DISTRICT PLANNING COMMITMENTS

Final Version October 5, 2026

District Planning Commitments were drafted by the Core Team to define Decatur School District's shared vision and priorities for educational delivery, grade organization, programs, specialists, and curriculum. These draft commitments will serve as a consistent framework for evaluating facility use and guiding the development of solutions that support the District's mission, vision, values and goals through the development of a long-range facility plan.

Prekindergarten (PreK)

- Pre-K serves as the foundation for academic, social, emotional and behavioral learning.
- Centralized Pre-K programs will optimize focused learning environments, centralizing peer age-grouping, leveraging efficiencies of staffing, resources, and programmatic needs to prepare students for future school and life success.

Elementary Schools (K-5)

- Elementary grades serve as building blocks for academic, social, emotional and behavioral learning.
- To support instructional collaboration, a three-specialist rotation model (PE, art, and music,) will serve as the baseline for all elementary buildings. (Flexible adjustments may be necessary based on staffing needs or gaps).

Middle Schools (6-8)

- Middle School serves as a core strategy to create exposure to a variety of pathways for the student's continued journey into High School.
- There needs to be clear articulation of the middle school pathway exploration and its transition and continuum of high school coursework that leads to students being prepared for success in their future pathway of choice.
- A true middle school model with students traveling between classes, creating greater alignment with the middle school structure and instructional approach is proposed to begin in the 6th grade.

High Schools (9-12)

- High school serves as the cumulative, capstone educational experience, with a critical focus on ensuring students are on track in ninth grade, intended to fulfill the vision of preparing all students for success in the future pathway of choice.
- All high school students should have equitable access and opportunities for social, emotional, behavioral, academic and extracurricular support and programing for a complete and comprehensive high school experience.
- Academic and social environments should provide support for a successful transition from middle school into high school.

School Choice

- There is interest in expanding school choice options for students and families, as equitably and equally as possible, somewhere on the DPS61 academic journey. During Phases I & II of the strategic planning process, there was consensus to provide more equitable school choice or programing options for students and families.
    - Providing school choice at the middle school (grades 6-8) provides beneficial pathways for students to explore specialized opportunities before transitioning to focused programming at the high school level.

Misc. Items

- All schools are part of DPS61 (one school, one family) and will provide a consistent, guaranteed and viable educational program across schools; however, each school can have its own identity.
- Consideration should be given to accommodate Professional Learning Community (PLC) planning at all levels, within the PreK-12th grade teacher workday, to better support student achievement.
- English Language Learners (ELL) and Special Education (SPED) programs should be centralized in similar grade bands as the rest of the district is organized to optimize peer grouping, support family navigation, and provide appropriate resources and staffing.
- Effective transitional support (between grade levels, and school configurations (PreK to elementary to middle school to high school) will benefit students and families and provide structures for success during transitions.