



Answers to Questions from Round 1 of Redistricting to Relieve Cross Keys Overcrowding

Why do this now? Why not wait until the new schools are built to provide relief?

Constructing a new school takes time, two years under ideal circumstances and longer if there are complications. It is possible that land is needed to build one or both of these new elementary schools, which could impact the timing.

Continuing to accommodate enrollment growth in portable classrooms without considering alternative options is no longer acceptable, as some school sites are nearing the limit of how many portable units they can accommodate.

The options presented are not intended to “solve” the issues of overcrowding in the Cross Keys cluster. They are intended to provide “short term” relief to some of the most stressed schools until the “long term” solution of building more capacity can be accomplished.

What is “Short Term”? What will happen to these schools in the long term?

The options being considered are to provide “short term” relief to elementary schools until the “long term” solution of building two new schools in the Cross Keys cluster area is complete. Once those new schools open, new attendance areas will have to be drawn for them from the attendance areas of Cross Keys elementary schools; and possibly other schools in the areas around the Cross Keys cluster. **The changes to these schools are not temporary**, and should be considered semi-permanent (that is, until the next redistricting).

What is the “Long Term” solution for Cross Keys HS and Sequoyah MS? What other initiatives are happening that could help this area?

A *Secondary School Planning and Feasibility Study* of all middle and high schools in Regions 1 and 2 as well as the Clarkston cluster was approved by the Board in January 2016. This study will begin in March 2016 and look at all aspects of middle and high schools, from capacity and utilization to attendance areas and facility condition. Later this Spring, public meetings will be held to gather community feedback on these schools. This study will provide recommendations to the District on changes that can be made to these schools or the need to add new schools in order to improve their ability to best serve the students of the District in the long term.

Later this Summer and Fall (2016), the Building SPACES initiative will continue public meetings to determine the needs and direction of District facilities and schools for the next seven years. The result of these two initiatives will be a facility master plan for all District facilities and the development of a detailed E-SPLOST V project list for 2017 through 2022.

Why not use more of the schools in the area to relieve Cross Keys elementary schools?

Many of the schools in clusters close to the Cross Keys cluster are close to their capacity or are small schools with relatively few spaces open, and all have portable classrooms. Every elementary school in Region 1 and the Lakeside cluster has at least one portable classroom, with most having three or more. This means that any redistricting from elementary schools in the Cross Keys Cluster to other elementary schools in Regions 1 or the Lakeside Cluster would not result in more students and classes being inside a building.

Why not move more students? Why are new lines drawn the way they are?

The options presented must take into account the capacity of the school into which students are being moved as well as the expected growth of both the area being moved and the area already being served by that school. Areas to be moved cannot be so large that they include more students than the receiving school can handle in the next few years. Moving more students could result in the receiving school needing portable classrooms, which would not lower the number of students being taught in portable classrooms.

What will happen to teachers?

Teachers generally follow students, but specific impacts on teachers will be determined by the Human Capital Department.



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Do the District's projections and enrollment expectations take into account future development? Do the projections reflect parents who would otherwise send their student to a private school?

The Planning Department tracks new housing development continuously, adding new housing to our projection models as information is announced and housing types and numbers of housing units are made available by developers. We update our projections three times during the school year to reflect new development and changes to programs within the District that could affect school enrollment.

The planning department also tracks private school students living in the District, and uses historic data to estimate the numbers for students that may come to DCSD schools from private schools due to new facilities or a change in attendance area.

Why not use the former Briarcliff HS facility?

The former Briarcliff HS facility, located on Druid Hills Road next to the former ISC facility and Adams Stadium, has been unused for several years, and it is impossible to prepare it to be available for use by the Fall of 2016. It is possible that the facility may be a strategic asset in finding long term solutions to overcrowding in the Cross Keys cluster, but it is not usable as a short term solution.

In Elementary Options 1 and 2, what will happen to the Montessori program at Briar Vista ES?

In Elementary Options 1 and 2, the Montessori program would remain at Briar Vista ES, and there would be no change to the program. All students enrolled in the Montessori program would be allowed to remain at Briar Vista ES, though they would no longer be attending their "home school" and would not be provided transportation.

Why not include Oakcliff Theme ES?

Oakcliff Theme ES serves students from the Cary Reynolds ES, Dresden ES, and Pleasantdale ES attendance areas. Using the school was not included in the three options presented because the school already accepts as many students as it is able to without needing portable classrooms, and accepting more students would not decrease the number of students being taught in portable classrooms. In addition, using the school entirely for the Cross Keys Cluster would require finding a place for the over 180 Pleasantdale ES students attending the school. Pleasantdale ES is currently over capacity with several portable classrooms and will not have room to accommodate an additional 180 students until the new 900 seat replacement facility planned for that school is complete in two or more years.

What will happen to the Fernbank International Baccalaureate (IB) program?

The Fernbank ES IB program is a school-wide program serving all students attending Fernbank ES. Fernbank is one of several IB elementary schools in the District. Seats have been made available at all of these schools, if space allows, in order to allow more students who do not live in the attendance area to take advantage of the IB program. However, as the number of open seats in these schools falls, the number of IB seats that can be made available to new students living outside the attendance area falls. Many IB schools in the District are not able to take any new students from outside their attendance area due to lack of available space. Students already attending the school are allowed to stay. It is expected that as enrollment at Fernbank ES increases the number of seats available to students outside the Fernbank ES attendance area will fall. If the attendance area of Fernbank ES increases, all students in the new Fernbank ES attendance area who attend Fernbank ES will be automatically part of the IB program.

Why not use E-SPLOST Funds to build new capacity or renovate old facilities?

Many of the long term options that are or will be discussed will rely on the use of future SPLOST funds. The major constraint in building capacity or renovating old facilities is time. New capacity takes several years to complete, and the only unused old facilities the District has in the area are the former ISC facility, which is already included in all three options, and the former Briarcliff HS facility, which has been vandalized to such an extent that it cannot be made available as a "short term" solution.



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Why not purchase or rent space in the Cross Keys cluster until the new schools are built?

This option has been and continues to be considered. However, preparing a space that is either not designed for educational use or has not been used for educational use in many years to serve as a school takes time. Any purchase or renting of space will not be available by the Fall of 2016.

Why not do 4th & 5th grade academies?

In September of 2015 the idea of creating 4th and 5th grade academies to relieve some schools in the Cross Keys cluster was presented to the Cross Keys community. The feedback from the community was very clear that splitting older and younger students to different schools would be unacceptable to most Cross Keys parents. One of the goals of the options presented is to keep all neighborhood (non-choice) students from any area affected together in the same school rather than dividing by grade.

How hard would it be to bring all schools to equal utilization (enrollment divided by capacity)?

Ideally the issue of redistricting to better balance enrollment between schools can be addressed on a year-to-year basis. This proactive approach helps prevent large disparities in utilization from one school to another. The District has not seen redistricting to balance enrollment in the last 5 years. In order to better balance enrollment across the District, redistricting would need to take place more often and the attendance area of many schools in the District would need to be examined and potentially adjusted.

What kind of renovations or changes would need to happen to Warren Tech to make it proper elementary school again?

The Warren Tech facility was originally built to be an elementary school. It has since been renovated to serve as a technical school for students with special needs. To make it an elementary school once again, these renovations would have to be reversed: walls would need to be re-constructed, ceilings would need to be re-installed, bathrooms would need to be re-fitted, etc.

What is the goal of redistricting? Is it to ease overcrowding, or to reduce the use of portable classrooms?

In short, the answer is "both". The goal of this redistricting effort is to decrease the number of students in the Cross Keys cluster who attend class outside of a permanent building, and to reduce overcrowding at these same schools.

Will the money used for "short term" relief of the Cross Keys cluster take away from money available for "long term" solutions?

No. The long term solutions that are or will be considered will rely on future E-SPLOST funds.

Will any of the Elementary school options affect where students go for middle or high school?

No. Middle and high school attendance areas will not change as a result of any of the elementary options. Students living in the current Briar Vista attendance area would continue to be in the Druid Hills MS attendance area, even if the neighborhood students under Elementary Options 1 and 2 are from the Sequoyah MS attendance area. In much the same way, under Elementary Options 1 and 2 neighborhood students to Briar Vista ES would matriculate to Sequoyah MS. Montessori students attending Briar Vista ES have always matriculated based on the middle school area they reside in (i.e. students living outside the Druid Hills MS attendance area do not matriculate to Druid Hills MS). This would continue, meaning that most (but not all) Montessori students attending Briar Vista ES would matriculate to their "home" middle school of Druid Hills MS.



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Why redistrict at all? Why not simply open up seats at schools with capacity to all who want to come?

Opening up seats to all who want to apply does not allow enough certainty as to how many students will attend their home school versus the receiving school. A version of this was mandated by No Child Left Behind and the results were not ideal. More targeted versions of this that apply to only certain areas are possible, but balancing those programs between new and existing populations takes several years. Additionally, the Cross Keys community has made it clear that transportation is a key factor, and currently the District only provides satellite transportation to school choice programs other than elementary theme schools.

Changing attendance areas, and the transportation that comes with that, is the only way to have a significant impact on overcrowding in the Cross Keys cluster.

Is the Chamblee Magnet program impacted by either of the High School Options?

Neither high school option directly impacts the existing or future number of seats available for the high achievers magnet program.

Will class sizes be affected by any of the options?

No. Class sizes are determined by the Board and are not affected by the number of students in a school. All schools, large and small, follow the same rules for class sizes.

Will any school or program receive any extra funds in any of these options?

These options are about moving (or not moving) students and programs. Funding for programs and schools is dependent on the type of programs and number of students in the program or school.

Why isn't overcrowding in middle schools being addressed?

Unlike at the high school level there is no easy move that will provide relief to Sequoyah MS. Henderson MS to the south is currently overcrowded and Chamblee MS to the north will soon be at capacity from natural growth. In addition, Chamblee MS was built on a small site, making it very difficult to accommodate portable classrooms.

The *Secondary School Planning and Feasibility Study* to begin in March will look at the middle school level in more depth.

How do I find out if I am affected? Where do I go to find out more information school capacity and enrollments?

The Planning Department webpage has resources on school enrollment, capacity, and a link to our school locator where you can put in your address and find out exactly what attendance area you live in. With that information, the maps on the Redistricting webpage should let you know if you are in an area affected by one of the redistricting options.

Planning Department webpage:

<http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/planning>

Redistricting webpage:

<http://www.dekalb.k12.ga.us/redistricting/>