation notes that projections do not include O-D Choice and do not consider students at MIC.

Projected Demographic Impact

Demographic	AIHS Current	AIHS Projected	Dickinson Current	Dickinson Projected
Hispanic	39%	36%	39%	47%
Black	47%	45%	32%	21%
White	10%	15%	24%	27%
Special Education	32%	31%	21%	26%
Multilingual Learners	22%	21%	24%	30%

Figure 13. Projected demographic composition under the proposed attendance-zone structure.

The demographic analysis in Figure 13 anticipates changes in the composition of both Alexis I. duPont and Dickinson Post-change to be very similar to their current demographics. McKean's demographics will be a representation of both schools.

Student Transition and Grandfathering

The recommendation includes a transition provision for students already enrolled at Dickinson whose residence would move into the new Alexis I. duPont attendance zone. Students in the graduating classes of 2029, 2030, and 2031 would be permitted either to remain at Dickinson through graduation, with transportation provided, or to transfer to Alexis I. duPont as their new attendance-zone high school.

Student Continuity and Graduation Transition Plan

As part of the Reimagining Secondary Education initiative, Red Clay Consolidated School District recognizes the importance of providing stability, continuity, and predictability for students and families impacted by the proposed transitions involving McKean High School and the Meadowood Program. The district will develop a student continuity plan that allows students currently enrolled at McKean and/or Meadowood (McKean) to remain through graduation if they choose.

The district will establish the following transition provisions:

McKean High School Students: Students enrolled at McKean High School at the time of implementation (Classes of 2029, 2030, 2031) will be provided the opportunity to remain at McKean through graduation, even as the school transitions to its new programming model as the McKean Innovation Center. The district will develop appropriate scheduling, staffing, and instructional arrangements to ensure students can complete their graduation requirements.

Meadowood Students: Students currently enrolled in the Meadowood Program (McKean) will be provided the opportunity to continue in their established educational placement through graduation or completion of their educational program, as appropriate. As Meadowood transitions to the Alexis I. du Pont High School campus, the district will prioritize continuity of specialized instruction, related services, individualized supports, and established student relationships. Placement and transition decisions for students with disabilities will continue to be guided by their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and applicable IDEA requirements.

- **Individualized Transition Planning:** School counselors, administrators, special education teams, and district personnel will review impacted students' academic progress, graduation requirements, course sequences, and individual needs to develop appropriate continuity plans.
- **Family Communication and Choice:** The district will communicate transition options and timelines directly to impacted families, provide opportunities for individualized consultation, and establish a clear process for documenting student and family preferences.
- **Implementation and Monitoring:** The district will monitor enrollment, staffing, course availability, transportation, and student progress throughout the transition to ensure that continuity commitments are fulfilled without compromising educational opportunities or graduation timelines.

Program Availability and Student Transfer Options

While the district is committed to providing currently enrolled students the opportunity to remain at their existing school through graduation, families should understand that the availability of certain programs, services, and activities may become more limited as enrollment declines during the transition period. This may include reductions in elective course offerings, extracurricular activities, interscholastic athletics, and other school-based opportunities that depend on sufficient student participation and staffing. The district will make reasonable efforts to maintain meaningful educational and extracurricular experiences but cannot guarantee that all existing offerings will remain available throughout the transition. Recognizing these potential limitations, students and families will also have the option to transfer to their newly designated attendance-zone high school at any point during the transition period, consistent with district enrollment and scheduling procedures.

A Comprehensive High School Experience

The John Dickinson High School



Opened in 1960, John Dickinson sits on a 67-acre campus in the Pike Creek community at 1801 Milltown Road. Originally known as John Dickinson High School, the school expanded its mission over time—adopting the International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme in 2011, adding a Middle Years Programme (MYP) for grades 6–8 in 2015, and officially becoming The John Dickinson School in 2019.

Now, with the middle school program relocated 1.5 miles to Skyline Middle School, Dickinson will expand its programming offer a full comprehensive high school experience, including:

- College-preparation and early college credit opportunities
- A broad selection of extra-curricular activities
- A complete interscholastic athletics program
- Extensive career-readiness opportunities through the Thomas McKean Innovation Center
- College & Career Counseling
- Student Support Services

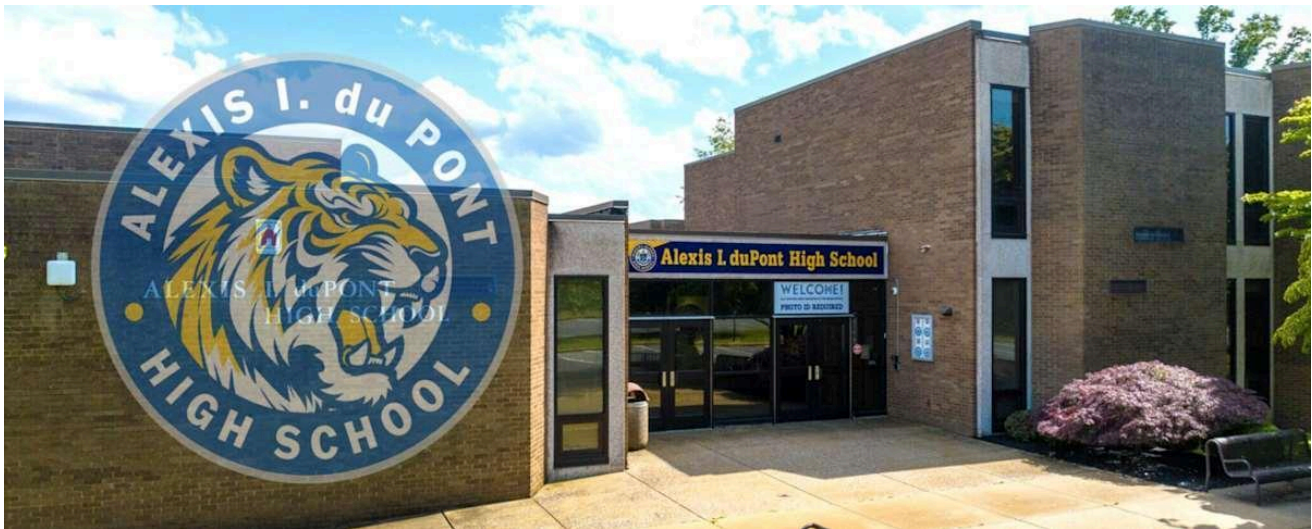
The International Baccalaureate Programme sits at the core of Dickinson’s academic program. As an IB World School, Dickinson serves as Red Clay’s high school campus for IB programming. Ninth graders may enroll in the Middle Years Programme—a rigorous, inquiry-based curricular framework that encourages students to connect their learning to real-world issues and develop as empathetic, globally minded learners. The MYP prepares students for the IB Diploma Programme in grades 11 and 12.

The IB Diploma Programme is a two-year, internationally recognized pre-university curriculum for upper classmen. Students complete coursework across six subject groups along with three core components: Theory of Knowledge (TOK), the Extended Essay (EE), and Creativity, Activity, Service

(CAS). This challenging program develops adaptable, analytical, and well-rounded learners recognized by universities worldwide.

Students may also choose to pursue IB Certificates, allowing them to take individual IB courses aligned to their interests without the full diploma commitment.

Alexis I. duPont High School



Located at 50 Hillside Road in Greenville, Alexis I. duPont High School (AIHS) was founded in 1893 and moved to its current building in 1966. Once the primary high school of the former Alexis I. duPont School District, AIHS became part of the Red Clay Consolidated School District in 1978 and continues to build on a long-standing tradition of academic excellence.

AI duPont's robust comprehensive programming will include:

- College-preparation and early college credit opportunities
- A broad selection of extra-curricular activities
- A complete interscholastic athletics program
- Extensive career-readiness opportunities through the Thomas McKean Innovation Center
- College & Career Counseling
- Student Support Services

AI is also home to Red Clay's Early College Academy (ECA), an innovative partnership with Goldey-Beacom College. Through this dual-enrollment program, students take in-person college courses during the school day, earning both high school and college credit. Students transition to the Goldey-Beacom campus during 12th grade and receive ongoing support through an ECA Support Class. Those completing all 30 credits graduate with the prestigious Sophomore Distinction diploma.

This model provides students with a pathway to early college access, supported by exceptional high school faculty, and creates a seamless bridge between high school and college.

The McKean Innovation Center



Opened initially as Thomas McKean High School in 1966, the campus at 301 McKennan's Church Road now serves as Red Clay's flagship campus for Career & Technical Education (CTE) programming, industry-standard credentialing coursework, and early college credit opportunities through expanded partnerships with the business community and local colleges/universities.

Short shuttle transportation allows 10th–12th graders to travel to the campus, where they select pathways within nine career cluster centers:

- Agriculture, Food Production & Natural Resources
- Arts, Audiovisual Technology & Communication
- Business Management/Administration & Marketing
- Education & Training
- Health Science
- Hospitality & Tourism
- Information Technology
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM)
- Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

Across 20+ pathway options, students earn three high school credits, may receive articulated or dual-enrollment college credits, pursue industry-aligned credentials, and participate in real-world learning experiences connected to their chosen field.

7 CLUSTER
CENTERS20+ SPECIALIZED
MAJORS

Within each major, students earn 3 credits during the 10th and 11th grades with articulated college credit where applicable. 12th-grade students enroll in related co-op opportunities, industry-standard credentialing, and dual-enrollment college coursework.

CLUSTER CENTERS							
	EDUCATION CENTER	HEALTHCARE CENTER	BUILDING & MOVING CENTER	DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY CENTER	BUSINESS CENTER	ENTERTAINMENT & HOSPITALITY CENTER	NATURAL RESOURCES & AGRICULTURE CENTER
Programs of Study	Early Childhood Education	Allied Health	Engineering Technology	Computer Networking	Entrepreneurship	Culinary Services	Veterinary Sciences
	K-12 Teacher Academy	Patient Care Services	Robotics	Cloud Computing	Marketing	Graphic Arts & Digital Animation	Plant Science
	Principles of Teaching	Medical Record Keeping	Architectural Design	Cyber Security	Banking & Finance	Audio & Video Production	Food Science & Processing
			Automotive Maintenance				Clean & Alternative Energy
Career Ready Certifications	Credentials of Value						
	OSHA 10	OSHA 10	OSHA 10	OSHA 10	OSHA 10	OSHA 10	OSHA 10
	PARA PRO	CNA	ASE Student Cert.	CompTia Tech	Nocti Marketing	Serve Safe	VET Assist. Cert
	CPR	Phlebotomy	SP2 Workplace Safety	Adobe Cert. Pro.	HubSpot Inbound Marketing	Pro Start Nat. Cert.	Elanco Fund.
	FIRST AID	CPR	Snap On Certi.	Python Inst. PCEP	Microsoft Office	Vector	Youth QA

Figure 14. Programs and Credential offerings

This approach gives students a powerful head start on their future. By blending real-world experience with college-level learning, students graduate with hands-on skills, recognized credentials, and meaningful workplace exposure—setting them apart in both college admissions and the job market. These opportunities not only strengthen academic confidence and career readiness but also open doors to industries and higher education pathways that many students may not have otherwise known were possible. It's a transformative model designed to expand access, accelerate achievement, and empower every student to pursue a remarkable future beyond graduation.

Industry-Recognized Credentials

Earning pathway certifications provides a significant advantage for students entering the workforce directly after high school. Attaining industry-recognized credentials within specific career pathways validates practical skills and technical proficiency, elevating a student's marketability and competitiveness to prospective employers. These credentials demonstrate career readiness, allow graduates to command higher starting wages, and establish a clear trajectory for immediate employment and career advancement.

Work-Based Learning Continuum

This comprehensive school model will include embedded Work-Based Learning experiences. This structured, multi-year experience is designed to help students build real-world skills while exploring future career pathways. Beginning in 9th grade, students engage in career exploration activities that introduce them to varying industries, help them identify their interests, and develop foundational professional skills.

As students progress, they move into more hands-on experiences. This may include job shadowing, short-term placements, and eventually internships or work experiences connected to their chosen pathway. By 11th and 12th grade, students may participate in more immersive WBL opportunities, including a dedicated WBL course and extended placements through partnerships with local employers.

Throughout the experience, students are supported by school staff, including WBL coordinators and teachers, who help secure placements, monitor progress, and ensure alignment with learning goals. Students are expected to demonstrate key employability skills such as communication, collaboration, reliability, and problem-solving, while also reflecting on their growth and setting goals for the future.

Ultimately, the goal of Work-Based Learning at the McKean Innovation Center is to ensure that students graduate with more than academic knowledge. Through meaningful workplace experiences, students develop practical skills, explore career possibilities, build professional confidence, and gain a better understanding of what is required to succeed beyond high school. By connecting education with real-world opportunities, WBL helps students make informed decisions about college, career training, employment, or a combination of these pathways. These experiences empower students to take ownership of their futures and move toward graduation with greater independence, purpose, and readiness for life after high school.

Innovation Center Scheduling Model

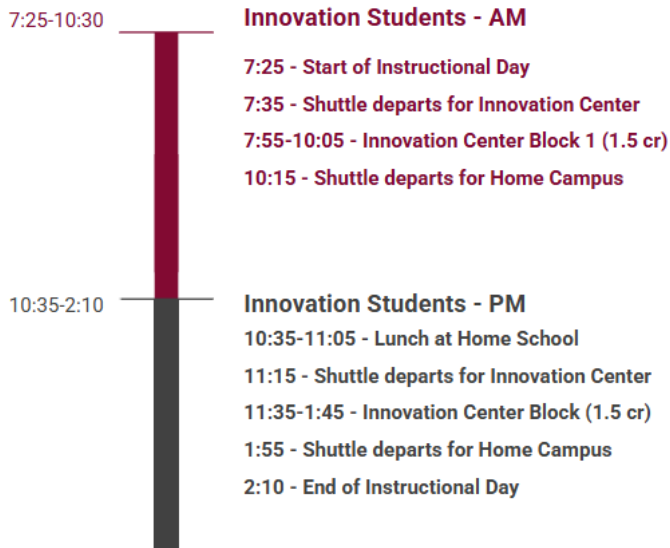
A central design consideration for the proposed Innovation Center is whether students can participate in specialized programming without losing access to the core academic courses, electives, activities, and relationships available at their home high school. The sample scheduling model demonstrates how the Innovation Center experience could be embedded within the existing high-school day through coordinated bell schedules and dedicated transportation.

Under the sample model in Figure 14, students would attend the Innovation Center during either the morning or afternoon portion of the school day. The Innovation Center would run an extended instructional block. Students assigned to the morning session would begin at their home campus, travel to the Innovation Center, complete the extended block, and return in time to rejoin the home-campus schedule at approximately 10:30 a.m. Students assigned to the afternoon session would complete their

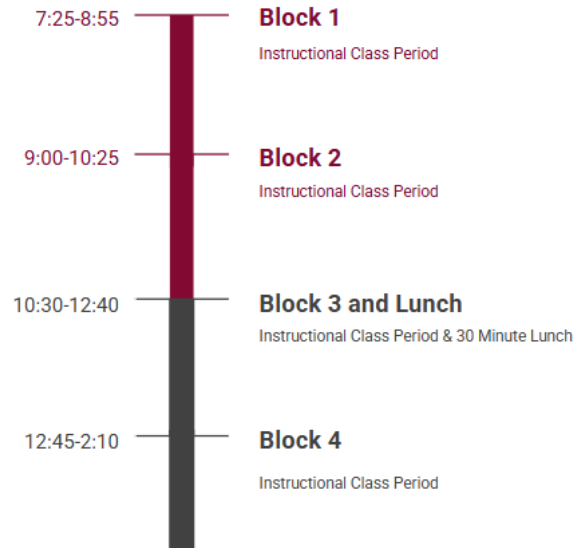
morning coursework and lunch at the home school before traveling to the Innovation Center and returning at the end of the instructional day.

Proposed Bell Schedules

Innovation Center Schedule



Home Campus Schedule



Shuttle Times:

TJDS to McKean- 9 minutes

AI High to McKean- 13 minutes

Figure 15. Illustrative Innovation Center AM/PM scheduling and transportation model based on sample bell schedules.

The model is illustrative rather than a final bell schedule, but it demonstrates that shared programming can be structured around a common district schedule. Successful implementation will require coordinated bell schedules, daily shuttle operations, aligned lunch periods, and careful student scheduling. The design also provides flexibility to assign students to morning or afternoon Innovation Center cohorts based on course needs and capacity.

Figure 16 illustrates a sample four-year pathway at Alexis I. duPont High School, designed to align with individual student strengths and career goals. Students pursuing this track can graduate from Red Clay with more than 30 college credits, real-world experience on a college campus, up to three industry-standard credentials, and valuable work experience in Cybersecurity. Additionally, students maintain full access to AI High's comprehensive sports and extracurricular activities. This student could also choose Honors, Pre-AP, or AP levels of high school courses where available.

9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
English 9	English 10	GBC English 110/ GBC English 130	English 12
Civics/Economics	GBC Humanities 104 /GBC Humanities 105	United State History	GBC Comms 328- Public Speaking/GBC PHL 233- Logic & Critical Thinking GBC Data 210 Foundations of Data Management/ GBC Comms 285- Public Speaking
Geometry	Algebra II	Pre-Calculus	
Biology	Chemistry	Financial Literacy/ WBL Practicum	
Spanish I	Spanish II	Spanish III	Calculus
Health/ Physical Education	Physical Education/Driver Education	GBC Sociology 161/ GBC Psychology 160	Physics
Early College Academy Bootcamp	Cyber Security /Networking	Adv Cyber Security /Ethical Hacking	WBL Immersion Experience- Cyber Security
Intro to Career Education			
High School Courses on Campus			
Goldey-Beacom Courses Taught on AI High's Campus			
Cyber Security Pathway Courses Taught on the McKean Innovation Center			
Goldey-Beacom Courses Taught on the Goldey-Beacom Campus			
Work-Based Learning Immersion offered in various formats to meet the needs of student.			

Figure 16. Sample Schedule Schedule, Alexis I. duPont

Below is a sample of a 4-year sequence of courses a student attending The John Dickinson High School may choose to take to meet their strengths and interests. This student would graduate from Red Clay completing the International Baccalaureate International Exams at the end of 12th grade with opportunities to earn college credits based on their exam scores. The schedule offers an opportunity to complete up to 2 pathway courses and earn credentials of value. Partial IB Programme students will have more flexibility to enroll in additional pathways and electives. Additionally, the student will have full access to the comprehensive offerings of extracurricular activities and interscholastic athletics. This student could also choose Honors, Pre-AP, or AP levels of high school courses where available.

9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
English 9	English 10	IB Language A English III	IB Language A English IV
Civics/Economic	World History	IB History of the Americas I	IB History of the Americas II
Algebra II	IB Applications I	IB Applications II	AP Calculus
Biology	Chemistry	IB Biology I	IB Biology II
Spanish II	Spanish III	IB Language B Spanish IV	IB Language B Spanish V
Health/Physical Education	Physical Education/ Driver Education	IB TOK/EE I	IB TOK EE II
Intro to Career Education	Allied Health Nursing I	WBL Immersion/Allied Health/Nursing II	IB Group 6 Elective (Science, Humanities, Arts)
MYP Bootcamp			WBL Immersion Experience- Allied Health
International Baccalaureate Courses taught on The John Dickinson School's Campus.			
High School Courses taught on the John Dickinson School campus.			
Nursing Pathway Courses & WBL Taught on the McKean Innovation Center.			
Work-Based Learning Immersion offered in various formats to meet the needs of student.			

Figure 17. Sample Student Schedule, Alexis I. duPont High School

Meadowood Program

The proposed relocation of the Meadowood Program from Thomas McKean High School to Alexis I. du Pont High School represents an important opportunity to enhance the educational experiences, inclusion, and long-term outcomes of students with disabilities. By integrating Meadowood programming into a more comprehensive high school environment, the district seeks to expand on the meaningful opportunities and partnerships with programs in conjunction with nondisabled peers through academic experiences, elective courses, extracurricular activities, schoolwide events, and shared social experiences.

Through intentional inclusive practices, thoughtful facility planning, and individualized student supports, the district envisions a community where Meadowood students remain fully valued and engaged members of their comprehensive high school. The move also provides the opportunity to strengthen collaboration between educators, expand peer mentoring and inclusive learning experiences, and better align individualized transition services with postsecondary services, employment, and independent living goals. Ultimately, the objective is to continually enhance the educational environment that empowers every Meadowood student to thrive academically, socially, and personally, while preserving the specialized services and tailored support vital to their individual success.

The proposed relocation of the Meadowood Program from Thomas McKean High School to Alexis I. du Pont High School represents an important and positive opportunity to expand and strengthen the program while enhancing the educational experiences, inclusion, and long-term outcomes of students with disabilities. This transition is deeply rooted in a commitment to honoring and sustaining the positive school culture, core values, and specialized programming actively nurtured by Meadowood's dedicated staff and families. By integrating Meadowood programming into a more comprehensive high school environment with access to a broader range of academic programs, electives, extracurricular activities, activity periods, and community partnerships, Meadowood students will have expanded opportunities to engage with a diverse student population and participate fully in a comprehensive high school experience with nondisabled peers.

Expanding Middle School Programming

Expanding Academic and Exploratory Opportunities

A central benefit of the Reimagining Secondary Schools plan is the opportunity to strengthen middle school programming by establishing more sustainable and balanced student enrollment across schools. Red Clay currently operates 3 of the 5 smallest attendance-zone middle schools in the state of Delaware. Just as enrollment drives programming at the high school level, middle school enrollment directly influences a school's ability to offer a comprehensive educational experience. Schools with larger, more stable student populations are better positioned to sustain a broader range of academic courses, exploratory electives, extracurricular activities, and student support services. By consolidating middle school programming, Red Clay can create the enrollment conditions necessary to expand opportunities, improve scheduling flexibility, and provide students with a more consistent middle school experience across the district.

Middle school represents a critical period of academic development, career exploration, and personal growth. All middle school students should have access to a rich educational experience that extends beyond the required core curriculum. However, smaller enrollment populations can limit the number and variety of courses schools can reasonably sustain. When student enrollment is spread across too many schools, available staffing resources must be distributed across multiple campuses, sometimes resulting in limited elective offerings, reduced course sections, or fewer opportunities for students to explore their interests.

Increased enrollment can create the critical mass necessary to support more robust programming, including:

- World Languages: Greater opportunities to sustain language offerings and establish stronger pathways into advanced high school coursework
- Career and Technical Education Exploration: Expanded opportunities for students to experience technology, engineering, business, computer science, family and consumer sciences, and other career-connected learning experiences that prepare them for high school pathways and the McKean Innovation Center
- Visual and Performing Arts: Stronger participation in band, chorus, orchestra, theater, and visual arts, including the ability to offer multiple levels of instruction and more specialized experiences
- Advanced Academic Opportunities: Greater flexibility to offer accelerated coursework, enrichment opportunities, and appropriate academic pathways for students demonstrating advanced readiness

Importantly, increased enrollment does not automatically guarantee additional programming. Rather, it creates the conditions necessary for the district to allocate existing staffing and resources more strategically, strengthen student course participation, and develop programs that may not be sustainable in smaller schools.

Additionally, larger enrollment populations can support additional sections of high-demand courses, more balanced class groupings, and greater flexibility in scheduling specialized instruction. This flexibility is particularly important for students receiving special education services, multilingual learners, and students requiring academic interventions. With thoughtful scheduling and appropriate

staffing, schools can provide necessary services while preserving access to electives, exploratory coursework, and the broader middle school experience.

The benefits of increased enrollment extend beyond the classroom. Middle schools play an important role in helping students develop a sense of belonging, discover interests, build relationships, and become connected to their school communities. Larger student populations can strengthen participation in interscholastic athletics, performing arts, student government, academic competitions, clubs, and other extracurricular activities. Increased participation may also make it more feasible to sustain activities that struggle to attract sufficient numbers of students in smaller schools.

Improving Staffing Efficiency and Program Sustainability

The Reimagining Secondary Schools plan also creates opportunities to use existing staffing allocations more effectively. Under Delaware's unit-count funding system, staffing resources are significantly strained by under-enrolled schools. By concentrating enrollment into fewer, more sustainable middle school programs, the district can improve its ability to organize teaching assignments, maintain specialized instructional offerings, and reduce inefficiencies associated with operating smaller programs across multiple locations.

This approach is not simply about reducing the number of schools. It is about maximizing the educational opportunities available to students through more effective deployment of district resources. Staffing efficiencies should be reinvested, where feasible, into strengthening academic programming, exploratory opportunities, intervention services, and student engagement.

Supporting the Middle Years Programme and Stronger Academic Pathways

The relocation of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) from The John Dickinson School to Skyline Middle School represents an important component of the district's effort to balance middle school enrollment and strengthen specialized programming. This transition provides an opportunity for the MYP to grow within a dedicated middle school environment while supporting increased high school enrollment at Dickinson. It also reinforces the district's broader commitment to maintaining strong academic programs and ensuring that specialized opportunities are supported by sustainable enrollment and staffing.

More broadly, stronger middle school programming can establish a more intentional connection between students' exploratory experiences in grades 6–8 and the expanded college and career pathways available in high school. Through early exposure to career clusters, academic interests, and hands-on learning, students can enter ninth grade with a clearer understanding of the opportunities available at their comprehensive high schools and the McKean Innovation Center.

Relocating the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) to Skyline Middle School represents a strategic shift within Red Clay's broader effort to balance middle school enrollment and ensure long-term program sustainability. This realignment expands access to a high-quality, internationally recognized academic model while optimizing facility usage across district middle schools.

The MYP provides a challenging, inquiry-driven framework that fosters critical thinking, global perspectives, and interdisciplinary problem-solving. Through rigorous coursework, students refine

essential research and communication competencies, building a strong foundation for upper-level high school opportunities such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate Diploma courses, and dual-enrollment pathways.

Establishing the MYP at Skyline Middle School offers a sustainable environment with the student base necessary to support dedicated staffing, robust course offerings, and comprehensive co-curricular activities. Simultaneously, this transition addresses historical enrollment imbalances across middle school buildings, promoting equitable distribution of educational resources districtwide.

Ultimately, this program realignment advances system efficiency and program equity, strengthening secondary learning pathways and creating an adaptable, coherent middle school experience for all Red Clay families.

Relevance, Impact, & Feasibility

Relevance

The plan directly aligns with district priorities and addresses long-standing structural challenges.

- Supports Strategic Plan Objective 3: College & Career Readiness
 - Addresses unbalanced enrollment by converting one high school into a districtwide career education hub
 - Ensures equitable access to programming, regardless of home school
 - Aligns with demographic projections and research on effective school size
 - Creates K-12 straight-line feeder patterns
 - Balances enrollment across two fully enrolled comprehensive high schools
 - Improves equitable distribution of programs and opportunities
 - Addresses middle school enrollment imbalances
 - Strengthens all remaining campuses academically and operationally
 - Scholarship Opportunities and Pathway based contests
 - Increased exposure to CTSO's
-

Impact

The approved plan produces meaningful, systemwide improvements that strengthen student opportunity and district efficiency.

- Expands access to 20+ CTE pathways, including dual enrollment and industry-recognized credentials
- Creates two fully enrolled comprehensive high schools, enabling expanded advanced coursework, electives, arts, athletics, and co-curricular programs
- Strengthens partnerships with colleges and industry
- Reduces under-utilization of buildings and increases district operational efficiency
- Expands the student-services model for improved academic and behavioral supports
- Establishes consistent MS–HS peer cohort continuity
- Reduces transportation complexity through aligned geographic feeder patterns
- Supports Dickinson HS expansion as an Attendance-Zone school
- Builds a unified MYP 6–10 pipeline
- Improves overall programming access, efficiency, and stability

Fiscal Feasibility: There will be two types of financial considerations for this plan and it is expected that in some cases there will be savings and in others there will be increases.

Feasibility

The plan is realistic, cost-conscious, and supported by clear implementation pathways.

- McKean’s existing facilities already support CTE and require program enhancements—not reconstruction
- McKean’s central location maintains efficient shuttle times (9–13 minutes)
- No projected staffing loss; staffing changes will occur through a transfer process agreed upon with collective bargaining units
- Strong community and industry support for expanded CTE, credentialing, and early-college opportunities
- Requires a coordinated implementation timeline (launch in 2027), with major steps already defined
- High school boundaries will align with the Neighborhood Schools Act
- Red Clay enrollment projections support the move to two larger comprehensive high schools
- Skyline has historical capacity for 700+ students
- AI duPont High School has historical capacity for 1300+ students
- Professional development will support all shifts

Financial Impact Analysis

Summary

The Red Clay Consolidated School District's Reimagining Secondary Education Plan represents a strategic investment in the long-term sustainability, efficiency, and educational effectiveness of the district's secondary school system. The financial rationale for the plan is grounded in two interconnected objectives: maximizing the educational value of existing district resources and redirecting investments toward expanded student opportunities.

Over the past 25 years, Red Clay has expanded from five to seven high schools and from six to eight middle schools without corresponding enrollment growth. As a result, the district maintains more than 1,500 unfilled secondary school seats while continuing to support the staffing, facilities, administrative structures, and operational costs associated with its current configuration. This creates financial inefficiencies that can limit the district's ability to invest in academic programming, Career and Technical Education (CTE), advanced coursework, and extracurricular opportunities.

The Reimagining Secondary Education Plan seeks to address these challenges through more balanced enrollment, consolidation of comprehensive high school operations, improved facility utilization, and the establishment of the Thomas McKean Innovation Center as a districtwide resource. The plan is not intended as a cost-reduction initiative. Rather, it seeks to improve the return on the district's existing educational investments while strategically expanding college and career opportunities for students.

Although the redesign may generate operational efficiencies over time, it will also require initial investments in facilities, equipment, transportation, staffing, and specialized programming. The district must therefore evaluate both short-term implementation costs and long-term financial sustainability.

Overall Financial Finding: The proposed redesign presents a credible opportunity to improve operational efficiency, reduce duplication, and better align district expenditures with student enrollment and educational priorities. However, the extent of potential savings, required investments, and long-term financial benefits must be established through detailed financial modeling before definitive fiscal conclusions can be reached.

Existing Financial Conditions

Red Clay's current secondary school configuration creates financial challenges associated with maintaining multiple facilities and operational structures despite uneven enrollment.

While individual school expenditures vary, operating additional schools generally requires recurring commitments for core staffing, building operations, utilities, maintenance, custodial services, technology, and instructional support including CTE and other labs that need regular upkeep and replacement. These costs do not necessarily decline proportionately when enrollment decreases.

As a result, lower-enrollment schools may have higher operating costs per student, causing inequities in other areas. Figure 18 below shows a 13% increase in the cost/student at two comprehensive high schools with different student counts.

School	FY26 Expenditures	FY26 Student Count	\$/Student
A.I.Dupont High School	\$12,746,888	543	\$23,475
McKean High School	\$18,950,882	917	\$20,666

Figure 18. FSF Expenditures, all sources July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026. Student count based on widely accepted yearly snapshot as of September 30th.

Additionally, smaller student populations can make it difficult to operate specialized courses efficiently. Low-enrollment in courses, CTE programs, and other program participation rates require staffing and equipment investments that serve relatively small numbers of students. The financial implications extend beyond individual school budgets. Maintaining fragmented programming across multiple facilities can reduce the district's flexibility to deploy resources where they will have the greatest educational impact. The district's existing configuration therefore presents both an operational efficiency challenge and an opportunity-cost concern.

Maintaining the current system requires the district to continue supporting fixed costs and fragmented programming structures that may limit its ability to invest in expanded student opportunities.

Anticipated Financial Benefits

The proposed configuration would establish two more fully enrolled comprehensive attendance-zone high schools while repurposing Thomas McKean High School as a districtwide Innovation Center. This approach is intended to improve facility utilization and reduce duplication of certain comprehensive high school functions.

Potential financial benefits include reduced duplication in administrative and operational structures, more efficient deployment of instructional and support personnel, and improved use of existing facilities. Importantly, the Innovation Center would remain an active educational facility. Therefore, the district should not assume that all operating costs associated with Thomas McKean High School would be eliminated. Any savings would depend on the differences between the current comprehensive high school operating model and the Innovation Center model.

More balanced enrollment at comprehensive high schools can improve instructional efficiency by supporting sustainable course sections and reducing the need to operate multiple low-enrollment classes. Larger student populations may also allow schools to offer a broader selection of advanced coursework, electives, and specialized programs without proportionate increases in staffing. It is important to note that this change would not create excessively large classes. Instead these changes in class size will lead to more appropriate class sizes; classes where there are sufficient students for robust class discussions as well as efficient scheduling. This could improve the educational value generated by existing instructional allocations.

However, staffing efficiencies should be distinguished from direct budgetary savings. Reallocating staff to expand programming may improve educational outcomes without reducing overall expenditures. As an example, during the 26-27 school year, AIHS was allocated more than 53 staff members yet earned only 45 Division I teaching units. As a high school earns more units, it does not

necessarily mean a decrease in teaching positions. Instead some of those staff members may be utilized in other schools that may benefit from additional staffing to meet the goals of our strategic plan.

The Thomas McKean Innovation Center provides an opportunity to centralize specialized CTE facilities, equipment, and instructional expertise. Many career pathways require substantial investments in laboratories, technology, specialized equipment, and industry-aligned instructional resources. Developing these programs at a shared districtwide location may reduce the need to duplicate expensive resources across multiple comprehensive high schools. The Innovation Center model also allows the district to concentrate investments in high-quality facilities and equipment serving students from multiple schools.

Centralized specialized programming has the potential to improve the cost-effectiveness of CTE investments while expanding access to programs that would be difficult or expensive to replicate at every high school. Figure 19 below represents an example of this potential based on a CTE business lab. This efficiency would apply to multiple labs related to CTE such as auto shops, healthcare labs, etc.

3 Schools with “Business Labs”	Innovation Center with 2 “Business Labs”
3 Labs * 25 Computers * \$850 / 5 year use	2 [#] Labs * 25 Computers * \$850 / 5 year use
\$12,750/year	\$8,500/year

Figure 19. In this example, it is assumed that the three labs would be replaced by 2 since there will be more students/sections using the lab.

A significant financial benefit of the proposed model is the opportunity to redirect resources toward higher-impact educational priorities. Potential efficiencies could support expanded AP and dual enrollment opportunities, industry-recognized credentials, work-based learning coordination, instructional technology, and additional student supports.

This approach recognizes that financial sustainability is not measured solely by expenditure reductions. It is also measured by the district's ability to use available resources to provide more meaningful educational opportunities. In the example above where A.I.Dupont High School was allocated eight “un-earned” units, some of those units may be deployed to other schools to meet unique needs, but others may be assigned to our comprehensive high schools to provide more course offerings.

Anticipated Costs and Financial Considerations

The district has identified both one-time implementation expenditures and recurring operational costs. These expenditures are expected to be supported through a combination of federal, state, and local funding sources, subject to funding eligibility and availability.

The primary one-time expenditures include:

- Professional development: Training associated with the realignment of instructional staff, programs, and school operations
- Planning and demographic analysis: Contractual services with the University of Delaware's Biden School of Public Policy Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research (CADSR)

- Facility improvements: Modifications, equipment purchases, and facility fit-out necessary to establish new pathways and upgrade existing CTE instructional spaces
- Transition expenses: Potential costs associated with relocating programs, equipment, and instructional materials

An important financial advantage is that the McKean facility already contains CTE instructional spaces. The proposed model builds upon existing district infrastructure rather than requiring construction of an entirely new technical education facility. In addition, the 2024 Referendum earmarked over \$43,000,000 in renovations to our 3 comprehensive high schools. These funds will help with changes to the buildings and as well as renovations to the building infrastructure.

The district's financial planning identifies primary categories of ongoing costs, anticipated to begin in FY2028 under the original implementation schedule.

Category	Anticipated financial impact
Transportation	Additional shuttle costs between comprehensive high schools and the Innovation Center, partially offset by more efficient morning and afternoon routes with the use of two AM and PM high school destinations instead of three.
Facilities	Routine utilities and maintenance expected to remain relatively consistent; potential long-term efficiencies from centralizing specialized CTE laboratories
Staffing	Reallocation based on enrollment and course selections; costs largely influenced by state staffing and vocational education funding formulas. Sustainable enrollment allows the district to greatly reduce the additional staffing resources necessary to ensure viability of under-enrolled schools.
CTE Programming	Recurring costs for equipment replacement, supplies, industry credentials, and specialized instructional resources
Program coordination	Potential expenditures for work-based learning, industry partnerships, and student program coordination

The district's preliminary analysis does not anticipate a negative impact on the local operating budget from staffing changes. The plan anticipates staff transfers rather than reductions in employment, with changes addressed through established processes and collective bargaining agreements. These assumptions will be validated as enrollment projections, staffing allocations, and course selections are finalized.

We are confident that there will be some efficiencies resulting in a saving of some local operating costs each year. Two areas where these have been modeled are that of Building Operations Budgets and Teacher EPER (Extra Pay for Extra Responsibility).

School budgets are driven by a formula including a component tied to enrollment since many school costs are tied to enrollment. By moving from three comprehensive high schools to two, there will be a savings to school budget lines. Figure 20 below demonstrates this savings.

Current Comprehensive School Building Budget	\$1,310,645
New Comprehensive Secondary School Budget	\$994,770
Net Increase/(Savings)	(\$315,875)

Figure 20. Building costs at the innovation center would be charged back to "home school" budgets or to CTE/Perkins Funds. Assumes McKean units are split 50/50 with AIHS and JDS. Current budget based on board approved budget BEFORE any allowed carryover.

Another area of yearly operating costs where there will be savings is that of EPER. Through the restructuring, duplicative EPER positions will be eliminated. Some of those funds will be available to add extra-curricular activities to our reimagined secondary schools and others will either be a decrease to yearly operating costs, or an opportunity to address strategic needs at elementary and middle schools. While the ultimate use of these funds has not been determined, we do know that there will be a decrease in the current EPER costs for three comprehensive high schools. Figure 21 below shows this yearly savings estimate and includes a \$100,000 place holder to enhance extra curricular activities that still results in a \$205,448 yearly savings.

Current Comprehensive School EPER	\$887,689
New Comprehensive Secondary EPER	\$682,240
Net Increase/(Savings)	(\$205,448)

Figure 21: While the Innovation Center will not have the same number of EPER positions, it is estimated that we will negotiate with our collective bargaining unit to repurpose some of the existing EPER contracts. These calculations have a \$100,000 placeholder.

Financial Sustainability and Funding

The long-term financial sustainability of the proposed model will depend on aligning recurring program costs with predictable funding sources. Delaware's education funding structure provides instructional staffing and vocational education resources based on student enrollment and applicable funding formulas. Consequently, changes in school configurations do not necessarily produce proportional reductions in instructional funding or staffing expenditures.

As the plan moves forward, the district will distinguish between expenditures supported through state allocations, local operating resources, and eligible federal grants, including Perkins funding. While the

district will look for grants to supplement the program, the model is expected to be funded through recurring funding sources that will not create “funding cliffs” where continued success is contingent upon new funding sources.

The Innovation Center will require ongoing analysis as the programming and equipment needs must be aligned with the vocational and career outlook for our students. Red Clay is well positioned to leverage our College and Career Readiness staff and district’s CTE Advisory Committee to monitor these needs and shift resources accordingly.

Financial Accountability and Board Oversight

Before final implementation, the district will provide the Board with a consolidated financial projection that distinguishes one-time costs, recurring expenditures, anticipated efficiencies, and funding sources.

The following financial measures will guide the district's analysis:

Financial measure	Purpose
One-time implementation budget	Establish total transition and capital-related expenditures
Annual operating cost comparison	Compare current and proposed secondary configurations
Transportation cost analysis	Determine net costs after shuttle additions and route efficiencies
Staffing allocation analysis	Evaluate staffing requirements and funding implications
CTE cost per participant	Assess the efficiency of specialized program delivery
Five-year financial projection	Evaluate sustainability and potential future obligations

Financial reporting will include a baseline reflecting the cost of maintaining the existing configuration, allowing the Board to distinguish expenditures directly attributable to restructuring from costs that would occur regardless of the plan.

Overall Financial Determination

The Reimagining Secondary Education Plan offers an opportunity to improve the financial efficiency and long-term sustainability of Red Clay's secondary education system. By creating more balanced comprehensive high school enrollments and establishing a centralized Innovation Center, the district can potentially reduce program duplication, improve instructional resource utilization, and expand access to specialized opportunities without replicating costly facilities across multiple schools.

The plan will require initial investments and may result in additional recurring expenditures in certain areas, particularly transportation and specialized CTE programming. These costs may be partially offset by efficiencies in transportation routing, staffing deployment, and shared facilities.

At this stage, the available financial analysis supports the operational feasibility of the proposed model but does not establish a verified net savings amount or a definitive five-year fiscal impact. The proposed redesign represents a financially reasonable approach to improving the use of existing district resources while expanding educational opportunities. Its financial justification should be measured not solely by cost savings, but by the ability to deliver broader, higher-quality programming through a sustainable operating model.

Conclusion

The Reimagining Secondary Education Plan is fundamentally an educational improvement initiative supported by a strategy for more effective resource utilization. The district's current secondary school configuration requires the continued operation of multiple facilities and programs despite uneven enrollment and underutilized capacity. The proposed redesign creates an opportunity to better align those resources with student needs.

Through more sustainable comprehensive high schools and the Thomas McKean Innovation Center, Red Clay can make strategic investments in college and career readiness while improving the efficiency of its existing educational infrastructure. The ultimate financial measure of success will be whether the district can provide more opportunities, stronger programs, and better student outcomes through a responsible and sustainable use of public resources.

The Red Clay Consolidated School District recognizes that the financial implications of Reimagining Secondary Schools extend beyond initial implementation. The district is committed to ongoing financial monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the changes remain fiscally responsible, sustainable, and aligned with the district's strategic priorities. This review will include continued analysis of staffing, enrollment trends, operational expenditures, transportation, facilities, and program investments. As implementation progresses, the district will assess actual expenditures against financial projections, identify opportunities for operational efficiencies, and make necessary adjustments to maximize resources while maintaining high-quality educational opportunities for all students. This commitment to continuous financial oversight will support transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources.

Our Approach to the Work

The Steering Team

The Red Clay district team has divided the work into 16 planning areas with seven of those areas involving working groups composed of various stakeholder groups.

Planning Area	Steering Committee Lead	Working Group
Adult Ed. to McKean	Hugh Broomall	
Student Life	Mark Pruitt	Yes
Communicating the Plan	Alva Mobley	
Facilities	Marcin Michalski	
Finance	Ted Ammann	
Innovation Center	Mark Pruitt	Yes
Master Scheduling & Logistics	Corey Heacock	Yes
Meadowood to AIH	Sarah Celestin	Yes
MYP to Skyline	Tawanda Bond	Yes
Nutrition	Jessica Farrand	
Professional Learning	Tawanda Bond	Yes
Public/Private Support	Hugh Broomall	
Realignment of A-Zs	Shawn Snyder	
Staffing Changes	Keenan Dorsey	
Student Services	Sarah Celestin	Yes
Transportation	Kelly Shahan	

Planning Area	Purpose
Adult Education to McKean	Develop and coordinate a comprehensive transition plan for relocating the Adult Education program and services from Alexis I. duPont High School to the Thomas McKean Innovation Center, including facility needs, staffing, scheduling, technology, and continuity of services for adult learners.
Student Life	Ensure that every student transitioning from McKean and John Dickinson MYP to Alexis I. duPont High School, Dickinson High School, Skyline Middle School experiences continuity, connection, and a strong sense of belonging.
Communicating the Plan	Develop and implement a comprehensive communication and community engagement strategy that provides timely, accurate, and accessible information to students, families, staff, and community stakeholders throughout the transition.
Facilities	Assess and coordinate all facility modifications, renovations, space utilization, equipment, and infrastructure improvements necessary to support the proposed school configurations and educational programming.
Finance	Identify, analyze, and monitor the financial implications of implementation, including one-time transition costs, recurring operational expenditures, potential efficiencies, funding sources, and long-term fiscal sustainability.
Innovation Center	Design academic, operational, and student-experience structures for the Center's opening. The group will provide expertise to a comprehensive plan that addresses programming, scheduling, staffing needs, transportation, partnerships, student supports, and communications, prioritizing feasibility, sustainability, and a positive student experience.
Master Scheduling & Logistics	Develop coordinated master scheduling structures and operational procedures that support student access to academic programs, efficient use of staff and facilities, and successful implementation of the new school configurations, particularly the cross-site McKean Innovation Center.

Meadowood to AIH	Develop and coordinate a comprehensive transition plan for relocating Meadowood programs and services to McKean High School to Alexis I. duPont High School, ensuring appropriate facilities, specialized instructional environments, staffing, student supports, continuity of educational services, and IDEA compliance.
MYP to Skyline	Plan and coordinate the transition of the Middle Years Programme (MYP) to Skyline Middle School, including program authorization requirements, curriculum alignment, staffing, professional learning, student transitions, and communication with families.
Professional Learning	Identify and coordinate professional learning opportunities necessary to prepare teachers, administrators, and support staff for new instructional programs, school configurations, operational expectations, and student support needs.
Public/Private Support	Identify and cultivate partnerships with businesses, higher education institutions, nonprofit organizations, and community stakeholders to secure resources, expertise, student experiences, and other support for implementation.
Realignment of A-Zs	Develop and coordinate the implementation of revised attendance zones, including student assignment procedures, feeder patterns, enrollment projections, transition provisions, and communication with families.
Staffing Changes	Working with employee groups, develop a comprehensive staffing transition plan that addresses personnel allocations, assignments, transfers, collective bargaining obligations, and equitable distribution of staff across schools and programs impacted by changes.
Student Services	Evaluate and plan for the continuity and alignment of special education, multilingual learner services, counseling, behavioral supports, health services, and other student supports throughout the transition, ensuring compliance with applicable requirements and equitable access.
Transportation	Evaluate and develop transportation plans aligned with revised attendance zones, school configurations, specialized programs, and student needs, including routing, fleet capacity, bell schedules, staffing, costs, and operational efficiency.

Working Groups

Workgroups consist of teachers, para-professionals, parents, school administrators, and district administrators. Committees began working during the Spring of 2026 and will continue bi-monthly through the launch of Reimagining Secondary Education.

Student Life Workgroup

- Charge Statement
 - The Student Life Workgroup is charged with ensuring that every student transitioning from McKean and Dickinson MYP to Alexis I. duPont High School, Dickinson High School, Skyline Middle School experiences continuity, connection, and a strong sense of belonging. This group will design systems that allow students to maintain access to extracurricular activities, athletics, and leadership opportunities while also creating intentional structures to unify the new school communities into one cohesive and inclusive student experience. The workgroup will prioritize student voice, equitable access, and community-building as it develops a plan to support a successful transition and a thriving, connected student culture.
- Areas of Work
 - Honoring McKean Traditions
 - Building New Athletic Teams
 - Team Building Activities
 - Supporting Students
 - Student Government & Leadership Structures
- [Rolling Slide Deck](#)

McKean Innovation Center Workgroup

- Charge Statement
 - The group's charge is to design academic, operational, and student-experience structures for the center's August 2027 opening. The group will provide expertise to a comprehensive plan that addresses programming, scheduling, staffing needs, transportation, partnerships, student supports, and communications, prioritizing feasibility, sustainability, and a positive student experience.
- Areas of Work
 - Determine Level IV Courses of Value
 - Work-Based Learning System & Structure
 - Building Map by Career Cluster Area
 - Budgeting- Perkins and DE509
 - Installation of New Programs of Study
 - Career & Technical Student Organizations
 - Aligned School-Based Enterprises
 - Calendar & Master Schedule
 - 9th Grade Exploratory Curriculum
 - Facility Upgrades

- Student Support
- School Administrative Team
- Staffing
- Daily Operations
- School Culture
- [Rolling Slide Deck](#)

Master Scheduling & Logistics Workgroup

- Areas of Work
 - Alignment of Master Schedules of Feeder Schools
 - Cross Site Enrollment in Infinite Center
 - Phase-Out Plan (from a scheduling lens) for current McKean students
 - Increasing Career-Readiness Opportunities (from a scheduling perspective)
 - Determine Level IV Courses of Value
 - Work-Based Learning System & Structure
 - Building Map by Career Cluster Area
 - Budgeting- Perkins and DE509
 - Installation of New Programs of Study
 - Career & Technical Student Organizations
 - Aligned School-Based Enterprises
 - 9th Grade Exploratory Curriculum
 - Student Life Impacted by Scheduling
 - Student Support
 - Broader Logistics for scheduling
 - Facilities (room numbers)
 - Administrative Scheduling Access
 - Staffing
- [Scheduling & Logistics Workgroup Slides](#)

Meadowood to AI High Workgroup

- Charge Statement
 - Develop and coordinate a comprehensive transition plan for relocating Meadowood programs and services to McKean High School to Alexis I. duPont High School, ensuring appropriate facilities, specialized instructional environments, staffing, student supports, continuity of educational services, and IDEA compliance.
- Areas of Work
 - Inclusion w/in HS classes
 - Innovation center access/inclusion
 - Staffing
 - Transition Planning
 - Facilities
 - Bathrooms
 - Elevator

- Accessibility in/out of building
 - Cafeteria
 - Parking
 - Classrooms & Related Services space Nursing access
 - Conference room & ofc space
 - Deescalation space
 - Equipment storage
- Extra-Curricular Activities
- Transportation
 - Timing for arrival
 - To/from Innovation Center
- Building Entry/Access- Front & Back
- Nursing Supports
- [Agendas/Minutes](#)

MYP to Skyline Workgroup

- Charge Statement
 - Plan and coordinate the transition of the Middle Years Programme (MYP) to Skyline Middle School, including program authorization requirements, curriculum alignment, staffing, professional learning, student transitions, and communication with families.
- Areas of Work
 - IB Compliance & Realignment
 - Community Transition
 - Communication
 - Professional Learning
 - Course Alignment & Access
- [Rolling Slides](#)

Professional Learning

- Charge Statement
 - Identify and coordinate professional learning opportunities necessary to prepare teachers, administrators, and support staff for new instructional programs, school configurations, operational expectations, and student support needs.
- Areas of Work
 - Teacher Transitions
 - Supporting Vulnerable Populations
 - Standardized Expectations
 - School Culture & Identity
 - Alignment of programs (AVID, IB, CTE)
 - Inclusion & Co-Teaching
- [Rolling Slides](#)

Student Services

- Charge Statement
 - Evaluate and plan for the continuity and alignment of special education, multilingual learner services, counseling, behavioral supports, health services, and other student supports throughout the transition, ensuring compliance with applicable requirements and equitable access.
- Areas of Work
 - Counseling Plan Alignment
 - Social Worker Service Delivery
 - 504 Plans & Support
 - Service Delivery / LRE Continuum (e.g., small group content, STEP, advisory)
 - Related Services Staffing & Service Delivery
 - Autism Services Staffing & Facilities
 - Special Transportation & Transition to/from Innovation Center
 - Paraprofessional Support Structure & Staffing
 - Nursing Staffing & Space
 - Wellness Centers
 - ML Staffing & Service Delivery
- [Agendas/Minutes](#)

Advisory Team

The Reimagining Secondary Education Advisory Team serves as a collaborative group of education, business, industry, and community partners charged with providing strategic guidance, technical expertise, and stakeholder perspectives to support the successful design and implementation of the district's vision for secondary education. With particular emphasis on the development of the McKean Innovation Center, the team helps ensure that academic programming, career and technical education pathways, facilities, and work-based learning opportunities align with evolving workforce demands, industry standards, and student needs. Through ongoing consultation and feedback, members identify emerging opportunities, recommend improvements, foster meaningful partnerships, and support the long-term sustainability of the initiative. Ultimately, the Advisory Team helps bridge education and industry to ensure that all Red Clay students have equitable access to high-quality learning experiences that prepare them for college, careers, and future success.

Member	Organization
Jamie Ayala	Christiana Care
Jonathan Wickert	Delaware Department of Education
Jonathan Starkey	Delaware State University
Mark Brainard	Delaware Technical & Community College
Leslie Mergner	Delaware Technical & Community College
Lisa Peel	Delaware Technical & Community College
Monterry Luckey	Delaware Workforce Development Board

Thais Greca	Emerging Delaware
Julia Keleher	First State Educate
Lisa Hoffman	FMC Agricultural Solutions
Curt Bedford	Glenn, Fedale, Papa
Joel Worden	Goldey-Beacom College
Colleen Perry Keith	Goldey-Beacom College
Helana Rodriguez	Leadership Delaware
Luke Rhine	Rodel Foundation of Delaware
Bob Stokes	Southern Regional Education Board
Dale Winkler	Southern Regional Education Board
Robert Rescigno	Southern Regional Education Board
Diana Frank	The College Board
Jonathan Cox	University of Delaware
Lindsay Rice	Wilmington University

Attendance Zone, Restructuring & Review Committee

Following the Board of Education's approval of the Reimagining Secondary Education plan in July 2025, the district established the Attendance Zone, Restructuring & Review Committee to provide continued stakeholder engagement, oversight, and transparency throughout the implementation process. While the original Secondary Attendance-Zone & Programming Committee was charged with examining enrollment, programming, and attendance zones and developing recommendations for the Board, the newly established committee serves a distinct purpose focused on monitoring implementation of the approved plan.

The committee's primary responsibilities include receiving regular progress reports from district leadership, providing assurance that implementation remains consistent with the plan approved by the Board of Education, offering perspectives and raising questions regarding implementation decisions, and providing updates to the Board. Through this structure, the district seeks to maintain transparency, accountability, and meaningful stakeholder involvement as the initiative moves from planning to execution.

The committee serves as an important connection between the district's internal implementation teams, the Board of Education, and the broader school community. As the district advances the multiple interconnected components of Reimagining Secondary Education, the committee provides a forum for reviewing progress, identifying potential challenges, and examining how implementation decisions align with the initiative's original goals.

Particular attention is given to the district's commitments to achieving more balanced enrollment across secondary schools, improving attendance-zone alignment and feeder patterns, expanding equitable access to academic and extracurricular opportunities, and establishing the McKean Innovation Center as a shared resource for high school students.

The committee's work builds upon the extensive engagement conducted during the original planning process, which included public committee meetings, student focus groups, a community meeting, and a community survey. Maintaining this engagement during implementation recognizes that successful systemic change requires ongoing communication, stakeholder input, and responsiveness to emerging concerns.

The committee's meeting schedule is structured around these major implementation areas, allowing members to receive focused updates and examine the operational, educational, and financial considerations associated with the transition.

These meetings provide a structured mechanism for reviewing the district's implementation progress while allowing committee members to examine the interdependencies among planning areas. The district's action-planning process also establishes a framework for identifying potential barriers, coordinating resources, and addressing implementation challenges before they affect students, families, or school operations.

More information about the Attendance Zone, Restructuring, & Review Committee at [the committee's website](#).

Board of Education Resolution to Postpone Implementation

In April 2026, the Red Clay Consolidated School District Board of Education developed a resolution calling for the postponement of the Reimagining Secondary Education initiative, including the McKean Innovation Center, to allow additional time for comprehensive planning, community engagement, and the development of a coordinated implementation strategy.

The resolution recognizes the importance of addressing longstanding inequities in educational opportunities while emphasizing the need to ensure stability and continuity for current students, meaningful engagement with families and staff, and appropriate supports for students transitioning between schools and programs. The resolution establishes eleven conditions to be addressed before implementation may proceed, including a phased transition plan, comprehensive communication and stakeholder engagement, professional learning for educators, a formal equity analysis, an IDEA compliance report, and an assessment of the operational and financial implications of the McKean Innovation Center.

Particular attention is directed toward students with disabilities, including those participating in the Meadowood Program, and ensuring that proposed changes do not compromise educational services or opportunities. Under the resolution, the administration must provide an updated implementation plan with documented evidence that the established conditions have been satisfied before the Board considers lifting the postponement and establishing a revised implementation timeline.

See the resolution here- [Resolution to Postpone](#). The district has initiated efforts to meet each of the 11 conditions.

Evaluation & Accountability

The district is committed to ensuring that the Reimagining Secondary Education initiative produces measurable improvements in student opportunities, experiences, and outcomes. The success of the

initiative will be evaluated through a comprehensive approach to monitoring and continuous improvement, grounded in the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) established in the district's 2024–2029 Strategic Plan. These indicators will provide measurable evidence of the district's progress toward expanding equitable access to high-quality academic programming, career pathways, work-based learning, and extracurricular opportunities.

Specifically, the district will monitor progress in five key areas:

- **Innovation Center Program Participation:** Measure student enrollment and participation in programs offered through the McKean Innovation Center, including the extent to which opportunities are accessible to students across all district high schools.
- **Enrollment in Work-Based Learning Immersion:** Track the number and percentage of students participating in meaningful, career-connected experiences, including internships, apprenticeships, and other structured work-based learning opportunities.
- **Industry-Standard Credential Attainment:** Monitor the number and percentage of students earning industry-recognized credentials that demonstrate career readiness and provide value in postsecondary education and the workforce.
- **Early College Credit Attainment:** Evaluate student attainment of college credits through dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, and other approved opportunities that accelerate postsecondary progress and reduce potential college costs.
- **Increased Extracurricular Participation:** Measure growth in student participation in athletics, clubs, activities, and other extracurricular experiences, reflecting the district's commitment to strengthening school communities and expanding opportunities for student engagement.

Beyond monitoring overall participation and attainment, the district will examine these indicators across schools and student populations to determine whether the initiative is reducing historical disparities in access and outcomes. Baseline data, annual progress monitoring, and longitudinal trends will inform program adjustments, resource allocation, and future planning. Results will be shared with district leadership and the Board of Education to promote transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Ultimately, the success of Reimagining Secondary Education will be measured not simply by the implementation of new programs or facilities, but by the extent to which these changes expand opportunities, strengthen student engagement, improve college and career readiness, and produce more equitable outcomes for all Red Clay students.

Communications & Outreach

Initial Communications- 2025-2026

- October
 - [Faculty Presentations to Impacted Schools](#)
 - Red Clay Choice Open House
 - [Slides](#)
 - [Video Recording](#)
 - [Letter to All Red Clay Employees](#)
 - [Letter to Parents & Community](#)
- November
 - [Changes & Impact on School Choice- Letter to all Red Clay Families](#)
- December
 - [Website Launch](#)
- March-May
 - [“Did You Know” Updates](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 - [Email Us To Learn More](#)

Community Engagement and Opportunities 2026-2027

As part of the district’s ongoing commitment to transparency, collaboration, and meaningful stakeholder engagement, Red Clay Consolidated School District will provide multiple opportunities for families, staff, and community members to learn more about the Reimagining Secondary Schools plan, ask questions, and provide feedback. The district’s engagement strategy includes three distinct opportunities designed to reach different audiences. Community Town Halls will be open to all members of the public, providing a forum to learn about the plan, discuss its implications, and engage directly with district leadership. Choice Open House Nights will include a dedicated Reimagining Secondary Schools information table, allowing prospective families and attendees to learn about proposed changes and ask questions while exploring school choice options. Parent Engagement Nights will be designed specifically for each school's community, providing families with more focused information about how the plan may impact their students, school programs, and future educational opportunities. Together, these engagement opportunities reflect the district’s commitment to accessible information, two-way communication, and ensuring that families and community members are informed and engaged throughout the implementation process.

COMMUNITY TOWN HALLS

4 EVENTS

2026 ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Alexis I. duPont High School	Oct 26 6:00 PM
McKean High School	Oct 27 6:00 PM
The John Dickinson School	Dec 9 6:00 PM
Warner Elementary School	Dec 10 6:00 PM

RED CLAY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT • REIMAGINING SECONDARY SCHOOLS

CHOICE OPEN HOUSES

8 EVENTS

2026 ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

AI duPont High School	Nov 4 6:00 PM
McKean	Nov 5 6:00 PM
Dickinson	Nov 9 6:00 PM
Stanton	Nov 12 6:00 PM
Skyline	Nov 16 6:00 PM
AI duPont Middle	Nov 17 6:00 PM
Brandywine Springs	Dec 1 6:00 PM
HB duPont	Dec 2 6:00 PM

RED CLAY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT • REIMAGINING SECONDARY SCHOOLS

PARENT ENGAGEMENT

17 EVENTS

2026 ENGAGEMENT SCHEDULE

Richey	Sep 29 6:00 PM	Linden Hill	Nov 17 6:30 PM
Lewis	Oct 15 5:30 PM	Skyline	Nov 18 6:00 PM
Cooke	Oct 22 6:00 PM	Brandywine Springs	Nov 19 6:30 PM
HB duPont	Oct 27 7:00 PM	Johnson	Dec 1 6:00 PM
North Star	Oct 27 7:00 PM	Richardson Park	Dec 2 6:00 PM
Baltz	Nov 5 6:00 PM	Heritage	Dec 7 6:00 PM
Forest Oak	Nov 10 6:00 PM	Mote	Dec 8 6:00 PM
AI duPont Middle	Nov 12 6:00 PM	Marbrook	Dec 9 6:00 PM
Stanton	Nov 13 5:00 PM		

RED CLAY CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT • REIMAGINING SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Additional Opportunities to Learn More:

- Choice Information Night on October 20, 2026 at 6pm on [Zoom](#).
- Families interested in touring one of the district schools should contact the school principal.

Student Voice

Recognizing that students are among the most important stakeholders in the Reimagining Secondary Schools initiative, Red Clay Consolidated School District has developed a comprehensive student engagement strategy to ensure students understand the proposed changes and have meaningful opportunities to share their perspectives. Throughout October, November, and December 2026, the district will implement a coordinated outreach effort targeting students in grades 6–10, with particular emphasis on awareness, understanding, and feedback regarding the proposed McKean Innovation Center and broader secondary school redesign.

The engagement process will include a student-focused informational video explaining the vision and opportunities associated with Reimagining Secondary Schools, followed by a districtwide student survey designed to assess student awareness and understanding of the plan. The video and survey will be shared through classroom-based activities, allowing students to learn about the initiative and provide feedback in a familiar school setting. Additionally, the district will engage its Student Voice Advisory (SVA) group and conduct targeted focus groups with McKean High School tenth-grade students to gather more detailed perspectives through structured discussions.

Student feedback will be collected through both quantitative survey results and qualitative focus group discussions, allowing the district to identify common themes, questions, and concerns. By December 18, 2026, the district intends to consolidate the findings and incorporate student perspectives into ongoing implementation planning. These efforts reflect Red Clay's commitment to ensuring that students are not simply recipients of the Reimagining Secondary Schools plan, but active participants in shaping the educational experiences and opportunities it will provide.

Districtwide Staff Training

To ensure all Red Clay employees are informed and prepared to support students and families throughout the Reimagining Secondary Schools transition, the district will provide a virtual professional learning session for all staff on November 12, 2026. This districtwide training will provide an overview of the Reimagining Secondary Schools plan, including its purpose, key components, anticipated benefits, and implementation timeline. Particular emphasis will be placed on equipping employees with the essential information and consistent messaging needed to confidently communicate with students, families, and community members about upcoming changes. Staff will gain a clearer understanding of school transitions, attendance-zone realignments, expanded educational opportunities, and the development of the McKean Innovation Center. The training will also help employees address frequently asked questions, direct families to appropriate district resources, and reinforce the district's commitment to transparency and a smooth transition. By engaging all employees in this coordinated communication effort, Red Clay seeks to ensure that every staff member can serve as an informed and supportive resource for students and families throughout the implementation process.

Equity Analysis

Summary

The Red Clay Consolidated School District's Reimagining Secondary Education Plan represents a comprehensive effort to address longstanding structural inequities in secondary school enrollment, academic programming, college and career readiness, and access to educational opportunities.

The plan is grounded in Red Clay's Strategic Plan Priority #1- Student Growth, Success, & Equitable Outcomes and nested within Objective 3—ensuring equitable, high-quality college and career programming for every secondary student. Every student, regardless of attendance zone, neighborhood, socioeconomic background, disability status, language proficiency, or school assignment, should have meaningful access to rigorous academic programming, career pathways, extracurricular experiences, and the resources necessary for postsecondary success.

Over the past 25 years, Red Clay's secondary school system has expanded from five to seven high schools and from six to eight middle schools without corresponding enrollment growth. This expansion has contributed to underutilized facilities, fragmented enrollment patterns, and inconsistent educational opportunities across schools. More than 1,500 secondary school seats remain unfilled, while the district continues to operate multiple schools with enrollments that can limit their ability to offer comprehensive academic and extracurricular programs.

These conditions have created a system in which a student's educational opportunities may depend, in part, on the school they attend rather than their individual interests, academic readiness, or aspirations. The Reimagining Secondary Education Plan seeks to address these inequities through three interconnected strategies:

1. Enrollment and attendance-zone restructuring: Establishing more balanced enrollment across comprehensive high schools and creating clearer, geographically coherent feeder patterns between elementary, middle, and high schools.
2. Equitable access to comprehensive programming: Strengthening attendance-zone high schools so they can sustain broader academic offerings, including Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, electives, athletics, arts, and extracurricular activities.
3. Districtwide access to specialized career pathways: Transforming Thomas McKean High School into the Thomas McKean Innovation Center, providing students from across the district access to specialized Career and Technical Education (CTE), industry-recognized credentials, early college opportunities, and work-based learning experiences.

This equity analysis recognizes that restructuring schools can create legitimate concerns related to transportation, school identity, student transitions, program accessibility, and the potential disproportionate impact on historically underserved populations. These concerns require deliberate planning, transparent decision-making, meaningful stakeholder engagement, and ongoing evaluation.

The proposed redesign has the potential to substantially improve educational equity by addressing systemic disparities in access to academic, career, and extracurricular opportunities. However, achieving these benefits will depend on equitable implementation, protection of student services and

rights, and the district's ability to demonstrate measurable improvements in student access, participation, experiences, and outcomes.

Equity should therefore be evaluated not simply by whether students are assigned to different schools, but by whether the redesigned system provides students with more meaningful and comparable opportunities than the existing configuration.

Purpose and Equity Framework

The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate the anticipated equity implications of the Reimagining Secondary Education Plan, identify populations that may experience disproportionate benefits or challenges, and establish considerations that should guide implementation and Board oversight.

For purposes of this analysis, educational equity means providing every student with fair and meaningful access to the secondary educational opportunities, programming, resources, services, and support necessary to achieve their full potential. Equity does not necessarily require identical programming in every school. Rather, it requires that students have access to comparable opportunities and that barriers to participation are identified and addressed.

This analysis considers equity through five dimensions:

- Access: Whether students can reasonably access educational programs and services regardless of their school assignment or personal circumstances.
- Opportunity: Whether students have comparable opportunities to participate in rigorous coursework, specialized programs, and extracurricular activities.
- Experience: Whether students feel included, supported, connected, and appropriately served within their educational environment.
- Outcomes: Whether the redesigned system contributes to reducing disparities in academic achievement, graduation, college and career readiness, and postsecondary success.
- Implementation: Whether changes are introduced in ways that minimize disproportionate burdens, preserve legally required services, and provide appropriate transition supports.

Enrollment is a fundamental driver of educational programming. Schools depend on sufficient student enrollment to generate staffing allocations, sustain course sections, provide elective choices, maintain specialized instructional programs, and support extracurricular activities. When enrollment falls below sustainable levels, schools may experience:

- Reduced numbers of advanced coursework and elective sections.
- Difficulty sustaining a broad range of CTE pathways.
- Fewer opportunities for students to participate in advanced or specialized coursework.
- Limited flexibility in master scheduling.
- Smaller athletic programs and reduced opportunities for junior varsity and developmental teams.
- Fewer extracurricular and co-curricular options.
- Greater difficulty sustaining programs with specialized staffing or equipment requirements.

While smaller schools can offer meaningful advantages, including personalized relationships and strong school communities, small enrollment alone does not guarantee equitable educational opportunity. When enrollment limits the breadth of programming, students may face fewer choices than peers attending neighboring schools.

Red Clay's existing configuration includes multiple secondary schools operating below optimal capacity. These conditions are not distributed evenly, resulting in differences in programming and student experiences across schools. Students assigned to lower-enrollment schools experience fewer opportunities through no choice or circumstance of their own. The resulting inequity is structural rather than necessarily the product of individual school decisions.

Red Clay's high school attendance zones have remained largely unchanged since 2002, despite significant changes in school configurations, school choice, and changing K-8 attendance zones. The existing boundaries have contributed to fragmented feeder patterns, including neighborhoods whose students attend different high schools despite sharing elementary or middle school experiences. These arrangements can create inequities in school continuity, community relationships, transportation, and access to programming.

Clearer attendance boundaries and feeder patterns have the potential to improve educational continuity and strengthen neighborhood connections. .

A central finding of the district's enrollment and programming analysis is that students do not have consistent access to the same breadth of educational opportunities across secondary schools. Differences in school enrollment, staffing, scheduling, facilities, and existing program locations influence the availability of:

- Advanced Placement and dual enrollment courses.
- CTE programs and specialized electives.
- Fine and performing arts.
- Athletics and extracurricular activities.
- College and career exploration.
- Work-based learning and industry-connected experiences.

Although the district has established common expectations for college and career readiness programming, differences in school size and capacity can affect how extensively those opportunities are offered. The proposed model seeks to strengthen comprehensive high schools while establishing a shared districtwide resource for specialized programming.

This approach recognizes that equitable programming does not require every school to duplicate each specialized course. It requires a coordinated system through which all eligible students have meaningful access to those opportunities.

Equity Analysis of the Thomas McKean Innovation Center

The Thomas McKean Innovation Center is the most significant programmatic component of the Reimagining Secondary Education Plan. The proposed center will transform the existing Thomas McKean High School into a districtwide resource for specialized college and career programming.

Rather than requiring students to enroll in a particular high school to access certain programs, the Innovation Center model is designed to allow students to remain enrolled at their comprehensive high schools while participating in specialized programming through coordinated schedules and transportation. This represents a shift from school-based access to districtwide access.

Career and Technical Education programs frequently require specialized facilities, equipment, industry partnerships, and appropriately credentialed instructional staff. These requirements can make it difficult to offer a broad selection of programs independently at every comprehensive high school. As a result, students' access to certain career pathways may be limited by the school they attend. The Innovation Center proposes to address this challenge by concentrating specialized resources in a shared districtwide facility while maintaining career and college readiness opportunities at comprehensive high schools.

The proposed model envisions more than 20 career pathways and opportunities for students to earn industry-recognized credentials, postsecondary credit, and meaningful work-based learning experiences. The center would also support stronger partnerships with employers, postsecondary institutions, and community organizations.

Anticipated equity benefits include:

- Reducing disparities in specialized CTE access between comprehensive high schools.
- Increasing participation in credentialing and postsecondary credit opportunities.
- Providing multiple pathways to postsecondary success beyond a traditional four-year college trajectory.
- Connecting students with industry professionals, internships, and authentic workplace experiences.
- Creating opportunities for students from different schools and backgrounds to learn and collaborate.

Importantly, the Innovation Center should not be viewed as an alternative to academic rigor. It is intended to integrate rigorous academic programming at home schools with expanded career-connected learning opportunities at the Innovation Center.

A distinguishing feature of the Innovation Center model is that students will remain members of their comprehensive high school communities. Students would continue to maintain connections to their home schools, including school activities, athletics, graduation traditions, counseling services, and other aspects of student life, while accessing specialized programs at the Innovation Center. This structure is intended to avoid forcing students to choose between participation in a specialized career-focused school and continued membership in their school community. However, the success of this model will depend on coordinated master schedules, reliable transportation, access to meals and student services, and the protection of extracurricular participation.

The creation of districtwide programs does not automatically guarantee equitable access. Student participation may be influenced by program capacity, family awareness, and master scheduling conflicts. The district must establish transparent and consistent procedures for student recruitment and enrollment and will include proactive outreach to students who have historically been underrepresented in specialized academic and CTE programs. Where programs have limited capacity, selection criteria should be clearly connected to legitimate program requirements and reviewed for potential

disproportionate effects. Participation data should be disaggregated by student group, home high school, and program area to determine whether access is equitable in practice. Student participation will not be influenced by application processes or transportation as the Innovation Center is a part of the educational program for all students.

Equity Impact on Student Populations

The district recognizes that the proposed restructuring may affect student populations differently. A comprehensive equity analysis must consider both the potential benefits and the risks associated with implementation.

A. Students from Economically Disadvantaged Households

Students from economically disadvantaged households may face barriers to educational participation that include transportation limitations, access to technology, competing family responsibilities, and reduced access to enrichment opportunities outside school.

The Innovation Center has the potential to reduce some of these barriers by providing specialized college and career experiences during the regular school day, supported by district transportation and resources.

Students who may not otherwise have access to industry certifications, dual enrollment, career exploration, or work-based learning could benefit significantly from a coordinated districtwide model.

However, these benefits depend on the district ensuring that participation does not require additional family transportation, fees, equipment purchases, or other expenses that could discourage enrollment.

The district will:

- Provide district transportation for scheduled Innovation Center participation.
- Minimize or eliminate student costs associated with program materials, credential examinations, and required equipment.
- Ensure equitable access to internships and work-based learning placements.
- Provide family communications through multiple channels.
- Monitor enrollment, completion, and credential attainment by economic-disadvantage status.

Students with Disabilities

See **IDEA Compliance** for detailed response concerning students with disabilities.

Multilingual Learners

Multilingual learners may experience barriers to specialized program participation when recruitment materials, application procedures, counseling, and instructional supports are not accessible.

The proposed districtwide model creates opportunities to expand access to rigorous academic coursework, career exploration, CTE pathways, and workplace experiences for multilingual learners.

However, equitable participation requires intentional attention to language accessibility and instructional support.

The district will:

- Provide translated program information and interpretation services for families as appropriate.
- Ensure multilingual learners receive equitable college and career counseling.
- Consider unnecessary language barriers.
- Coordinate English language development services with Innovation Center schedules.
- Provide appropriate language support within specialized instruction.
- Monitor enrollment and completion patterns by English learner status.

Students from Historically Underserved Racial and Ethnic Groups

Historical patterns of residential segregation, school enrollment, and access to specialized programming can contribute to differences in educational experiences and outcomes. Attendance-zone changes and school restructuring must therefore be examined for their potential effects on the racial and ethnic composition of schools, access to programs, and student experiences. The district should assess whether the proposed configuration improves access to high-quality programming across student populations and whether any changes create unintended concentrations of educational disadvantage.

The Innovation Center has the potential to bring students from different schools and communities together through shared academic and career experiences. However, this benefit should not be assumed without examining actual participation patterns.

The district will:

- Compare racial and ethnic enrollment patterns under current and proposed attendance zones.
- Examine access to advanced coursework and specialized pathways across student groups.
- Review disciplinary, attendance, and school climate data during transition.
- Monitor Innovation Center participation and completion rates.
- Engage students and families from communities most directly affected by restructuring.

Students Experiencing Housing Instability and Other Barriers

Students experiencing homelessness, foster care transitions, significant family mobility, or other circumstances that affect school continuity may be particularly vulnerable during districtwide restructuring. The district must ensure that school assignment changes and program transitions do not unnecessarily disrupt educational stability or legally protected school-of-origin rights. Appropriate transportation, counseling, and individualized transition supports will be essential. The district should also consider students who rely heavily on school-based relationships, extracurricular activities, and support systems when evaluating transition arrangements.

Current Thomas McKean High School Students and Families

The transformation of Thomas McKean High School requires particular attention because it changes the role of an existing comprehensive high school within the district. While the Innovation Center is intended to create expanded opportunities for students throughout Red Clay, the transition will be

experienced differently by students, families, and staff who identify strongly with McKean High School. For these stakeholders, the change is not solely an adjustment in program delivery. It may involve changes to school identity, relationships, traditions, travel patterns, and educational expectations. The district will acknowledge these concerns as legitimate equity considerations.

The district will:

- Provide clear, individualized information about future school assignments.
- Develop transition supports that preserve student relationships and continuity.
- Evaluate the effects of reassignment on transportation and extracurricular participation.
- Address school identity, traditions, and community concerns through meaningful engagement.
- Provide appropriate counseling and student support during the transition.
- Ensure that current McKean students have access to educational opportunities comparable to or greater than those available under the existing model.

Equity Analysis of Attendance-Zone Restructuring

The proposed attendance-zone restructuring is intended to strengthen enrollment at the district's comprehensive high schools, align feeder patterns, and create more sustainable educational programming. The recommended configuration includes two attendance-zone comprehensive high schools, Alexis I. duPont High School and The John Dickinson School, with Thomas McKean serving as the districtwide Innovation Center. The plan also includes secondary program realignment, including the relocation of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme to Skyline Middle School.

Balanced enrollment is not an end in itself. Its educational value lies in the opportunities that sustainable enrollment can support. More balanced enrollment can improve the district's ability to offer comparable comprehensive programs across attendance-zone schools, including advanced coursework, elective options, athletics, and extracurricular activities. The district should continuously evaluate whether proposed enrollment levels support stronger programming at both comprehensive high schools rather than simply achieving similar student counts.

Clear feeder patterns can provide greater continuity as students move from elementary to middle to high school. This continuity can strengthen student relationships, improve coordination between schools, and provide families with greater predictability. However, geographic coherence must be balanced against transportation, school capacity, demographic composition, and access to programming. The district should evaluate the extent to which proposed attendance zones reduce unnecessary fragmentation while avoiding disproportionate burdens on particular student populations.

A central benefit of the proposed restructuring is the opportunity to strengthen the comprehensive high school experience. Larger, more sustainable enrollments will allow schools to offer additional course sections, increase student choice, and expand extracurricular participation. This is particularly important in programs where a minimum number of interested students is necessary to sustain a course or activity.

The district will establish common expectations for comprehensive high school programming and monitor whether both schools can deliver comparable opportunities. Comparable programming does

not necessarily mean identical schedules or elective catalogs. It means students should have meaningful access to rigorous academics, broad electives, and appropriate support regardless of their attendance zone.

The proposed relocation of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme from The John Dickinson School to Skyline Middle School is intended to address enrollment imbalances and improve the alignment of secondary programs. The district will evaluate the impact of this change on current and prospective IB students, transportation, access to specialized instruction, and program continuity. Particular attention should be given to maintaining the quality and accessibility of the IB experience, preserving appropriate pathways into high school programs, and ensuring families receive clear information about the implications of the relocation.

Transportation, Scheduling, and Access

Transportation and scheduling represent two of the most significant operational equity considerations in the proposed model. The Innovation Center's districtwide structure depends on students being able to move between comprehensive high schools and specialized programming without sacrificing access to required instruction, services, or extracurricular opportunities. The district's preliminary feasibility work has identified relatively short transportation distances between the proposed comprehensive high schools and the Innovation Center, with estimated shuttle travel times of approximately 9–13 minutes.

The district will establish transportation and scheduling standards that address:

- Reliable transportation between instructional locations.
- Accessible transportation for students with disabilities.
- Coordination of class schedules to minimize lost instructional time.
- Access to meals, counseling, health services, and related services.
- Participation in athletics and extracurricular activities.
- Transportation associated with internships and off-campus work-based learning.
- Contingency procedures for delays, absences, and emergency situations.

Students should not experience lost opportunity or access to important school activities because they participate in Innovation Center programming. Transportation and scheduling should therefore be treated as essential components of educational equity rather than solely operational matters.

Potential Equity Risks and Mitigation Strategies

While the proposed restructuring is designed to address existing inequities, the district recognizes that systemwide changes can introduce new barriers if not implemented carefully. The following matrix identifies major equity risks and mitigation strategies.

Potential equity risk	Mitigation
Disproportionate impact of attendance-zone demographic	Conduct demographic and geographic impact analyses with University of Delaware before final implementation

groups	decisions
Disruption of student relationships, school identity, and community connections	Develop transition supports, student orientation activities, and community engagement opportunities through the creation of the Student Life Workgroup.
Unequal access to Innovation Center programs	Establish transparent scheduling procedures and annual data analysis through the creation of the Operations & Master Scheduling Workgroup.
Transportation or scheduling barriers	Coordinate master schedules, provide accessible district transportation, and monitor actual travel and instructional time through the Operations & Master Scheduling Workgroup.
Reduced access to services for students with disabilities	Conduct individualized planning and ensure full implementation of IEPs, Section 504 plans, and required services through the Meadowood and Student Services Workgroup.
Underrepresentation of multilingual learners or economically disadvantaged students	Provide targeted outreach, accessible communications, counseling, and appropriate instructional supports through the McKean Innovation Center Workgroup.
Loss of extracurricular opportunities due to Innovation Center participation	Protect participation in home-school activities through coordinated schedules and transportation through the Student Life Workgroup.
Uneven implementation across comprehensive high schools	Establish common program expectations and monitor course offerings, staffing, and student outcomes through the Operations and Master Scheduling Workgroup.
Inequitable access to work-based learning placements	Establish consistent placement procedures and provide transportation and other participation supports through the McKean Innovation Center Workgroup.

These risks do not outweigh the benefits of the plan. However, they demonstrate that equitable outcomes require more than structural design. The district must establish safeguards that translate the plan's equity commitments into practice.

Equity Accountability and Measures of Success

The district will evaluate the success of Reimagining Secondary Education through measurable indicators of student access, experience, and outcomes. Using the indicators below, the district will establish baseline data prior to implementation and regularly report progress following the transition.

Equity Area	Recommended indicators
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Enrollment equity	School enrollment, utilization, demographics, and enrollment stability
Academic access	College course availability, participation, and successful completion
CTE access	Enrollment, pathway completion, and industry credentials
Work-based learning	Participation in immersion experiences
Student experience	Attendance, discipline, belonging, school climate, and extracurricular participation
Students with disabilities	Program access, service delivery, transition outcomes, and credential attainment
Multilingual learners	Access to specialized programs, participation, completion, and language supports
Transportation	Travel time, reliability, accessibility, and missed instructional time
College and career outcomes	Graduation, postsecondary credit, industry credentials, and postsecondary enrollment or employment where available

These indicators should be disaggregated, where appropriate, with a particular emphasis placed on comparing opportunities and outcomes before and after implementation.

Implications of Maintaining the Current System

An important component of this analysis is the consideration of the existing secondary school configuration as an alternative to restructuring. Maintaining the current system would avoid some of the short-term disruption associated with changes in attendance zones, school assignments, and program locations. It would preserve existing school communities and provide continuity for students and families who value their current educational environments.

However, maintaining the current system would also preserve the structural conditions that prompted the Reimagining Secondary Education work. Those conditions include underutilized facilities, enrollment imbalances, fragmented feeder patterns, and inconsistent access to academic and extracurricular opportunities. Without structural changes, the district would continue to face challenges in sustaining comprehensive programming across schools with substantially different enrollment levels.

Similarly, the district's ability to expand specialized CTE pathways, industry credentials, and work-based learning experiences would remain constrained by the need to duplicate expensive facilities and staffing or limit certain opportunities to individual schools. The equity implications of maintaining the current configuration must therefore be considered alongside the potential risks of restructuring. Avoiding the disruption of change does not result in a more equitable educational system.

Overall Equity Determination

Based on the district's historical enrollment analysis, evaluation of attendance zones and feeder patterns, review of secondary programming, and development of the Thomas McKean Innovation

Center model, the Reimagining Secondary Education Plan is designed to address structural conditions that have contributed to unequal educational opportunities across Red Clay's secondary schools.

The plan's central equity benefits include:

- Strengthening comprehensive high schools through more sustainable enrollment.
- Reducing the extent to which attendance-zone assignments determine access to educational programming.
- Establishing clearer and more coherent feeder patterns.
- Expanding districtwide access to specialized CTE, industry credentials, postsecondary coursework, and work-based learning.
- Creating a more coordinated secondary system that uses district resources to support broader student opportunity.
- Establishing multiple rigorous and meaningful pathways to college, career, and postsecondary success.

Equity Analysis Conclusion

The fundamental equity question facing Red Clay is not simply where students attend school, but what opportunities are available to them once they arrive. For many years, the district has operated a secondary school configuration in which enrollment imbalances, fragmented attendance zones, and the distribution of specialized programs have contributed to differences in student opportunity.

The Reimagining Secondary Education Plan seeks to address these conditions by creating stronger comprehensive secondary schools, establishing more coherent feeder patterns, and expanding districtwide access to specialized college and career programming through the Thomas McKean Innovation Center. The proposed model reflects an important shift to providing educational equity. Rather than attempting to duplicate every specialized opportunity in every school, it seeks to build a coordinated secondary system in which students can access high-quality programming regardless of their assigned comprehensive high school. This approach has the potential to expand student choice, strengthen academic and career preparation, and create a more sustainable system of educational opportunities.

The district also recognizes that educational equity cannot be achieved through structural change alone. It requires attention to the experiences of individual students, the needs of affected communities, and the elimination of barriers that may prevent students from fully participating in available programs. Successful implementation must therefore be accompanied by transparent decision-making, appropriate student supports, meaningful family engagement, and ongoing analysis of outcomes.

IDEA Compliance

The Reimagining Red Clay Secondary Schools initiative presents an opportunity to strengthen educational programming, improve facility utilization, establish more coherent feeder patterns, and expand equitable access to college and career readiness opportunities. As the district considers changes to attendance zones, school configurations, specialized programs, and the development of the McKean Innovation Center, it is essential that implementation fully complies with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as well as applicable Delaware special education regulations.

The McKean Innovation Center model provides opportunities to expand on the provision of special education and related services. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and state special education regulations outline the requirements for eligibility for services, development of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and the provision of specially designed instruction and related services (e.g., speech, occupational and physical therapy, counseling, psychological services). While these regulatory requirements will be followed across any setting, the following IDEA compliance report outlines considerations and opportunities for the McKean Innovation Center and feeder high schools organized around the core principles of the IDEA federal law including:

- Child Find & Timely Evaluation
- Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) & Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
- Procedural Safeguards & Parent Involvement

Child Find & Timely Evaluation

The Child Find requirement includes the condition to establish a process for intervening when students are struggling with academic or non-academic skills as well as conducting unbiased psychoeducational and related service evaluations to determine eligibility for special education services. Interventions will continue to be provided through the Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) and may include reading or math interventions as well as non-academic interventions across several need areas (e.g., emotional regulation, social skills, behavioral needs). MTSS interventions will continue to be offered within the student's feeder/choice school. One important consideration will be the communication system between the feeder/choice school and McKean Innovation Center staff in order to inform staff of needs and interventions. This communication system is available through the iTrackerPro application of the Data Service Center which allows for tracking and progress monitoring of interventions which can be accessed by any staff member that teaches or supports the student. The main logistical consideration for MTSS has to do with the Problem Solving Team (PST) process that takes teacher/staff referrals for students who are in need of support. The PST will be hosted by the feeder schools (AI DuPont and Dickinson), and the Career Technical Education (CTE) teachers at McKean will need to submit referrals to the PST team for the appropriate school. One consideration may be to have a PST liaison at

McKean to facilitate this process and to invite the CTE teacher to attend the PST meeting virtually to provide feedback about concerns.

The requirement for timely evaluations includes the tracking of the evaluation process from the signature of the Permission to Evaluate (PTE) to the eligibility meeting. Per c, evaluations must be conducted with an eligibility meeting held within 45 school days or 90 calendar days whichever is shorter in duration. The Special Education Coordinator assigned to manage the student's eligibility process will coordinate the timeline between all evaluators. An important consideration is the coordination of the eligibility process across settings (both home school and innovation center as well as across classes). The observation requirement within the psychoeducational evaluation will need to be conducted across settings and will need to be coordinated between school psychologists at each setting, or the school psychologist assigned as the lead evaluator will require added time to conduct observations across settings. Depending on the amount of cross-building evaluations that need to take place, school psychologist caseloads may need to be adjusted in order to provide adequate time to complete all evaluation requirements.

Free & Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) & Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

The provision of FAPE is a core component of the IDEA and is based on the development of the IEP as well as progress made toward IEP goals. The IEP team is developed by a collaborative team that includes the parent/guardian(s), student (for secondary level), general educator, special educator, CTE teacher, related service providers (based on student needs), school administrator/designee, and evaluators (if including eligibility discussion). The first consideration of the IEP team will include individualized decision-making regarding accessing the innovation center. This will be driven by the student's transition plan and career/employment goal.

Per DE Admin Code 14 § 925.7.2, secondary transition planning is required through the IEP process beginning no later than the first IEP in effect when a student turns 14 or enters eighth grade, whichever occurs earlier. A key opportunity of the innovation center model is the ability for IEP teams to align student's transition goals around the career field to the most aligned career pathway. This is a challenge in the current model as career pathways are not available across all feeder schools. With access to the innovation center, students with disabilities can have greater alignment of career pathway coursework with the transition plan goals and activities. It also allows for expansion of work-based learning opportunities for students with IEPs to provide hands-on training that can be captured through transition services and activities. Special education staffing including teachers, paraprofessionals and related service providers (e.g., speech, occupational, physical therapists, school psychologists) will be available at each setting in order to deliver special education and related services in academic and career pathway classes.

Questions have been raised about scheduling concerns and the impact of transportation to/from the innovation center on students' service times within the IEP. While it will take planning to coordinate services across settings, all specially designed instruction and related services times will be provided across the high school and innovation center settings. It is important to note that related services such as therapies or counseling can be provided across settings with service delivery tracked through the Related Services application through the Data Service Center. Specialized transportation and bus accommodations will be provided with the innovation shuttle service and walkers who are transitioning to the innovation center will also be eligible for specialized transportation as determined by the IEP team. Depending on the type of transportation accommodations required and/or the need for modified curriculum expectations, some students may have a modified schedule when accessing the innovation center. This scheduling change may involve accessing a career pathway for a partial block vs. the full time period. Any determination regarding a modified schedule for the career pathway access would be made with the IEP team when considering transition goals and pathway coursework. An additional transportation consideration is the transfer of motor equipment between school sites. Due to the size of most gross motor equipment and the need for students to access the equipment for regular position changes, duplicate equipment between the high school and innovation center is needed along with storage space for this equipment.

The IEP team will continue to drive the type of services and supports that students need and how services are delivered (e.g., frequency, duration, location). All staff supporting the students must be aware of their IEP goals and services including Behavioral Support Plans (BSPs) and/or Safety Plans. Staff across settings will also need training in deescalation and personal emergency interventions as outlined in students' IEPs and BSPs. School psychologists and behavior analysts will continue to provide staff training and consultation on student BSPs across settings - similar to the evaluation process outlined above, it will be important to consider psychologist and behavior analyst caseloads with travel time for staff training. All sites will continue to have a Student Crisis Readiness Team that is trained in deescalation and personal emergency interventions for students who are in crisis. All settings must include intervention spaces and calm down/deescalation spaces in addition to storage space for materials and mobility equipment.

Extracurricular participation and support needed is also determined by the IEP team. While individual services are driven by the IEP, the innovation center structure provides the opportunity to expand specialized extracurricular programs such as Special Olympics Unified Sports and Best Buddies. Both AI DuPont and Dickinson high schools can expand these programs to create additional extracurricular opportunities for all students.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

IDEA requires students with disabilities to be educated alongside students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. The proposed realignment must not inadvertently increase segregation, reduce access to general education, or limit placement options. The principle of LRE drives IEP team

decision-making around the setting for student's services. The continuum of settings includes support in the general education setting, services within a special education classroom setting (e.g., pull-out, self-contained) and specialized settings such as autism support classrooms and Meadowood program classrooms. The restructuring of the high schools provides an opportunity to restructure to have greater alignment of settings across the high schools and innovation center. For example, small group special education courses are currently offered for English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies across AI DuPont, Dickinson and McKean; however, small group world language is offered at McKean only. Additionally, push-in or co-teaching support is offered by some high schools in core content and career pathways, but the availability is inconsistent based on staffing and caseload needs. It is recommended that the staffing plans for all sites include the ability to provide a small group course option as well as push-in/inclusive general education course sections. Additionally, each high school has a special education small group support class (e.g., Academic Advisory, Reinforced Learning Lab), but they are inconsistent in focus and service delivery - some focus on transition planning and specially designed instruction while others focus on classwork/homework support. The innovation center plan allows for recalibration of these classes to have greater consistency.

Autism support classrooms will be available across all sites, and emotional support classrooms have the opportunity to expand from McKean and Dickinson to all sites. The Meadowood Program will be incorporated at AI DuPont with a focus on development of inclusive partnerships between Meadowood and AI DuPont staff to facilitate push-in opportunities across content areas. Students who are in need of off-bell transitions and modified scheduling as determined by the IEP team will continue to utilize these practices, but it will be important that all staff across settings receive communication about these accommodations via the Special Education Coordinators.

Procedural Safeguards & Parental Rights

The procedural safeguards including parental rights and procedures for state complaints and due process hearing will not be impacted by the innovation center. One consideration related to the IEP team is participation of all required parties. With the majority of CTE teachers being located at McKean, coordination will be needed between the Special Education Coordinators of the high schools with the administration at the innovation center in order to plan for release time for CTE teachers to participate in IEP meetings as required in DE Admin Code 14 § 925.8.1.6. There is also an opportunity to provide greater involvement of the Multilingual Learner (ML) teachers for students who are dually identified as multilingual learners who receive special education services. This process will utilize the DOE recommended consultation form for MLs as well as the possibility of ML teachers participating in the IEP meeting to coordinate language-based services. A final consideration related to the IEP team is case management which is typically provided by a special educator at the high school who coordinates with all team members. Case managers will need to communicate with the staff serving the student at the innovation center to ensure accommodations and supports are consistent across settings.

Additional Considerations

Outside of the IDEA core principles, some students with disabilities will have accessibility concerns due to mobility needs. Facilities accessibility is a core component of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504. All high schools involved with feeder change discussion and the innovation center have been reviewed for facilities accessibility. AI DuPont High School has an ADA report on file related to building accessibility. Additionally, the Facilities department has proposed the following renovations in preparation for a transition of Meadowood Program from McKean to AI DuPont:

- Ramp added to back of building to entrance outside of gym
- Enclosed ramp from first floor to cafeteria/lower level
- Accessible bathrooms near nursing suite

These items are already budgeted with planning underway through the Facilities Office. In addition to facilities accessibility, school safety is a key component for security of all students. All sites will utilize the [Red Clay Risk Assessment](#) procedures to assess student need. School administration will continue to plan for supervision of unstructured areas including hallways, cafeteria and bathrooms to reduce the risk of bullying or other safety concerns.

Conclusion

The Reimagining Red Clay initiative is not inherently inconsistent with IDEA or Delaware special education requirements. The proposed changes offer opportunities to improve educational access, strengthen secondary transitions, expand career and technical education, and create more coherent instructional pathways for students with disabilities. Reimagining Red Clay provides an opportunity to strengthen the district's commitment to inclusive education while modernizing its secondary school structure. The success of the initiative will depend not only on enrollment balance, facilities, and expanded academic opportunities, but also the district's preservation and enhancement of educational services for students with disabilities.

Before finalizing implementation, the district will complete a formal internal compliance review led by Special Education and Student Services in collaboration with School Operations, Facilities, Human Resources, Transportation, and College and Career Readiness. This review will be informed by the ongoing planning, oversight, and implementation guidance of the Meadowood to A.I. High Workgroup and the Student Services Workgroup, both established as part of the district's Reimagining Secondary Schools implementation process. These workgroups will play a critical role in identifying student needs, evaluating potential barriers, coordinating services and supports, and developing recommendations to ensure a successful transition for students with disabilities. Particular attention will be given to maintaining continuity of services, ensuring appropriate facilities and programming, supporting meaningful inclusion, and meeting all requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The district's guiding commitment will be that no student with a disability experiences a reduction in educational access, required services, or individualized supports as a consequence of the reorganization. Through proactive compliance reviews, meaningful family engagement, careful transition planning, and

collaboration across district departments, Red Clay can implement the proposed changes while meeting its obligations under IDEA and advancing more equitable educational opportunities for all students.

Conclusion

Reimagining Secondary Schools represents a necessary and strategic shift. The work balances operational realities with a clear focus on student opportunity, ensuring that every learner benefits from a system designed for both equity and excellence.

The next 17 months will require disciplined execution, consistent communication, and continued collaboration with the community. The result will be a stronger, more coherent secondary system that prepares students for success in college, career, and life.

FAQ

Frequently asked questions with responses are available at [Reports & Frequently Asked Questions](#) at [Reimagine Secondary Education](#).