



Reimagining Education Reinvigorating Schools

DES MOINES PUBLIC SCHOOLS | DES MOINES, IOWA

An Overview of **THE PLAN**

January 2025



An Overview of the Plan

The Background

- What is Reimagining Education?
- The Reasons We Reimagine
- The Committee
- The Strategic Plan
- The Work Already Underway

The Plan

- The Elements of the Plan
- The Changes Necessary

The Next Steps

- The Process



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The **Background** of Reimagining Education

What is Reimagining Education?

- Thinking differently about education in Des Moines
- Making DMPS a destination district for families who want the best experiences and opportunities for their children
- Being more efficient in order to focus resources on students and staff, not on buildings



The Reasons We Reimagine

Turning This . . .

- Declining enrollment
- Limited funds
- Learning spaces that are in the wrong places, not meeting students' needs, or inefficient to maintain

. . . Into This

An opportunity to be the premier district in the region, where each student's journey from pre-K through graduation inspires them to a successful future.



The Committee

- Students, parents, teachers, staff, and community members met dozens of times for more than a year.
- They . . .
 - reviewed research
 - studied best practices
 - visited high-performing schools
 - evaluated DMPS classrooms across the district based on data





Immersive Multi-Cultural Learning Experiences

Celebrating diversity

Global connections

Language proficiency



Access to Rigorous Academics

Advanced Placement courses

College prep courses

Critical thinking and problem solving



World-Class Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Hands-on, real-world preparation

Work-based learning

Cutting-edge CTE facilities



Wrap-Around Child Development Programs and Supports

Preschool education

Whole child support

Comprehensive development
(extra-curricular activities)

The Strategic Plan

- The Reimagining Education proposal aligns with the new strategic plan DMPS unveiled at the January 14 School Board meeting.
- Elements of the proposal address each of the top priorities from the strategic plan, and implementing them will help bring these ambitious goals within reach.



The Work Already Underway

- Increasing access to preschool
- Piloting a K-6 elementary school
- Expanding access to Montessori programs
- Developing Diploma Plus



A group of diverse students are shown in a celebratory mood, with their arms raised high in the air. They are wearing dark-colored t-shirts, some with white text or numbers. The background is a solid blue color, which is a semi-transparent overlay over a photograph of the students. The overall scene conveys a sense of achievement and joy.

An Outline of the **Reimagining** **Education Plan**

The Elements of the Plan

- Full-day preschool
- Middle-school experience redesign
- Interest-based signature schools
- Experiences to prepare students for futures after graduation
- High-quality programs and facilities for activities and athletics



Increasing Access to Full-Day Preschool

To provide a foundation for future development and educational success:

- Full-day pre-K throughout the district, reducing transportation barriers
- More pre-K centers and programs at selected elementary schools



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Redesigning the Middle School Experience

To build excitement for learning and ease the transition between elementary and middle school:

- Hands-on exploration, combining CTE and interest-based learning
- Building more learning spaces
- Changing grade configuration, moving sixth grade to the elementary level



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Developing Interest-Based Signature Schools

To provide students with choices of schools that immerse them in a specific topic to engage them in learning (Cowles Montessori School is an example):

- Repurposing existing buildings and building new learning spaces throughout the district
- Engagement of students, families, staff and community when choosing Signature School themes



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Preparing Students for Successful Futures After Graduation

To provide opportunities for students to explore their interests and prepare for college, career, enlistment or whatever is next:

- Diploma Plus program to provide hands-on, real-world learning, beginning in pre-K with life skills and ending at graduation with special certifications
- Building the facilities necessary to ensure each student has access to these experiences



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Providing High-Quality Programs and Facilities for Activities

To provide activities, clubs and athletics that increase student interest and engagement in the life of a school, which then improves their academic success:

- Additions and renovations to increase access to engaging extracurricular activities in high-quality facilities
- Prioritizing improvements that benefit a wide range of students in a variety of activities



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The Changes Necessary

- Retiring or repurposing buildings
- Changing grade configurations
- Creating 3 regions with feeder patterns
- Providing sites for Signature Schools
- Building new learning spaces



Retiring or Repurposing Buildings and Spaces

Over eight to 10 years, gradually retiring or repurposing some buildings:

- Occurring as district completes construction of newer, more effective spaces added onto schools that are accessible to more students
- Refocusing resources on meeting students' needs and keeping excellent teachers and staff instead of on the expensive maintenance of less efficient buildings



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Changing Grade Configurations

Changing grade configurations:

- Pre-K: at centers and some elementaries
- Elementary schools: K-6
- Middle schools: 7-8
- High schools: 9-12
- Signature Schools: different grade configurations for each school



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Creating Three Regions with Feeder Patterns

Creating three distinct regions:

- Northwest, northeast and south, divided by the rivers
- Feeder patterns leading to regional comprehensive high schools
- Increased neighborhood connections
- High-quality learning spaces and programs in each region



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Providing Locations for Signature Schools

Creating as many as eight new program locations for Signature Schools:

- Two or three options in each region (families can choose any Signature School)
- Repurposing some existing buildings
- Adding program-specific spaces to sites



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Building New Learning Spaces

Adding onto many existing schools:

- Providing hundreds of needed classrooms and spaces for collaboration and innovation
- Providing access to high-quality, effective learning spaces in parts of the district that do not currently have them



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The **Next Steps** for Reimagining Education

The Process

1. Sharing the outline (tonight)
1. Sharing specific details at the State of the Schools event on Feb. 11
1. Getting stakeholder feedback about how to implement Reimagining Education and using it to refine the proposal
1. Finalizing the plan to bring to the School Board for consideration



Thank you!



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