Public Comment Session
Engagement Session 3
Dunwoody HS location
11/5/26

Executive Summary
The overwhelming theme of the meeting was community frustration with the Student Assignment Project (SAP) process, coupled with demands for long-term solutions rather than short-term boundary changes.

While speakers represented different school communities, several common threads emerged repeatedly:

1. Ashford Park families overwhelmingly want their community kept together and want an expansion of Ashford Park seriously considered.
2. Kingsley families are asking the district to make a difficult long-term decision rather than continue years of uncertainty. Several speakers openly supported closing or repurposing Kingsley if it results in stronger educational opportunities.
3. Montgomery families are concerned that a dual-campus model has become an assumed solution without sufficient explanation, analysis, or community input.
4. Many speakers questioned the transparency, consistency, and accuracy of the data driving the proposals.
5. Multiple speakers argued that educational quality, equity, and academic opportunity should weigh more heavily than seat utilization and facility capacity.
6. There was broad concern that the district appears to be pursuing temporary fixes that may require another reassignment process in a few years.

Major Themes
1. Keep Ashford Park Together

Ashford Park parents repeatedly argued that:
- Their neighborhood should remain intact.
- Dresden Drive connects the community rather than serving as a logical dividing line.
- The current scenarios split neighbors and long-established feeder patterns.
- Families specifically want to remain connected to the Chamblee feeder pattern.
- Expansion should be pursued before breaking apart the attendance zone.

Many speakers viewed the current options as different versions of the same outcome: Split Ashford Park and move students elsewhere.

2. Expansion vs. Redistricting
A major debate emerged around whether overcrowding should be solved through:
- Boundary changes, or
- Capital investment and expansion.

- Numerous Ashford Park speakers argued:
- Overcrowding has been known for years.
- The district has invested in other schools while delaying Ashford Park.
- ESPLOST funding provides an opportunity to finally address it.
- Expansion is a permanent solution while rezoning is temporary.

3. Lack of Trust in the Process

Speakers repeatedly expressed:

- Feeling unheard.
- Frustration after participating in surveys, focus groups, CAT meetings, and public comments.
- Concern that community feedback is not reflected in the options presented.
- Perception that decisions may already be made.

Several speakers used phrases such as:

- "What are we still doing here?"
- "Yelling into the abyss."
- "This process sucks."
- "Our voices aren't being heard."

4. Need for Long-Term Planning

Repeated concerns included:

- Current proposals appear temporary.
- Some facilitators reportedly indicated another reassignment process may occur within a few years.
- Families want a 10–20 year vision rather than a 3-year fix.
- Community exhaustion from recurring reassignment conversations.

5. Educational Quality vs. Capacity Management

Many speakers argued that:

- Schools should not be viewed simply as seats and buildings.
- Educational outcomes should be the primary consideration.
- Moving students from high-performing schools into lower-performing schools raises legitimate concerns.
- Proposed options should include academic plans, staffing plans, and program plans, not just enrollment projections.

6. Equity and Resource Allocation

Several speakers broadened the discussion beyond neighborhood interests.
They advocated for:

- Equity analysis for all options.
- Consideration of poverty, ESOL services, gifted services, and special education.
- Greater transparency on socioeconomic impacts.

- More equitable distribution of district resources.

Notably, some speakers challenged the district to think beyond preserving existing boundaries and instead consider what creates the strongest district-wide educational system.

7. Concerns About Montgomery Dual Campus

Montgomery speakers were generally not outright opposed to dual campus.
Instead, they repeatedly asked:

- How would it work?
- Which grades go where?
- How would transportation work?
- Is it temporary or permanent?
- Why has it become the only option presented?

A key point:
Community members feel they are being asked to evaluate a model without enough operational details.

8. Kingsley's Future

Kingsley presented a very different perspective.
Multiple speakers argued:

- Years of uncertainty are causing enrollment decline.
- The school needs major investment if it remains open.
- Families are tired of waiting.
- The district should either invest substantially or consider closure and redevelopment.

Several Kingsley advocates openly discussed supporting closure as a neighborhood school if it would improve educational opportunities for students districtwide.

Speaker-by-Speaker Highlights

Pre-recorded Brookhaven Resident

- Requested reconsideration of the Ashford Park/John Lewis dual-campus proposal.
- Argued it could address overcrowding and underutilized capacity simultaneously.

Laura Sum

- Opposed feeder fragmentation.
- Preferred Options C and D over A.
- Said students should stay together from elementary through high school.

Rachel Glover (Kingsley)

- Suggested Kingsley should potentially close as a neighborhood school.
- Opposed moving Hightower students into Kingsley.
- Called for long-term clarity.

Laurie Bishop (Ashford Park)

- Advocated restoring the Ashford Park/John Lewis dual-campus option.
- Argued district policy prioritizes keeping neighborhoods intact.

Kingsley Parent (strongly critical remarks)

- Called the process poorly managed.
- Urged district leadership to make difficult long-term decisions.
- Openly advocated closing an elementary school if necessary.

Jessica Hill (Montgomery PTO)

- Questioned why every scenario assumes a Montgomery dual campus.
- Requested operational details and facility investments.

Samantha Rubin

- Focused on equity and policy.
- Recommended adding equity analyses to Policy AD.
- Called for academic impact plans, not just facility plans.

Katie Lucey (Kingsley PTO)

- Argued uncertainty has harmed Kingsley.
- Requested either investment or decisive action.
- Raised facility condition concerns.

Michelle Sandrock (Montgomery PAC)

- Presented survey findings.
- Option D received the most support.
- Strong demand for more information about the dual-campus model.

Former Cross Keys Student

- Asked district to ensure students benefit from investments in Cross Keys.
- Focused on opportunity and access rather than boundaries.

Chad Corley (Ashford Park)

- Advocated expansion as the permanent solution.
- Framed rezoning as a short-term fix.

Multiple Ashford Park Parents

Represented by speakers including:

- Erica Smith
- Amy Eisenman
- Ben Knapik
- Bennett Ginberg
- Jessie Fetterling
- Alan Krijanek
- Stacy Miller-Morris
- Sally Chasteen
- Others

Collectively emphasized:

- Keep Ashford Park together.
- Protect Chamblee feeder patterns.
- Expand Ashford Park.
- Reject current scenarios.

- Restore dual-campus alternatives.
- Improve transparency and responsiveness.

Vanderlyn Representative (Yang Yang reading Tarun Pawar's statement)

- Questioned enrollment projections.
- Highlighted discrepancies in district forecasting data.
- Requested longer-term forecasts.

Montgomery Speakers

Including:

- Jake Robinson
- Courtney Forensic
- Sarah Chris
- Julie Paul

Common messages:

- Need details on dual campus.
- Need clarity on temporary vs permanent plans.
- Want Montgomery expansion reconsidered.
- Protect high-performing academic programs and magnets.

Will (Austin Elementary)

- Focused on countywide equity.
- Asked whether resources are being allocated where needs are greatest.
- Encouraged broader geographic analysis.

David Fall Foldy

- Criticized rhetoric portraying some schools as "good" and others as "bad."
- Called for investment in Cross Keys.
- Emphasized educational opportunity across communities.

Overall Representation

The meeting was heavily represented by three groups.

Ashford Park

- Keep community together.
- Expand Ashford Park.
- Restore dual-campus conversations.
- Stop treating rezoning as the only solution.

Montgomery

- Explain the dual-campus model.
- Reconsider expansion.
- Provide long-term planning and operational detail.

Kingsley

- End years of uncertainty.
- Invest heavily or make a difficult long-term closure decision.
- Stop using Kingsley as a stopgap enrollment solution.