



# Engagement Summary Report

## *Des Moines Public Schools*

March 10, 2025

prepared by CESO Communications

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# Executive Summary

## Overview

Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS) engaged CESO Communications to facilitate a comprehensive community engagement process regarding the district's Reimagining Education (RE) Plan. This initiative aims to improve student experiences, optimize resources, and introduce innovative school models, including signature schools and grade reconfigurations. To ensure a transparent and inclusive decision-making process, CESO Communications conducted structured conversations, an online survey, and extensive multilingual outreach efforts.

## Engagement Process

Between Feb. 13 and March 2, 2025, CESO Communications led 19 structured conversations and administered an online survey to gather diverse stakeholder input. These efforts included:

- Three staff-only virtual sessions
- 16 community conversations (four virtual and 12 in-person)
- A multilingual engagement strategy with sessions in Burmese, Karen, Karenni, Pashto, Spanish, Swahili and Vietnamese
- An online survey with 2,103 responses and a 79% completion rate

## Key Findings

Feedback was categorized into strengths, challenges, opportunities, and additional considerations.

### Strengths

- Improved student continuity and feeder patterns
- Expansion of PreK and early childhood access
- Increased school choice through signature schools
- Modernized facilities and infrastructure
- Enhanced college and career readiness opportunities
- More family and student voice in school selection

### Challenges

- School closures and their impact on local communities
- Uncertainty regarding signature school admissions and transportation
- Concerns about teacher job security and reassignment
- Potential overcrowding and increased class sizes
- Clarity needed on funding and implementation timelines
- Safety concerns related to grade reconfigurations (e.g., PreK-6 and 7-12 groupings)



## Opportunities

- Stronger community partnerships to support student learning
- Expansion of career and technical education (CTE) pathways
- Improved multilingual outreach and communication
- Equitable access to transportation and program offerings
- Transparent staffing plans and professional development
- Strategic repurposing of retired school buildings

## Recommendations

To ensure a successful rollout of the Reimagining Education Plan, CESO Communications recommends that DMPS:

1. Adjust school closure plans to minimize disruptions and provide transparent justification.
2. Ensure equitable transportation access for all students, particularly those opting for signature schools.
3. Clarify and strengthen the signature school model, including clear admission policies and support services for special populations.
4. Address staffing concerns through transparent job reassignment plans and professional development for transitioning educators.
5. Enhance communication strategies with multilingual engagement, frequent updates, and ongoing community feedback mechanisms.

## Conclusion

The Reimagining Education Plan presents a transformational opportunity for DMPS. By incorporating community feedback, addressing key concerns, and maintaining open communication, the district can build trust and ensure a smooth transition toward a more equitable and innovative educational future. Continued engagement will be critical in refining and successfully implementing the plan.



# Community Engagements Analysis

CESO Communications was contracted by Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS) to gather feedback about the district's Reimagining Education (RE) plan from district students, staff, families and community members. Following the district's announcement of RE plan on Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2025, CESO Communications collected community feedback through in-person and virtual conversations as well as via an online survey. Following this engagement period, input and feedback was analysed by CESO Communications and compiled into this summary report for DMPS.

## Engagement Process •

### Structured Conversations

CESO Communications conducted both in-person and virtual conversations between Feb. 13 and March 1, 2025.

### Focus Questions

All members of the DMPS community were invited to learn about the Reimagining Education plan and to participate in structured conversations about the plan. Specifically, facilitated conversations focused on the following questions:

- **Strengths** – What do you see as the strengths of the proposed plan? What do you like about it? How do you see this plan positively impacting the students and families of DMPS?
- **Challenges** – What challenges do you see with the proposal plan? What gives you pause or concern? How do you see this plan negatively impacting the students and families of Des Moines Public Schools?
- **Opportunities** – What specific suggestions do you have for improving the proposed plan? What opportunities may arise as a result of the plan?
- **Other Considerations (parking lot)** – What else should the district consider as it moves forward with the Reimagining Education program? Are there specific audiences or strategies that the district needs to include as part of its revisions, decision-making and rollout? What questions still need to be considered or addressed?



## Participation

A total of 19 structured conversations were conducted between Feb. 13 and March 1, 2025. Sessions were open to all members of the DMPS community, including students, families, staff and residents. In all, the conversations included nearly 500 participants.

### STAFF-ONLY CONVERSATIONS

All staff were invited to participate in one of three conversations February 14, 17 and 18.

- **Format** – virtual via Zoom
- **Participation** – 102

### COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

To maximize participation, a total of 16 community conversations were conducted between February 19 and March 1 at various times and locations throughout the district.

- **Format**
  - Four virtual sessions via Zoom
  - 12 in-person sessions
- **Language**

In partnership with the district’s bilingual family liaisons (BFLs), sessions were available in multiple languages, including:

  - Five dedicated Spanish-language sessions
  - One “low-incidence” language session available in Burmese, Karen, Karenni, Pashto, Swahili and Vietnamese
- **Participation** – 386
  - Virtual –88
  - In-person – 298

## Online Survey

In addition to structured conversations, CESO Communications crafted a survey open to all DMPS community members. The survey was administered by DMPS via the district’s online survey platform. The survey was open February 5 through March 2.

### Participation

The survey had 2,103 participants, with a completion rate of 79%.

### Survey Content

All members of the DMPS community were invited to complete the online survey, regardless if they attended a structured dialogue. Prior to answering the survey questions, respondents



were asked to review the Reimagining Education website, which was linked in the survey, to build understanding of the plan.

Respondents then answered questions about the RE plan in the following areas:

- GOALS of the Reimagining Education plan
- OUTCOMES of the Reimagining Education plan
- PROPOSED CHANGES to the Reimagining Education plan
- POTENTIAL SIGNATURE SCHOOL interest and theme preferences
- STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES of the Reimagining Education plan
- OTHER CONSIDERATIONS for the Reimagining Education plan

## Themes and Findings •

The comments and input from the structured conversations were reviewed by CESO Communications for key themes for each of the four categories – strengths, challenges, opportunities and other considerations.

### Structured Conversations (*Staff*)

#### Strengths

1. **Stronger Feeder Patterns and Student Continuity** – The plan corrects inconsistent feeder patterns, ensuring students stay with their peers from PreK through high school, fostering a stronger sense of community.
2. **Expansion of PreK and Early Childhood Access** – Universal PreK and integrating PreK into all elementary schools is seen as a major win for early intervention and student success.
3. **Signature Schools and Expanded Student Choices** – Many staff support the development of specialized schools, especially in fields like Montessori, IB, and Career & Technical Education (CTE).
4. **Modernized and Improved Facilities** – Upgrading buildings with better classroom spaces, natural lighting, and more inviting environments was widely praised.



5. **Enhanced College and Career Readiness (*Diploma Plus & CTE*)** – Staff value opportunities for students to graduate with certifications, college credits, or job training experience.
6. **District Office Relocation to Schools** – Moving administrative offices into school buildings is seen as a positive change that will increase district leadership’s understanding of school needs.
7. **Increased Student and Family Voice in School Choice** – Giving families options to select a school that best fits their child’s needs is a major advantage of the plan.

## Challenges

1. **Uncertainty Around Signature Schools** – Staff want clarity on admissions criteria, programming, accessibility and transportation for signature schools.
2. **Job Security and Teacher Placement** – Many worry about where they will be reassigned, whether they will have a say, and how teacher transfers will be handled.
3. **Middle School Structure and Grade Shifts** – Moving 6th grade to elementary and reducing middle school positions creates uncertainty for middle school educators who prefer their current setting.
4. **Potential Enrollment and Overcrowding** – Staff question what happens if too many or too few students opt for signature schools, causing imbalances in enrollment.
5. **Student Behavior and Safety** – Fears were raised by some staff about how behavior challenges will be addressed, particularly in larger schools and with younger students mixing with older students.
6. **Transportation and Accessibility** – Staff have questions and concerns over longer bus rides, lack of guaranteed transportation to signature schools, and overall transportation logistics.
7. **Lack of Communication and Transparency** – Many feel left out of the decision-making process and want clearer communication on timelines, staffing decisions and implementation details.

## Opportunities

1. **Better Staff Involvement and Input in Decision-Making** – Staff want a stronger voice in shaping school changes, staffing decisions and curriculum adaptations.
2. **Equitable Access to Signature Schools** – The district must ensure all students can access these schools regardless of background, location or socioeconomic status.





3. **More Career Learning and Hands-On Opportunities for Students** – Staff encourage expanding CTE programs, apprenticeships and alternative education pathways for real-world experience.
4. **Enhanced Social-Emotional and Mental Health Supports** – Many see an opportunity to prioritize mental health resources and behavioral interventions in schools.
5. **More Professional Development and Training for Signature Schools** – Teachers want clear training opportunities to transition into specialized schools like Montessori, IB or STEM-focused programs.
6. **Strengthening Community Partnerships** – Staff would like the district to expand collaborations with businesses, universities and nonprofits to provide more support for students.
7. **More Transparent and Proactive Communication** – Staff need clear updates, a roadmap for transition, and more opportunities to dialogue with leadership.

### Other Considerations (Parking Lot)

1. **How will staff reassignments be handled?** Will teachers at closing schools have priority for open positions, and how will staffing decisions be communicated?
2. **What happens if the bond measure doesn't pass?** Is there a backup plan if the community does not approve the funding for these changes?
3. **How will student behavior concerns be addressed?** What new strategies will be implemented to improve student discipline, safety and classroom management?
4. **Will transportation be available for students who choose a signature school?** How will access be ensured for students who live far from these schools?
5. **How will families and staff be kept informed throughout the process?** Many staff feel there is too much uncertainty and need more and regular updates on the plan.
6. **What will happen to special education (SpEd) and English Language Learner (ELL) programs?** Will students continue receiving services at signature schools?
7. **How will changes impact school and neighborhood communities?** Closing schools could disrupt existing relationships and communities that students, staff and families rely on.
8. **What additional training will be required for teachers transitioning to different grade levels or new school models?** Staff need clarity on certification, endorsements and professional development expectations.



9. **How will this plan improve staff retention and morale?** Many are worried about job security, increased workloads and feeling undervalued.
  10. **How will DMPS ensure transparency and trust moving forward?** There is a significant need for more trust-building efforts, open conversations, and clear explanations of decisions.
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## Structured Conversations (*Community*)

### Strengths

1. **Expanded Early Childhood Education** – Strong support for increased PreK access, including full-day preschool and placing PreK within neighborhoods to improve accessibility for families.
2. **Fewer Student Transitions** – Moving 6th grade back to elementary school and creating clearer feeder patterns were seen as beneficial for student stability and reducing transition-related challenges.
3. **Signature Schools & Expanded Programming** – The concept of signature schools offering specialized programming was appealing, providing more choices and helping students find their fit.
4. **Balanced Enrollment & Smaller Class Sizes** – The plan's potential to improve student-teacher ratios and create more equitable class sizes across schools was viewed positively.
5. **Facility & Infrastructure Improvements** – Updating buildings and amenities, improving functionality, and ensuring equitable distribution of resources (tracks, theaters, pools, etc.).
6. **Long-Term, Thoughtful Planning** – The 10-year phased approach was seen as proactive and allowed time for adaptation and feedback.
7. **Enhanced College & Career Readiness** – The Diploma Plus program and emphasis on preparing students for both college and career paths were seen as positive initiatives.
8. **Improved Community & Staff Engagement** – Relocating district administrative offices to schools was seen as a way to improve connections and increase support for students and staff.



9. **More Equitable Distribution of Resources** – Ensuring all schools have access to quality extracurriculars, sports and arts programs was cited as a positive.
10. **Forward-Thinking & Innovative** – The plan was praised for thinking outside the box to address long-standing challenges.

## Challenges

1. **School Closures & Neighborhood Impact** – Many concerns were raised about how school closures will affect specific communities, particularly neighborhoods losing their local elementary school.
2. **Transportation & Accessibility** – There were many questions about how students will travel to new schools, especially signature schools, concerns over potentially long bus rides, and several comments about the lack of walkable school options in certain neighborhoods.
3. **Uncertainty About Signature Schools** – Many families wanted more details on what these schools will offer, how students will be selected, and whether they will remain viable long-term.
4. **Staffing & Teacher Retention** – Concerns were raised over losing experienced, quality teachers due to uncertainty and job reassignments.
5. **Potential for Increased Class Sizes** – While the plan aims to balance enrollment, some feared that consolidating schools could lead to larger class sizes rather than reducing them.
6. **Safety & Age Grouping Concerns** – Parents worried about mixing younger students (PreK-6) with older students (7-12) in the same buildings, particularly as in regard to bullying, peer influences, and security.
7. **Impact on Extracurriculars & Athletics** – Uncertainty about how sports and activities will be structured in the new school model, particularly for students attending signature schools, was a frequent concern.
8. **Funding & Public Support for the Bond** – Many questioned whether the district could secure funding for the plan, particularly if the bond measure does not pass.
9. **Communication & Transparency Issues** – A common concern was the lack of detailed information about the reasoning behind school closures, the selection process for signature schools, and overall implementation.



10. **Impact on Special Education & ELL Programs** – Questions were raised about how these special programs and services will be integrated into the new school structure.

## Opportunities

1. **Stronger Community Partnerships** – A fresh chance to engage local businesses, nonprofits and universities to support specialized programs, internships and funding opportunities.
2. **Expanding Career & Technical Education (CTE)** – Enhance vocational training, apprenticeships and job readiness programs, particularly in trades, STEM and healthcare.
3. **Increased Parent & Community Involvement** – Provide more structured ways for families to engage, including workshops, open houses and accessible informational sessions.
4. **Equitable Access to Programming** – Ensuring that all students, regardless of income or background, have access to signature schools and specialized learning opportunities.
5. **Improved Marketing & Public Relations** – Strengthening DMPS’s reputation by highlighting program strengths, improved facilities, and competitive advantages over suburban and private schools.
6. **More Inclusive Communication Strategies** – Increase outreach to multilingual families, holding meetings in different languages, and ensuring all information is accessible across communities.
7. **Utilizing Retired School Buildings** – Explore creative repurposing of closed schools, such as community centers, workforce training hubs, or alternative education programs.
8. **Exploring Additional School Configurations** – Explore 7-9 junior high models, expanded K-8 options, or year-round schooling to improve student outcomes and family flexibility.
9. **Securing Funding Beyond the Bond** – Seek grants, corporate sponsorships, and public-private partnerships to sustain programs.
10. **Using Data & Feedback to Refine the Plan** – Ensure that community concerns shape future decisions and implementation.



## Other Considerations (Parking Lot)

1. **More Detailed Justification for School Closures** – Community members requested data on why specific schools were selected for closure and how these decisions were made.
  2. **Student and Teacher Transition Plans** – More clarity is needed on how students and staff from closing schools will be supported and reassigned.
  3. **Safety and Security Enhancements** – Suggestions included adding metal detectors, structured student separation by age, and increased security personnel.
  4. **Long-Term Financial Planning** – Questions need to be answered on how the district will sustain funding for new initiatives and what happens if enrollment declines further.
  5. **Transportation Logistics and Equity** – Ensuring all students have fair access to transportation, particularly for those choosing signature schools outside their neighborhood, needs to be addressed.
  6. **Community Engagement and Outreach** – There were many calls for more multilingual resources, direct engagement with neighborhoods where schools are closing/retiring, and outreach to underrepresented families.
  7. **Use of Retired School Buildings** – Questions need to be answered about whether closed schools will be repurposed for community use, sold or left vacant; many concerns about if this will bring in more charter schools.
  8. **Addressing Student Retention and Enrollment Decline** – The district needs to gather more data on why students are leaving DMPS and use that information to inform retention and/or “bring back” strategies.
  9. **Ensuring Special Education and ELL Support** – Making sure students with disabilities and multilingual learners are fully supported across all school models must be addressed and communicated as part of the plan and implementation.
  10. **Clear Communication Plan and Updates** – Community members want consistent updates, specific transition timelines, and detailed explanations about next steps.
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## Online Survey

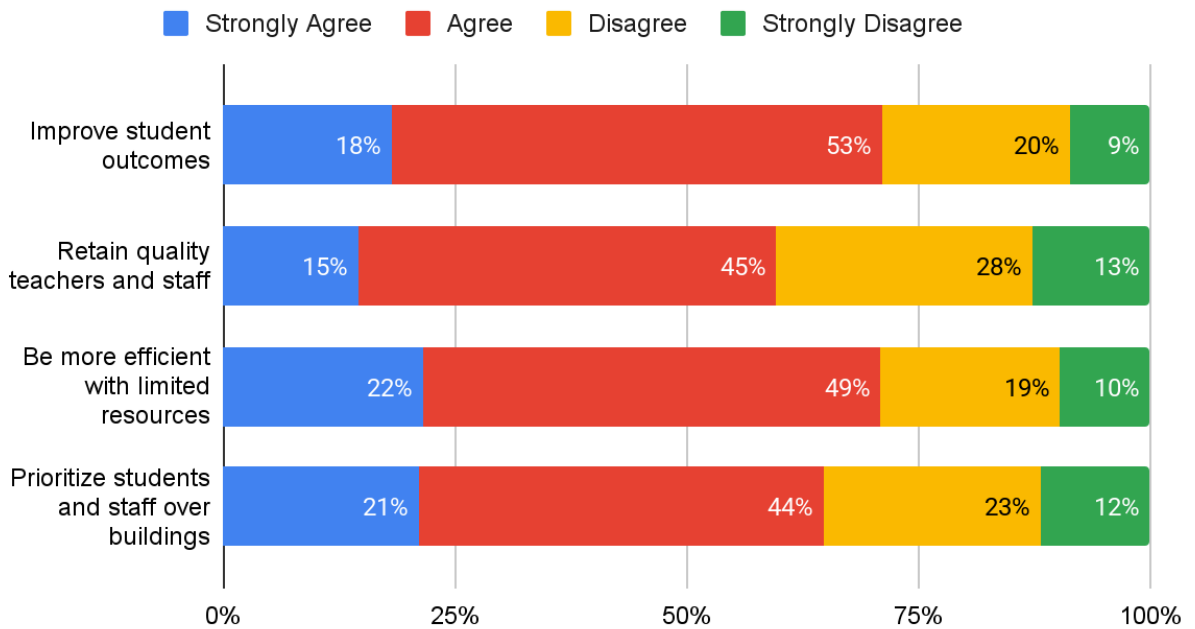
Survey respondents first answered questions about the goals, outcomes and proposed changes of the RE plan.

### GOALS of Reimagining Education Plan

About two-thirds of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the RE plan will achieve its stated goals:

- 71% agree the RE plan will help DMPS improve student outcomes
- 60% agree the RE plan will help DMPS retain quality teachers and staff
- 71% agree the RE plan will help DMPS be more efficient with limited resources
- 65% agree the RE plan will help DMPS will prioritize students and staff over buildings

### Goals



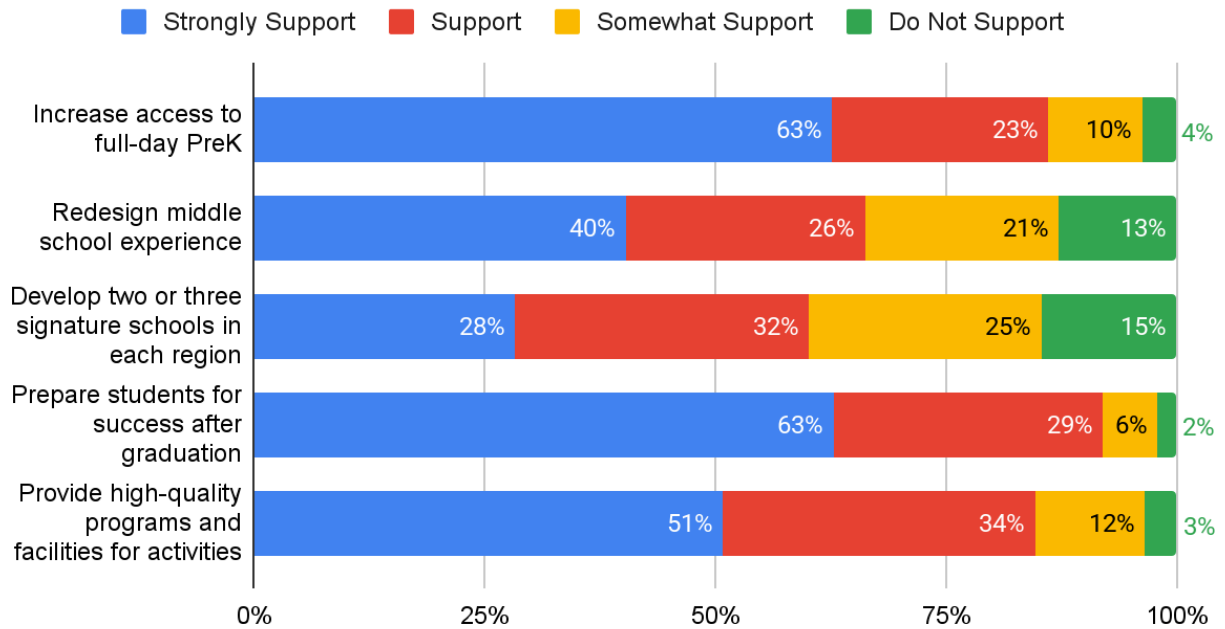
### OUTCOMES of Reimagining Education Plan

The majority of respondents support or strongly support the intended outcomes of the RE plan:

- 86% support increasing access to full-day preschool
- 66% support redesigning the middle school experience
- 60% support developing two or three interest-based signature schools in each region
- 92% support preparing students for successful futures after graduation
- 85% support providing high-quality programs and facilities for activities



## Outcomes

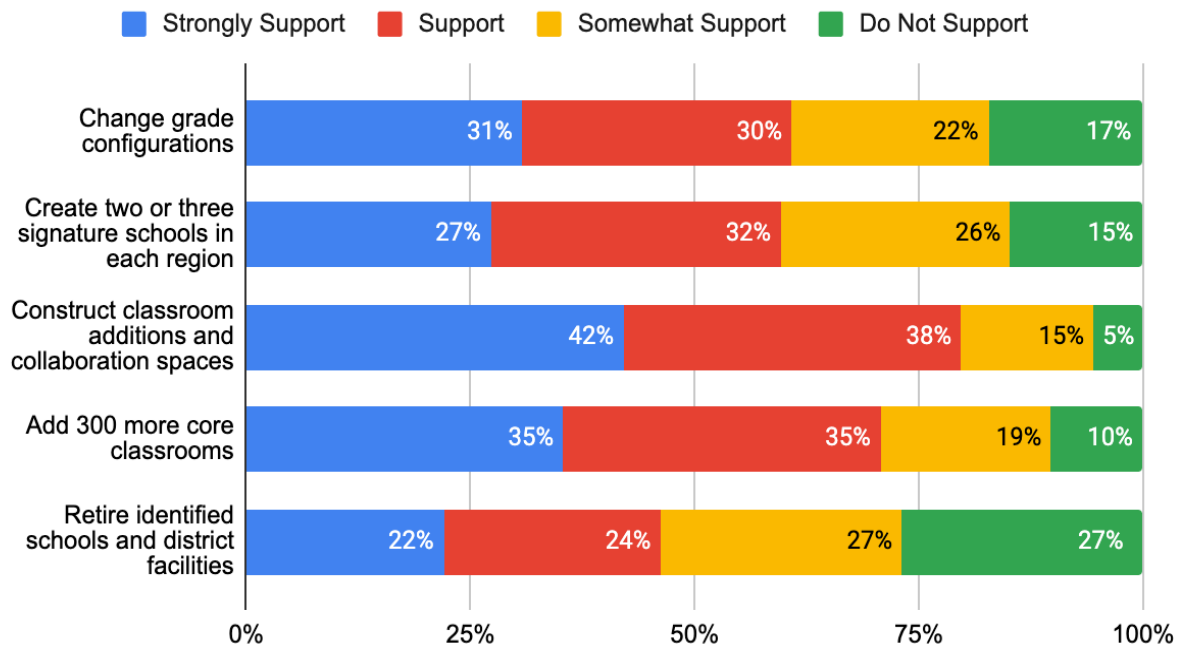


## PROPOSED CHANGES of the Reimagining Education plan

Support for the proposed changes in the RE plan were generally supported, with the lowest favorability being about retiring of schools:

- 61% support changing the district's grade configurations
- 60% support creating signature schools
- 80% support constructing classroom additions and collaboration spaces
- 71% support add more than 300 core classroom spaces
- 46% support retiring nine schools and two district facilities

## Proposed Changes



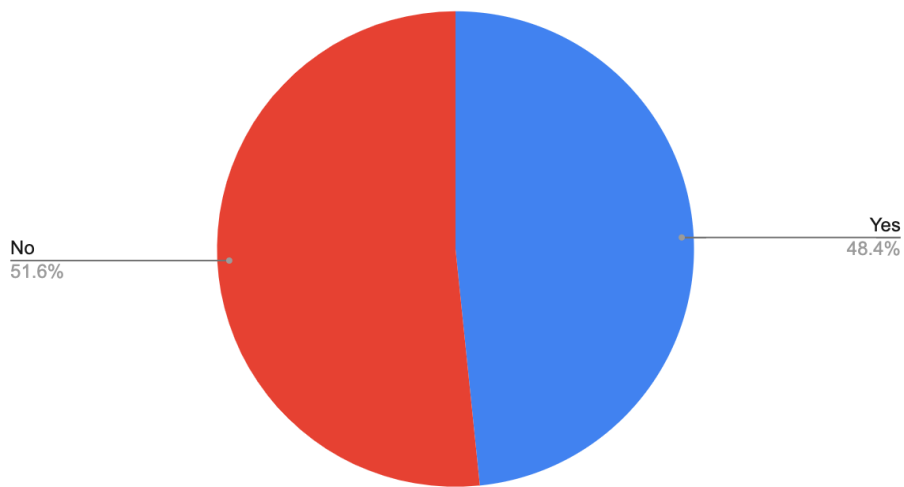


Respondents then were asked if they would consider enrolling in a signature school and the type of signature school that interested them.

### POTENTIAL SIGNATURE SCHOOL interest and theme preferences

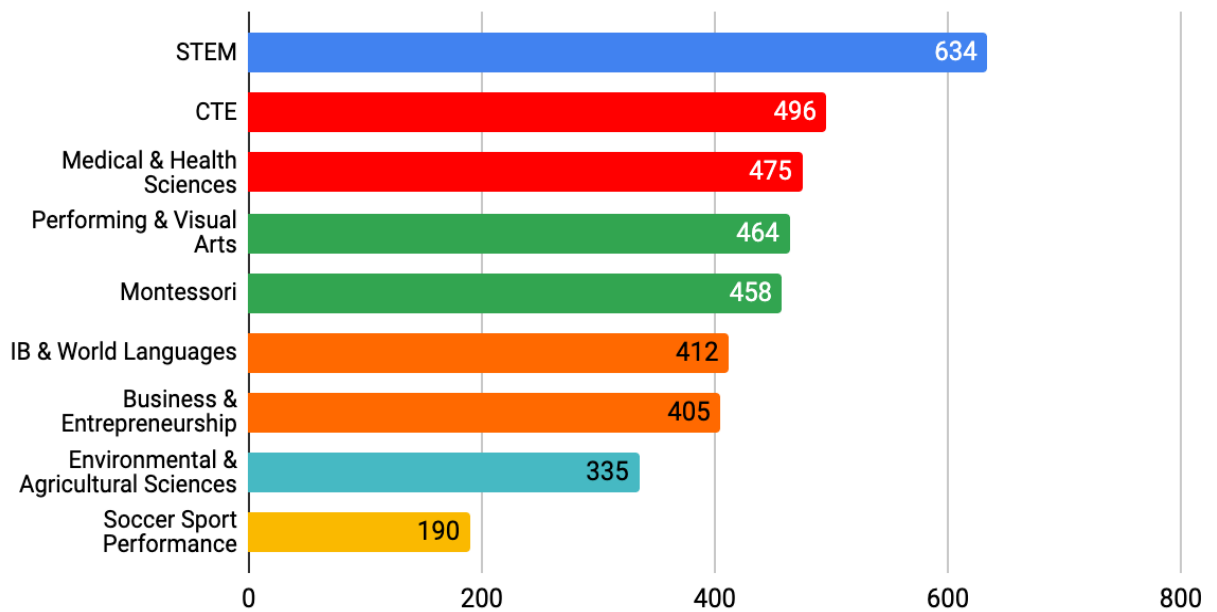
Approximately half of respondents indicated an interest in enrolling in a signature school.

Interest in Signature School Enrollment



In regard to which signature school themes were most favorable, respondents were able to select from a list of nine options. STEM garnered the greatest interest, followed by CTE, Medical & Health Sciences, Performing & Visual Arts, and Montessori. The following chart represents the themes in order of interest:

Signature School Theme







## Open-Ended Questions

Finally, respondents were allowed to offer feedback and insights on the RE plan, offering what they saw as strengths of the plan, challenges with the plan, and opportunities for improving the plan. They also had the opportunity to offer other considerations and questions.

## Strengths

1. **Expanded Early Childhood Education** – There is strong support for increased PreK access, including full-day preschool and placing PreK within neighborhoods to improve accessibility for families.
2. **Fewer Student Transitions** – Many respondents view moving 6th grade back to elementary school and creating clearer feeder patterns as beneficial for student stability and reducing transition-related challenges.
3. **Signature Schools & Expanded Programming** – The concept of signature schools offering specialized programming is appealing to many families, as it provides more choices and helps students find programs that align with their interests and needs.
4. **Balanced Enrollment & Smaller Class Sizes** – The plan has the potential to improve student-teacher ratios and create more equitable class sizes across schools, which many respondents see as a positive outcome.
5. **Facility & Infrastructure Improvements** – Updating buildings and amenities, improving school functionality, and ensuring equitable distribution of resources such as tracks, theaters, and pools are seen as major strengths of the plan.
6. **Long-Term, Thoughtful Planning** – Many people appreciate the 10-year phased approach, as it is viewed as a proactive strategy that allows time for adaptation and feedback.
7. **Enhanced College & Career Readiness** – The Diploma Plus program and the emphasis on preparing students for both college and career paths are seen as positive initiatives that will benefit students in the long run.
8. **Improved Community & Staff Engagement** – Relocating district administrative offices to school buildings is perceived as a way to strengthen connections between the district and the schools while increasing support for students and staff.
9. **More Equitable Distribution of Resources** – Ensuring that all schools have access to quality extracurricular programs, including sports and the arts, is cited as an important benefit of the proposed changes.



10. **Forward-Thinking & Innovative** – Many respondents praise the plan for being innovative and thinking outside the box to address long-standing challenges within the district.

## Challenges

1. **School Closures & Neighborhood Impact** – Many respondents are concerned about how school closures will affect specific communities, particularly neighborhoods that will lose their local elementary schools.
2. **Transportation & Accessibility** – There are numerous concerns about how students will travel to their new schools, especially signature schools, as well as fears of long bus rides and a lack of walkable school options in some neighborhoods.
3. **Uncertainty About Signature Schools** – Many families feel they need more details about what signature schools will offer, how students will be selected, and whether these schools will remain sustainable in the long term.
4. **Staffing & Teacher Retention** – There is concern that the proposed changes may lead to the loss of experienced and high-quality teachers due to uncertainty, reassignments, or dissatisfaction with the new structure.
5. **Potential for Increased Class Sizes** – While the plan aims to balance enrollment, some respondents worry that consolidating schools could lead to larger class sizes instead of the intended reductions.
6. **Safety & Age Grouping Concerns** – Many parents express concerns about mixing younger students (PreK-6) with older students (7-12) in the same buildings, particularly in regard to bullying, peer influences, and overall security.
7. **Impact on Extracurriculars & Athletics** – There is uncertainty about how sports and extracurricular activities will be structured under the new school model, especially for students who will attend signature schools.
8. **Funding & Public Support for the Bond** – Many respondents question whether the district will be able to secure funding for the plan, particularly if the bond measure does not pass.
9. **Communication & Transparency Issues** – A recurring concern is the lack of detailed information about the reasoning behind school closures, the selection process for signature schools, and the overall implementation timeline.



10. **Impact on Special Education & ELL Programs** – There are questions about how the district will integrate special education and English language learner (ELL) programs into the new school structure to ensure equitable access and support.

## Opportunities

1. **Stronger Community Partnerships** – The district has an opportunity to engage local businesses, nonprofits, and universities to support specialized programs, provide internships, and create new funding opportunities.
2. **Expanding Career & Technical Education (CTE)** – There is strong interest in enhancing vocational training, apprenticeships, and job readiness programs, particularly in fields such as trades, STEM, and healthcare.
3. **Increased Parent & Community Involvement** – Families would like to see more structured opportunities to engage with the district, including workshops, open houses, and accessible informational sessions.
4. **Equitable Access to Programming** – The district has an opportunity to ensure that all students, regardless of income or background, have access to signature schools and specialized learning opportunities.
5. **Improved Marketing & Public Relations** – Strengthening DMPS’s reputation by highlighting program strengths, improved facilities, and competitive advantages over suburban and private schools is an area of opportunity.
6. **More Inclusive Communication Strategies** – There is a need to increase outreach to multilingual families, hold meetings in different languages, and ensure all information is accessible across various communities.
7. **Utilizing Retired School Buildings** – The district can explore creative ways to repurpose closed schools, such as converting them into community centers, workforce training hubs, or alternative education programs.
8. **Exploring Additional School Configurations** – Respondents suggest considering alternative models, such as 7-9 junior high schools, expanded K-8 options, or year-round schooling to improve student outcomes and provide more flexibility for families.
9. **Securing Funding Beyond the Bond** – The district should seek grants, corporate sponsorships, and public-private partnerships to sustain programs beyond bond funding.



10. **Using Data & Feedback to Refine the Plan** – Ensuring that community concerns shape future decisions and implementation is a critical opportunity for the district.

## Other Considerations (Parking Lot)

1. **More Detailed Justification for School Closures** – Community members are requesting data to explain why specific schools were selected for closure and how these decisions were made.
2. **Student and Teacher Transition Plans** – Respondents would like more clarity on how students and staff from closing schools will be supported and reassigned throughout the transition process.
3. **Safety and Security Enhancements** – Many respondents suggest adding metal detectors, structured student separation by age, and increasing security personnel to ensure student safety.
4. **Long-Term Financial Planning** – There are concerns about how the district will sustain funding for new initiatives and what contingency plans are in place if enrollment declines further.
5. **Transportation Logistics and Equity** – Respondents want assurance that all students will have fair access to transportation, particularly those who choose to attend signature schools outside their neighborhood.
6. **Community Engagement and Outreach** – Many people are calling for more multilingual resources, direct engagement with neighborhoods affected by school closures, and outreach to underrepresented families.
7. **Use of Retired School Buildings** – There are questions about whether closed schools will be repurposed for community use, sold, or left vacant, with many concerns about the potential for an increase in charter schools.
8. **Addressing Student Retention and Enrollment Decline** – The district should gather data on why students are leaving DMPS and use that information to develop strategies for retention and re-engagement.
9. **Ensuring Special Education and ELL Support** – Many respondents emphasize the need to ensure that students with disabilities and multilingual learners receive adequate support across all school models and that this information is clearly communicated as part of the plan.
10. **Clear Communication Plan and Updates** – Community members are requesting consistent updates, specific transition timelines, and detailed explanations of the next



steps in the process.

## Recommendations •

As the Reimagining Education Committee reconvenes to refine the plan before presenting it to the DMPS Board, the following key recommendations reflect the most pressing updates needed based on community engagement and input feedback:

### 1. Adjust the School Closure Plan to Minimize Community Disruptions

- *What Needs to Be Updated*

- Provide detailed, transparent data and justification for why specific schools were selected for closure
- Develop a clear transition plan for students and staff affected by closures, ensuring early communication, relocation assistance, and emotional support.
- Commit to repurposing closed school buildings for community use rather than selling them off or leaving them vacant.

- *Why This Needs to Be Updated*

Community members, including families and staff, expressed deep concerns about school closures, citing potential loss of neighborhood identity, increased transportation burdens, and a lack of clarity on the decision-making process. Ensuring transparency and minimizing negative impacts will build trust and improve community support.

### 2. Improve Transportation Access and Equity for All Students

- *What Needs to Be Updated*

- Guarantee reliable transportation for all students, particularly those opting for signature schools, to ensure equitable access.
- Address long bus ride concerns by evaluating and optimizing route planning before implementation.
- Ensure safe and walkable routes for students impacted by school closures, considering options like ride-sharing or transportation stipends.

- *Why This Needs to Be Updated*

Families, particularly those from lower-income neighborhoods, raised concerns about accessibility to signature schools, long travel times, and safety issues related to school closures. Without a well-defined and fair transportation



strategy, students may face significant barriers to attending their preferred schools.

### 3. Clarify and Strengthen the Signature School Model

- ***What Needs to Be Updated***
  - Establish clear admission policies for signature schools to ensure equitable access and avoid unintended exclusivity.
  - Provide detailed programming and curriculum outlines so families can make informed choices.
  - Ensure that students in special education (SpEd) and English Language Learner (ELL) programs receive necessary services within signature schools.
  - Set up a phased or pilot approach for new signature schools, allowing for evaluation and adjustments before full-scale implementation.
- ***Why This Needs to Be Updated***

Many families and staff expressed uncertainty about how signature schools will work, who will have access, and whether they will remain sustainable. Providing more transparency and thoughtful rollout strategies will help build confidence and improve participation in these new school models.

### 4. Support Teachers and Address Staffing Concerns

- ***What Needs to Be Updated***
  - Provide job security assurances and a transparent reassignment process for teachers impacted by school closures or program shifts.
  - Offer comprehensive professional development and training to help teachers transition into signature school programs.
  - Address teacher workload and morale concerns by involving staff in decision-making and ensuring reasonable staffing levels at all schools.
- ***Why This Needs to Be Updated***

DMPS teachers and staff have expressed significant concerns about job security, unclear placement policies, and lack of training for new educational models. Addressing these concerns will help retain high-quality educators and ensure smooth transitions within the reimaged education system.

### 5. Enhance Communication and Community Engagement

- ***What Needs to Be Updated***
  - Implement the strategic communication plan, including regular updates, clear timelines, and a frequently updated FAQ section to address ongoing community concerns.



- Expand multilingual communication efforts to ensure all families understand the plan and how it impacts them.
  - Establish parent advisory councils at signature schools and maintain ongoing community feedback sessions throughout implementation.
  - Ensure data and engagement feedback continue to shape decision-making, with adjustments made based on actual student enrollment, facility needs and community response.
- ***Why This Needs to Be Updated***

A recurring theme across all engagement efforts was a lack of clear, timely communication from the district. Families and staff feel left out of the decision-making process and are skeptical about how changes will be implemented. A stronger two-way communication strategy will help build trust, improve buy-in, and increase the likelihood of a successful transition.

These key recommendations directly address the most urgent concerns expressed by students, families, staff and community members while refining the Reimagining Education Plan to be more equitable, transparent and effective. By incorporating these changes before presenting to the DMPS Board, the district can build greater confidence and support for the initiative while ensuring a successful long-term impact on student learning and school communities.

## Additional Considerations •

To ensure continued engagement of the community with the Reimagining Education Plan, several key factors should be considered as the district moves forward with refinement and implementation.

### Develop a Contingency Plan if the Bond Measure Fails

- Identify alternative funding sources such as grants, corporate sponsorships and state/federal funding.
- Prioritize essential projects and determine which parts of the plan can still move forward without full bond approval.
- Communicate a clear fallback strategy to the public to maintain confidence in the district's ability to implement meaningful changes.

### Monitor and Address Enrollment Trends

- Collect and analyze data on student enrollment patterns, including those leaving DMPS for other districts or charter schools.
- Use this data to adjust school capacity, staffing, and program offerings to retain students.



- Develop a student retention strategy, including marketing DMPS schools' strengths compared to alternative options.

### **Ensure Special Education (SpEd) and English Language Learner (ELL) Program Continuity**

- Guarantee that SpEd and ELL students continue receiving equitable support services under the new school structure.
- Provide specialized teacher training to meet the needs of these students in signature schools and restructured schools.
- Communicate with families about how services will transition to new school environments.

### **Repurpose and Utilize Retired School Buildings Strategically**

- Prevent vacant properties from becoming liabilities by repurposing them for community benefit (e.g., workforce training centers, alternative education programs, or early childhood hubs).
- Partner with local businesses, nonprofits and higher education institutions to find innovative uses for the buildings.
- Consider leasing or selling facilities with agreements that prioritize public and educational use rather than private development.

### **Continue to Build Trust and Engagement with the Community**

- Continue community conversations, surveys, and advisory groups throughout the implementation process, not just during the planning phase.
- Ensure that non-English speaking families receive all communications in their preferred language.
- Provide consistent, clear updates to avoid misinformation and maintain community support.

By addressing these additional considerations, the district will strengthen the overall success of the Reimagining Education Plan by ensuring long-term sustainability, equitable student support, and strong community engagement. Addressing these proactively will increase public confidence in DMPS's ability to implement meaningful improvements.

## **Final Thoughts •**

The Reimagining Education Plan presents a significant opportunity for DMPS to create a more effective, equitable and forward-thinking educational environment for students and staff. Through meaningful engagement with the community, valuable insights have been gathered, ensuring that decisions align with the needs and priorities of those most impacted. The recommendations outlined in this report provide a clear pathway for refining the plan before its final presentation to the DMPS Board.





As DMPS moves forward with implementation, continued engagement, transparency and adaptability will be essential in ensuring the success of this initiative. CESO Communications remains committed to supporting DMPS in this process through ongoing community engagement efforts, strategic communication support to ensure stakeholders remain informed and involved and facilitation of future discussions to gather feedback and adjust the plan as needed.

By prioritizing these key areas, DMPS can strengthen community trust, enhance educational opportunities, and position itself as a leader in innovative public education. CESO Communications looks forward to continuing its partnership with the district to ensure that the vision for a reimagined education system is realized successfully.



# APPENDIX



# Structured Conversations Data

## STAFF MEETINGS DOCUMENTATION

### Strengths

Given the goals of the Reimagining Education program as shared in today's presentation ...

*What do you see as the strengths of the proposed plan? What do you like about it? How do you see this plan positively impacting the students and families of DMPS?*

Staff Responses (STRENGTHS)
Like the idea. I like that we are correcting the feeder patterns, in the current model students can get divided between schools as they transition. In the new proposal, students can stay with their peers from pre-K through high school. It's cool to graduate with friends. Like the distinct regions and feeder patterns.
Central Academy and Campus are great draws. I like building on this Signature School kind of programming, including expanding Montessori. Like more choices and options for students of all grade levels. Eager to learn more.
Love expanding pre-K. Universal pre-K is very cool. Making that more accessible is very important.
Diploma Plus opportunities are good.
Renovating our buildings is great.
Like district offices being in schools, with the staff there interacting with children.
Like the reimagining of middle schools. That's where we see a lot of enrollment drop because of perceptions.
Excited to hear about all the options and regions, how it will work. What we think will depend on rollout.
Is IB also one of the programs under consideration for expansion?
The vision of open enrollment out of the district not exceeding open enrollment into the district is an inspiring goal, and I hope that is achievable for us as a district.



Staff Responses (STRENGTHS)
The way the district has reflected on shortcomings and problems takes courage and vulnerability. I appreciate and respect the team and committee that put forth all the time to address this. It has continued to be a struggle.
I think the district office staff will like being in the schools. They will get first-hand knowledge of how things are going.
I want to know more about changes to middle school programming other than just changing the grade configuration. What other opportunities will they have?
Would like to know why enrollment is dropping and what research went into finding out.
I think keeping the sixth grade in the elementary level will help those students mature more before they entire the MS environment.
It's good to expand preschool to reach students that might need early interventions and families that might need support.
Like that the feeder patterns will build community through the consistency of going to the same schools.
Like that the Signature Schools will be inclusive of SpEd and ELL students.
The transparency of the regions will help kids and families have a clear path to be excited about long-term. The boundaries are super messy right now. Kids will be split between schools and don't even know which friends they will go to the next schools with. I think families will really appreciate that. Long-term, that will build a cool environment.
Signature Schools are exciting. Voice and choice for students. Immersion school is exciting. Give skills students can take into their life beyond typical skills.
Huge strength is bringing district leadership back into the schools. That will create better, more seamless understanding and knowledge of the day-to-day, better than now when they are so separated from us.
Differentiates us from surrounding school districts and will hopefully encourage parents to consider that when enrolling their kids. There are perceptions about DMPS that are inaccurate, but hopefully this will give us some good publicity.
Signature Schools are a good idea, to give kids something they are interested in, as long as students have access to those programs without barriers.
I love the idea of having more access to preschool, starting students out on the right foot, making this accessible to all.
Remodeling and making larger spaces that are more comfortable and fresh, not just brick and



**Staff Responses (STRENGTHS)**

white walls. This will make students feel more welcome and less industrial. I notice that more competitive schools have these kinds of facilities. This would also be nice for staff to work in a space that is inviting and warm.

Emphasis of the plan on student belonging and outcomes. It's empowering as a staff member and community member to see the district putting students first. Even the mission and vision have been very uplifting.

I am a fan of Montessori, and although no school will implement it 100% perfectly, I like expanding access to this and not just making it a West-side thing.

I don't have a lot of details about Diploma Plus, but what I have heard makes it seem like a good option.

This will make families feel like they are more empowered when it comes to their children's education. They can choose a Signature School and not just their neighborhood school.

There are opportunities for staff members to shine if there are areas they are interested in or more comfortable with.

All of the proposed Signature Schools in the survey, I thought, "yeah, I'd send my kid to that one!" I think they really thought through the things that people will want from those Signature Schools.

If they're actually redrawing district boundaries, there would be more students in a school, so I'm hoping there would be more school counselors with the opportunity for a team instead of a sole counselor.

I love the idea of the outside-inside spaces. I wonder if there will be remodeling.

I'm glad that DMPS is making changes, because I feel like staying stagnant would not get us anywhere. There's always going to be things that will make it hard, but I think being bold enough to try to do something different is good.

I like that they're going to have to really look at the curriculum. What might work for a Montessori or an IB school might not work for a computer science building, so they'll need to look at our curriculum.

I really appreciate the meetings like this, with the caveat that they are really listening. Actually keeping us a part of it.

At my school, the boundaries are weird and split between high schools. Have the through line with the feeder patterns. Although some people will have to change schools, in the end having that through line is good.

Career education coming down to the middle school and elementary level. I'm trying to teach



Staff Responses (STRENGTHS)
students to be a good human being, but giving them an idea and a more hands-on experience with different types of careers and the skills needed for them.
It's a cool opportunity to have different options for schooling, although it's also a challenge.
It is nice to be able to combat the voucher program and help keep public dollars with public schools.
We're taking on the opportunity to be able to compete in this changing society with vouchers.
Expansion of Pre-K and in the neighborhood for all kids.
Moving 6th grade to Elementary and limiting transitions.
Signature schools like Montessori in all regions.
The regions separated by rivers makes sense.
Being able to go Prek-6 and 7 -12 and only attend 2 schools and have opportunities to attend signature schools.
Signature schools and more options and opportunities for specialized education.
Prioritizing keeping staff over keeping buildings.
Reimagining the classroom spaces and having state-of-the-art classroom spaces.
Signature schools located where we want to attract more people to DMPS.
Having more students enrolled in Pre-K, we will likely see better academic achievement throughout their academic career. 10 out of 10 for Pre-K!
Completely overhauling MS is exciting. Changing the MS experience to be more hands on and interactive would be amazing.
This is a much needed overhaul of our out-dated system. I'm excited about having leaders who are willing to do such a big change.
It will increase access to a lot of programs. I like the pre-K proposal.
I like the signature schools. They could be attractive to bring students back.
I like the consolidation into the 3 regions. In other neighborhoods the moment you step into a Johnston school you are a dragon. It will increase belonging if we can develop a sense of community like that starting in elementary schools.
PreK-6 together is excellent. And the 7 -8 building together is really great. It will be helpful to



Staff Responses (STRENGTHS)
allow kids to be kids and not trying to impress older students.
I like that Pre-school is together. It will help us meet the rules and regulations for pre-school and help create an environment for the littles.
I like that every Elementary will have Pre-K, too.
I like having a high school that is comprehensive and also a signature high school in each region.
I like the idea of bringing outside to inside rather than the sterile and institutionalized look of some of our buildings now.
It is exploring new ideas for some of our students. Being open minded for new ways of learning for our kids. Getting our kids an opportunity to walk out of high school with associate degrees. Diploma plus gives students new pathways.
Access to pre-K and offering it in elementary schools is one of the only things I can get excited about in this plan.
There seems to be a lot of focus on CTE which is very exciting to me. Modern education is so core focused. But by 2032 we will have a deficit of skilled trades workers. Having a place to focus on skilled trades is important. It seems like we are really expanding the campus.
This plan is expanding access to choices across the district. Having support for these choices in all regions is important. A signature school with a fine arts school would be a dream come true for my child. Signature schools could provide an opportunity for students to explore careers, hobbies, or new skills.
Being able to go to signature school no matter where you live in the district is a fantastic idea.
Access to facilities such as a performing arts center would give students a sense of pride in what they are learning. This would also work for CTE, too.
Our one-size fits all high quality curriculum could be enhanced at the signature schools to give HQC that fits student goals.
Getting inquiry based learning experiences at the MS has the potential to really be powerful. There is space for student voice in what is taught.
I'm eager to see the Signature Schools, specifically the 7-12. Students tend to be more engaged in areas related to their passions. Some schools in the suburbs are not as targeted. This would give students the opportunity to be more targeted.
I understand and agree with the building changes and how they are being used. I don't understand what the Signature Schools are and what their purpose is, and why they span



Staff Responses (STRENGTHS)
different grades.
It's an opportunity for change that allows us to create services that compete with the other schools in our realm. I like the idea of having schools with a focus on being work ready. I liked the opportunities at Central Campus, and having teachers who were knowledgeable about the programs.
The strength of people to get to choose what they want is a strong point. Students don't always get to choose, so I like that part of the plan.
Community partnerships are a strength. We are always vying for our community to work together with our schools. That will be a boost. The regional partnership would be positive.
I'm excited to see more opportunities for preschool. I work at a building with a lot of preschoolers, and we see that early access being a route to later achievement. Getting instruction at an earlier age helps, and it also helps families who are working – students get instruction in a caring setting.
An advantage at a school that has a pre-K through 8th grade span provides more connection and reduces transitions. It allows students to learn about the curriculum, the philosophy and the structures. It facilitates parent communication. Starting earlier and going longer has its benefits. I've talked to someone at a school who will be getting sixth graders, and they're excited. No matter what, the oldest grade will be the most chaotic, especially for adolescents.
My school is going to be a Signature School. I like the idea of offering choice to families. I think they are looking for this. At middle and high school, the sooner we can tap into what brings students joy, the better off we are.
I'm excited about the option of choice and the emphasis on preschool. The extension of the elementaries will be a tremendous benefit that will offer consistency, stability, and it will be a great opportunity to do something different.
I worked in another district that had programs similar to Signature Schools, but they were more neighborhood schools. It's a great option, we just need to make sure it's equitable in terms of access. I've seen it work.
I like the idea of having new facilities for our students. Anyone who has walked into a suburban school, it's like, "wow." Our students deserve that as well. My school has a yearly flood, and it will be nice to not have that experience anymore. I have family in the schools, and it's exciting for them to have these choices for their future. We'll want to make sure accessing these choices is equitable. Maybe this will bring more people into the Des Moines area.
I was intrigued about the wood-based construction, the natural lighting, and the better functional capacity. All of that will be more beneficial for students and staff in the district.
I like the increased access to pre-K. I like the Signature School offering. I don't know how it will





**Staff Responses (STRENGTHS)**

get implemented, but I like the parts.

I like having pre-K at all the elementary schools, so all families will have access in their neighborhoods. That is an important early step. They are able to be with slightly older siblings if they have them.

The Fleur closing is very wise. It shows a lot of effort to give up the fancy office so that we put our money where the kids are. That was an unnecessary expenditure in that facility. People can work anywhere. You don't have to have a nice office.

I'm hopeful this will help us keep staff. I know that is a huge thing for DMPS, because our staff turnover is great. I hope it keeps people around and makes them want to be here.

When we talk about the physical spaces and the idea that we could really transform them, that's really exciting. The day we moved my class into a new addition, I had a seventh-grade boy tear up because it was so pretty and exciting. I'll never forget it. The expectation and hope in a child that can be created with a beautiful, respectful, focused instructional environment.

The increase in preschools is a benefit. That is critical. Although I'm sad about my school, with the growth of the birth rate, it only makes sense to make sure there is a large preschool available in the South region.

I agree with the preschool. It is a huge impact, especially for Des Moines, it's really needed at all the schools so everyone has a chance for that foundation.

Kids learn better in an open environment. Having that available for them will be phenomenal.

Love the preschool.

Love the opportunities the Diploma Plus stuff offers.

Getting the stadiums, so each region will have one to hype up their school spirit in the community.

Love the Signature Schools. It's a great opportunity to help get kids invested. My daughter is in eighth grade, and I've been talking to her about selecting electives, and how she will enjoy learning more because she has some choice in it.

Using student choice is important. The focus on increasing CTE opportunities is huge. There has been a massive shift in college and career readiness. A successful career path might not be college, and that is fine.

I'd love in middle schools for them to have more options for electives and increased choice.



## Challenges

**Given the goals of the Reimagining Education program as shared in tonight's presentation ...**

*What challenges do you see with the proposal plan? What gives you pause or concern? How do you see this plan negatively impacting the students and families of Des Moines Public Schools?*

Staff Responses (CHALLENGES)
What plans are in place for Signature Schools? Criteria for admissions and accessibility? What criteria are we using to decide who attends?
Staff input - how much involvement will there be for staff to share input? Renovations of schools, types of instruction - having input from teachers when developing details - have an opportunity to share
Signature schools - IB school background - will be able to continue the program? Can I stay in the IB school and are there opportunities for others to be involved? Have opportunity to be involved in Signature Schools
Staffing plans - what happens to teachers who are at schools that are retiring? How do teachers get to choose where they will teach? When will we know when the changes will be made?
Walnut Street school - building will close and be used for instruction; have a lot of families that may not understand the closure date of the school; some confusion over the timeline for retiring Walnut Street; some students thought school is closing after this year
Staffing plans - some can move more easily in the system - office manager position - how will people move to a new position? How will the transition be handled
A lot of staff want to work in the same program like IB - when will the Signature schools be available?
Downtown School - any plans for project-based learning type schools?
What kind of plan or support for school communities that are slated for change? What will we do for families - support and communications to keep families engaged and informed
We have families that choose Downtown School because of a different calendar? Will there be a school with a different calendar?
Class sizes - what will be the cut off for the number of students in a classroom? How will class sizes be handled and managed?



Staff Responses (CHALLENGES)
Will there be different curriculums at signature schools? (elem - IB, Montessori, etc.)
Impact on EL students
How will staff shifts happen? - area of concern and historical feeling of mistrust
How impact buildings that are slated to be closed (ex Walnut street)? Who will want to transfer there?
Clarity of timelines of what is happening where and when
Staff should be notified of communications to family messages - who then put on FB, so get all staff info
THIRD GROUP - Sixth grade -feel like rug is being pulled out - people have been in district for decades - love middle school and made into elementary teachers - and does not mesh with how they see themselves; may look for a job outside the district because being forced into a position I am not passionate about; this is what I'm good at -
Teach at Callanan - with school being retired, want to ride it out and stay to the end but want to get a job in another MS; will I be guaranteed another position in a middle school? What will the staff process look like?
When will boundaries change so people will know where their kids will be going so teachers can then begin to plan?
Will there be less positions available in middle schools?
Relationships with co-workers - could be jeopardized - need to think about relationships that have been built with co-workers; need to be considered when evaluating staff impacts!!!!
If not enough kids in a region that don't choose a signature school, how will we deal with schools that are overcrowded?
Sig schools - great opportunity for kids - hard to be able to predict enrollment
Building is transitioning to Montessori - what will be done to reach out to building to help them understand the concept
Band - band teachers in elementaries were removed - will they lose the opportunity to take part in band
With one high school per region, what happens if there are not enough kids who sign up for sig school and enrollment is too large
What would sports look like signature schools - how can kids participate in sports/activities



## Staff Responses (CHALLENGES)

Stowe - retiring building - think about kids that live close to a school that is being retired - longer bus rides for kids - longer bus rides; potential concern about spending more funds on buses; would school buses be used

Moore - IB school - does that mean IB is going away - not listed as a sig school

Stowe - staff are trained in IB - teachers on pause to see what happens with the Sig schools - would Brubaker staff get priority to stay at school - where is the priority in staffing

Brubaker - not sure how it will work to be a prek-12 school; do not want to move buildings; what will the training look like - will SPED teachers get training in IB

Lot of uncertainty about school transferring to montessori and not sure how to get trained to teach or transfer to another school; training and transfer opportunities; lot of anxious teachers about what will happen

How is this all going to work to transfer - has been excessed teachers and then new teachers; feels like we are being pushed out of a building

Do I need to move to a middle school now so I get established in a middle school - does it matter if I move now

How soon to know - need to know as soon as possible - training will start soon - need information as soon as possible - not a lot of information presented with the proposal - lot of teachers have been there for a long time

Teachers need to know when the transfer window will be open; no answers yet; hard for staff to make plans; blue contracts - sign contract that you will teach a certain amount of time to get masters at Drake

Turning Kurtz into sig school - have special programs including Focus for special behavioral students - more restricted - what will happen with the programs

Busing - and logistics of busing

How is behavior going to be addressed - moving sixth grade behavior to elementary schools; concerned about behaviors; what will seventh grade look like as young ones in school

Are we going to continue the same grading for 7 and 8 - will there be a changed - SRG grading now

Will there be training or endorsements needed if buildings change grade configuration if in 7-12

Training at signature schools - have spent a lot of money training teachers in IB - what will teachers need to do to be prepared to teach at a Sig School; have alternative programs - kids



Staff Responses (CHALLENGES)
who need a more structured classroom setting - what alternative programs will continue to be offered?
Signature Schools - what challenges will parents face if they want their kids to go to a signature school
What is sig schools are overloaded and kids cant get in; will need to get information to parents to get kids enrolled in the schools; what if there is not enough room in the schools; will kids have to apply to attend sig schools; will behaviors of students get them removed from the schools;
What other alternative programs will we have - have students who need extra services; what will happen
Behavior - there is not a lot of opportunity for elementary students with alternative programs behavior needs to be addressed and is a big concern; will be at a Montessori school; feels like we are breaking up the community
Parents will have a hard time not knowing with the sig schools will be offered so they can make decisions; can leave through a voucher - need to survey parents to see what programs are available; show them what is available; are any of these programs can be transitioned to higher grades
Concern - talked about teacher retention to be part of it but fear that it will be the opposite - teachers will be losing classroom space; will have more students and will mean more duties for teachers;
Concerns about access to sig schools - transportation
transportation to schools after boundaries; fewer schools means some kids will have longer bus rides;
transportation to sig schools - will there be transportation to the school they want to attend
Teacher equity and FTE - work load - have full-time employee status and balance work load; some are at a four section school and some at small schools;
Equity for sped students and attendance at sig schools; will services follow them - access to services
Have students with IEPs and are invited to 504 and IEP meetings and hoping that would still be the case at sig schools.
Have we talked about what happens if we lose enrollment at schools that are slated to close; if the bond does not pass, what does that do to the timeline?



Staff Responses (CHALLENGES)
The district is going to be very fluid. People – kids – will be in and out of schools that are not in their neighborhood.
It would help if people go to school in their areas
Staff doesn't know what it will look like when their schools close
Have a list of schools and when they're going to close
Don't send people to schools that are closing consecutively
How will this effect staff who need to stay?
Concern is for students who want to try a signature school in a region other than their own and transporting them. Is there a plan to get students to where they want to be?
Staff in specialized positions – will those positions be available to those whose school is closing? Need to make sure positions they're interested in are available to those staff.
School communities as they are now will break up and no longer exist
Disbursing kids to schools and communities they aren't familiar with could be difficult for students in particular and families in general
Removing the sense of community in some schools will be particularly difficult.
Buy-in for signature schools. It may not be there. There's a lot of confusion about what they are and what they will be offering. A lot of rumors have started as a result.
It may be difficult to find teachers to staff the specialty areas.
Teachers may be moved out in favor of industry experts.
There is some distrust about there being equity between the three zones and how that will be carried out.
The district has to find a way to build faith among parents for this plan. It's difficult to do because of the lack of specifics.
Families need to be front and center. How many families in this plan are loyal Des Moines families?
Training of staff, particularly in Montessori. Without training this seems rushed.
How much do parents understand what Montessori is all about?
A lot depends on budget, and a lot of this is falling to grants and partnerships.



Staff Responses (CHALLENGES)
Need bonds, but a lot of bonds are not being passed
Can some of this be piloted instead of rushing in?
Hearing rumors that staff will have to pay back to DMPS for training
Moving 6th grade back to elementary doesn't eliminate transitions.
Not addressed in the plan is more placements and how to address students mental health
Fear isn't of middle school, fear is of behavior issues. It's also why the district is losing teachers
We're "workbooking" kids to death. How do the new programs recognize and honor differential learning?
Already have some signature schools (IB) and the programs haven't been invested in. How are we going to invest in others?
Parking at some schools is going to become an issue because kids can drive to school at 14 and 15
Until the referendum passes this cannot happen. Without the details people are wary to vote in support of it. If the bond doesn't pass, what happens?
A lot can happen between now and November to hurt the bond's chance.
How will they manage to give all kids a high quality experience if teachers aren't trained?
Managing the number of options is a lot
Until the district can get some of the extreme behaviors can be managed I'm not sure any of this will work
Are we going to be doing this offerings in multiple languages
Will experiences be equitable?
Concerns that McCombs will be an elementary school and will not be a neighborhood school - will be a middle school - concerned about class sizes, student behavior and other issues
How are we going to find jobs for current teachers - where will people be going and where will we be going? How to accommodate what everyone wants
Building on the retired list - do I need to find a new position now or do I wait it out until the process works out? What voice and choice do I have? Do current staff at sig school get first choice in teaching positions? Worried that teachers may not get to move to another position



Staff Responses (CHALLENGES)
K-6 teacher getting MS endorsement - will I have voice and choice or but forced to go back to elementary?
Staff is uncomfortable because they don't know where they will be going; will preferred position be available
Why pre-k centers or preK-3 and 4-6 buildings? Longer bus rides for preschool students; where is the annual timeline for this work? Some parents are not aware of timeline - need more information about timeline
Have some kids who have gone through the same building - feel sense of community and ending the building poses a loss of unity as school is closed
McCombs - some students transferred to the school because scores have increased and they have chosen to come to schools; parents will be losing the choice they made; have a lot of kids who walk to school and that will be an issue with transportation - will now have to ride a bus rather than walking - what will it look like for families and district?
Busing will be an issue - lots of kids walk because there are no buses - if we can't bus enough kids now, how will we have enough buses in the future? Sig Schools - how will families apply to get into Sig School? How are we going to prevent Sig Schools from becoming exclusive? Do I still have the ability to go to a Sig School in another region? Having students have the opportunity to attend schools
Sees these things as very cool - went to a position in technology - enjoying the perspectives of others - listening to others
As someone who was displaced from a position - please don't leave - district has been a blessing and watched out for me and hopes to be the same for others - huge change for everyone and offers a new beginning for many - the kids need you
McCombs - hate the thought of leaving the school - forced to make changes and leave their team
Would love to stay as instructional coach - will that be possible; can we move people together as a team; some teachers feel less uncertain because the school is not closing or changing; want district to listen to what teachers wants; treat teachers in a kind way; just saying I have a job is not enough
Transparency - if you don't have a plan, just tell us - want to know what is going to happen - learned that we have two more years that leaves teachers in a scrambling position - kind of on a time crunch
Are sig schools going to have busing as an option -
Going to be hard for some staff to move to a new school





Staff Responses (CHALLENGES)
Staff will have to move; families will get moved around which will be hard for them;
McCombs MS - there for 21 years - first concern is staff retention - have highly trained teachers who want to have say in their future - little level of mistrust to make sure we are taken care of in the process
Have logistical concerns to make this all work; not sure district office can do it; needs to be more transparency especially for those impacted sooner; need more connections from talent and personnel department
Wondering what transportation will look like; if a student wants to go to a school in another region, will there be busing? Will we need more bus drivers? Staff retention - really important to allow staff to have connections with the people they work with;
Walnut Street - school is a strong sense of community; going to be a challenge; how to do busing for students; people want to finish career in DM - has a family feel at the school
Since decision was announced, feel like I am grieving the loss of a place that feels like home; acknowledgment of feelings that may not be positive; has taken a lot to create positive atmosphere at McCombs - feels like a community school - kids can see teachers they leave and care about them; appreciate the community and the kids that come back;
The biggest thing is all the unknowns - what will the Sig Schools be? Will more information increase the excitement in the community?
Will there be an IB school? Kids come to the school for IB; Can we have IB at all high schools?
Wonder about impact on students who need special programs? Programs are currently housed in buildings that might be closed - alternate placement programs
One thing we see every day is the level of mental health in students and we see lot of challenges; Ames is creating a high school with trauma focused lens with emphasis on mental health; kids can opt into
Continue to have reservations about moving sixth grade to elementary school; sixth grade are ready for different experiences; don't like PreK and 6th in same building; could do some thing at Middle school to better fit 6th grade; don't want 7 and 8 to be junior highs or mini high schools
If sixth is in elementaries; could have different grade or age alignment; fourth through sixth graders are ready to have different method of instruction; look at different approaches; could move amongst teachers for core subjects; would require training for teachers; allow teachers to have their expertise
Teachers who want to teach middle school love teaching at that level; may have teachers who leave because they do not want to teach elementary school; will have fewer middle



## Staff Responses (CHALLENGES)

schools; will parents pull their kids and put them in charter schools?

Challenge is for students to navigate through all this - dealing with the changes - may be disrupting their futures with splitting up friend groups and teachers that they love

## Opportunities

**Given the goals of the Reimagining Education program as shared in tonight's presentation ...**

*What specific suggestions do you have for improving the proposed plan?*

## Staff Responses (Opportunities)

It's no secret that we've had too much land and too many buildings for too long. This is an obvious, overdue change.

The plan would be improved if it explained:  
How this is communicated to staff. Clarity to staff on how they will have a job (they want) when this plan is implemented. Lots of panic currently.

The plan would be improved if it explained:  
First year teaching at the middle school level. In the proposed structure - I am licensed to teach only Reading Intervention for 7th and 8th grade, as I have the K-6 endorsement. I have no desire to teach elementary.

Do I need to get additional endorsements (time & money) to teach what I want to teach at the grade level I want to teach? Many teachers are already considering the financial implications to adjust their Iowa teaching licenses.

The plan would be improved if it explained:  
How is transportation going to work? We get a lot of parent questions on this and are the ones they talk to -- if we can get more information on this issue, that would be helpful as we are talking to concerned parents.

The plan would be improved if it explained:  
Are we having pre-K at every elementary building? If yes, we should not keep the centers OR not have Pre-K at buildings that are close to pre-K centers.



Staff Responses (Opportunities)
The plan would be improved if it explained: How will transportation to signature schools outside a student's region be handled?
Leave 6th grade as a middle school experience, but build in additional supports for transition between 5th and 6th grade.
The plan would be improved if it explained: What is the plan for the movement of staff so we can end up with a position and colleagues that are the best fit for us?
The plan would be improved if it explained: How this plan will help students with behavior concerns. How this plan will help students with IEPs.
When upgrading facilities, are we creating learning spaces that facilitate multiple modalities of learning, are we building rooms for students to calm down. How does this plan build in the flexibility that addresses challenges that we face every day?
The plan would be improved if it explained: How will this plan better serve students with high-needs?
The plan would be improved if it explained: Does this plan allow us to expand capacity for additional students to participate in current alternative programs? ...
If not, does this plan allow for students to participate in NEW alternative programs, since the current programs are at capacity?
COMMUNICATION: The slides that were presented at SOS and the email that went to families have different timelines for closure/swing/repurpose. (Example Walnut Street)
The plan would be improved if it explained: How will this plan prioritize staff retention?
Keep 6th grade at elementary school, but in the 6th grade (end of year) let them experience some things at the middle schools.
Regardless of when the transition occurs, the transition needs to be better for students. PreK to K, ES to MS, MS to HS. For students and families
Missing - how are we addressing behavior and the consequences around that - big reason as to why families might be leaving between elementary and middle school
Programs - social emotional capacity not there to be in a regular classrooms - for struggling with academics - how are we going to look at those options



## Staff Responses (Opportunities)

Implementation - just finished taking the stay interview results that people are staying because of the relationships in the buildings; this is tearing the buildings apart; sometimes change is good - we know that; job is to serve students - understand that; to be the best teachers, we have to love what we are doing and love the people we are working with - from admin to peers; it feels like a "slam" - we have taken what people really enjoy about their jobs and we are tearing it back down to why do we teach - we just love the people we teach with. Implementation of this plan we know can be good but how it is being done and the way it was introduced to the staff and the way the staff learned about it has felt like an undercut or behind the scenes. It felt like a rug pull. Really made us feel as staff that we don't mean anything at all - need to be seen and heard by the district - it was just words they have been using for two years. Agreement on the call and from others who have come to folks on the call to talk about this. We hear you ... but do you really.

How is the district going to provide more opportunities for feedback - not just from the staff but the communities it is affecting. Especially buildings that are going to be retired. Need that personal connection - also the community - what opportunities are they getting to provide feedback on the process. Shifting boundaries; signature schools and what that looks like. We have tried some of this in the past. How is this going to work?

Opportunity for staff to have a choice of placement - our principal was asked about if we like what we are in and what we might like to do - survey of where you want to be and where you don't want to be - might have certification but might not want that role. Personal choice does matter. Opportunity to say what I would like to continue to teach or not teach.

Pick the top three positions you want - if there is a change, have a discussion first; would like to express where we want to be. Making sure our thoughts are honored. Especially thinking about retention.

Few teachers at my school who are nervous that they are going to be placed in a school or position they don't want - want the opportunity to move out of their current location

Prior district had signature schools - I think the signature school has a lot of good benefits; that opportunity is a good bonus fit for students;

they have tried signature before but tried to fit it in neighborhood schools - tried things before - great opportunities; while good at the same time how is that going to look for access for all of our students - all students should have that opportunity;

Worried about moving to elementary for 6th grade for science and until this year year (6th) - K-5 didn't receive science instruction prior to the 6th grade year - have to teach the K-5 standards but also the 6th grade standards - make sure students receive global studies and science - more rounded curriculum or just focus on the reading and math;

Right now as a 5th grade teacher we are missing the global studies and financial literacy piece - the curriculum needs to align. scratching the bare surface.



Staff Responses (Opportunities)
Preschool offered throughout the district; need a transitional kindergarten for the young 5 year olds
Signature schools - focus on the arts, performing arts/fine arts; areas where students can find belonging; as we are looking at the mission of belonging - that fits very well.
Sig. schools - transportation option for families that are not close to the signature schools - available to all students.
Sig. schools - access through the application process - families less involved - will they advocate for their children - how do we make sure everyone is served equitably.
Science more at k-5 x 2
Increasing number of opportunities with performing arts facilities (along with athletic facilities) - some of the suburb schools have beautiful facilities - make kids excited about the opportunities; equity across those programs; modern facilities
social studies - would like to see more time spent on social studies - some of that is a response to politicians focus on math and reading - emphasize at K-5 level
Agree that performing arts is so important - that is a connection for many kids - anything we can do to have more kids feeling proud about those programs would be great
elementary being larger - special ed. at each grade level - a few years ago we had more and I was able to co-teach and we had way more gains under that set up - not able to do that with the limited staff at our buildings right now - the students were making more gains before; felt more connected
Elementary - staff concern around the large number of ages served in some of these buildings - like preK-12 - safety concerns - make sure that is being prioritized; having kids that went to Cowles prek-8 - they did a good job of handling that; fewer transitions the better they do in school; as long as there is a plan in place to make all that work
Most of the schools are still slated to be the K-6, 7-8 and hs - same as what we currently have really; if we are really looking at reducing the number of building transitions, we are not really doing that as most schools are going to have the same number of transitions, just in different years; maybe it is better for older - but that should be explained so we understand that.
Add a staff daycare in each of the regions - open prior to elementary and an hour after high school is over
training to become a montessori teacher - track offered through the blue program - DMPS - sign contract - masters through Drake - if it is going through anyway, could it be added to the blue pathway to choose as an option



Staff Responses (Opportunities)
staffing and transfers - buildings are supported by trained staff and how that process will work - if there is a staff that doesn't want to do montessori - or not - how would they be supported by staff; and how that is prioritized.
how are all the stakeholders going to be informed about opportunities in their neighborhood - they didn't know about the IB in my last school - how to inform the community.
This plan is about not enough money - opportunity could be opening up training for staff for the areas they will be changing to next year. The paid training - people like those opportunities.
Special education - how is that going to look - is a signature school still going to have a special education program - a student with an IEP - will they have the opportunity to go to a signature school?
Staff would like to have the implementation information out sooner than later.
Let the people these changes impact the most, giving them the information they need to make decisions as soon as possible.
Interested in knowing the rationale for choosing buildings who will be changing grade bands, or to signature schools, for example. Staff members are stressed out and information would be comforting.
More specifically gather staff feedback before making decisions that may negatively impact them.
More transparent about the transition process.
Take into consideration how these changes will negatively or positively impact current schools culture, data, enrollment, staffing, etc.
Having an opportunity to work in a job where you find meaningful and th
A retention plan in order to offer students a high quality education. As staff move in/out, and it's needed to train or retrain new staff, providing a quality experience and instruction should be a priority.
Will busing negatively impact attendance, on late start days, in addition to
Teachers already have Master's degrees, so the training required in transition to Montessori makes teachers feel like they're being pushed out.
Career learning and hands-on opportunities for middle schools is a great opportunity - knowing more about specific ideas would be great!



## Staff Responses (Opportunities)

Details regarding timelines for when families and staff can expect to be able to make decisions about enrollment or entering the transfer pool.

Opportunities to gain curriculum and resources to allow all students to be able to access core content and instruction.

Using the resources (people) in our district to help build buy-in and provide training? Have we considered moving people around to other buildings to help with the implementation of signature schools who maybe have high quality experience or expertise.

Concerned about the students in the Drake neighborhood losing two schools. Are we looking at which neighborhoods are being displaced the most? Moving two schools seems like it won't help to make the neighborhood more safe.

The plan for retiring does not include when actual schools are closing so more information about those specifics, especially for the staff and families impacted, would be helpful.

Important for students and staff to not get shuffled between one retiring school to the next.

Some staff may be interested in operating in a swing school so making space for staff to navigate that may be an opportunity.

Look into and share more information about why families are leaving DMPS. Use that information to improve the plan.

Share class size information transparently to help families know what is coming in the plan.

Consider what a parent "stay" interview would teach us about why families are leaving or staying.

Feels like there is a long time table for all of the changes. What does it mean for teachers looking forward if your timetable is 2 years? The district should communicate more about what is happening because there is a lot of fear. Teachers may need to just look elsewhere for work.

Teachers need ways to have conversations about their futures and what is best for them.

More information about what options will be provided to those impacted in the very near future. What kind of job opportunities will be available for impacted staff

Professional development and support for teachers. Intentionality put forth to provide learning opportunities over the summer so teachers feel ready for the changes in curriculum in the new school year. This would help build confidence. Sixth grade teaching staff need additional support.

Transparency and communication about the impending staff shuffle and changes. Staff need



Staff Responses (Opportunities)
to feel like they have job security. The fear of the unknown is strong and anything the district can do to relieve that with transparency would be appreciated.
Leadership should dig into what middle school aged children need and what their experience is. It feels like middle school is treated less important and should be honored for being its own important part of the educational experience
Moving 6th grade into elementary impacts all of those who are part of the middle school ecosystem. Middle school educators chose to be in middle school, not elementary. The elementary teachers will also have to be aware of how the school environment will change introducing the 6th grade into the campus culture.
Help the transition into 6th/middle school that has not happened yet. Team teaching should start earlier (as early as 4th grade).
Athletic and theater arts (extracurriculars) opportunities for 6th grades would be beneficial and helps with the transition immensely
An orientation for 5th graders that will demystify worries about middle school.
6th grade teachers that would like to use EQ funds or PDD time to partner and teach each other the units before the end of the school year.
Morale is very low at impacted schools. Leadership has had to comfort teachers every single day. More needs to be provided to these teachers. Many of them are looking to leave the district and this needs to be addressed ASAP
The anxiety of knowing your building won't be there anymore next year. There needs to be a formal process for those staff members to learn more and express their ideas.
Consider departmentalizing the 5th and 6th grade classrooms. Jobalikes: ELA, Science, etc.
How will ensure staff have the proper training and qualifications for specialized schools? How can we ensure staff are placed properly? Multiple years of PDD with this focus would be helpful.
Make sure we are adequately using local resources to truly train staff members and ensure a smooth rollout. Specifically for Montessori.
Incentives for impacted staff





## Other Considerations (parking lot)

**What else should the district consider as it moves forward with the Reimagining Education program? Are there specific audiences or strategies that the district needs to include as part of its revisions, decision-making and rollout?**

Staff Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Community partners need to have opportunities to provide feedback
HR and employee movement. There's a lot of movement. That's where the biggest anxiety and concerns are, and we could lose people. We want to keep the people we have, while being advocates for bringing more people in, so we need to address people's anxiety.
Provide BFLs at the meetings
Streamlined internal communications - somebody needs to own internal communications; need to have standards of when and how we will receive information; feels like we can't trust because not enough information is being shared;
Benchmarks - we do not have clear understanding of timelines- there is a disconnect with staff- need to improve the process of connecting with staff
Among staff there is a general mistrust of our own needs being meet; help ensure us that the plan cares about us; district has reputation of building the plane while in the sky; keep a focus on students - student centered - staff have the same needs and happy qualified staff affects the student experience
Are we differentiating preschool and pre-K?
Lots of implementation questions. I feel like we don't have very many answers.
I was wondering what they will be doing to the Brubaker-Hoyt facility to make that space work for a Signature School.
Will district administrators be in the sub rotation?
How can we point out all the good things happening in DMPS?
Thinking about the difficulty of breaking up school communities.
Need more details about what Diploma Plus is.
What will access to Signature Schools look like? Access to other programs has not felt as equitable. How much access will our families actually have to those kinds of schools?



Staff Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Full and complete transparency. If they're going to make a decision or not, tell us why. If they hear a lot of feedback and they decide not to go with the suggestion, tell us what led to that thought process.
Thinking about both staff and families, and the opportunities that will be offered to people, knowing that we can't all go to the same school.
We had parents think everything was happening in 10 years. They need to know the actual timeline for specific schools. Hard to have that news right before parent-teacher conferences. It was nice to hear from the principal first.
It would be nice if the decision makers would physically come into the buildings. offering empathy and support.
Lots of opportunities to be excited about the plan but hard to comment without some details like what type of signature schools programming we'll have.
Will we have athletic facilities in each region? Will there be transportation?
I'm curious about what the signature schools will be.
The plan is so vague it is hard to point out strengths. We're not sure what is happening.
We are not sure we agree that this plan prioritizes staff over buildings. What is the plan for us?
Doing a good job of pulling in staff and families; need to pull in community programs and agencies - to see how they can support these changes - Al Exito, ASAP, DM performing arts
Potentially looking into training for teachers - how will teachers get the training - set up teachers up for success
Would love to hear them talk about encouraging people to stay while changes are made - keep teachers informed; validating their fears because of the unknowns; causing some anxiety
This is in regard to mental health and student behaviors. It's why DMPS are losing students to the suburbs.
A diverse district with lots of languages, at the minimum have a summary in the languages used in the district.
community partners - Principal Insurance was a community partner to provide clothes and boots;



Staff Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Is DMPS talking to school based therapy? - Mosaic, Hazel Health, Orchard Place
Is there going to be a place to send questions as we think of them? Opportunity to ask questions as the process goes along. [There is a building form at at least one school]
How staff will be assigned or selected when schools are retiring. And, will staff trained in specific aspects like IB be allowed or encouraged to remain or help start future IB schools?
Is the district considering corporations helping with curriculum and/or helping staff and families? What partnerships are going to be maintained or started. Monetary and services.
Feedback from current community-based centers and partners is important.
Are we considering what may happen with funding from the state or federal government in terms of impact on the plan? Do we have a backup plan? If bond does not pass?
Sad about the uncertainty and only having two years left with the school community. We don't know whether we'll have a choice about where we go.
How can we prioritize people who are losing their community and buildings they love? "It's like your parents are getting divorced and now you don't know how you're going to live."
We are a family, and we love each other.
Concerned about how this will happen if what is happening in our society interrupts the money we have available.
If our enrollment improves or increases, is capacity for that built into the plan?
Wonder how we will keep the students who come to Des Moines for access to preschool as they move to elementary?
I think there should be more advanced coursework at the middle school level, and having those students choose electives.
Don't just hit families of students but also people without students, so they will buy in before the bond issue in the fall. It will really have an impact on the city itself.
A lot of increased communication about what a strong school system does for a city. That would be an angle to take with the community. I don't know how informed the south side community is with the specifics of the plan. I suspect they're not really informed, so anything that can be done to get their input would be great.
It would be really good to get student input.



## Staff Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)

I would love to see a lot of teacher input into the plan as it moves forward. I didn't see a lot of teachers or middle-school teachers in the committee.

Honoring that middle school is its own thing. Middle schoolers have their own needs. They are not elementary or high school students. It can't be like the other levels, and it needs to honor what these students need, including voice, choice and options to figure out who they are. I'd love to see a middle-school teacher and staff member.

Educate parents about how to support their children and their education. From a parental involvement perspective, we have a lot of room to grow.

Parents - if we want to present a good reason to come to DMPS, we need to involve them in this work

How are we having these conversations with non-English speaking families? Are we creating spaces for these families to be involved; are there other ways for us to think about how to envision school?

Initial feelings shared: Heartbroken about the changes coming. Lots of unknowns. I want to know the options. I want to be heard. Very concerned about the expense for the staffing and assistance that the private schools will require.

Can the district send out a survey to teachers in buildings that are being retired that can help identify how they want to move forward and what they are interested in?

Teachers and staff want the opportunity to share their preferences.

Moving buildings with a colleague to help with the transition.

How is the district ensuring that the entire district is feeling heard and supported throughout this experience. A feedback loop would be appreciated.

What happens if there is no board approval, and what happens if the bond does not pass? We would like transparency about all of those things.

Do staff have an opportunity to move to a signature school? If you are at a building that is becoming a signature school do you get automatic priority? Can teachers move in pods? What is the process for applying to teach at a signature school? There are teams that collaborate so well together, is there a way to keep these teams intact at another building if yours is being retired?

Are incoming 6th graders being held into elementary school now? How will we address this with those students?



### Staff Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)

Is grading going to change for the 7th and 8th graders that will prepare them for high school now that 6th grade is moving down to elementary?

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# COMMUNITY MEETINGS DOCUMENTATION

## Strengths

Given the goals of the Reimagining Education program as shared in today's presentation ...

*What do you see as the strengths of the proposed plan? What do you like about it? How do you see this plan positively impacting the students and families of DMPS?*

Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
Pleasantly surprised, sad when families bail to the suburbs. I appreciate people thinking outside the box.
I hear that class sizes are currently too big, so I like how this will reduce class sizes, which will improve teacher morale.
We can work together to enhance the sustainability of our community.
Emphasis on preschool is huge
Reducing transitions
Diploma Plus
Effort to broaden access to preschool
Signature schools are interesting concept, but I have a lot of questions
Stronger feeder patterns to keep kids together
Balanced enrollment will help with quality of activities and extra-curriculars
Signatures will allow more students find where they fit
Try something new. Bold move to address issues. Serves as a reset
Minimizing transitions between schools is a positive
More kids can access the kinds of programs currently at Central
Having choice might make students and families feel more invested



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
Signature schools give DMPS opportunity to invest in students' current needs
Added amenities and facility upgrades
Like moving 6th grade back to elementary
Not happening right away – happens over 10 years, there is time to decide
Intending to do right by staff; it is good to support staff as much as possible
Increasing preschool access
Clean feeder patterns helps build neighborhood connections and pride
Increasing college and career readiness will help break patterns of generational poverty
The opportunity for more programming in DMPS
I'm excited for preschool for my grandkids
Opening more preschools is important as a single mom; having them closer means less driving. It a need in Polk County
Having PreK in the neighborhoods would be amazing.
I have seen wasted space in our schools. But it may be worth the hardship of change – but it is necessary
The opportunity for North to have the 7-12 signature school
I'm excited that we have a good leader (Dr. Roberts) here in DMPS to do what needs to be done to get us to the next stage. It's like getting teeth pulled – it needs to be done.
Preschools are the selling point
It's a great idea to do K-6 program
Regions might be good for Hoover and Lincoln. The regions make a lot of sense
There is a clear articulation of feeder patterns to create culture and community like in small towns
The admin building is closing and admin staff will be in the school buildings – more adults to help with emergencies
Neighborhood approach



## Community Responses (STRENGTHS)

Regions – also like signature schools; want to know plan for Moulton; bring programming to other schools

More access to unique programming that has been limited

Expanding programs to more sites

Like PreK-6 model, research supported

Opportunities for Diploma Plus – industry recognized certificate

Proud of district trying to take on challenges from Capitol

Signature schools in each region; I chose downtown school for project-based learning

The welcome center struggles to meet demand for Cowles; the limited spaces make it hard for students to get into

Having 6th grade in elementary is a strength – less moving around and from my MS days, I think there is some maturity difference between 6th and 7th

Having a focus on 7th and 8th – would be good for the support and development of the students

The K-8 options give parents more options

The long-term nature of the plan shows the commitment of the district – it is not a quick fix

The updating of the buildings is a strength

All-day preschool for all – metro kids care at all sites is important; it helps student development and parents who work need that amenity. Transportation is great, but parents work

Recognizing that students learn in lots of different ways. Not everyone needs (or wants) the same treatments. Different options in this plan is a strength

More school choices beyond neighborhood programming

Getting rid of old buildings and creating new spaces to learn

Data-driven decisions

Transparency about lack of information when no research about it

Fewer transitions





Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
Like 6th grade moving to elementary
Redesign of middle school experience
Reducing the number of high schools (costs and programs)
Expanded PreK access
Signature schools - like the concept/idea
Acknowledges reality of the district's position
Ratios: being more balanced and lowering class sizes
Have student and staff interests at heart
Moving 6th grade is good - does it go far enough? Push more K-8 to reduce transitions for MS students
Forward thinking and proactive
Like that people can stay in the area where signature schools are offered
6th moving to elementary
Students can stay in spaces longer and reduce transitions/buildings (smoother transition)
Regions
Community/input driven
New buildings might attract people
Nicer facilities for all
Emphasis on students' future
Expanding programming current at Central Campus/Academy
Ability to focus on all students
Additional preschool access
Positive and proactive plan
Not just putting a band-aid on the problem



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
Continuing with staff (keeping them, not being cut)
Potential to incorporate community feedback in all stages (essential for plan to work!)
Community built in the regions
Signature schools a great way to attract talent (staff)
Using Montessori more wide-spread throughout the regions
Fewer transitions if they have PreK or are in a signature school
Smoother transition from 6th to 7th than from 5th to 6th
Better designed buildings – functional space, natural materials
Equitable distribution of amenities (tracks, theatres, pools, etc.)
Safer/newer buildings
Having a clear plan that benefits students
Change is hard, but can be <u>positive!</u>
Appreciate the signature schools and expanding options for students; also love that it's available to any/all students
Access to full-day preschool
Moving 6th grade to elementary
Adding more signature schools to provide opportunities
Easing of congestion in the high schools
Focus on PreK is much appreciated
PreK through 8th configuration
Innovative idea overall
Appreciate opportunities to provide feedback
More PreK through 6 is exciting – helps in forming relationships with students and less transitions is positive
New resources and expanded opportunities at Central is a positive



## Community Responses (STRENGTHS)

Being able to compete with the suburbs is positive; they look down on us. If we go to rural areas, they think we have a lot of opportunities

Future-looking; long-term roadmap to help families make decisions

This is a clear plan – no more rumors or guessing!

Opportunities to sell/advertise our district

Tying school and future students – students seeing the importance of education

Smaller class sizes

Larger physical spaces, especially classrooms

Growth as a district

Uniting communities

Like that it's being divided by the rivers and money is distributed evenly

Reflects the reality of running an urban education

If we stick to the plan, it addresses inequities – financial support, community support

Sees the plan as moving into equity

Space and modernization of education spaces are important – gives kids something to be proud of

Space does affect how students are taught

Larger classroom space

Addresses issues DMPS has faced for years

Recognition and action by administration to make necessary changes

Clean/updated space is important

Provides opportunities

Students may have issues on choosing

Equity is real and students will notice the upgrade



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
Will make DMPS more competitive
Important for middle school 7th/8th as 6th graders may not be ready developmentally
Definitely the support services for students must be continued. We have a wide range of socio-economic needs and unlike Johnston, we need to keep those services (they have these services because they can afford it due to property taxes)
Grade configurations for MS is a strength for building pride. We have that with Findley. Having that continued support is important to prevent gaps in achievement and reduce transitional stress. Elementaries have a lot more support – 6th graders need that especially since COVID
I like the signature school for students who need more or special content like STEM or business
The regional borders by the rivers is a good idea. People who live just North of East have to go farther to go to North HS because of the river. Red-lining is part of our history and this plan counters that historical injustice. Allows us to invest as a collective that will better both North and East and reverse the effects of red-lining that have plagued us. School rivalry is fed by social injustice of red-lining that created such disparity
Signature schools have potential, but it must be well-organized with student voice and staff in addition to business partners. It has potential but I am hesitant. Need to ensure there are some liberal arts opportunities too.
I am heartened by the various ways students can access special programming. Bringing these opportunities closer is important
PreK districtwide because transportation has been an issue
Everyone in one building
Realistic about some of the buildings
As stated, if we accept declining enrollment it's the only way to keep the large school district model operating
Learning space changes could end up with better classroom and improve learning
Like that spaces would help little ones learn



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
7th/8th grade model will benefit students. Not all 6th graders are ready, and 7th/8th graders "go through things" ... this move will help them be more independent, form better relationships
Could help with behaviors
Allows investment in people because the district is maximizing resources
Miraculous plan in difficult situations because of vouchers (paying parents to send children to private schools)
Focus on people and students first, buildings second
Better to cut money away from teachers and resources focused on the classroom
Time for a change; Doing it over 10 years is a good
Like 6th grade in elementary
Like expansion of preschools
Regions are good, and we need to reduce costs of facilities
Reduce transitions for kids
Improve facilities
Need to be more more appealing for open enrollment
Headstart and preschool make a real difference
Signature schools will keep kids in buildings
Realistic and achievable, with time for change
Focus is more on education
Have preK at schools creates bond at the school
Share more about how the funding model restricts how dollars can be used
Need more information about value of regular vs signature schools



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
Need more transparency – more details, more communication at schools that are being retired
K-6: like the idea of having one more year in elementary for maturity of students
Spreading the facilities and special signature schools thru the district in every region
Adding PreK to all elementary facilities: It will save time for families with multiple children for drop-off in the mornings
Renovating buildings and returning buildings to save money and spend on programming
Less transitions for students will be helpful. For parents it is less running around if they have several children
The fewer transitions will help because the students can build friendships and stay with friends longer
This plan will make our district more desirable and more competitive
With three regions, there will be less competition internally and create more unity in sports and other activities
There will be more access to Montessori across the city and not just in the NW region and rich neighborhoods
The regions are easy to explain to parents; the feeder pattern is clearer
All-day PreK for everyone is wonderful
I like less transitions and 6th grade back in elementary. It doesn't make sense that they can't participate in MS sports now
I like having grade 7-8 together and not 9th so that 7th/8th graders can be their awkward selves
Having signature schools allows more students to have access to specialized programs like what is offered at Central
I like having comprehensive sports facilities in each region. It makes sense and gives equitable opportunities and development of pride in each region. It makes financial sense too. We can work together so that we have better access and better fan support in each region.



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
The plan provides 21st Century learning across the city.
Providing some more opportunities to learn trades across the city is good
I love the PreK in schools. Greenwood has had great success with that. It is a very good answer to the childcare shortage/crisis. Having this available across the city is a great idea.
The redesigned spaces are important for having the right spaces for learning. Having facilities like they do in the growing, wealthy suburbs. It would be nice to have access to that.
The goal of being equitable, especially if transportation is included, makes DMPS more desirable and attractive.
I like having the distinct HS and clarity of the feeder patterns
Relocating the District Offices is good. Where would that be? Could it be centralized?
Having PreK to 8th grade will improve the culture and community and will make schools safer for students, more comfortable. Increase stability for families.
Having PreK being more than just daycare - it could improve their preparation for school
It is very important to have new facilities to refresh the students and for the staff. The daylight is important, without it, it kills my soul. Having A/C that works would be good.
Expanding the school cultures that are working in some schools to all schools.
This could be a nice opportunity to have a common policy for all schools – common attendance policies, common discipline policies, standardized procedures. Some schools allow phones, others don't. We need standardized policies and procedures
We could be on the cutting edge to prepare students for after school, especially in the trades. In Hispanic cultures it is important to have a trade and we have a shortage of trades.
More Pre K across the district
6th grade returning to elementary schools
The amount of thought and attention put into the plan is phenomenal
10 year transitions time
District is changing to assist the community



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
The thought process. It's 21st Century education to meet kids where they are and how they engage
The idea of the three regions eliminates competition between schools
Signature schools is DMPS leaning in to what makes it unique and spreading that programming across the district
Thoughtful and proactive in deciding in what schools to retire
Like that DMPS is looking at signature schools from a competitive level to attract and keep people in the district
Pre-K access
Minimizing transitions across schools
Conducive spaces for collaboration allows for hands-on education
Functional capacity at schools
Aesthetics of buildings
Acknowledgment of the impact of private/charter schools. DMPS is taking action rather than reacting.
Three regions have equitable access to programs
Choice of schools
Like the idea of adding additional signature schools
Appreciate the emphasis on equity and accessibility in this plan
Appreciate the vision and willing to address these challenges
Trying to do something new comprehensively to new results
Like the focus on staff and keeping our people
Pre-K through 6th is a good configuration
Committee has done a lot of research and background work while still leaving room for community input





Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
Increasing Pre-K
Moving 6th grade back to elementary
That there is a plan
Focused on student experience and equity
Plan to upgrade facilities
Learning in indoor and outdoor spaces
New schools with open space and technology
Focused on decentralizing resources
Ability to rethink the middle school experience, particularly experiential learning
10-year plan rather than right now. Don't accelerate
Transportation
Three regions
Grade level realignment are a positive part of the plan
More opportunities for students
Signature schools are good for students. Gives them more opportunities for leadership.
Updating the buildings
Pre-K-6 grade alignment. 6th graders aren't mature enough to be with 7-8 graders. 7-8, 9-12 alignment is good
Applied learning and the modernization of the instruction in classes
Provides the necessary tools for student learning will translate into better results for students
Closing schools now will be beneficial in the future
Can offer special workshops in signature schools



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
New buildings that provide natural light
Creation of signature schools
All-day preschool
Good idea to keep 6th grade separate from 7th and 8th grade sports
Transportation to school
Signature schools
Keeping 6th graders in elementary school is a good idea
The opportunity for students to study specialized areas in signature schools
Renovation and modernization of school facilities
Students and parents are familiar with the system and the schools
Intentional thinking of how we will cut costs
Equity – not just looking at one side of town, district buildings
Equity and access to signature schools
Fewer transitions.
6th grade back to elementary school
Signature schools – real possibilities early on. Both options – traditional/comprehensive and signature
More opportunities and a variety of options for learners, career for staff, small vs. larger, grade levels, specialized topics
Willingness to try something new
Getting opinions from other people and the community
School support. Pre-K. Help with children in crisis and will increase access, test scores and success in the future
District is listening, realizing education competition exists



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
Options for signature schools – providing something outside Central
More options allow DMPS to compete with suburban districts
Should be able to retain teachers with new programming and new options for students and families
Signature school options allow DMPS to lean into what they do well currently
Thought and intention in the planning and communication of the plan
Merging funding sources so there is more equity across regions and not single campuses
Taking action on doing better for our students
Honoring the needs and cultures within various communities
Very comprehensive plan with multiple stakeholders
Providing choice within public schools
Allows our students to flourish
Addresses middle schools and their significant obstacles
Prioritizing Pre-schools
Idea of signature schools
Like the idea of PreK-6 because of the long-lasting friendships, the longer they are together
With having a 7th grader in the district, I can say that 6th graders belong in the elementary buildings. I think it is a good move
Pre -k will have a positive benefit for our students. It will prepare them for Kindergarten and thereafter.
Transition to the three regions will create pride in our schools. It will help grow sports programs and help people want to be involved.
I like the idea of the signature schools . As we learn more about them I think it can draw more people in.
I'm excited about the pre-K program and the potential for that to be full-day will be good.



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
I don't have direct experience, but I think that moving 6th grade kids to elementaries will be a good thing. The transition is difficult and the social=-emotional time and friend groups are forming. I personally went to a K-6 school and that was a good experience.
When I went to DMPS, 6th grade was part of elementary school. That is a positive- or something I wouldn't object to. When I made the jump from 6th to 7th that was a big deal. So, making kids make that jump a year earlier is not a good thing. This would be better.
When people are learning about what they want to learn, that would be great. But I'm not sure what those signature schools will be yet.
Pre-school expansion is a great idea. I know how much I struggled getting my kids in Pre-K so that is a great idea.
I like the ideas of the signature schools and diploma Plus. But I'm not sure we have enough information about those to say that it will be great.
I appreciate that the district and the re-imagine team really tried to think outside the box. They took some risks, which I liked. Having never been a part of a district that realigned like this, I think it is exciting. I appreciate their willingness to do it and to listen.
I really like some of the Pre-K opportunities. I think it will be great especially for our immigrant and low-income families.
The idea of signature schools is a great idea. Want to know what's being offered before fully committing to the idea
Like the outside thinking around the plan. Likes that the district is thinking big
Plan does a good job of understanding the reality of funding
Recognizes the enrollment challenges – impacts of charter schools, public/private
Like the idea of 6th grade moving back to elementary schools. Good with an extra year of elementary school
Specialized training at signature schools can give them a leg up in their careers. Could have a positive effect on the lives of SPED kids that don't exist even now.
Not one size fits all. Like the different opportunities that the district will provide
Need to make sure specialty schools are supported for the long haul
Like the idea of the potential for smaller class sizes. Currently two of her children are in classes of 16 or 17, and the other with 24. Would like to see the 16-17 stay and the 24 get lower



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
Class size absolutely matters. Smaller class sizes allows teachers to build relationships and give the students attention they deserve
Moving people from the central office to other sites is interesting. Like the idea of spreading the administrative footprint. Curious about how communications will be facilitated when that happen
STEM is everywhere, and would make a good signature school
District has had good results with Montessori, but the district needs to be cautious and do more investigation and getting community feedback before selecting signature schools
The district is looking down the road at how to handle a tough situation. I would like to see more opportunities for the average student and students who may not want to go to college. Students who do want to go to college need access to academics, too.
Would like to know what signature schools will offer: CTE? Health Care? What careers will they concentrate on?
Students will have access to more programming, but . . . what programming is it?
Healthcare careers would be an important area to offer students a signature school. Also construction and mechanical trades. There's a shortage of people, and these areas offer good lifetime careers
Electrical and plumbing programs that offer apprenticeships
I would like to see signature programs that will build more relationships with post-secondary institutions in the area so that students can get college credit while in high school. These will help students build pathways to lifelong careers
Areas like music, fine arts, etc. would be other areas for signature schools
One of the positives of the district is its diversity. If there is a way to make specialty programs inclusive of other cultures it would make them stronger. Is there a partnership that could be formed to provide resources to make that happen?
Like the idea of signature schools. Why can't all schools do some type of signature programming?
Appreciate that the building and facility footprint is being reduced, and that funding will concentrate on student experience and staff. I know it will be hard, but putting money in fewer locations makes sense.
Like that the district will invest in educational spaces to enhance learning. Want updated and rejuvenated spaces and new technology



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
Thinking critically about current spaces and revitalizing them is good. A lot of families are leaving for suburban schools because they have nicer facilities
Think the plan will make DMPS more competitive and are excited in what everything will look like in 10 years
Hopes it makes high schools more appealing
I think it will create strong school communities.
Likes keeping 6th grade in elementary schools
It's important to accurately engage interests in the proposed signature schools
Important to honor the diversity in the programming that's offered at signature school. Diversity is a strength of DMPS
A nod to non traditional pathways for signature schools is an opportunity (CTE)
There will be more of a community focus. Hope is that it will improve schools across DMPS
This plan provides families with a variety of choices, and that's something that's important right now
Need more information on how the signature schools will work.
The plan has recognized the student population DMPS serves and how we need to serve those students so that they have options to go into the workforce and not just a college bound culture.
Thoughtfulness of the transition plan to different buildings
Making PK more accessible to the community
Plan is looking to address the challenges and the shortfalls of the loss of enrollment and budget constraints; appreciation for a detailed plan to do something knowing what the impact on the district can be
There have been great opportunities for parents and the community to engage in the plan and provide feedback
Ease of convenience with sending students to one building when there are multiple ages living in the home
The district is open to big changes and wants to address those changes; out of the box thinking is happening to address the needs



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
Appreciates the regions being defined by the rivers
<i>The district is moving forward after being stagnant; loving the fact that DMPS wants to toot our horn and imagine ourselves as the leader of education and destination choice</i>
The district is providing a choice; this is school choice
The establishment of signature schools throughout the districts in every region
Transportation to go to signature schools across the district because of transportation is huge to be able to access these programs.
The career focused high schools
I believe signature programming and the growth of the diploma plus will renew students interest in education and shift us from a college centered education institution. I appreciate the focus on equity in these plans as well.
I'm excited about the signature schools, especially the Montessori schools.
Moving 6th graders to elementary will help with our retention because it is better for the SEL of the students.
The expansion of preschool availability is a great starting place for all students.
I'm excited for the expansion of more full-day pre-schools and want to see what that will look like going forward.
The parents at South Union are supportive of the idea of keeping 6th grade at the elementary schools.
Jackson is our home elementary school and I'm excited that they are rolling out the Montessori so soon.
The retirement of some buildings is probably a good idea. Especially in light of the huge budget cuts. The plan is bold and being willing to put out there that we can be better and do better is pretty cool.
I am also excited about other non Montessori signature programming, as Montessori is not a good fit for all students. I am looking forward to STEM based program options, career based education, etc. I also hope as a staff member to continue my joy and passion of seeing students succeed in the ways they want to
I like that you are considering what the people in each region want in their signature schools.
I love the thought of having a fine arts school. I've heard that kids are excited about a STEAM



Community Responses (STRENGTHS)
academy.
My daughter is excited about a signature school, too. I like that it is fresh and exciting. I like that it was described that we would not be “gatekeeping” and it allows equity of access.
We are not reinventing the wheel, but we are bringing it to Des Moines and making it work for us.
I would love 6th grade to be in elementary schools. Just thinking of when students start in K and have another year, delays the transition and helps them make the transition to middle school. It gives kids that extra time to prepare. There is such a range in development in that area.
I am really excited by signature schools. Have we considered partnering with New Tech schools that include some soft skills, too.
One positive is the Pre-K. That is a good response to the child crisis we’ve been facing for the past few years.
I’m thinking a lot about STEM or STEAM possibilities. I’m thinking about the students who may not be on the accelerated path but have interests in technology or other areas like the arts for all kids. I have a lot of artistic students so having a space for them is valuable and exciting to me. Some students see the world through a different lens and it could be really cool. It could attract students from other districts.
We should keep the transportation piece... My kids can’t get bussed right now and they walk down very busy streets. If we could get transportation it would be amazing.
I love the pre-k
Middle school is horrible for everybody, so having the extra time in elementary is so beneficial.
I love the idea of partnering with the community and business partners. I have questions about how that is going to work but I’m excited to see how that will play out.
I’m excited about Pre-K. So that everyone has a year under their belts about going to school. Where they can learn how to play, how to tie their shoes and open a milk carton so that we can have more rigorous K. Our scores will sky rocket.
As a Cowles graduate, I went to Montessori for half my life and it really helped me develop the skills and perspectives I have now.
Giving opportunities that were missed by past generations.
Emphasis on Pre-k as that is critical to student success.





## Community Responses (STRENGTHS)

Expanding elementary gives students opportunities to have another year in their safe place where they have connections to teachers and friends.

Buildings and technology will be updated with current teaching methods.

More technical careers: more options and opportunities for students

Increased access to Central Campus courses

More competitive with other schools; Comparable to private schools

More learning opportunities for advanced students

Equal access

Like that there are new topics for students through signature schools

Long-term stability

Less commuting

Fewer transitions

Having PreK-6 will allow the parents to have one more year at the same schools; less hassle in the transporting of children

Consolidating schools will allow parents to take other students/friends to school

It's better for all grades to come out at the same time

STEM signature school is good

Introduction to computers and talent-based classes

All-day PreK

If the plan decreases the number of students, teacher ration will be better

Private sector grants being spread out is appreciated

They like the new facility will be a great thing for the new generation

Students will have a choice in career-based education, whether electrician or otherwise.

They like staying longer at schools, like the fact that 6<sup>th</sup> grade is in the elementaries



## Community Responses (STRENGTHS)

Some of the schools are pre-k through 12<sup>th</sup> grade and they felt that was a strength and a benefit to the students.

They like the facts that students can play sports and participate in activities in their home school instead of having to join at another school across town

Like that the new buildings will have more advanced opportunities for students and that we are right-sizing our buildings like the example of Lincoln being able to serve 1400 students but has 2100 students right now. This change is positive for them because it will increase the quality

Like the idea of modernizing and updating the facilities because they recognize they are old and not serving our students well

This transition to different buildings could potentially help reduce the number of schools that families need to get their students to or reduce the number. For example, if there is one pre-k 12, then the parent just has to make one stop to drop off the students and get to work. Instead of making multiple stops and multiple schools with varying start times.

They love this plan because it is very forward-facing and not just to serve this generation but to serve many generations to come

It's a view that they can see a future in

## Challenges

**Given the goals of the Reimagining Education program as shared in tonight's presentation ...**

*What challenges do you see with the proposal plan? What gives you pause or concern? How do you see this plan negatively impacting the students and families of Des Moines Public Schools?*

## Community Responses (CHALLENGES)

When Stowe is closed, we will have no elementary or preschool within easy distance for our neighborhood.



## Community Responses (CHALLENGES)

Signature programs come and go. How will the families in my neighborhood be served?

With charter schools mining our students, they will take advantage of us closing schools in our neighborhood. We should give them NO space. They do not serve all kids.

The neighborhood schools are needed. The kids are still there, and they will also need preschool.

We don't want kids to have to be on the bus for too long.

I share concerns about losing a walkable school in our neighborhood (Hubbel). I don't know the data for why it would close. Seeing the amazing things that happen at Hubbel, I don't want our neighborhood to miss out on that.

Concern for the North HS community, with news that the City is closing a pool. Not having an outdoor pool is a loss of an asset for the NE side.

Concerns about the staff. My sister's kids have more staff in their classrooms in the suburbs, and I'm wondering how we can improve that in DMPS when we're building more classrooms.

Concerned about student transitions during the changes from this process

Questions about transportation and traffic:

- How will students access buildings and programs in other parts of the district?
- How will the district pay for transportation and find enough drivers?
- Who will qualify for transportation?
- DART? Is this an option?
- If we attract open enrollment transfers, is there enough space for traffic flow?

Questions about options for students who are open enrolled in and whether students can stay where they are after changes. How will students be prioritized?

Need to build community trust in DMPS in order to pass a bond

- It's a hobby for people to badmouth DMPS
- Mediacom stadium broke a lot of people's trust

We don't know what's coming from federal and state government and how that will impact DMPS

Concern about not doing enough to get people to come back or open enroll in DMPS

What if this doesn't work?

White flight is the root cause (racism)

Class sized might not get fixed



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
What if you don't get enough people enrolled in a signature school to balance enrollment at a comprehensive HS?
Listen to younger families who will be there when it changes
Concern about combing students from different gangs at same HS
How will signature schools evolve as interests and needs change over time?
How will this plan address SpEd, ELL programs – will this be an option for all students and programs?
Will curriculum change with moving 6th grade back to elementary?
How will people learn about how access to extra-curriculars will work?
Communication isn't happening at the school level. Staff are sharing their frustrations
Will signature schools have their own sports and activities?
Most challenges are questions about this will work
Concern about the retired buildings and whether they will drain resources – will DMPS sell them?
Open enrollment deadline is looming and we might lose people who do not have answers
Staff need more answers so we can retain them
With 7-12 and PreK-12 buildings, how will we keep the younger students safer and not interact with older kids? Some of the interactions could be bad like teen pregnancy of our younger students. I wouldn't want my child in that situation.
Why not have 7-9 buildings instead of just 7-8? 9th graders' maturing seems a better fit with 7th/8th graders
How will we ensure we have CTE teachers for our new spaces? That seems to be a real shortage area
We need more engagement – a better investment in programming not just grade configurations
What do activities look like at Hoover or North? Do we have sports, music programs?
North could still be split between NE and NW regions – classmates could be split at that time, The relationships they build is a unique bond. Teammates may be split.



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
Will the district provide transportation for activities if they go to North and participate at East?
As I get ready to sell my house, there is no elementary school that doesn't cross a major street – it's not walkable. Hiatt and Goodrell are not in my neighborhood. If my child doesn't want the NHS signature school, now they go across the city. We've had a lot of development in the Highland Park neighborhood
If there are no sports at signature schools, we need to ensure there are opportunities – not just varsity sports but intramural options for example. How do we keep kids involved in activities at school and don't want to take a bus?
Transportation – students having access to programs, how is it going to work?
How to work with DART; challenge in access getting to school and access to afterschool activities
Want to know the plan for Downtown School kids being transitioned; will they have a chance to finish PBL?
Trying to push resources toward kids with least opportunity; will they have access to opportunities?
Help for kids with behavior issues – need to involve parents, culture of learnings (health realization , 3Rs)
Parent involvement needs to be at all schools
Are we identifying students with learning and/or behavior challenges and are they getting access to what they need?
Kids facing challenges without parents' ability to advocate for them
Opportunity to reset expectations of what it means to be a student, parent and staff
Talking about parents who went through the system and were treated differently because of race: parents need to advocate, have traumatized kids.
Kids need to be treated respectfully, same; need to reset with how we treat and interact with kids
What is happening for 25% of kids who are not graduating?
Ability to read vs reading to learn – parents have to contribute to education, make kids as part of learning process



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
Need shared accountability for kids to be successful
Student-led conferences – need to learn how to read; reading is learning
Help find issues in kids affecting learning (vision, disabilities) – need to help all kids that need help
Make sure district is elevating PreK in schools vs. in child-care centers
Loss of feeder pattern and knowing/planning for transitions as a parent
Retired schools – keep kids together to continue relationships
6th grade vs 9th grade as the pull out grade
Funding – vouchers
Competition of other school options – most important bond for DMPS!
Regions may limit flexibility in the future with competing schools
The next 10 years will be difficult for current students – “sacrifice present for future”
Perceptions of inequity (East vs. others)
Perpetuating red-lining
The storytelling has to be powerful; educating audiences must consider language and mobility
Cost of construction
Transportation – added costs of field experiences, transporting all students
Non-teaching focus supports for students to increase graduation rates
Public support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Families without school-age children?</li> <li>● Education in general?</li> <li>● Can people afford to pay more taxes?</li> </ul>
Helping people understand social benefits of PUBLIC education
Bond failure – what happens if it doesn’t pass?
Some neighborhoods will lose their schools – how were the schools selected to be retired? need to see the data



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
Concerns about losing their school community
What will the transition look like for schools that are closing?
What incentives do students and staff have to stay at a retiring school?
Will parents have the opportunity to transfer children before their school closes?
How can parents limit the number of transitions for their children?
Concern about increases in class sizes
Concern about how the numbers will work out – timeline doesn't match up
High school enrollments are an unknown
Competition – education landscape has changed, vouchers are not going away
Transportation – will everyone get it? logistics are a mess
How does the plan address the NOW issues of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● students not feeling engaged with school</li> <li>● escalated behaviors of students</li> </ul>
How will class sizes become smaller when we have the same (or smaller numbers of non-signature) high schools?
How will we make DMPS a destination district NOW because we can't wait 10 years?
How much will this "project" cost?
What will happen to this plan if district leadership changes?
Why do we need 100s of more classrooms with declining enrollment?
What is the plan to convince the public to pass the bond?
What size of classes are we talking about having with this plan?
How will we convince the public to pay for three stadiums when we advertised Mediacom as the "one" district stadium?
How does the plan solve the over-capacity problem in high school?
"Destination District in 10 years" – how do we do that year 1?
Attraction and retention of students and staff



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
Quality Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Homework</li> <li>● Where are we at with high-quality curriculum and preparing students beyond high school?</li> <li>● SRG</li> <li>● Finals</li> </ul>
Preserving historic buildings (GW, Callanan)
What are the reasons students are leaving? Is that captured and communicated? Need more communication about why there is a decline (population decline, suburban open enrollment, public vs. private)
Communication at the district and school/classroom level – share what/why we have a quality education at the district
Transportation within regions
Are we looking at any other public schools in high charter/voucher options that are further along in the development?
Increased property taxes & public perception
Concerns about closure of Hubbell: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● World class education &amp; competing for students message contradicts the success of Hubbell</li> <li>● Breaking up staff</li> <li>● Loss of collaboration/mentorship with Roosevelt</li> <li>● Drake neighborhood loses access to neighborhood schools</li> <li>● Perkins is not close</li> </ul>
Current 3rd graders will transition three times by 8th grade at Greenwood
Size and scope of plan is intimidating
High-level presentation leads to a lot of “fill in the blanks”
Timeline transparency – current families are already planning, determining whether to stay or go
Communication – CLEAR IS KIND!
Longevity of leadership – Will those deep in the plan be there in the end? What is the plan to keep if continuing as intended? Does it change with different leadership?
Busing equity – examples (King going to Callanan)





Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
What if enrollment doesn't match interest at a signature school?
Signature school opportunities for ML or students with IEP?
Schedules: Middle School vs. Elementary when spaces are combined?
Finding proper staffing for signature schools
Size increase of elementary schools
Retaining teachers, staff and students at a school that will be retiring
Enough Montessori experience to support all three regions
Remaining buildings accommodating current population
Possibility of shifting schools away from marginalized populations
Staff willingness to go back for certifications for signature schools
"Water cooler" conversations at schools that will be retiring
Addressing concerns for families that are very invested in the current school community, which has been intentionally planned
Lack of current play structures (park) that current schools serve as a community gathering place
Lack of walkers – increased busing
Family buy-in based on the lack of specific data supporting the proposal makes it hard to build trust
How and why the plan has/will change
Retaining families who choose to stay in Des Moines because of student and family diversity
Retaining subject matter expertise for 6th grade at elementary schools
Perception of DMPS middle school is very poor
Class sizes – not clear number of students choosing "traditional" vs "signature"
How to get students and parents excited about going to signature school
Morale at retired schools



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
Open enrollment limitations
Roadmap for staff at retired schools
Support systems for the staff – is that included?
Does the plan incorporate PD for staff?
What does it look like with retired buildings? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sell or watch them rot?</li> <li>• Can money from the sale of schools be reinvested into the district?</li> </ul>
Class sizes need to be smaller
Have the students been asked, “Why don’t you want to go to school? How can we support you?”
What is the ideal enrollment number? Is the 30,000 student district based on data? People will ask when DMPS asks for a bond!
What safe guards are in the plan to make sure the plan stays effective with a change of leadership?
How are signature schools being selected?
How do you expand CTE but centralize it?
How can businesses be brought on board for support?
Communication – staff need to know so that can answer questions and have information to share
Bond needs to pass – there is a lot on the line, costs will continue to climb
How will the in-between construction be dealt with?
Keeping/building new in communities
Student behaviors - how will they be addressed?
Signature schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What if students change their minds about their interest area, are they stuck?</li> <li>• How can they explore other interests?</li> <li>• How will you decide who gets seats if it is very popular?</li> </ul>
Central Academy & Campus are set up for sampling ideas or interest. Many teens won’t know what they want to do. If it is a set decision – what if they are pressured or discover they



## Community Responses (CHALLENGES)

don't like it?

The plan needs to share more details. I'd like to see the data about what is driving the decision. They said something about Chicago but what did they see in Chicago?

We've already started cutting programs due to budget. It seems a hypocritical decision considering our "Come here. Become here" messages.

The loss of Italian and Arabic is hard

This is a risky plan because it is changing how our schools operate. What if it doesn't work?

The cost of building is very high. How will we afford this plan, especially in the transition to the ideal state? Will this cut into our programs to make this plan come alive?

We understand that this is a big plan and we're having staff cuts right now. We are starting this plan on the wrong foot with the staff cuts. It is bringing people's worst fear about staff loss to the front. We are asking what will be cut next? The arts? The humanities? It's important we keep our opportunities.

Too big of a space could overwhelm the little ones

Signature schools – will the entrances be just one big office or a separate entrance just for the program?

Take ages into account as schools are designed

Will everyone start at the same time (bell times)?

Parking at middle schools could be an issue

Culture around each school – How do you handle differences between signature schools and comprehensive high schools?

Losing established cultures could lose DMPS students

Need more details

Equitable treatment for SpEd

Trust gap – DMPS not completely forthcoming

Not getting a full picture

Are signature schools just an excuse to close more schools?



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
Could it follow the same path as community college and CTE?
Will signature schools become dumping grounds?
More details needed
Equitable distribution and treatment of campuses
State hates Des Moines – need to have a contingency plan in case the governor steps in
Athletics – what would it look like?
Logistics of getting kids from school to school
How will it benefit day-to-day students?
Grade configurations – I prefer 7-9 vs. 7-8 or 7-12
Especially referencing Brubaker/Hoyt – I don't want my 7th grader interacting with 11th graders
Need walkable, neighborhood school option ... How will we be able to sell our house if there is no school nearby?
With requirements/pre-requisites for signature schools, will that create perception that the comprehensive schools are "less than" ?
What about athletics and activities at signature schools?
Class sizes are too big now – What will be done about class sizes? What is the plan for making classes smaller?
Would like more transparency and details – What is the criteria for closing schools? What Hubbell? How was the decision made?
Surprised Greenwood was not closed
Need more details about plan
Need to know the numbers
How will boundaries be determined? What will the boundaries be?
Need more details about schools that are closing or being repurposed



## Community Responses (CHALLENGES)

Share information sooner than later, we want to know details now

Want to know how decisions were made

Need more details about the bond

Need to use parent input to create details of the plan

How will bond funds be used?

Need to know more details about school additions

Impact of state legislature decisions (vouchers and other issues) is adding to challenge

How do we best take care of ourselves?

Need to focus on retaining teachers

Need reasons and rationale for retraining schools

Want more transparency – need to know more

Maintain older buildings

Share the functional capacity scores of each building

Need to focus on academics

Class size ratios are really important

PreK is very important

Need to be honest about why schools are closing, be more open about it

The plan needs changes – make it more exciting. Go back to the drawing board? It appears to be top-down ... need to better engage people at the school level and have more parent involvement

Why do we need \$500 M for bond? More details are needed ... it's a hard sell

We have a deficit and are asking for more money to address budget problems

Need more details about the bond



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
Need to focus more on the “why”
Transitions – minimize impacts on students; worried about transitions, especially with Cattell closing in 2027, even more transitions for these students
Repurposed in NW (Hubbell and DNTN) – understand longest waiting list is of the highest rated cultures
Need to communicate with the families and teachers concerned about the culture and staff of “dying” school
Will the teachers have jobs and where will they be? I need to talk with the families about this.
School is diverse – worried about that changing
Open enrollment options to signature schools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Will it be possible?</li> <li>● Will there be transportation?</li> </ul>
What if the school of choice is full? Merrill only and location?
Need continued staff sessions on the plan
Preserving the culture of school; how is that communicated and carried forward to the new school? How will merging schools start partnering with each other?
Focused meetings for schools that are closing, they need targeted meeting with district admin, more transparency
Financial challenges – worried about how the district will be able to afford construction for the new facilities
Vouchers & Voting – how can families help educate the public?
How many students leave and return to us without funding?
Concerns about programming for 5th and 6th grade band, what about middle school programming?
Clubs and activities for 6th grade – where will these programs live?
How will the signature schools work? What does the application process look like? Will there be requirements/pre-requisites?



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
7-12 school – how will it look to have a 7th grader in the same building as a 12th grader? Parents are worried about that
How will we make sure that the students are successful with the curriculum?
How will we incorporate families to be more inclusive? Need to sell to families to be a team
How specifically are we preparing students for the trades? Would like to see more information about that – programming and possibilities
Will the new plan be more inclusive of families or exclusionary? It must be inclusive!
Language should not be a barrier to opportunities (e.g. ELL)
9th graders do not belong in HS (don't want seniors "hitting on" 9th graders)
Will open-campus continue? Especially in a 7-12 building, will younger students be allowed to leave as well?
Sports: how will that work? combined? need to consider how to create unity
PreK with 8th graders is not a good match
What is the safety & security plan? (human trafficking, school fights)
Concerns about behavior and safety
If we can't control class size none of this will work
What is the transition plan for student movement? A portion of 5th graders will move more than what they're moving under the current circumstances
We may be turning away from what's working well, particularly when it comes to community culture
Schools selected for retirement are schools that are drawing people to DMPS
Loss of community traditions
The plan will increase transportation needs. What will that cost and is there a plan? How do those costs compare to closing a school?
There's no transition plan for students and teachers



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
Need more details and a roadmap
How do we incentivise teachers at closing schools to stay until the buildings close? How do you keep morale up?
Will retiring schools be allowed to deteriorate along with the community culture?
People move into the neighborhood to walk to Hubble. By closing it are we discouraging people from moving into DMPS
What will happen to the IB program at Hubble? Will it be offered at another school?
Details and communications – we don't have any
Is mixing older kids with younger students a good idea?
Will Montessori education continue?
What will be done to engage the community to pass the bond?
Will there be a bond campaign?
Need to be talking more about the bond. Everything in this plan is contingent on it passing.
What are the projected utility savings?
Have any students been done on kids having to leave buildings and travel further, especially in winter?
Where in the budget is additional funding for transportation?
Where are you going to get bus drivers?
DMPS doesn't have a numbers problem, it has a distribution problem. The plan does not address this.
How do you keep enrollment advancing?
I want to see how neuro-diverse children will be supported. They need access and opportunities for all students in signature schools
What does it mean when a building is retired? Does it become a charter school? Does it become housing?





Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
A large bond needs to pass. If it doesn't pass, what are the specific implications?
Can businesses/corporations step up and support DMPS in this work?
Getting buy-ins from families whose buildings are affected. The need to see the greater good. The district needs to share more information and vision.
Worry a lot about staff retention, especially in buildings that are closing
We need to better showcase and sell ourselves to attract families
Potentially losing quality staff
Anxiety among teachers, particularly regarding state legislation
Reputation
Student behavior with special needs students: how do we support these students
Will the new buildings actually bring families?
Class size
Athletics
Programming
Classism/racism
One region retiring a lot of schools
Will retired schools be used for charter/private school? Can we make rules about the sale?
Hard for the early change schools
Whole community on board – the importance of this
Home values can go down without the plan
It's not perfect right now
Additional transparency on how decisions were arrived at. Some schools seem to meet the goals while others don't.



## Community Responses (CHALLENGES)

Can we really count on the money to fully complete this plan

Student time spent on buses. Are we truly able to give equitable access? Car riders versus requiring buses to access a school

Is there truly busing available to all who will need it? How will it work? What are the costs and logistics?

Students will have several transitions as the plan is carried out in the next 10 years. Families may enroll elsewhere. Staff may not stay if the building is closing.

Families who are impacted by the transition/closures have not been communicated with. They need reassurance.

Community feel of neighborhood schools is negatively impacted (schools closing before signature schools are ready)

Communication of the closure/plan for impacted schools (DTS, Hubbel, etc.) has not been shared. Families need information to make enrollment decisions, even if it's just a timeline on information that can be shared.

Need to share the vision. Sell it.

Concerned about the learning opportunities for students in grades 7-12

Closure of several schools

More kids going to one school will have a limited access for drop off and pick up

Traveling time if my school will change due to closure

Transportation

Older students bullying younger students. We need to make sure there is enough supervision in the cafeteria.

Anxious about bullying in the bathroom and pressure to do drugs

Security: windows to protect students; more security guards

Will K-6 students have separate entrances than those for the older students?



## Community Responses (CHALLENGES)

Parking: will children have to come into the same entrances as cars? Need to organize this to reduce the frustration of parents

Need metal detector for grades 7 through 12

Separate upper and lower grades and make sure students are respecting the rules in connection to physical and sexual harassment

To have preschools with older students. The differences in the ages is concerning

Will transportation be provided to students no matter where they live?

Need to have sparse bathrooms for younger and older students

How will you separate students in 7-12 schools?

Will there be doors separating k-8 and 7-12 sections of schools?

Creating spaces with natural light

Restructuring drop off and pick up areas to speed and traffic flow

Limiting the negative influences of older students to younger students, especially students with behavioral problems.

Transparency – what schools will be open, under construction, etc. Need more details.

If the bond does not pass, how will we make changes equitable? How will changes be made?

Timeline – 8 years – what will keep our staffing in the meantime?

Beyond our building, what about programming, curriculum, etc.? How will that help us keep students at DMPS?

Where does athletics fall? Students are leaving for more competitive programs/districts. What are the conference plans?

How will people who do not speak English know what's happening? Low incident languages will threaten their stability.

What will happen to teachers at the school? Can teachers “stay together?” What is the plan when schools close?

9th grade to middle school



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
Concerns about people leaving the district when the reform changes get too hard
If leadership changes will the plan change?
Lack of alternative school options for students that cannot be productive in comprehensive settings
What happens to the traditions that have been built in schools and the community that are generational?
Community buy-in in seeing the value of future plans
If the board doesn't pass, what's the next step?
Getting the referendum passed. What's the plan?
How do we plan to evolve the plan to meet the changes we can and can't predict that occur in our communities/politics/etc/?
Overcoming mindsets and physical advantages that perpetuate disparities
Retaining strong staff in the short and long term
Disconnect between the hierarchy of our current system and the actual daily life of buildings (and reality)
Unrealistic goals; reframing goals to speak to the community
How do we overcome anticipated impacts from politics/economy?
Transportation logistics
Concern in NW region - having two elementaries south of Grand; negatively affect families in the Drake area that currently go to Hubbell; not sure it is equitable to close Hubbell; people attend Hubbell because of neighborhood aspect
might change the neighborhood with fewer families young kids
Hoover - many immigrant families; what attempts are being made to get feedback from a variety of families; need to get input from a variety of families
Similar concern to Joe about Cattell - many different languages represented at the school; need to make sure there are opportunities for all to contribute
Shocking to hear that Cattell was going to be closed; would have liked to have parents



## Community Responses (CHALLENGES)

involved sooner rather than just announcing the closure; troubling that kids will have to change schools again; should have been informed earlier to allow time for families to make decisions; plan is moving forward without the money to do it

Committee - lot of time commitment to be part of the committee; heard frustration around timing and involvement of community and parents; feedback sessions should have been done earlier; were told the announcement was going to be made in October; felt like plan as made without parent input; feels like the process is rushed; need more time to consider the plan

Echo questions around funding of plan - what happens if bond does not pass

Signature high school - make sure students can go there and get a complete education even though there is a focus on certain skills

Can anybody in any area of town be able to enroll in any of the Signature school and will busing be offered; how will the logistics work

Have questions about how the plan will get at root challenges the district faces; lot of focus on buildings and infrastructure; not much focus on program; have 70 percent of families living in poverty; large portion of population of non-English speakers; giving less and less resources to support families; how is plan going to help families

Not clear how this process will work - what the next few years will look like; if Hubbell will be closed, how will the process work; need details on how this will help our more vulnerable families; need to have more details and specifics; how does closing buildings going to help families that are struggling

Concerns about process and transparency; hit Hubbell hard and do not have a lot of information on what is next; need to engage the community; Hubbell embodies things that should be cultivated; lack of alignment ; not valuing communities that are in place - we are not a blank canvas; wondering how the sig schools will be selected - getting back to logistics and instruction - lot of questions

Question about sixth grade moving - what is the timeline?

If bond does not pass, talk about changing the timeline, is there a plan B on how this will be changed?

Have seen the 10 year plan, how quickly will be see a short term plan; would like details about schools and families; primarily about building that will experience change

Talked about growth on south side is booming - changing McCombs to elementary - kids will be bused to another school - kids will delay when they leave the district

Number 1 reason people leave is the behavior of students not being effectively managed -



## Community Responses (CHALLENGES)

some days that kids and staff do not feel safe - consequences for behavior is frowned upon and not handing out consequences; have worked really hard at McCombs to change behavior culture and school will be changed to elementary

Here comment about behavior as criticism of DM schools and teachers don't have ability to address behavior issues; don't understand the difference between sig schools and comprehensive schools? How many students will be bused to other schools as opposed to attending schools in the neighborhood?

Worry that academic gap will get bigger - some families will have time to research to have their kids go to sig schools and others will not have that opportunity

Academic gap has grown over the years; some schools have worked hard to narrow academic gap and these schools are being changed

May lose good teachers in the process

Lot of things we could do without changes - we should have opportunity for students in eighth grade to take upper level classes; we could add classes into existing schools; concerned that we will add more students into classrooms; would like to add higher level classes for 7th and 8th grades; will still have three transitions

If we split schools, are we losing access to fine arts for sixth graders? Choir and band in sixth grade, you can be involved - will that be available at the elementary schools - delay exposure to those programs

Similar issue with sports - will have fewer teams to play

Affordability and funding - when will we get some clarification on the impact of the bond? What is the tax impact? If the plan is not adopted, will the bond issue not be needed? What are the implications of it?

Issue of attracting new teachers - question to be considered

What are district relationships with Drake and other higher ed to support students with access to the arts? If they don't exist can we foster them? Arts and speciality programs - try to leverage talent in the community to help in the schools - help support in the schools

With the current plan, how does it impact the graduation requirements? Currently students have to take core classes, will students have less access to take some electives - can students have the opportunity to explore other classes while taking the required classes - would Sig School limit access to some elective courses -

Is Central Campus now - is it spread throughout the city or concentrated with one or two campuses - would it stay the same or be different? Is everyone who wants to take part in central campus allowed in or are there restrictions?



## Community Responses (CHALLENGES)

Short term challenges - what happens now? What are the details of how this will be executed? How do families plan for the changes? Do kids finish out at schools or do they move? Where would they start? How would you keep kids together? Creates logistical issues for families - want to make the best decisions for the kids and the district - how to keep families from hopping around to various schools?

Concerned that uncertainty could accelerate enrollment loss; not knowing Sig Schools themes could cause families to make other choices; when they have options for other schools, going to make other schools more attractive; identifying Sig Schools as early as possible would be helpful - families are making decisions now

Like the idea of knowing about details of Sig Schools - have to apply for enrollment to Downtown School - what will be the process for accessing Sig Schools; not always easy to get into the school you want to get into - would want the Sig School themes known as soon as family - decisions are pressing for families - 10 years is a long time for implementation and impact on students

need more details on the plan - need to know what the plan will look like - see it as a good plan but concerned about the details; more details about the Sig Schools - will need to attract kids to Sig Schools; more details about the sixth grade transition - what will that transition look like; don't want to lose families because of uncertainty of the plan; provide as much detail as possible

Reviewed proposal - concern - how is this going to affect class sizes? Currently have 28 students with two teachers? Not sure how the class sizes

Where is funding going to come from? How is this going to affect students who need additional resources? Kid on 504

Concerned about the signature schools. Support them but need more details.

Concerned about losing the Hubble community

Need to talk about how to keep existing communities strong

Will teacher retention become an issue? What is the future of the teachers in the schools that are closing?

Will maintenance still be done at Hubble?

Will this cause Hubble parents to transfer some lace.

The cost of the plan is significant. A lot has to happen to make this work.

Teacher retention in general should be more of a priority



## Community Responses (CHALLENGES)

Teachers are the backbone, and they need a stronger presence in the plan

There's a lot of unknowns about the signature schools. Will they pigeonhole students before they're ready?

There needs to be more outreach to the community, especially to those who don't have kids in school. They need to understand how the plan benefits them. It's important to get their buy-in.

DMPS needs to build trust across the community. The district will need community and parent support to pass a bond

Need to hear from students and consider and capture their voice. Students need to be more involved. What they're hearing right now isn't necessarily positive. Some students are anxious.

It's great to want to draw people in, but there needs to be a focus on students in the district now.

Will regions be equally diverse? Don't want to see one region with a high economic status, and one with a lower status. Don't want to create segregation.

Transportation: there are issues now. Will signature schools add more issues to those that exist now.

Transportation. There will need to be more buses. Does the district have the infrastructure? Is there staff? Will they need more buses? The financial impact of needing more buses is significant.

All of the district departments need to be fully communicated with so the district can efficiently get to the end result it wants

Communication – or lack of it – could become an issue. Need to make sure communications that clearly communicate the plan so citizens can share accurate information.

The plan as laid out fosters insecurity and disappointment.

Does the district believe in the trajectory? There are a lot of questions and more details are needed to make people feel comfortable with the plan.

Specialty schools bring up a lot of questions. Will there be enough to allow for students to get a good education across the district

The data doesn't align with the focus, especially when it comes to Hubble. I would like to see how the data supports retiring some schools while keeping others open.





Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
Hubble demographic reflects what the district is reflective of what the district is aiming for. I don't understand why it was chosen to be retired.
What is the value proposition of people choosing DMPS? This needs to be answered through every phase.
Transition of students and families in schools that are scheduled to be retired.
Keeping up morale for teachers and families in schools slated to be retired
DMPS needs to make sure that the plan is clearly communicated. Not everyone understands the direct impact it will have on their neighborhood school
I want to make sure project based education like at Downtown School continues. Is that still in the plan?
Will signature schools include project based learning?
Transportation to specialty schools must be provided
Will special ed services be provided at every school, and how will that be affected by the plan? What will SPED look like under this plan?
Very concerned about any transition for students and families. Not sure how this will impact young children
What does this mean for teachers, especially those in schools that are to be retired?
Did not hear the reason why people are leaving the district and did hear what we are doing about student outcomes; determining whether to stay
know more about transportation piece; need to learn more about details; how enrollment in comprehensive high schools might look; will enrollment decrease into Sig schools
More information around Signature Schools and what it will look, like
Facilities - see more research on how open facilities contribute to learning - lights and open spaces; more than just facilities
How kids will go through the district during course of 10 year plan - son would not make it through Hubbell - what would it look like - where would he go - start in two-three years - want to make sure the experience has continuity - would not want him to be transferred to another school; what school would Hubbell students be transferred to; how to minimize challenges
Walnut Street - where will students be going?



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
Cattell - where will kids be going?
What are the expectations of managing budget deficits if enrollment continues to drop? how will budget be managed in near term
huge ask of community to pass 500m bond - staff departments asked to make reductions; already asked to reduce programming and making sacrifices; worry that it is very expensive; not understanding feasibility
would like to know more about bond issue and how tied to the plan; what happens if it does or does not pass
Has it been considered to put in renewable resources and make it more renewable to mitigate some cost; don't think 500m will be enough and we will need more money;
High schools are mentioning as being over capacity; how many students spend time at other locations like Central; opportunities to provide learning at other locations; do we do exit interviews to capture why they are leaving
Have no programming in Farsi - multiple languages that are not being reached; frustrating because not being reached; multiple requesting surveys for students but not in all the languages; need to get input from students
Would like to see a teacher version of the survey; provided option for teachers to provide input
what about teachers - will we lose teachers and staff and principals; do not want to lose them
met with Hubbell parents - don't want to lose people; how to get them to stay in the district
Kids go to Merrill - expansion will cause issues; more clarity about what will happen to all schools; is there a plan B if Plan A does not work
Heard that one of Sig Schools will be a fine arts school; district identifies for giftedness and hope Fine arts school can be a reality
Sig Schools - who is going to pay the teachers to be trained? Will we have to get new teachers who have the training?
Would be cool to hear more about public private partnerships - would be good to see how school's structures are aligned with the partnerships - what does it look like for kids
Presentation - want to attract students seems like a far reach - more about maintaining current students should be step one; maybe too rosy of an outcome



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
Need to solve budget and enrollment problems - what happens if we implement the plan and it does not work? What do we do?
More information about the budget deficit
Student support staff - aligning with partnerships - how will student support staff be impacted - what will their responsibilities be in the new structure?
Still struggling with equitable access; if Sig school on other side of town, how does my child have access: what if program is full
Transportation issue - funding of transportation; will they be able to stay at school
Concern - what happens if more kids transfer or leave the district because kids will shift schools; will projected numbers drop in future years?
Class sizes and staffing - how does it work? Student opportunities for curricular and afterschool programs
Reduce transitions - have different ranges - could create some difficult transitions for kids - challenges if a kid goes to K-8 and then wants to move to a 7-12 school; difficulty in moving into school
Feel a community loss - can't walk to the stadiums - takes away feeling of intimate community - feels like a lack of connection
Will kids be at two different schools - four years apart - plan has not been given enough detail to understand full impact on families/kids
Like to know more about transportation - not all families can transport kids - kids need reliable transportation to attend the schools they want to attend; need consistent and reliable
Concerned if revenue further drops - enrollment decrease or less revenue from state - budget cuts may affect some schools more than others; Sig Schools that is less popular may be an easy target
Not serving all kids now - what are we doing to make sure all kids are being served?
Plan is dependent on bond passed- what happens if bond is not approved?
Change in laws about what books can be in libraries - how will it affect Sig Schools - will the law affect what classes can be taught or curriculum that is available; current law impact and also impact of future changes; will a 7-12 building affect access of materials; are there limits what a teacher can provide to students
I think Cowles Metro kids cost more than regular metro kids. I was just wondering if



Community Responses (CHALLENGES)
signature school metro kid will cost more too?
Sports - speech/debate - access - will kids have access with sig schools; will sports and activities be available
I would like to know when parents are able to give feedback after the board goes back and makes revisions
Drake area - not all people being affected by closures - draft affected by two closures - Hubbell - beloved school and makes area desirable; going to lose that attraction; mistake to close Hubbell; Callanan also slated to close; going to have strong negative impact on families in Drake area
Need people to advocate for schools - losing kids to schools outside of the district; teachers who choose to send students to other schools; encourage teachers/staff to send their kids to DM schools; want everyone to believe in DM - we bring our children here - we believe in district
Feel we are losing potential growth with project based learning - may not be embraced at other schools; going to be losing a large amount of experience and affecting deeply rooted community
Adding all day preK - does the plan help us step away from standardized testing - more play and hands-on learning - social emotional emphasis
Excited about making MS more exploratory - hands on and exploratory - concerns about class sizes - what will it look like in the classroom? What can teachers do with larger class sizes and trying to do exploratory learning
Transportation -love the idea of Sig Schools- concerned that special schools will be for students that can get themselves there; how will transportation limit who can attend
Might be a long commute for some kids depending on locations of schools
Impact on performing arts - how to restructure band to give them more opportunities; sixth grade moving - will take away students from band program - can band come to 4-6 grade?
Before and after school care - need to move forward with child care program - need to have families have access to care
Need to have Metro Kids accessibility for students; program is critical
Need to have quality programs with quality staff; provide enrichment opportunities in child care programs
Special education - students with different learning needs - how will the plan help kids with



## Community Responses (CHALLENGES)

learning differences? Will SPED kids be supported? How will services be integrated and enhanced

What is the plan to improve behavior and reduce violence in schools? No plan.

Student-teacher ratio per classroom.

Teacher preparation to educate and manage all children in the classroom.

Does not include information about security improvements.

The socio-emotional aspect for all populations is not explained.

How do students access specialized schools? Equal access?

Concern for K-12 – Many age groups together.

Concerns about the lack of homework; students should have more work to do at home

How does this plan account for families with life challenges? How will students be supported?

Too many students for a single teacher (class size)

If we consolidate grades, will they have enough teachers?

Concerns about having younger students in same location with older students

How will schools handle (verbal) bullying?

At signature school, will the teacher help students choose their post-secondary plans?

Transportation concerns while students are attending other school

Will the mileage for transportation change while school is close?

Will the changes align with college?

Who chooses the path in signature schools? Teachers, parents or students?

Will transportation and mileage be reimagined as well?

Will they increase bus stops and school buses?

Transportation – one student goes to Harding but that will be closed.  
Question: IF my student(s) want to go to a signature school, will transportation be provided?  
How so?



## Community Responses (CHALLENGES)

One mentioned that he is the only one in his 8 person family that can drive and he has to work, so transportation will be VERY important to ensure they still are given equal opportunity.

Transportation – it gets really hard for another person because no one in the family speaks English and no one can drive, so it's hard for them to get around and even go out. So getting the students to school is of primary concern.

Providing transportation for students who are deemed “walkers” and the cold winters and long distance for walking is very hard. Especially for this group who is not used to cold weather.

They mentioned that they saw LGBTQ pride flags hanging in schools and in classrooms.

They are concerned that this will influence their kids and make them “go that way” - they wonder if they can be removed.

Matt answered concerns around transportation, funding, pride flags, and questions about homework and reducing student movement/transitions between multiple classes – asking if teachers can rotate instead of students.

Phone policy questions – Matt answered and reassured that the no phone policy at school will go district wide next year.

The group also raised concerns that they are not allowed to discipline their students the way they see fit (for instance with spanking) without the teachers or BFLs alerting the authorities.

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## Opportunities

**Given the goals of the Reimagining Education program as shared in tonight's presentation ...**

*What specific suggestions do you have for improving the proposed plan?*

## Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)

Expand community partnerships to provide more accessibility for students. Market these opportunities more.



Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)
Expand CTE offerings
Reach out more to East Siders, in ways that fit into their busy lives
Send home fliers with students – more communication and reminders
Work with immigrant and refugee families
More intramural opportunities for middle schools. We used to have a chess club, student council. Creates enthusiasm <i>NOTE: another participant said middle schools are doing these things, but could be beefed up</i>
Opportunity to correct strange attendance boundaries to make better feeder patterns
Answer questions about transfers between schools; how families can access signature schools
Maybe Stowe could be turned into a Montessori school
Sell district land, sell unused buildings
Move 9th graders to the middle schools
How is the plan impacted if the bond doesn't pass?
There haven't been a lot of conversations about activities
Will we have enough students in the signature schools to field teams or bands? But they could produce some really amazing things. Would they lose that motivation if they do their sports/activities at the comprehensive schools instead of the signature schools?
We must be strategic to keep our best and most effective teachers and staff
An opportunity for how we invest in activities like suburban schools – more equitable access to better coaching, better facilities and larger team
We need to tell the story of how this plan allows us to keep staff by reinvesting how we spend our facility money
Can we keep highly effective teams (like at Finley) together? – Can we move them together to the new facility or add them together to a school that is growing from two sections to four?
We need to really explain what happens if we do nothing. If we don't do this, we'll still lose schools but there would be no new options or programs
Keep Callanan as 6th/7th grade building ("true" middle school model)



Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)
Make Merrill as an 8th/9th grade building (Jr. High model)
Notion to reset for students, teachers and parents
Need to attract people even if they did not have a good experience in school themselves
Give kids more life skills (e.g. finances, life opportunities, jobs, grants, college)
Removal of home economics resulted in loss of life skills kids need
The community is small enough to connect youth with business opportunities – how do we make this available to all? How do we make business opportunities open to all students?
Access to all
Opportunity for community be brought in, rely on community partners
Culture is huge
Thinking about neighborhood and church groups – use community to help support
Montessori and project-based elementary learning could be good signature schools
An arts signature schools – especially in elementary and all their wiggles, arts and music would help
CTE programs would be helpful – more employment opportunities would motivate students to graduate
We have students who struggle. Getting them to realize they can be successful at high school
We need to have a place for students who struggle that could capture their curiosity and enthusiasm
Virtual school for ES and MS students, not just HS. It could capture home instruction students who are already doing co-ops; There are already other virtual options that we are sending people to that are not part of DMPS
What happens if the bond issue does not pass? A lot people in my neighborhood don't have children in DMPS and their grandchildren do not go to DMPS
Further consolidation of schools (HS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● two brand new schools</li> <li>● to be competitive, needs to be equitable – all students go to new schools?</li> </ul>





Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)
Storytelling – have we thought about the lens of the message? Improves teaching and learning. The WHY is getting lost
Community partnerships, especially with signature schools (internships); and funding to provide a new way to reach new funds
How do we become competitive to obtain funds and enhance learning?
Partner with corporations with new programs; recognizes employment in the future, learning opportunities
Continue public input opportunities
Not sure voice was heard before this
Establish an online place for people to comment
Opportunity to change the narrative surrounding DMPS – a reset
More speciality opportunities for students/families to choose
A chance to differentiate instruction to meet students where they are
Huge opportunity for PreK
Invest more in staff and teachers (professional development)
PreK could increase graduation rate
Grass roots effort to pass the bond
Find ways to find new educators and bring them to Des Moines
Retain good teachers (especially in retiring buildings)
Be more transparent about the process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● let us see the data used</li> <li>● how will we know feedback affect the plan</li> <li>● share more about how the process works</li> <li>● timelines from now to November</li> </ul>
Show stakeholders that feedback matters (is our feedback being considered and how will we know?)



Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)
Opportunity to use Callanan for a K-8 or Roosevelt overflow (to avoid a school gap on the map with Greenwood/Hubbell)
Would like to engage the community and leverage more resources (professionals, parents – have more adults helping in teaching)
Callanan is on a campus
Accessibility?
Opportunity for more project-based (not just Montessori) and to learn more about it, get training
Invest in dual-language programming (K-12), taught by bi-lingual or L1/L2 staff; most powerful method of teaching languages engages with multi-lingual community members; prepares students to learn and use language and empathize with language learners
Use of outdoor and green spaces and involvement of nature programming
Older students mentoring younger students in signature schools (PreK-6, PreK-8, PreK-12), providing leadership opportunities for older students
Engagement from families/community to improve plan – how else can we support?
Creative blending of old/new for buildings
Community use of facilities (ex: access to open gym, open play, track)
More clubs, athletics
Communication – effectively communicate to students, families and community
Solid attraction/retention strategy for staff and families
Using feedback to improve plan
Communication – the more people know, the better
Students will have the ability to collaborate in spaces more conducive to learning
A chance to build new communities
Mobility – students may not have to leave their neighborhood to get the education system



Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)
Team up with DART to help lower the cost and logistics related to transportation
For high schools – combine students from signature schools and comprehensive school to participate in sports and other extracurriculars
Change to start intervention and wrap-around support for students are disruptive
World languages in signature schools. Offer more than Spanish. Provide things you can't get anywhere else.
Increase transparency of our decision-making will bring students to DMPS
Language immersion can be really exciting and be super influential for Des Moines – especially Spanish. It helps us build awareness of a connection in the community.
We're a hidden gem! How do we highlight the opportunities that DMPS already offers?
Having more schools like Central would be wonderful. We didn't know about it until friends started to go.
What is very well-known is the negative. Our schools get a bad rap – people are scared of our diversity.
We need more publicity!
Need more specifics by program
Centralize the location of shared athletic spaces
Why invest in stand-alone PreK?
DMPS needs to build trust
Develop a deaf/hard of hearing program
Focus on addressing current families rather than chasing the suburbs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You'll attract people by authentically addressing needs of DMPS families</li> <li>● Being strong for us should be a higher priority</li> </ul>
Communications and Answering Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Who are we not communicating with, especially if we need a bond to pass?</li> <li>● Be visible in the community</li> <li>● Hold meetings like this for preschool families</li> </ul>



Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have principals hold meetings like this at their schools, with the district. Tell families to come to these meetings (personal invitations)</li> <li>• Having meetings at the school level will help building community</li> </ul>
Center the people who have the most need (need more ELL and SpEd teachers, pipelines to hire those people)
Those of us who are doing well will feel the impact when those who are struggling start to rise. Life gets better for all of us when everyone is living a life of dignity.
Reach out to community partners who work with the most vulnerable.
May not need all of the athletics facilities?
Consider incentives for teachers to stay?
Spell out more detail of need for bond
Develop plan to retain teachers
Consider why teachers are leaving DMPS
Teachers need to better understand the plan so they will stay
Need to pull together as a community
Need community to value and appreciate contributions of teachers and schools
If changes from the top, teacher voices will be lost
Increase transparency in communications re: employment for teachers and staff; prevent employees from leaving because of uncertainty; include staff in communication to families
Capitalize on partnerships in the community (money and opportunities)
Educate families on opportunities
BFLs to receive all trainings to be strong ambassadors for DMPS
Communication & transparency/detailed info – use all media to reach families (TV, Facebook, texts)
Communication of plan and materials in multiple languages



Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)
Get ahead of anger about decisions
Opportunity to serve the minority-majority to have a real voice, be provided with the services and education they deserve
Better systems for volunteering; access with fewer barriers both in process and language
Opportunity to highlight multiple cultures
One-one-one meetings with schools that are closing to ensure clarity in communication; provide educational and emotional support
Hubbell families and equity – how is it provided to ALL
How do we expand the school-community connections that currently exist?
Eligibility for transportation: use more factors beyond distance (siblings, safety, age)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Should we expand transportation, DART?</li> <li>● More access to education</li> </ul>
Ensure all sports have access to quality facilities
Rethink the loss of pools ... opportunity for partnership? (YMCA)
Consideration for more connection with the trades – including beauty schools, fashion and design, etc.
The plan isn't final, it can change
A great opportunity to compete with other districts and vouchers
Shows DMPS community is committed to investing in kids and community
Use retired building to NGOs and non profit organizations to build community centers
Use this to launch a community engagement program. It needs to be invigorated.
A chance to market aggressively for public schools
Be aggressive about how schools are spoken about. Build pride in DMPS
Public school pride
Have a clear message on how we support vulnerable populations



Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)
Have a more formal way to support transitions from school to school
Great time to shift thinking and try something new
What do students want? Need to engage students.
Find ways to increase transportation for students
Further participation with DART
Students contributing to their own space such as community gardens, outdoor learning
Language immersion and more robust opportunities for language learning
Preschool in ALL elementaries
Opportunities to enhance 21st century skills and prepare students for a global job market
Need a visual timeline for every school that shows program changes by year, infrastructure. Swing school or transition school after school closes.
Educate the public on the positive impact so voters are informed at the polls
Highlight features at each school, not just signature schools. Sell the "why" for each school.
Transparency with allocation of funding i.e. misconceptions with previous expenditures creates assumptions that funds won't be allocated appropriately.
Lack of communication about new stadium led to assumption that it was prioritized over school resources
The plan is specific but it needs more details for the bond. Vagueness needs to clear up.
Understanding what happens if this doesn't happen. Not a scare tactic but information showing what happens.
Not locked into this, this or some other version.
Communicate. Voices need to be heard.
Callanan only 1 mile from Roosevelt (more conducive to bigger kids). Hubble for small kids.
More communication on transition for teachers so they know what is happening to them



## Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)

More specifics. What's being done to retain teachers/staff as this is happening. Can we offer them incentives to stay during transition?

How much of this is data driven versus anecdotal information?

Small size of elementary. People like that. Realize that it costs more money.

Plan is large – potential for it to be overwhelming

See beyond what's in it for me – individual expectations

Certain population with louder voices due to resources – squeaky wheel

Lot's of folks don't know it's happening. Need to send out a letter

Special needs support  
Legislation not supporting schools – elected officials need to support schools

Surprised there isn't a high school on the southeast side

Lot of people we need onboard to understand how important this is

Would you make better access to drop off or pick up students so traffic jam is not what it is right now

Would they have more and better transportation for students to get to school?

Signature schools – would love a vocational training school that prepares students for work

Grades 7-9 being together.

9th grade being separate from the lower grades. They're more mature.

More opportunities for elective days: workshops, languages, high school credits in middle school

Dual language programs: learn about languages and cultures

Will schools allow students to use cell phones?

Opportunity to educate young people of the dangers of alcohol and drugs

Offer summer school to catch up or for enrichment



Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)
The district has to reconfigure the open campus concept, especially at signature schools. Not sure it's a good idea to allow students to leave campus to eat.
Security is very important. Suggest a model that starts in middle school and runs through high school. Have metal detectors and look out for students bringing cigarettes on campus.
Redesign who is eligible for transportation
All meetings at all individual schools that are closing. These meetings should be open to all people who want to hear what's being said at each meeting
Community communication must be thought out. A strong education benefits all.
Aggressive timelines of district office – get into buildings to see firsthand behaviors or things district staff didn't even know are happening
Student-friendly engagement. Put the surveys and conversations in student-friendly language.
Doing something different – partner. With community buy-in and will help grow enrollment.
Property taxes will rise. Can you consider ways to protect families for affordable housing?
Liaisons to help with families and schools. Advisor for students and staff.
Someone to help explain the different opportunities – a point person community advisor to help students and families know what choices there are
If the plan plays out how it's outlined, smaller class sizes should be a result
consideration for a signature school that provides options for mental and behavioral health programs
Communication to the school communities that goes deeper into the process of school changes; more communication so families know step-by-step what the process is for individual schools
Connecting with families in hours that work for them, truly when they don't need to give up work to attend sessions
Connecting with city of Des Moines to push out this plan and speak to the benefits
Opportunity to overhaul systems, not just physical spaces





Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)
Dismantle the disconnect between layers of hierarchy
Empower the autonomy within building decisions
Explore and visit other communities who have experienced this type of transformative system change
Addressing behavioral cultures and current challenges in schools
Building pride within communities (school spirit)
Listen to all stakeholders, especially the students
City and district generate money
Provide information about how this process will affect teachers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication about how their future will be determined</li> </ul>
Consider the emotional impact of closing schools/changing programs in the communication and process. - Take into account the short-term effect it might have on families or teachers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Process of change</li> <li>- Immediate communication - do not wait</li> </ul>
Considering how to keep teams (students and teachers) together as we move to new schools
Consider signature schools in SW area to retain and attract students and families
Share information about what is the plan for students that will not have a building for their tenure there
Provide clear information and communication to incoming 6th grade parents about how it will look like. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Goal is to ease concerns and be transparent -Avoid families leaving</li> </ul>
Provide info about when elementary schools will absorb 6th grade - timeline, process.
Increase the communication in a way that can reach ALL families and students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do we ensure equity of info - access <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Language, access to information</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Find effective ways to share info</li> <li>- Be intentional about collecting feedback from families that might not want to attend a public meeting.</li> </ul>



## Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)

Make sure signature schools are also comprehensive schools

- Be intentional about communicating how these schools work and options and opportunities they will have

Ensure that students have access to their neighborhood school, even if a signature building

We should think about expanding year-round school - Investigate the benefits for all levels, not just elementary.

Ensuring that students and families experience educational and emotional stability as the plan is implemented.

Families should be able to have all their children in the same school - Hubbell and Downtown  
- How does it look like

Share with families the short term plan of schools and how it will affect their children

Provide educational counseling for families to be able to support and plan paths for students

We should have open houses and opportunities for families to visit and meet teachers/leaders in each school.

Staff members whose job is to work with families during the transition to guide/support families and students - Ensure retention of families and students

Share more information to prevent uncertainty - 6th grade - Share timelines/process

Planning pathways for teachers and staff

Support for parents and students re: signature schools - Dedicated staff to educate families  
- Ensure equity in access to information for multilingual families

Share the entire timeline/schedule of all changes, transitions in a transparent manner

Surveys and sessions for students to ensure their voice is heard during the process

Clarification on Sig schools/all schools - access, enrollment, transfers, etc

More information! Not just for families in the district but for voters - financial info

More info about what specific changes will happen to each building and also the timeline

Leverage community relationships for programming and student opportunities - post-secondary

Communication is vital for buy-in - It takes the entire community, not just families - Affirming



Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)
prior comments
Involve students in the promotion of this plan - very powerful voice
Continue to provide opportunities to engage with the plan
Marketing strategy of sharing how people are engaged/interested in the process
Being able to understand the types of signature schools proposed and specifics about them
Clarity on a signature school
modernizing schools as much as possible to make them more efficient while keeping historic parts of them
more specifics on renovation vs new build
more specifics on where families will go from a retired building
opportunities for students to take classes at home schools and not have to go to central everyday
opportunity to use our local media to shine positive spotlights on the plan to help build the momentum and trust for the plan.
more opportunities to retain students in DMPS and to make things better
opportunity to strengthen DMPS - to get a better reputation
Ideas for signature schools that we have heard: project-based learning, vocational avenues/trades focused, montessori,
trying to compete with private schools around us
more career readiness and college-readiness
how will we keep the community feel of schools with bussing students as well as the community around school buildings
opportunity to reach out to community partners to find out needs/wants of our community
opportunity to show our local legislators what we need to do/ why we need to have a plan because of decisions from the state on funding.
ideas for signature schools: visual and performing arts,
opportunity to show families examples of successful signature schools in other



Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)
communities around the country - to help families better understand signature schools
better outline the concepts of a signature school
will we still be able to serve students in signature schools that might attend only due to location and not preference of emphasis
Is there currently a plan for what will happen to teachers at a school that will be transitioned or closed? Objective: we want staff to follow students as much as possible.
Are all the schools able to support all of our students, including ML, newcomer, populations who benefit from alternate programs? Add specific information to the Reimagining plan information to address this.
This could be an opportunity to look at our curriculum and how to teach our students the standards.
Blue contract through Drake- this could be an opportunity to take the practices into the classroom.
In order to "sell this" really look at how we can ensure we are showing school in a positive way.
Montessori and STEM schools tend to cost more money- will the signature schools have the funding to ensure they can fulfill their program?
More clarity on the programming that exists today. Example: Finley and their Montessori. Clarity on the buildings/programs that exist today.
Equity- Is the plan for the signature schools to be more first come first serve? People who are in the know will get into those schools. This could have the effect of "tracking" students. Could there be a lottery system?
Neighborhood schools, then we would go out from there within the district, then open up to other areas of the district with transportation available.
Lean into the uniqueness of the Signature Schools. For instance all the programs at Central Campus. Scattering these opportunities across the district.
More vocal about current unique programs to highlight the strength of these plans. Expand these opportunities across the district.
How to ensure all families know the signature schools exist, not those with older students or in the specific neighborhood- not equitable.



## Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)

Equity and enrollment- during budget cuts it seems we push students more toward trade schools. How are we making sure we are making sure we give students access to academic paths? Example- not just central campus, but central academy.. How are we ensuring students have opportunities for advanced classes and not tracked to a trade path?

Drake neighborhood is impacted by 2 changes: Hubbell

Make sure this plan is available for all the languages of all our parents.

Timeline- Specify which schools will be available throughout the process.

Provide more transparency on how the decision was reached for retired schools. Consider ways to help families through the transitions. Help them feel understood and comforted. More details on why schools that can be repurposed are not still a good choice as a school?

High school programming is very general-more specific information on what the school will be repurposed for.

Huge opportunity to build community. The three cohesive regions are exciting. Youth sports could really be built and expanded.

Signature school ideas: Fine arts focus school, STEAM school, Dual language immersion,

Newcomer programming space for those new to the country and a transition program for getting students to their homeschool.

Take a look at the New York City public Specialized high schools?

Consider all languages for communication.

- Equal time for information.
- Materials.
- Help families feel included.

Schools with multiple age groups: separate students for safety.

Consider separating 9th grade; Keep them separate from older students.

Hold a session only in Spanish to inform families

Analyze the reasons for student attrition

Meetings for parents to help them create families that set limits and educate their children

More support and counselors;

Personalized education to reduce violence and behavioral issues



Community Responses (OPPORTUNITIES)
Great time to add more security
Reduce transportation requirement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HS &lt; 3 miles</li> <li>● MS &lt; 2 miles</li> <li>● Elem &lt; 1.5 miles</li> </ul>
Can we have grades 6-8 together?
New opportunities for parents to get involved at their children’s school, assisting with reading, writing, etc.
Opportunity to incorporate multicultural setting into the buildings so students feel more welcome

## Other Considerations (parking lot)

***What else should the district consider as it moves forward with the Reimagining Education program? Are there specific audiences or strategies that the district needs to include as part of its revisions, decision-making and rollout?***

Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Partnership with City (BOE and Council) for future community needs and neighborhood identities
Share data about why individual schools were chosen for retirement
Bring back ½ kindergarten option?
Need concentration on social skills for youngest learners (PreK-2)
Change PreK (4-year old) date of birth cutoff to August; kids are too young if younger than 4. Kindergarten should start with age 5



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Provide parents with resources to best support the needs of their individual child, and help them make decisions that support them when kids are young (e.g. hold back, don't just start kids b/c of age, make sure they are ready)
Concern about City's development plan and its impact on neighborhoods, especially increases in cost of living
Concerns about vouchers and impact on DMPS and local taxpayers
Explain why DMPS families are choosing other districts or schools. Do we have the data?
Do more marketing of Central Academy / Central Campus, especially the unique CTE programs available in DMPS
Need more adult education opportunities, especially ESL/ELL, GED and enrichment opportunities
Explore considerations about middle school engagements and connections to school – embed clubs, co-curriculars into the school day
Look at ways to also enhance engagement of middle school teachers and staff
Need more city parks and recreation programming to address inequities and disparities
Ensure transportation to signature school of choice to ensure access and opportunity for all students and families
It's hard to be excited about a plan when the details are not fleshed out
How were the retired buildings chosen? Why was one kept and one shuttered? Why close Cattell vs. Capitol View? I'd like to know why school A was picked and B shuttered?
What does taking Prek-12 out of a neighborhood mean for that neighborhood?
Our superintendent has met my kids. He high-fived them and interacted with them. This is a plus in creating community
We don't have enough gym space for our kids that don't play varsity sports. This would help kids feel connected through intramurals
I appreciated that school people and neighborhood people are in the grind to create this plan.



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Project-based learning (Downtown School) – need to maintain the program
What is the % of students leaving DMPS (private, charter)
What % of students will end up at signature schools?
When will schools shift to PreK-6?
How will transitions for retiring schools happen?
Pedagogy plan that support the new facility
Where do staff from retired buildings go?
How does this impact inner-district transfer?
How will the district ensure equity during the 10-year transition?
Why and how will the bond be “rolled out” ?
DTS has an extended calendar – can this be explored as an option with other schools/programs?
What is the plan for retired buildings?
Do we have enough teachers graduating from college?
Need more information about signature schools
More emphasis on other languages (learning other languages besides Spanish)
Could dual language be a signature school?
Disposition of assets – what’s the process for disposing of buildings that are closing?
Will the school board make up the shift to represent the three regions?
What is the demographic profile of each region?
What will sports/extracurriculars look like? How can all students who wish get to participate?
Would like to see data that supports closing Hubbell/Callanan specifically, particularly pertaining to equity





Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Access to the facilities report would be appreciated
Will feedback actually be considered?
What happens to our retired buildings?
Provide assurances to teachers whose buildings are closing – Is there a plan for where they go next? Will they have control over where they end up?
In new spaces: Make accessibility a norm, not just compliant; make accommodations the norm (physically, hearing, seeing)
Is information for the Reimagining available in other languages? Do community resources (e.g. Oakridge) know multiple languages are available?
What does communication look like with business partners?
Outreach to Oakridge Community regarding communication
Proactive vs Reactive DMPS – involvement with City Council regarding population growth
Will this plan help retain our teachers? Will we be able to keep them through the transition?
Where will the teachers go when the building closes? Will they move together?
How do we communicate with staff about where they go when buildings close?
Will class sizes decrease?
How many classrooms are there currently and how many will there be?
How will boundaries work?
How do 6th graders decide which school they go to in 7th?
Is there an example of this model (i.e. from another district)?
With these changes, won't it mean even more transitions for students whose schools are affected?
How do we get information to our ML communities? Resources?
What if enrollment continues to decrease even after this plan is completed?



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
What is our financial footprint?
Getting the word out to get the bond passed (door knocking, texting, social media)
Possible sale of retired schools to charter schools
How do the programs at Central Campus align or be impacted by the signature schools?
What capacity of \$\$ do we have to complete some of our plans?
<p>Audiences to engage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Students</li> <li>● Neighborhood Associations</li> <li>● Childcare Centers (birth to PreK)</li> <li>● Church/Faith communities</li> </ul>
How will DMPS leverage community partnerships?
Need flexible spaces that can be used in multiple areas
Right now there's no benefit to losing
Space/access to students and data are what partners need. They're applying for grants and that information is important
Make partners feel welcome – don't make it difficult to become a partner
Kids need health/wellness information
When kids make bad choices, offer them ways to get back on track
Find out why kids aren't showing up or dropping out; need more research on this – survey the students who are leaving
Food pantries have given schools a greater chance to connect with families. Need to do this across DMPS
How do we better advertise these meetings? We need more of these meetings to help people understand the reasons for this change. The decision-makers need to share some of the plan and explain the details. More community outreach is essential to making a good decision. Teachers need to be able to share their thinking without ramifications and be on the frontline of decision-making around the plan.



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
What was the percentage of teachers on the committee?
What is going to make people come back to the district?
Need more people involved
More advertisement for the plan
Send information with kids about meetings
Send info about survey out
Need to increase knowledge of the plan and meetings
Need to say the imperative – say what’s said at the end of the meeting to everyone
People need to know this is critical
Put out more specific information about the deficit
Allow text answers in the survey
Provide a place to upload questions and see answers
Tell more stories about DMPS and what is happening
Need more data regarding the rationale for Building X retiring and Building Y staying
Impact on neighborhoods when there is no K-12 school nearby?
Chance to better invest in activities and provide equitable access
Help families and staff in retiring schools compartmentalize their grief
Reinvest facilities spending on people
Need to do a better job of selling the positives and inevitable outcomes
Dr. Roberts is doing a great job building a positive, relational culture throughout DMPS
It’s the people that make the schools – it’s what attracts kids and families
How will revenue impact activities down the line? How will we pay for activities at a signature school?



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Seems west side parents have more clout than other parts of the district?
Athletics facilities need to be adequate but not state-of-the-art at every school
Academics are playing a backseat to athletics – there is too much of a sports-dominant identity
Need to keep sports identity
Need to engage the community around the bond
Share more information about the budget and need for bond
Consider changing bell times? Older students should start later (research, can take younger kids to school)
Educate the community right away about the bond (cost, benefits); What are we doing to ensure all voters support?
Start times that are not equal for K-12 schools
What does access/safety exits look like for district offices in schools?
How is safety (fire areas) factored into the plan?
Tactical information needs to be shared right away!
Specialized programs – what does it mean? options, nuts and bolts Families will need more information to make decisions
Equity - comfort level; where are we meeting? Familiarity?
School community coordinators – asset that can help with communication and engagement in the process
Support for families during transition time – attendance, breakfast club
How do we collaborate beyond the district to support families and public schools?
Could we have more pathways rather than just college?
Reach out to more families and multilingual groups



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Can we explore our community partnerships with Parks & Rec, YMCA – so we don't have to reinvent
Can we explore partnerships with businesses – for example, how do we prepare future electricians? Can they provide curriculum ideas, donations, internships?
For kids with disabilities, can we develop career pathways and training like what Goodwill does? They can be creative even if they can't read or do math well.
Have you investigated the origin of our people? Have you thought about the interests of the immigrant populations? For example, less pools and more soccer? It can be a nice plan, but be exclusionary if you don't think of them.
We feel the BFLs are an afterthought. We are often not included in the planning. For example, they change our 9th grade orientation to May rather than the typical time in August. Then they ask us to do this after our time is booked. BFLs have knowledge of our communities – we are 40% of the district.
How can we make sure our families know about and can take advantage of this plan?
More research on grade levels – 7/8, 9-12, etc.
District offices – where will you be? If in schools, will understand impact of decisions
What about breakfast and lunch? Will it stay free?
Opportunity for parents to volunteer regardless of immigration status
More guidance and options of documentation for parents/families to be allowed in building (beyond drivers license, passport); BFLs see a discrepancy on which docs are accepted. Also, some schools take students back after learning for 10 days – Welcome Center vs. back at building; excused vs. unexcused because inconsistent across buildings. NEED CONSISTENCY in policies and procedures.
Don't let retired buildings become charter schools. For example, Callanan is in the heart of our district and a charter school would be devastating.
Will the school have the same hours? If so, it will be helpful to families
How will it be decided if a student goes to a signature school or comprehensive?
Will transportation be set up the same? Is the mileage from the school of choice considered or will the family have to provide it if they live in another region?



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Will students in 7-12 signature schools participate in sports with the comprehensive school in the region? If so, that would make us more competitive
Will within district transfer and open enrollment still be available in this plan?
Will free school meals continue?
Will there be an option that teachers rotate class to class rather than the students?
When will PreK for all, all-day, be available?
More follow through and transparency surrounding what's going to happen at all the schools
It would be easier to get on board if there were more details
Would like to see the city support the bond
Open communication
Make sure there is greater community involvement than there has been
Keep people involved
Talk more about kids and how this will affect them
If district/board leadership changes will this plan continue?
Is the plan flexible enough to be effective in 10 years
What makes this plan better than other plans?
What are you doing to retain staff
Offer teacher incentives to stay in their current building until it closes, and incentives to stay with the district after. Keeping staff is less costly than hiring new staff. Keeping teachers increases student outcomes.
Does the plan address loss of students?
Need a deeper dive in enrollment: where are the kids and where are they going to school?
Will feedback actually be utilized?



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Who is actually on the planning committee? We need more transparency.
Share finding of buildings to be retired. Make information regarding the decision easier to find.
What ongoing feedback opportunities will there be as the plan moves forward?
Who will be the point to contact (rather than school administration)?
Will we retain our teachers? If the building they work in is retired, will they be guaranteed a job in the district?
In this transition will 6th grade look different?
Will there be opportunities for the three regions to interact with each other?
How will athletics be affected? Could a signature school focus on this? Students are very interested in the health/strength-training/wellness field.
More recess, even in middle school
What would projected enrollment look like in each region
Will there be consideration of region changes if enrollment changes?
Could school choice be offered/prioritized for families impacted during temporary transitions?
Does Merrill really have capacity for all students? Enrollment at Cowles seems to decrease from 6th to 8th grade. Where are they going?
URGENCY:Families impacted need to know where they're going?
People from Hubble apple to be on the committee and didn't get on and it's being closed
Transparency on how funds are distributed. Should be transparent.
Is open classroom a fad? Be careful. You need good research on this before a decision is made.
What information was collected from families who left? Exit surveys. Why did they leave? Do we know what they want?



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Is the district really going to take all this feedback and consider it?
Southside needs opportunities for CTE/Trades for students not college bound
Share when information drops are coming. What is the communications plan? Otherwise rumors. Need a timeline on information and next steps.
Engage those who are being impacted. Put them on the committees to help with the decisions.
The community has been left out of the process over the last 15 months. The plan came out of the blue.
Talk specifically with communities where schools are slated to close
Talking about neighborhood schools will help people understand and support the plan
Understand the new boundaries with school closings
Explain diploma and program better
Add signature trade schools in the plan
Will there be security guards at school throughout the time students are at school?
What services and supports will be in place for special needs students, and will they be available at all schools?
Will transportation be provided for those students who do in-district transfers from their home school?
What will be done to make sure students can't get drugs, alcohol and firearms passed security?
Metal detectors
Require transparent backpacks
More security guards in the school
Add to the policy that parents can authorize the review of backpacks
Prohibit ear airpods, caps and cell phones





Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Require uniforms or enforce the dress codes
Don't allow the use of phones during free hours or require phones for classroom activities
Uniform school Monday through Thursday; a negotiable process
Use the colors of the school logo in the school. It would increase the concept of belonging and increase pride of the community
How much does it cost to operate the school year?
Professional development – what if teachers want to learn about Montessori
What will happen to teachers?
Signature school ideas: will these be shared? When, where and how will this take place?
What will happen to all the closing schools? Selling some? Tearing down some? Expansion?
What happens to our mascots?
Can people join the committee? Can we help – be included?
How does the district communicate the benefits of the comprehensive schools so they are just as appealing as the signature schools?
Canschools that are being closed be repurposed to the community and/or non profits?
Reimagine the actual school day, bell schedules
How do we address the reasons people/families leave? Let's do this out loud.
Lip service won't be the work, actions is
How can we leverage this plan to improve upon alternative programs
If this program is approved, how will they provide progress reports showing the funding is not wasted, goals are being met, etc. Transparency. Also, how will we address when parts of the plan aren't working?
Increase the communication in a way that can reach ALL families and students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How do we ensure equity of info - access</li> <li>- Language, access to information</li> </ul>



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Find effective ways to share info</li> <li>- Be intentional about collecting feedback from families that might not want to attend a public meeting.</li> </ul>
Provide a voice to teachers - Fear of unknown
How do we provide educational stability during this process
Wondering when the transition to K-6 going will occur?
As a parent of a child who is transitioning from DTS to Callanane there is a lot of confusion about how this transition will look for next year. Mr. Sharp sent out information about what it looks like next year. More information is needed for families going from 5th to 6th next year.
As a Hubble parent, having just found out that our school is on the chopping block, it would be good to have a Hubble specific conversation about it. More information about how the decision was made would be helpful. Not everyone knows about it. And those that are aware are experiencing panic and nervousness. Some are thinking about leaving. So, finding a way to include them in this would be helpful. A lot of vulnerable families may need more support to understand this plan..
The missing link is how this plan will help our graduation rate. Those that are having trouble getting students to school or suffering from the immigration stuff– I’m not sure how this plan will help them.
When will we know the programming at each school?
The focus of the signature schools, where will the decision be made?
I have some questions about why Hubble was chosen for closure, other than the proximity to Roosevelt, because we are really a model for the district.
Callanan PTA meeting - bond referendum - needing to start building support for it in the community; how do we get into the communities and get people to go out to vote so it will be passed; need everyone to be involved
Will the principals need to apply or be assigned to a school: what is the process for assigning principals and administrators; will affect the decision of the teachers of where to go
Jackie shared what is happening to get the bond committee organized



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
Principal assignment is also important for parents; want to make sure we can keep the good
What will be the process for teachers to move to other schools; how will that look for teachers
Some strengths noted in the plan
History within the building and that is part of the decision to stay in DMPS - values not connected to the decision. Do not see the loss of students as noted in the plan.
<i>Current IB schools aren't going to be supported</i>
Would like to see some data that class size has a positive effect on student outcomes
What success have magnet schools had?
District could leverage community involvement but they're looking past that right now
Need more cultural representation in the music programs and want to see more culturally based programming
Marketing strategy of sharing how people are engaged/interested in the process - familiarize people with the issue - Churches? Encourage them to engage with the information
Information shared in the website - Share info from these meetings there
More information can be provided on programming for signature schools; what is the curriculum and what are the offerings?
What are the logistics of having multiple age groups in a building, and has there been consideration for having such a wide age range of students in one building?
What is the timeline for teachers to be made aware of their placement when their current building is closed/repurposed?
What's the plan to keep up morale for students and families that will remain in buildings to help with their transition and feelings?
Can resources be provided to parents that support their talks with their students about the transition and what is happening with the district?
Will the process for OE and WIDT remain the same or will there be changes?
How will start times be affected for signature schools with multiple levels?



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
NW area has 3 proposed signature schools but not similar to the NE schools, and the S only has 2. Is it possible to add a third option to the S to balance the number of schools in all areas?
<i>What is the plan to retain teachers when their current building is transitioning?</i>
Will there be a full timeline of what is happening to individual buildings? Details to outline the full process of the transition for buildings.
Do we have the timeline of when the bond will be up for election?
Hubbell should be reconsidered as the campus is thriving (climate scores well exceed the district average) and there is a strong foundation there for students, as well as the pathway that has been established to Merrill
Not sure what the plan is for families and teachers in schools that are to be retired. Need to see a transition plan.
The next version of the plan needs to answer questions in detail and providing clarity will help people to feel more comfortable. Show a more detailed and updated timeline for the plan on the website and share that information.
More concrete and detailed information on signature schools. The unknown is creating a sense of uncertainty and loss.
How will this affect transportation? Will it be able to be met by DMPS?
Will students be expected to stay in their regions?
How will athletics work?
How will we retain teachers?
Specifics on feeder programming so students aren't moved/changed several times in their schooling.
How will activities work in all spaces?
sports teams names? Will they change?
Will attendance boundaries change with this new programming?
including community partners in planning/suggestions for this plan
plans for feeder programming and timing for moves of groups



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
teacher retention plans
How will the district train staff and provide support for Montessori in higher grades?
How will Montessori be implemented with fidelity given the costliness of the training? and especially for the higher grade levels?
How will more alternative signature programming be determined? Is it by popular request or by evidence based research in different models?
Will people who live in neighborhoods with signature schools not be able to get in if it is very popular?
If someone were outside the district or with young children, how will we explain the options that are out there?
Are we keeping equity in mind ? Hoover kids playing football now for Roosevelt might not have the same personal resources for equipment, training, and transportation. This also for performing arts and transportation.
We need to include our MLL families in other languages, too.
I would love it if we could put 9th grade in middle school, too, for the same reason as 6th in elementary.
<a href="#">New Tech Network</a>
How do we get more world languages for our students to learn? And at younger ages.
I believe it is mentioned in the plan already, but I want to re-emphasize trauma-informed care for our students is critical.
I'm struggling to see that we are including in the plan the outside resources we use. For example, strengthening our relationship with public transportation. Other partnerships are important too. What struggles are they going through at this time, too?
You can do anything with buildings and curriculum, but teachers are essential. We need all teachers to be properly trained. Not just one person goes and brings back. I want excellent teachers across the district– not just the best teachers in signature school. All our teachers need trauma-informed training. All teachers have training in the science of reading. All teachers need to be the best.
I'm excited that 6th grade has been added to Greenwood! (Student comment)
Staffing with the increase of number of students in schools



Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)
How does this plan support staff so they stay with us?
schools not slated to close- how will they retain teachers and staff
Schools that are slated to close -how will staff have opportunities at other schools
How can we rely on community organizations that can support families? Can non-profits help
Can one of the retired buildings housed by non-project service agencies
Schools in community with food pantry and clothing - do not want to lose these services/opportunities
Immigrant population - need more support for families - need resources to have staff to support families
Curious about support to have access to SCAVO programs supports: will we bring the program back?
What is the protocol for if signature schools are at capacity?
Will there be a consideration of changing school start times? The later start times worked for our family and our students' educational needs?
What about the schools that need something now-Studebaker- still missing teachers. Are we going to do anything for the current students in buildings?
Has anyone run this plan through AI to see what it would suggest?
During the next round of conversations, will there be a greater opportunity for more people to be able to attend? Over a longer period of time? More languages?
Has there been any discussions about building new preschool spaces, instead of adding them to existing buildings?
Is there still opportunity to join the committee, or has it been closed to new attendees?
Make sure opinions/political views are kept out of the classroom
How will this feedback actually make a difference?
How can we address bullying and unwelcoming environments in school?
Can they improve schools, curriculums, etc. during the 10 year period?



<b>Community Responses (OTHER CONSIDERATIONS)</b>
Other districts have better transportation – How will transportation work with this model?
Who can go to signature schools? What requirements will there be? Will there be transportation?
Will lunch be free?
Will bell times be the same?
Will the district involve parents all the way during the plan?