
DCSD Growth and Decline Update

January 14, 2025



Agenda

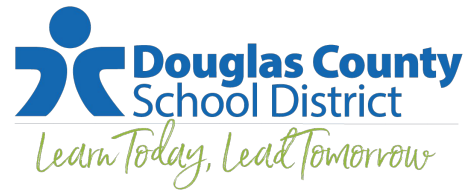
- Our Realities
- Timeline
- Input on School Pairings/Criteria Policy
- Data
- Plans for Future Engagement & Staffing

Kids!

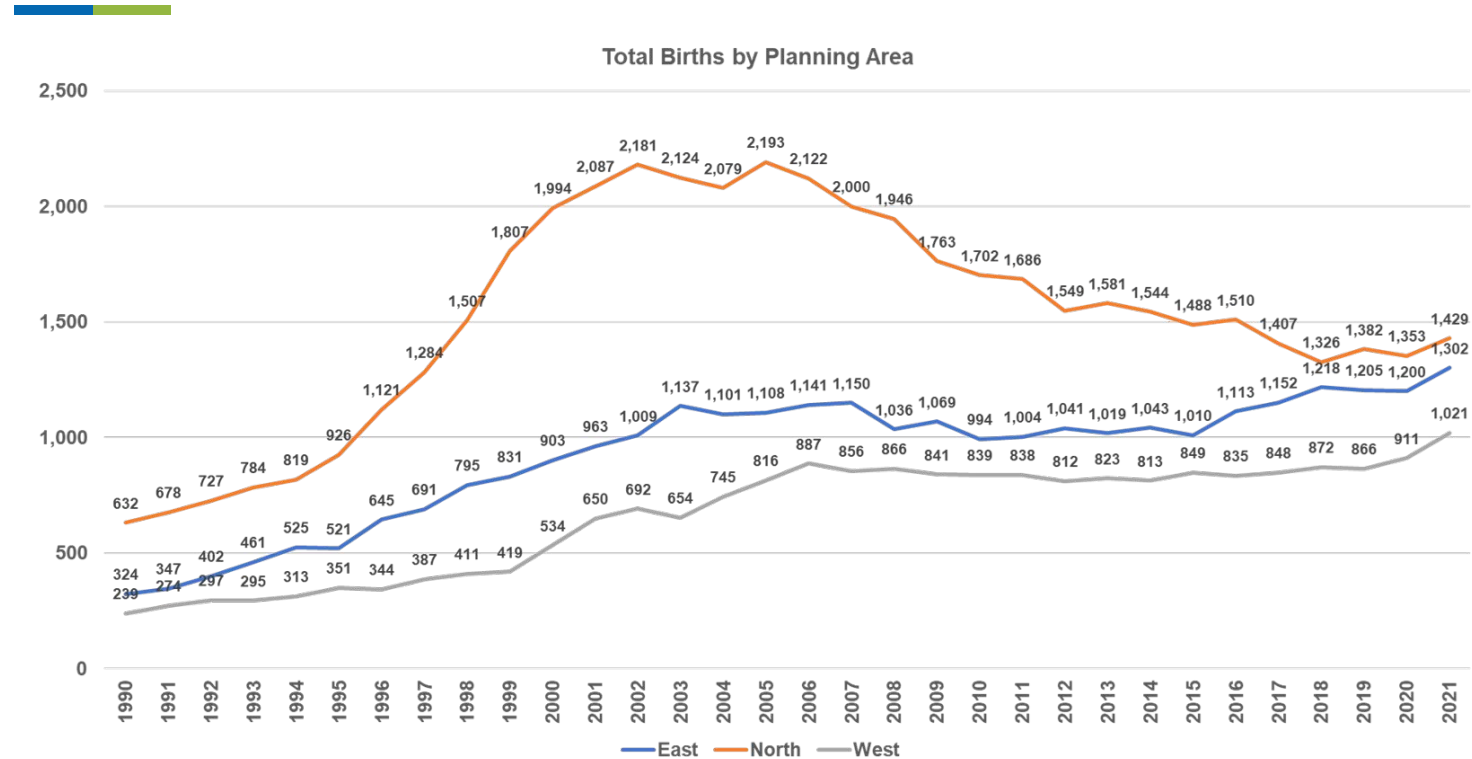




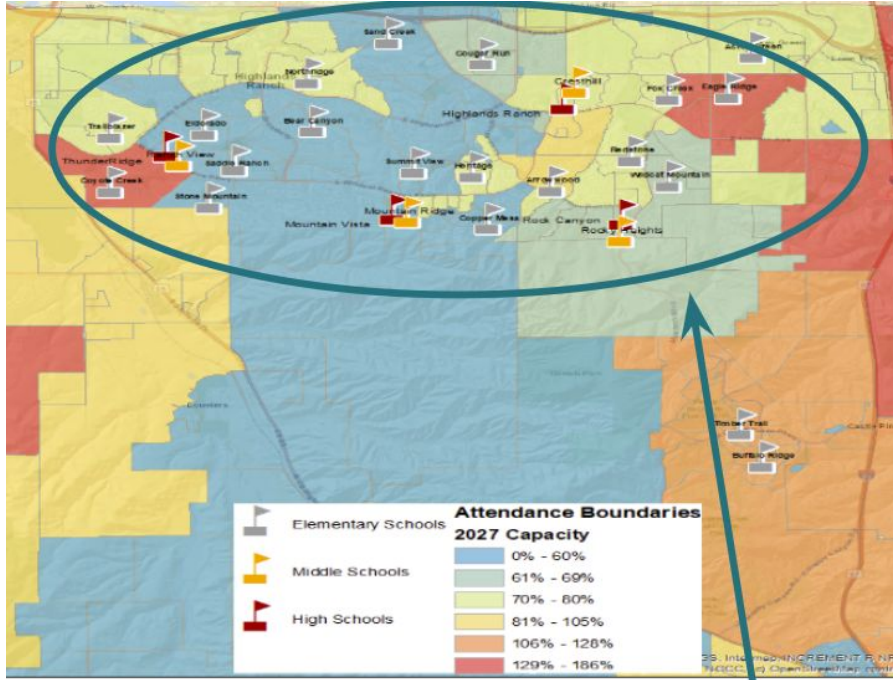
Our Realities



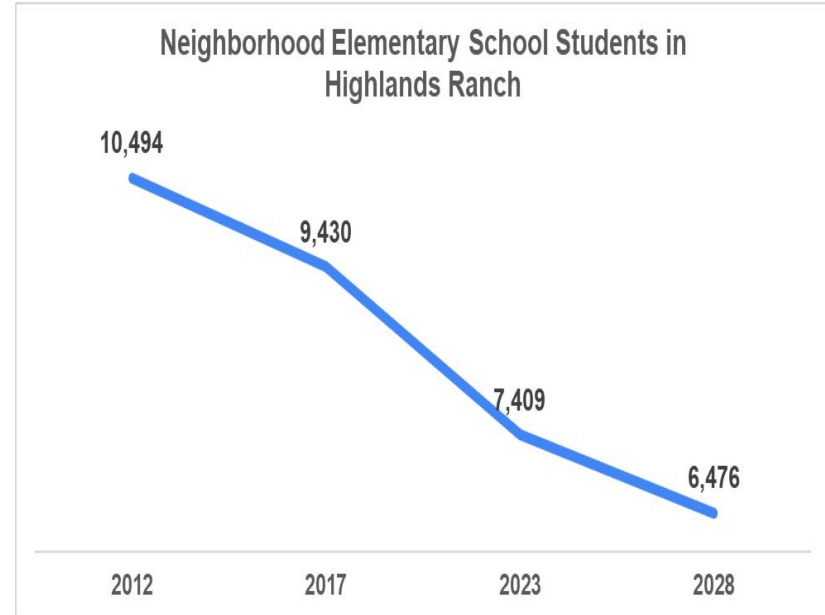
Our Realities – Birth Rates in Douglas County



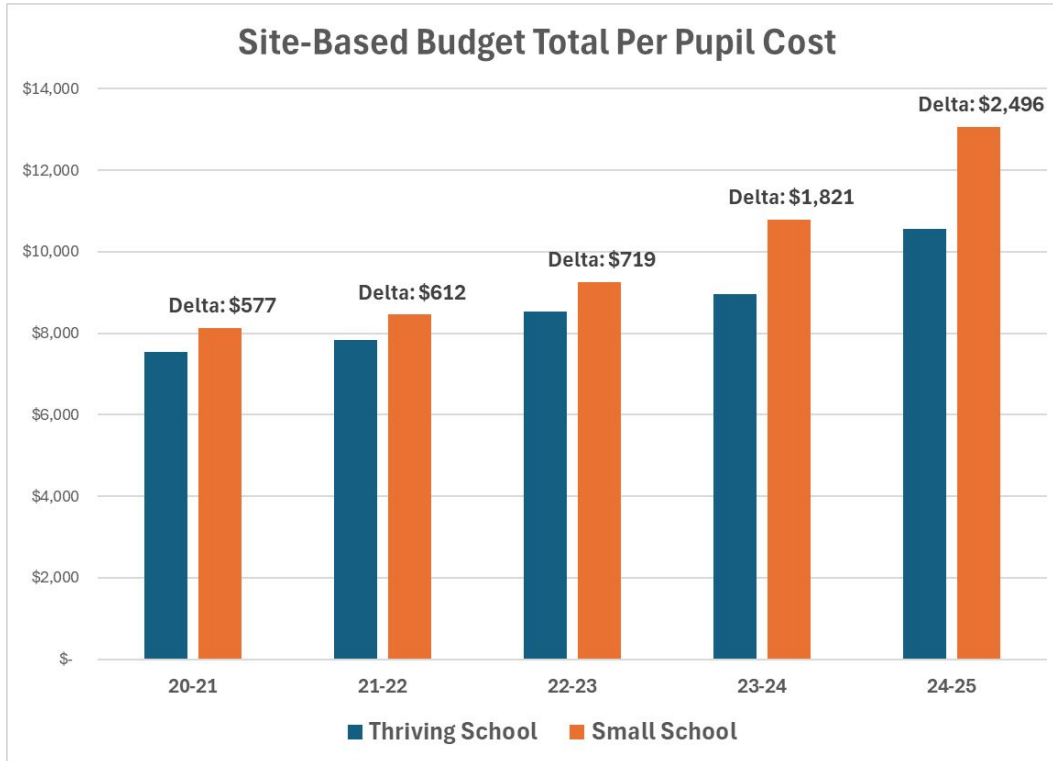
Our Realities– North Planning Area Enrollment



Highlands Ranch
(38,000 homes)



Our Realities– Cost



Today in Highlands Ranch there are 3,192 students in small schools, **costing \$8M**.

In 2028, projections show there will be 4,640 students in small schools, **costing \$17M** if the delta grows by 10% per year (the delta grew 27% from 2023 to 2024).

A Tale of Two Actual DCSD Elementary Schools

Elementary A (600-700 kids)

World language offered
STEM offered separately
Art offered separately
Full time Music teacher
Additional Advanced academic programming
Multiple grade level teachers collaborating
Robust intervention support
Support for center-based programming for student with special needs
Support for Universal Pre-K
Robust extracurricular opportunities

Elementary B (200-350 kids)

No world language programming
STEM mixed in with Art
The music teacher is also the interventionist
Limited advanced programming (combined levels)
1 or 2 grade level teachers (limited collaboration)
Limited extracurricular opportunities
Staff wonderings about their jobs because of lower enrollment

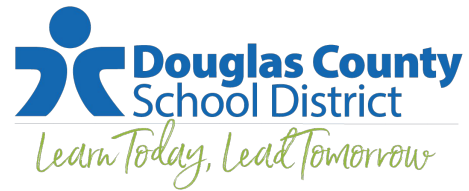
Our Conversations to Date

Over the last two years...

- Board of Education meetings
- Various community meetings
- District-leader conversations
- Leader-staff conversations
- Initial due diligence through DCSD departments and North Planning Area Engagement Group on a host of related issues.
- Staff meetings with potentially impacted schools



Timeline



Timeline for School Pairings



PHASE 1

Plan & Engage (Jan 2023- Jan 2025)

Plan

- ✓ Monthly NPAE Meetings
- ✓ Identify and resolve open questions
- ✓ Develop policy recommendations

Engage

- ✓ BOE Committees
- ✓ District and School Leaders
- ✓ HR School Staff/Communities
- ✓ HR Community Groups

PHASE 2

Policy & Decision (Jan 2025-April 2025)

Policy

- ***Present policy recommendations to BoE re criteria only (Jan 2025)***

Decision

- Develop recommendations based on policy
- ***Finalize, communicate recommendation prior to April 8 BoE meeting***
- ***Staff presents consolidation recommendations to BoE (April 8, 2025)***
- ***Board vote on recommendations (April 22, 2025)***

PHASE 3

Implement & Support (April 2025 and beyond)

Implement

- Plan and perform building improvements (the bond!)
- Develop staffing plan

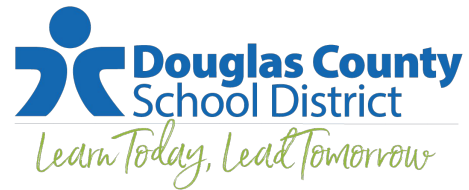
Support

- Engage community
- Support staff
- Support families
- Support the coming together of two school communities

*****Opening of "New" Schools (Aug 2026)*****



Pairing Criteria Policy



Policy Drivers

- DRAFT Board Policy FCB & Superintendent Regulation Policy FCB-R
- At minimum, we want the policy to set a solid foundation for if we have to do this again. We've also drafted "now" items, messaging as well.
- This hard work becomes easier when we hear out, work with our stakeholders. The policies are focused on education, feedback opportunities, and reasonable flexibility to do the best thing for kids.
- Criteria (for pairings) AND considerations (regardless of pairings) to account for.
- These are based on A LOT of feedback. Criteria have been largely consistent across groups.

Input on School Pairings/Criteria Policy– Scope of Conversations

- Meetings with staff at each potentially impacted school (16)
- Meetings for families at all potentially impacted schools (5)
- North Planning Area Enrollment Advisory Team (Leadership & Community): executive directors of schools, elementary principals, community members, various department leaders (Special Education, PreK, Advanced Academics, etc.), communications staff
- North Planning Area Enrollment Advisory Team (Staff) -- Two representatives (one classified, one certified) from each potentially impacted school, BASE, Nutrition Services.
- All Board committees, public meetings and presentations

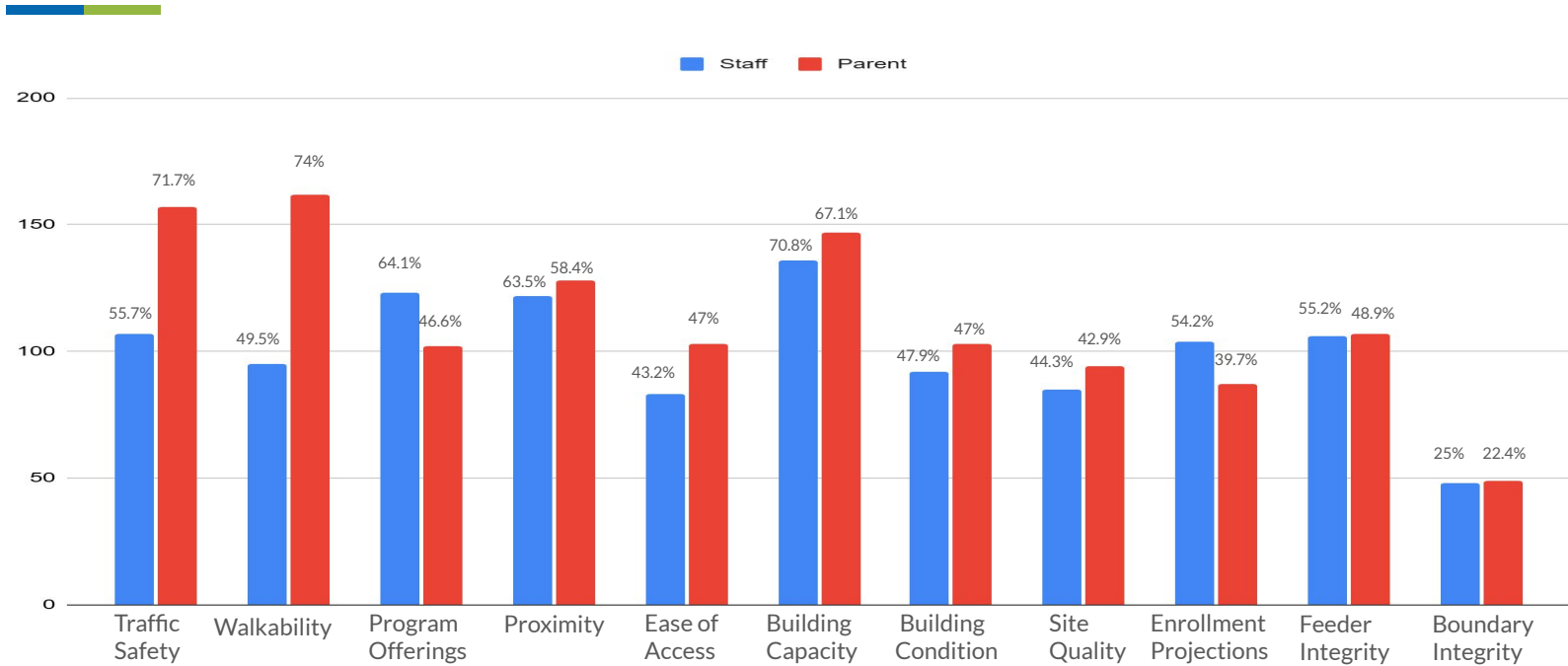
Input on School Pairings/Criteria Policy– Survey Request

Staff and parents of the 16 schools were surveyed about the criteria, among other things. The survey read as follows:

As part of the school pairing process, the Board of Education will consider Board policy regarding the criteria for pairings of schools in January 2025. In preparation, we have received a lot of suggestions about potential criteria. We want your suggestions too.

Based on input received to date, we have included criteria below for you to review. Please check only those that you think should be considered. Then, please suggest any other criteria that you think should be considered in the Comment Box below.

Input on School Pairings/Criteria Policy– Survey Results



*411 total responses received (192 staff and 219 parents)

Pairing Criteria

- Proposed criteria for pairing:
 - Preservation of the integrity of school communities as much as possible.
 - Management of traffic and safety
 - Ease of access to building (e.g., traversing major roadways, crosswalks, district transportation)
 - Walkability for students and families
 - Maximization of school program offerings (e.g., Art, STEM, BASE)
 - Proximity of potentially consolidated schools
 - Current and potential building and site capacity, limitations, and possibilities
 - Building condition and quality (e.g., accessibility, security, repairability, recreational opportunities)
 - Current and future enrollment projections
 - Preservation of feeder integrity and continuity, where possible
 - Financial and logistical realities and sustainability

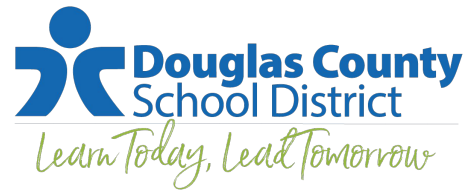
Pairing Considerations

Proposed considerations regardless of pairings:

- Status of staffing
- Resulting class sizes
- Accommodation of programming related to special education, advanced academics, gifted, English Language Development (and the status of related staff), and preschool, among others.
- Accessibility to local resources (police, fire, parks, etc.)
- The timing and process for (in no particular order):
 - Enhancements to buildings and temporary accommodations for students, if needed
 - Appropriate and timely transition conversations and activities for students and families, including individual student support where appropriate
 - Future alternative use of the closing school building and related plans for upkeep and desirability for the neighborhood
 - Merging of consolidated school cultures academically, socially, and emotionally
 - Open enrollment (per Board Policy JCA/JFB)
 - Periodic and reasonable assessment of school consolidation results
 - Potential grade-level location adjustments in one or more feeders (e.g., sixth grade to middle school)
 - Other material considerations that may arise



Data

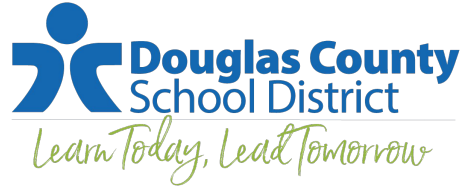


Data

- Key data will drive pairing decisions along with criteria and considerations set out in policies FCB & FCB-R. We wanted to publish that data to our community.
- Our data dashboard can be found on the [Growth and Decline webpage](#).
- DCSD's data dashboard is based on DCSD's latest enrollment projections (released late December 2024, per normal timing) and internal data re all other categories.
- The data reflected in the dashboard may or may not be relevant after criteria are established by BoE. Staff deemed the categories identified to be a reasonable starting points so that we can remove or add data as needed per the finalized criteria.



Communication Timeline– January through April 2025



Communication Timeline Through April 2025

January 2025

- After policy proposal, we will facilitate additional community and staff engagement.
 - **Community & Family:**
 - Two virtual session options on January 15 and 29, 6:00- 7:00 p.m. (we will publish these sessions through HRCA and local pre-schools to maximize community, non-family engagement).
 - Strategic plan focus groups will also discuss this, in part
 - Will work with building leaders re SACs (including DCSD staff attending)
 - Attend Board committee meetings
 - **Staff:** Two virtual session options on January 15 and 29, 4:30-5:30 p.m.
- **Central question:** Given policy, published data, and other information to date, what questions, concerns, input?

Communication Timeline Through April 2025 (cont.)



On or Before February 11, 2025

After criteria policy is finalized, publish considerations/plans for open enrollment, staffing, and SPED related to school pairings.

March 2025

Notification to all 16 school communities re school pairing recommendations along with close-in-time follow-up conversations with leaders, staff, and families in a manner that allows for effective support.

Communication Timeline Through April 2025 (cont.)



April 2025

- April 8: Staff Recommendation to Board of Education re School Pairings
- April 22: Board of Education decision re school pairings
- April 23 through Close of School Year
 - Immediate in person presence for staff and families

Kids!





Questions?

