
Growth and Decline Recommendations

April 8 2025



Overview of the Process to Date

2023-2024 School Year: Growth & Decline discussed (BOE, staff, SACs, and community groups)

Aug - Sept: Monthly NPAE meetings, engaged board committees and District Leadership Team

Nov - Jan: Collected feedback on criteria and considerations through staff meetings, NPAE, NPAES, and *dozens* of community meetings (in-person and virtual)

Jan: Policy recommendation to the Board of Education based on feedback

Feb: BOE approves policy, staffing plan released; Superintendent attends HR staff meetings

Feb - Mar: Cabinet and Executive Directors perform a detailed analysis of many pairing scenarios based on criteria and considerations in policy (*32 hours in joint meetings, 1,500+ staff hours of research*)

Mar: Recommendations announced; Engaged at 6 staff meetings, 6 parent meetings, HRCA, and County Commissioners; survey released

April 2: LRPC Meeting briefing and resolution in support of recommendations

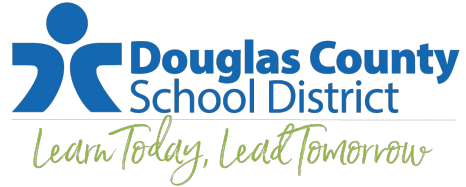
Recommendations to Board of Education

Effective School Year 2026-2027:

- **Pairings**
 - Saddle Ranch Elementary School into Eldorado Elementary School
 - Heritage Elementary School into Summit View Elementary School
 - Acres Green Elementary School into Fox Creek Elementary School
- **6th Grade into Middle School:** Applies to all elementary schools in Highlands Ranch High School, Mountain Vista High School, and ThunderRidge High School feeders
- **Boundary Adjustments:** Specific to each pairing ([details here](#))



Saddle Ranch Elementary School into Eldorado Elementary School



Saddle Ranch into Eldorado: Pairing Overview

- 95% student cohort preservation with minor boundary adjustments.¹
- Increased enrollment at Eldorado is within capacity; no traffic mitigation needed.
- Projected 2030 Enrollment: 452 students.*
- Why this pairing: avoids a school desert north of Saddle Ranch, more efficient traffic management and better access at Eldorado, and full ownership of Eldorado property (a portion of Saddle Ranch fields are not the property of DCSD).

¹ *Boundary adjustment: homes north of Kendrick Castillo Way move from Eldorado to Northridge. When Elementary 51 opens, more adjustments will be needed.*

**with 6th grade in middle school; accounts for expected open enrollments due to pairing.*

Saddle Ranch into Eldorado: Impact Overview

Students:

- Current 5th graders stay at SRE for 6th grade.
- Current 4th graders stay at SRE for 5th grade then go to Ranch View Middle School for 6th.
- Current 3rd graders (and under) stay at SRE next school year then move to Eldorado Fall 2026.
- Impacted families receive Open Enrollment priority.

Traffic and Transportation:

- Schools are in close proximity by car (2.5 miles, 6-7 minutes) and by walkable open space (1 mile, 20 minutes) with no major (4 lanes) roadways to traverse. No traffic mitigation needed.
- One bus route will be added for students living, in general, south and east of Saddle Ranch.
- Transportation fees waived for two years for impacted families (those changing schools).

Saddle Ranch Elementary Building Use:

- The building will be maintained and available for community use (playground, fields, etc.) in addition to housing school district programming, to be determined next school year.

Saddle Ranch into Eldorado: Student Programming

- Ensure the sustainability of full-time Specials teachers to support a well-rounded curriculum and expand Specials programming (e.g., STEM, instrumental music) based on community input and student needs.
- Maintain consistent student support services, including academic intervention and mental health resources.
- Integrate Significant Support Needs (SSN) programs while maintaining Affective Needs (AN) programming (K-3) to support students from both schools.
- Increase Special Education, English Language Development (ELD), and Gifted and Talented (GT) programming to better serve all student needs.
- Expand preschool programming to meet early childhood education demands.
- Before and After School Programming (BASE) will continue to be available.

Saddle Ranch into Eldorado: Engagement

STAFF Engagement Opportunities:

- Leadership and Transition Planning Engagement Sessions
 - April 9 @ 7:45 AM: Eldorado Staff
 - April 9 @ 3:45 PM: Saddle Ranch Staff

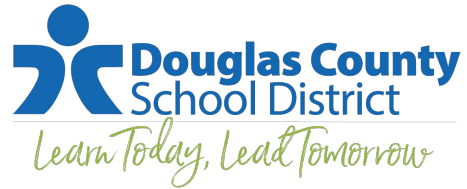
COMMUNITY Engagement Opportunities:

- Leadership and Transition Planning Engagement Sessions
 - April 10 (Thursday) @ 5:30 PM: In person meeting @ RVMS (for both schools)
 - April 15 (Tuesday) @ 5:15 PM: Virtual meeting (for both schools)

A Detailed Frequently Asked Questions Document on Saddle Ranch into Eldorado can be found on the [Growth and Decline webpage](#). ** will be posted by Monday, April 7*



Heritage Elementary School into Summit View Elementary School



Heritage into Summit View: Pairing Overview

- 70% student cohort preservation with boundary adjustments affecting homes south of E Wildcat Pkwy.¹
- Traffic mitigation measures recommended, including relocation of school zone indicators and speed enforcement.
- Projected 2030 Enrollment: 430 students*.
- Why this pairing: SVE is a bigger building (+5,000 sq. ft.) with a larger lot size and allows for better traffic management.

¹ *Boundary adjustment: Homes south of E Wildcat Pkwy will be assigned to Copper Mesa Elementary (CME).*

**with 6th grade in middle school; accounts for expected open enrollments due to pairing.*

Heritage into Summit View: Impact Overview

Students:

- Current 5th graders stay at Heritage (HE) for 6th grade.
- Current 4th graders stay at HE for 5th grade then go to Mountain Ridge Middle School for 6th.
- Current 3rd graders (and under) stay at HE next school year then move to Summit View Fall 2026.
- Impacted families receive Open Enrollment priority.

Traffic and Transportation:

- Schools are in very close proximity (0.8 mile by car, 20 minute walk) with no major (4 lanes) roadways to traverse. Traffic mitigation recommendations are minor.
- One additional bus route will be needed for HE students north of Wildcat to go to Summit View.
- Transportation fees waived for two years for impacted families (those changing schools).

Heritage Elementary Building Use:

- The building will be maintained and available for community use (playground, fields, etc.) in addition to housing school district programming, to be determined next school year.

Heritage into Summit View: Student Programming

- Ensure the sustainability of full-time Specials teachers to support a well-rounded curriculum and expand Specials programming (e.g., STEM, instrumental music) based on community input and student needs.
- Maintain consistent student support services, including academic intervention and mental health resources.
- Integrate Significant Support Needs (SSN) programming to support students from both schools.
- Increase Special Education, English Language Development (ELD), and Gifted and Talented (GT) programming to better serve all students.
- Expand preschool programming to meet early childhood education demands.
- Before and After School Programming (BASE) will continue to be available.
- SVE is currently an Expeditionary Learning (EL[®]) spirit school with components of EL education; the newly paired community can evaluate specialized programming moving forward.

Heritage into Summit View: Engagement

STAFF Engagement Opportunities:

- Leadership and Transition Planning Engagement Sessions
 - April 11 (Friday) @ 7:45 AM: Summit View Staff
 - April 11 (Friday) @ 3:45 PM: Heritage Staff

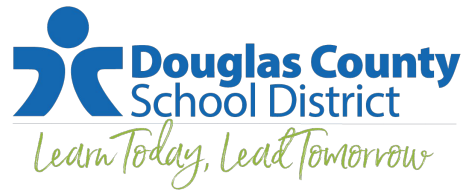
COMMUNITY Engagement Opportunities:

- Leadership and Transition Planning Engagement Sessions
 - April 14 (Monday) @ 5:30 PM: In person meeting @ MRMS
 - April 15 (Tuesday) @ 5:15 PM: Virtual meeting

A Detailed Frequently Asked Questions Document on Heritage into Summit View can be found on the [Growth and Decline webpage](#).



Acres Green Elementary School into Fox Creek Elementary School



Acres Green into Fox Creek: Pairing Overview

- 95% student cohort preservation with adjustments affecting Millstone and Carriage Club communities.¹
- Future traffic improvements recommended for Collegiate Drive.
- Projected 2030 Enrollment: 493 students.*
- Why this pairing: relative superiority of size, age, and condition of FCE building. In addition, ERE has to continue to absorb all growth of RidgeGate.

¹ Boundary adjustment: Homes in the Millstone community move from FCE to Wildcat Mountain and homes in the Carriage Club community would move from AGE to Eagle Ridge. When Elementary 50 opens more adjustments will be needed.

*with 6th grade in middle school; accounts for expected open enrollments due to pairing.

Acres Green into Fox Creek: Impact Overview

Students:

- Current 5th graders stay at Acres Green (AGE) for 6th grade.
- Current 4th graders stay at AGE for 5th grade then go to Cresthill Middle School for 6th.
- Current 3rd graders (and under) stay at AGE next school year then move to Fox Creek Fall 2026.
- Impacted families receive Open Enrollment priority.

Traffic and Transportation:

- Schools and communities are in reasonably close proximity – 2.4 miles by car.
- Three additional bus routes will be needed for students currently walking to Acres Green.
- Transportation fees waived for two years for impacted families (those changing schools).

Acres Green Elementary Building Use:

- The building will be maintained and available for community use (playground, fields, etc.) in addition to housing school district programming, to be determined next school year.

Acres Green into Fox Creek

- Ensure the sustainability of full-time Specials teachers to support a well-rounded curriculum and expand Specials programming (e.g., STEM, instrumental music) based on community input and student needs.
- Maintain consistent student support services, including academic intervention and mental health resources.
- Integrate Significant Support Needs (SSN) programming to support students from both schools (FCE is an award-winning Significant Support Needs model program site).
- Increase Special Education, English Language Development (ELD), and Gifted and Talented (GT) programming to better serve all students.
- Expand preschool programming to meet early childhood education demands.
- Before and After School Programming (BASE) will continue to be available.
- FCE is currently an Expeditionary Learning (EL[®]) school and AGE is a Leader in Me school; the newly paired community can evaluate specialized programming moving forward.

Acres Green into Fox Creek: Engagement

STAFF Engagement Opportunities:

- Leadership and Transition Planning Engagement Sessions
 - April 9 (Wednesday) @ 7:45 AM: Fox Creek Staff
 - April 9 (Wednesday) @ 3:45 PM: Acres Green Staff

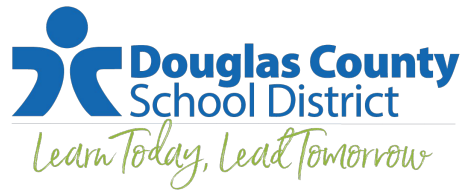
COMMUNITY Engagement Opportunities:

- Leadership and Transition Planning Engagement Sessions
 - April 9 (Wednesday) @ 5:30 PM: In person meeting @ Cresthill Middle School
 - April 16 (Wednesday) @ 5:15 PM: Virtual meeting

A Detailed Frequently Asked Questions Document on Acres Green into Fox Creek can be found on the [Growth and Decline webpage](#). * will be posted by Monday, April 7



6th Grade into Middle School in Highlands Ranch (2026-2027)



Advantages of 6th Grade in Middle School

- DCSD Middle Schools have a middle school teaming model.
- Eliminates the “transition in” and “transition out”, two year cycle, increasing family engagement and student “connectedness” to the school.
- Expanded course offerings and broader options for acceleration and elective opportunities.
- During this time of developmental change, additional time and resources are dedicated to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of students.
- Educational resources and support through a 6th-8th grade lens.

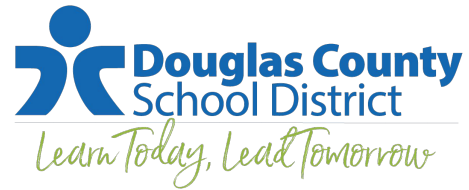


Next Steps for 6th Grade in Middle School

- Family will be provided with engagement opportunities to receive more information and for Q&A before the end of the school year.
- Common questions:
 - Continuation/graduations during transition for both 5th and 6th graders and moving forward?
 - What about 6th grade staff?
 - What will be done to help our students transition (tours? First day? etc)
 - Will our transitioning students be able to experience Outdoor Education?
 - Will my students be able to participate in the “New Beginnings” summer program?
 - Will my student be able to participate in athletics and activities

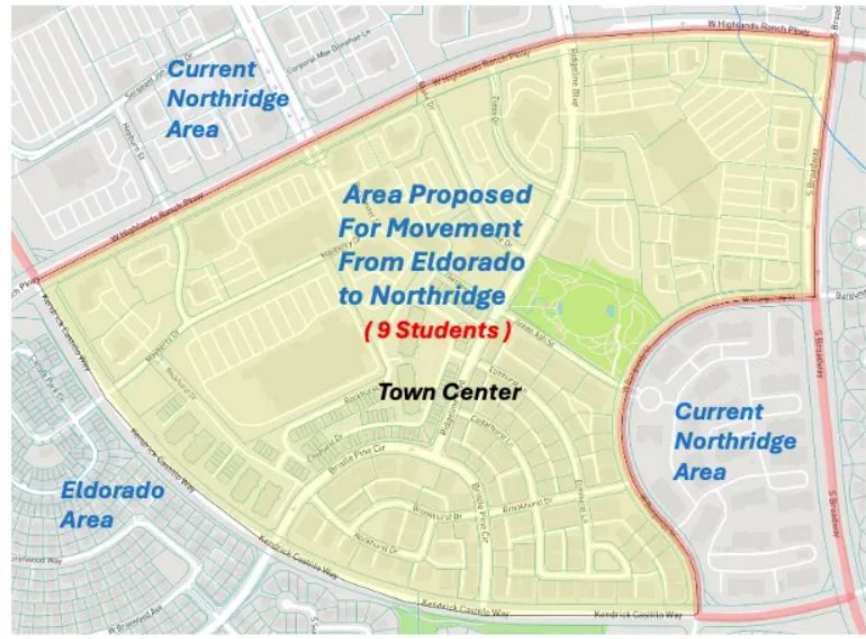
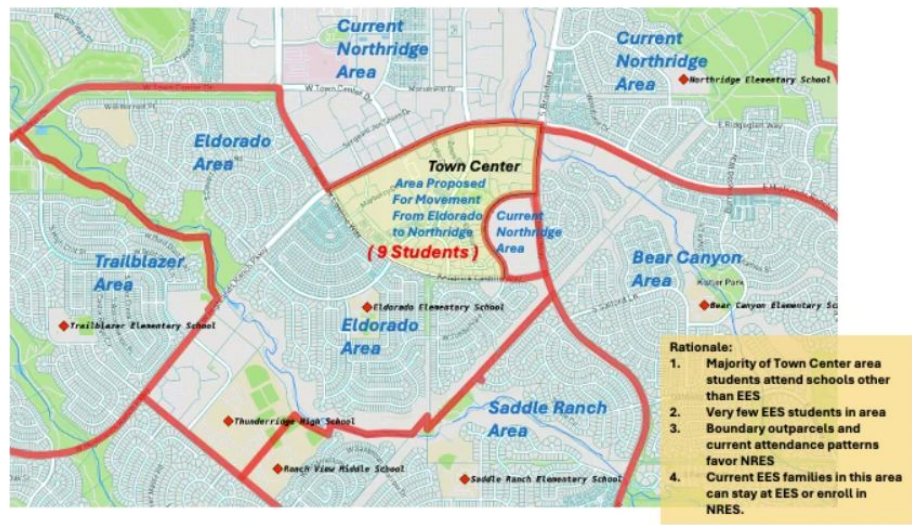


Boundary Adjustments



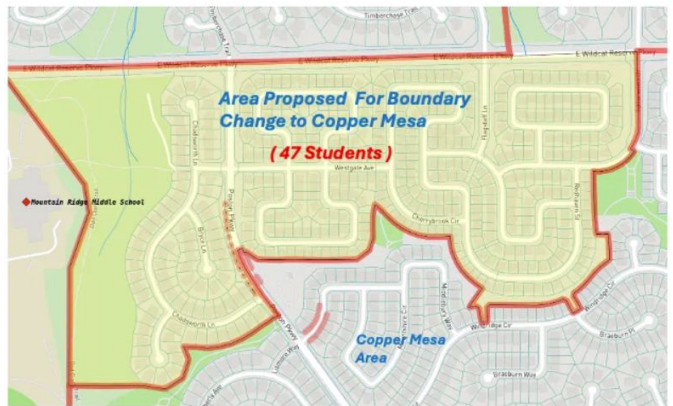
Boundary Adjustments: TRHS Feeder

Recommended Boundary Change - Area Proposed for Movement from Eldorado ES to Northridge ES



Boundary Adjustments: MVHS Feeder

Recommended Boundary Change - Areas Proposed for Movement from Heritage ES to Copper Mesa ES



Boundary Adjustments: HRHS Feeder

Recommended Boundary Change – Millstone -
Proposed for Movement from Fox Creek to Wildcat
Mtn. – Close Up



Recommended Boundary Change – Carriage Club -
Proposed for Movement from Acres
Green to Eagle Ridge – Close Up

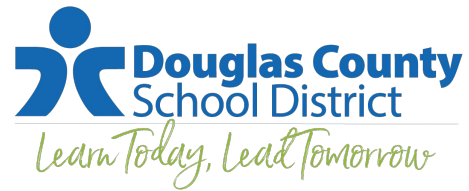


More Boundary Adjustment Information

- More details on Boundary Adjustments can be found on the Growth and Decline Webpage: [RECOMMENDED BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENTS](#)



Survey Results

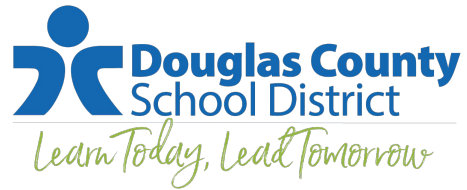


Summary of Survey Results

- Survey was distributed to families and staff of all 16 schools through the March 24 email notifying them of the recommendations. QR Code also present in the presentations for staff. Results will be published on G+D webpage, appropriately redacted.
- Two questions: 1) What questions do you have about school pairings? and 2) What do you need from DCSD to help you through this process?
- **As of April 4, 140 responses.** Working to craft FAQs and respond individually as quickly as possible.
- Brief summary of Question topics: increased traffic, overcrowding/class sizes, 6th grade into middle school, outdoor ed, leadership identification, property values, timelines, community cohesion, among others.
- Brief summary of Need topics: as much information as early as possible about impact on SPED, 6th grade, traffic mitigation, staff hiring, leadership, and open enrollment, among others.



Savings Analysis



Estimated Savings

Primary Savings Sources

- Reduced headcount (fully realized in 2027-2028 and beyond) by reducing to one management team (admin, office, custodial, etc) per school pairing and reduction in redundancy in district management.
- Reduce the number of schools (now and in the future) that require supplemental funding of about \$2,500 per student per year in order to offer reasonable programs due to size.

Estimated Savings: \$30.4 - \$42.6 million over five years.

- Does not include additional potential savings from moving district programs out of leased spaces into district-owned buildings in Highlands Ranch.
- Does not account for the increasing cost of education and staffing each year nor the continued increase in the number of small schools, so the real saving will be much more.
- Savings per year will increase each year.

How will the savings be used?

Benefits to Students

- Newly paired school will prosper due to being larger in size overall - allowing for more options for robust student programming and support through economy of scale.
- Savings will help support programs like band, orchestra, art, or STEM (depending on the needs of individual schools).

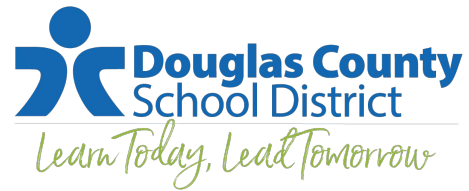
What about recent ballot initiatives?

- 2023 Mill Levy Override: used for needed salary increases for all district teachers and staff as well as added security personnel.
- 2024 Bond: used for capital needs including building improvements at every school; bond project progress can be tracked [here](#).

How do job guarantees help save money? Job guarantees for staff will be managed through normal annual staff turnover (500-750 positions district-wide) and the need to staff two new elementary schools opening in SY 2027-28. Affected staff will have priority access to open positions for two years.



Next Steps



Leadership Transition Plan

- The School Leadership team is working with the leaders from all of the proposed paired schools to gauge their career goals moving forward.
- Together, School Leadership and the school leaders will formulate a Proposed Leadership Plan for each newly paired school in the recommendations.
- The Proposed Leadership Plan will be communicated this week.
- Staff and families will have the opportunity to engage with the 2026-2027 Proposed Leadership Team to discuss and formulate transition planning.
- If the pairing recommendations are approved on April 22, the Proposed Leadership Plan will move forward.

Transition Planning Overview

Goal: Guide the pairing of Acres Green/Fox Creek, Heritage/Summit View, & Saddle Ranch/Eldorado with a focus on community, leadership, and planning for a positive outcome.

Timeline: Overall process from April 2025 – August 2026.

Proposed Leadership Plan (April 2025):

- Staff and families will have the opportunity to engage with the 2026-2027 Proposed Leadership Team to discuss and formulate transition planning.

Initial Transition Planning (May - Sept 2025):

- Appointed principal familiarizes with both communities & meets staff.
- District-led Transition Team formed (District, Principal, Parents, Community, Specialists).
- Team conducts data review & needs assessment (academics, climate, facilities, specialized programs - SPED/GT/ML, traffic).

Community Engagement & Program Alignment

Community Engagement (Sept - Oct 2025):

- Joint meetings led by new principal to share info, address concerns, gather input.
- Facilitate PTO/PTA collaboration.

Program Alignment (Nov 2025 - Jan 2026):

- Staff collaboration to align academics, curriculum, activities, and social-emotional support.
- Detailed planning for integrating specialized services, ensuring continuity and support.
- Address logistical needs (transportation, food service, space, traffic safety).
- Proactive communication with families requiring specialized services.

Identity Building (Jan - Feb 2026):

- Facilitated discussions (students, staff, families) on new school name, mascot, colors, vision, etc.

Plan Finalization (March 2026):

- Solidify student placement, staffing, specialized program support, logistics, communication, and traffic safety plans.

Implementation and Ongoing Support

Transition Prep (April - May 2026):

- Joint staff professional development (climate, instruction, supporting diverse learners).
- Student visits and joint activities at the receiving school, with accommodations for specialized needs.

Physical Transition (June - July 2026):

- Closing school officially closes; materials/equipment moved by district.
- Secure transfer of all student records (including IEPs, 504s, MLPs, ALPs).
- Receiving school prepared.

School Opening (August 2026):

- Focus on welcoming environment, relationship building, implementing aligned programs.
- Ongoing Evaluation.
- Continuous monitoring of student progress and school climate post-opening.
- Gather feedback and make adjustments as needed.
- Celebrate successes and address challenges collaboratively.

Special Education Transition Plan

- Special education leadership will host a virtual meeting for families of students with disabilities in the paired school communities on Wednesday, April 16 at 6:30 PM.
- Special education and school leadership will we meet with center-based families and hold engagement meetings for special education families in the paired school communities by the end of May 2025.
- Special education leadership and school leaders will meet with special education staff and special service providers to discuss the process, supports and needs for helping staff, students and families transition.
- Special education leadership is planning for new center-based programs as needed in schools in the Highlands Ranch Region for the 2026-2027 school year and beyond.
- School leadership and Special Education leadership will coordinate orientation activities and opportunities for students and families to come together during the 2025-2026 school year.

Building Improvements and Traffic

- **Interior Renovations and Traffic Improvements: Completed August 1st, 2026**
 - The architect, engineers, and traffic engineer have been hired for the three consolidated elementary schools and three middle schools
 - April - May 2025: Contractors hired
 - May - October 2025 - Architect, engineers, and contractors work with the Transition Teams to finalize renovation and [traffic improvement needs](#)
 - December 2025: Designs and permitting complete
 - May 28th - August 1st, 2026: Construction

* Any potential building additions would be completed by July 31st, 2027.

Transportation

- Six additional drivers will support the additional bus routes needed for sixth grade into all three middle schools and all elementary school consolidations. Bus routes are tiered, with middle and high school routes first, followed by elementary routes at a later time.
 - 6th Grade into Middle Schools: Two additional drivers for each middle school.
 - Saddle Ranch into Eldorado: One additional bus route for those students living, in general, south and east of Saddle Ranch.
 - Heritage into Summit View: One additional bus route. With the boundary change, there may be a reduction of one bus route.
 - Acres Green into Fox Creek: Three additional bus routes for those students currently living within the 1 mile walk zone for Acres Green.
- Bus fees will be waived for two years for impacted communities.
- Research is ongoing to determine the feasibility of providing busing during a transition period for students who would walk the path from Saddle Ranch to Eldorado, and students living south of Wildcat Reserve Pkwy who would attend Summit View. If feasible, this would be reevaluated after one year.

Future Building Use

Buildings are needed for District Programming Purposes

- DCSD spends about \$1 M per year in leases
- Our long-term goal is to move out of leased space
- According to current zoning, at least 51% of space must be occupied by educational programming

Timeline

- Fall 2025: DCSD Staff engages in conversation with programs that are currently occupying leased space, including leadership, staff and families
- Fall 2025: DCSD Staff will recommend relocating programming into buildings in Highlands Ranch to the Board of Education, with feedback from LRPC
 - Including improvements that may be required and a transition plan and timeline.

Buildings will continue to be maintained and availability for community use will remain in place.

Staffing Impact

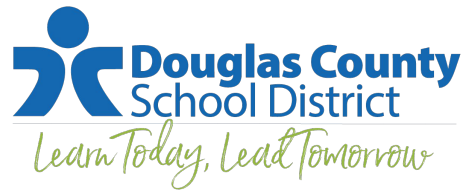
- Guarantee of positions per Staffing Protocol on [Growth and Decline webpage](#).
- Published [FAQs](#) on staffing plan on March 24. These are based on feedback from NPAES and NPAAE groups along with other conversations.
- From March 25-28, Chief of Staff, Chief Human Resources Officer, and HR Director rotated between the six affected schools during the entirety of those school days so staff could ask questions, etc.
- On April 2, conducted virtual meetings in the morning and afternoon for affected staff of all 16 schools.
- For Roxborough Intermediate and Lone Tree Elementary, offered in person or virtual meetings for 6th grade staff if/as needed.

Board of Education: Next Steps Overview

- April 8: Board of Education hears staff recommendations
- April 2 - April 16: Attend Community Meetings
- April 22: Board of Education votes on recommendations
- April - August: Transition Planning
- School Year 2025-2026: Status Quo
- School Year 2026-2027: Pairing Implementation



Questions?



For Reference: Last Growth and Decline Board of Education Update

DCSD Growth and Decline Update

February 11, 2025



Agenda

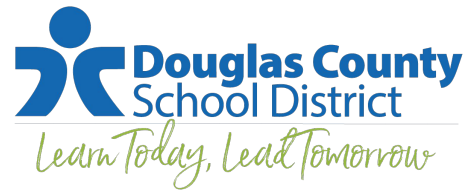
- Our Realities
- Timeline
- Policy FCB Second Reading
- Data
- North Planning Area Engagement
- Support
- Communications Timeline
- Recent Community Questions and Answers

Kids!

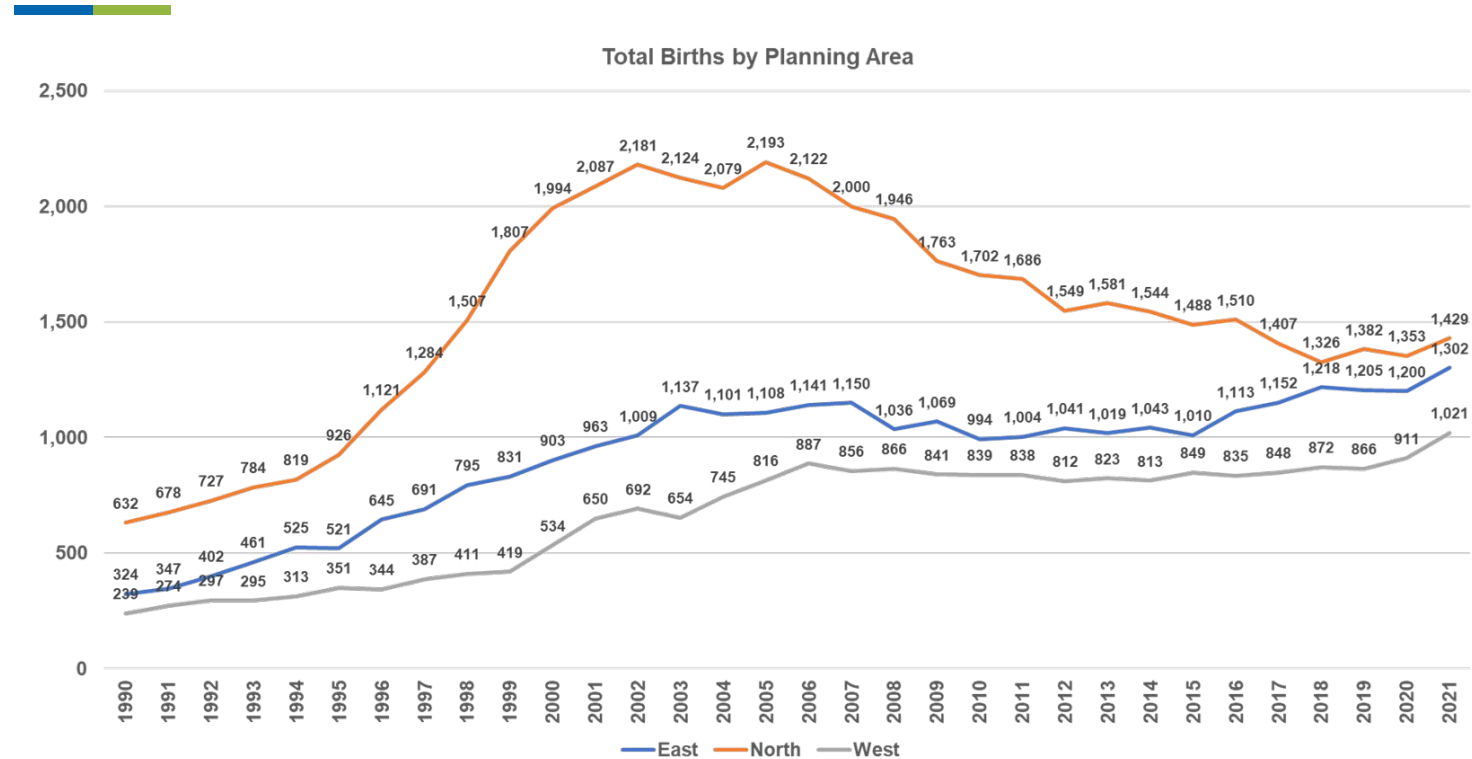




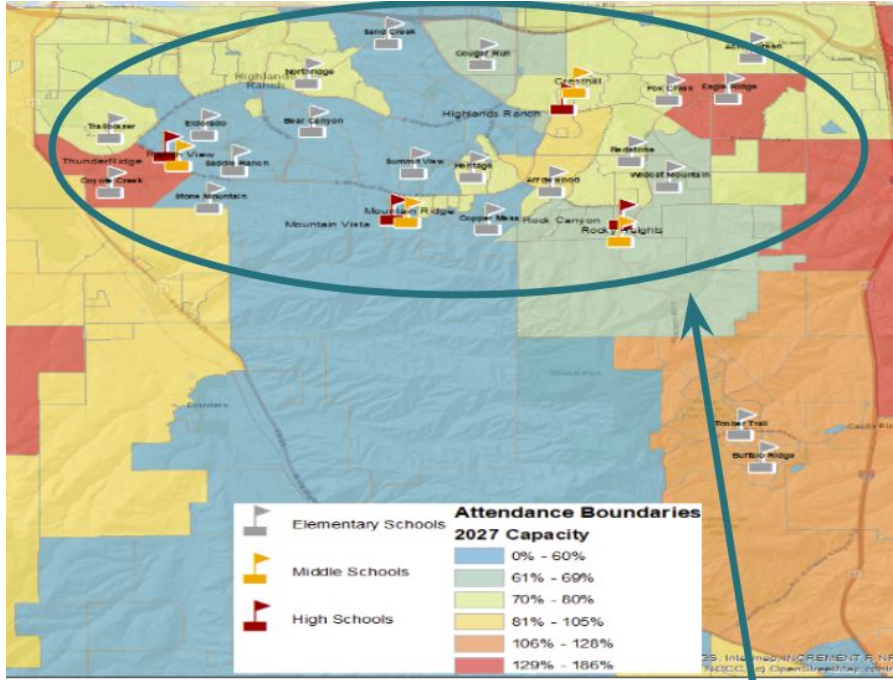
Our Realities



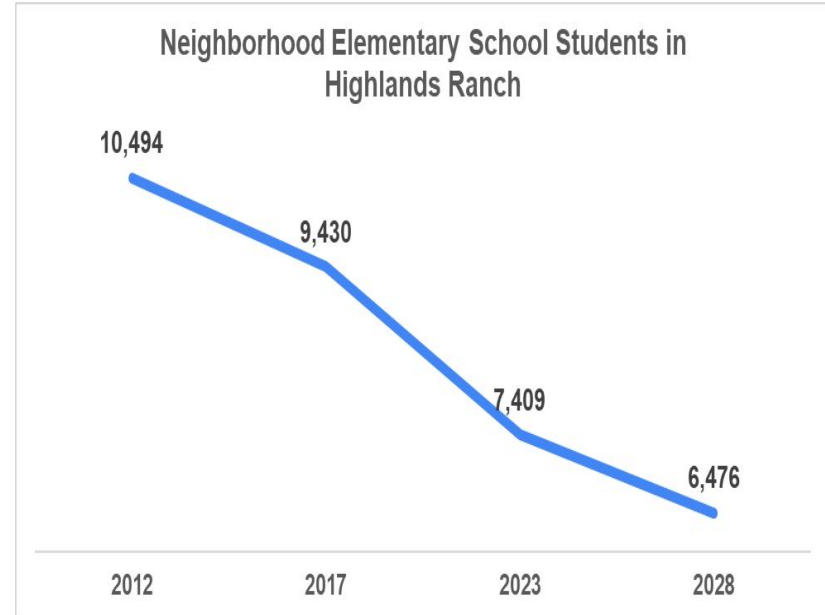
Our Realities – Number of Births in Douglas County



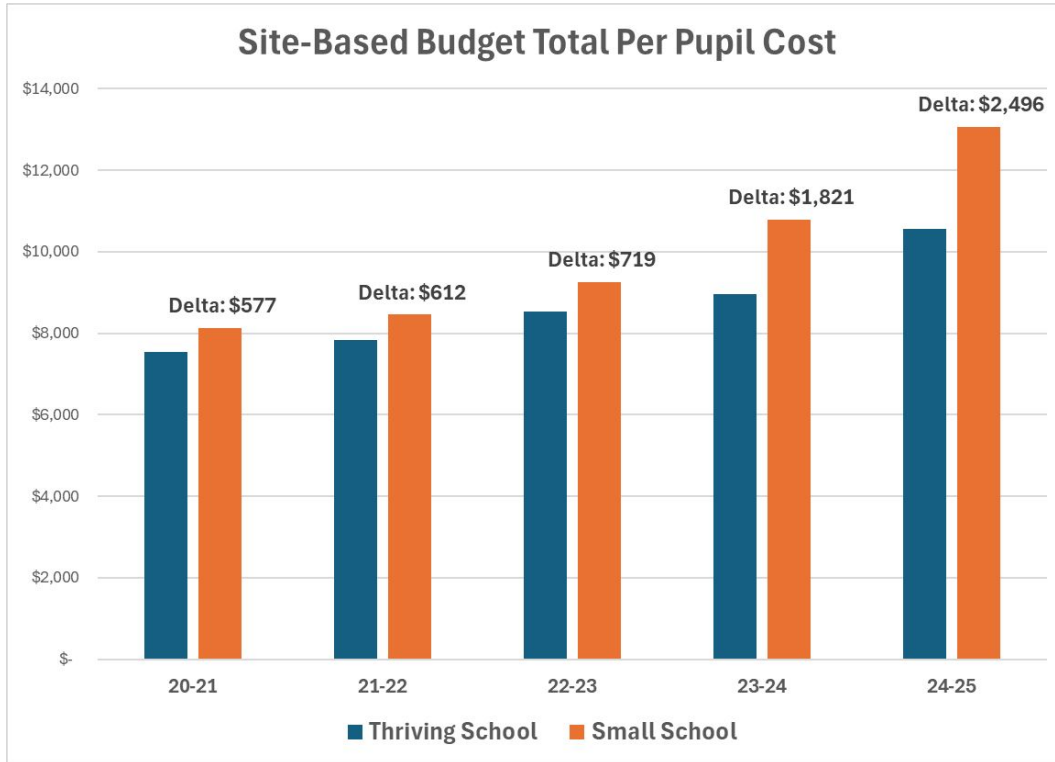
Our Realities– North Planning Area Enrollment



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

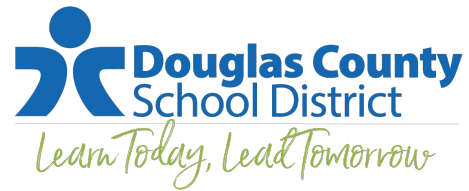
Our Conversations to Date

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



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

Policy

- ✓ Present policy recommendations (criteria & considerations) to BOE: Jan-Feb 2025

Decision

- ✓ Develop recommendations based on policy analysis
- ✓ *Finalize & communicate recommendation prior to Apr 8, 2025 BOE meeting*
- Staff presents consolidation recommendations to BOE: Apr 8, 2025
- Board vote on recommendations: Apr 22, 2025

Implement

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

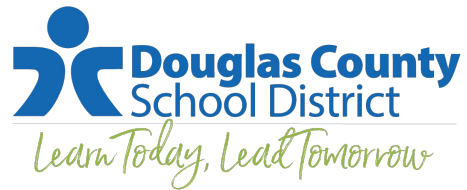
Support

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

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



Policy FCB Second Reading



Policy Drivers

- 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

Pairing Criteria

- Proposed criteria for pairing (*revised*):
 - *Preservation of student, staff, and community cohorts 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

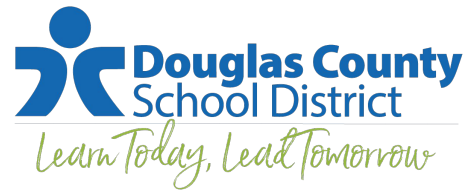
Pairing Considerations

Proposed considerations regardless of pairings (*revised*):

- *Careful consideration of the needs of impacted staff*
- 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 *by DCSD* 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

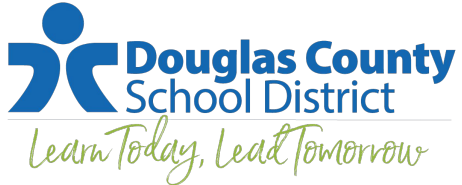


Data

- 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.



North Planning Area Engagement



NPAE and NPAES

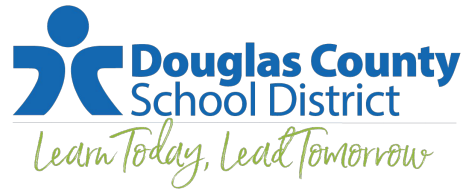


Both groups have been instrumental in helping to form policy recommendations, the staffing protocol, identifying “look fors,” among other important matters.

- The NPAE members were drawn from Board community groups along with representatives from DCSD school and operational departments that are likely to be most impacted by school pairings: executive directors of schools, elementary principals, various department leaders from Communications, Budget, Planning, Special Education, PreK, and Advanced Academics.
- For NPAES, while visiting each of the 16 buildings in November 2024, leadership asked for volunteers to submit for this group as part of the criteria and considerations survey. Members were chosen from the volunteer list based on the need for a split between licensed and classified and then by diversity of position. To the extent that there were more volunteers per school than spaces available per school, volunteers were chosen based on the timing of their volunteer submission and diversity of position.



Support



Family and Staff Support

- Supt. and District staff will be available directly after pre-announcement in March and throughout April to answer questions from and provide support for families and staff.
- We are in the process of hiring a Staff Support Liason for the next couple of years to work alongside paired school staff (that position recently closed - hoping for a former principal or HR professional).
- We have engaged HR professionals (former HR chiefs) to supplement existing HR staff for a week or two after pairings are solidified so that one (or more) can be in each building as announcements are made and to support staff.
- A posting is about to go up for a Family Support Liaison for the next couple of years to help school communities- PTOs, SACs, etc. - come together, alongside our building leaders and staff.
- We are in the process of engaging existing and/or retired registrars to help ensure families have access to an enrollment specialist right after pairings are finalized, if they need.

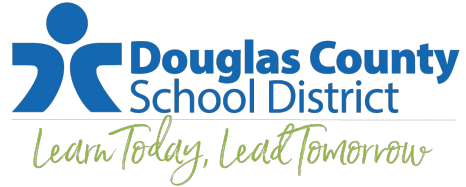
Staffing Protocol, Open Enrollment, SPED

All of these will be posted with detail on the G+D webpage:

- Staff Protocol– Every staff member in an ongoing position impacted by the school pairing process, who is interested in continuing their employment with DCSD, will be offered a commensurate position in DCSD.
- Normal open enrollment rules will apply per policy JCA/JFB-R, to include any revisions to those policies after Board review.
- Actual pairings will dictate SPED staff allocations and space for each building. Every family should expect a quality staffing and school experience for their child before, during, and after the pairing process.



Communication Timeline– January through April 2025



Communication Timeline Through April 2025



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.)

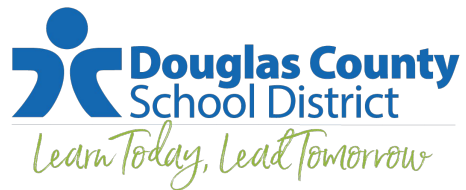


April 2025

- 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



Recent Community Questions and Answers



What about other options?

- Can we consider boundary changes or transportation changes instead of school pairings?
 - Changing boundaries or busing students a different way will not change the total number of students being spread across 16 schools. Supporting 6K students in 16 buildings that used to support 11K kids is not financially sustainable. There would still be too few kids across to many buildings.
- What about charter schools?
 - Charter schools are governed by state law and depend on parent demand. School districts cannot legally close charter schools unless they fail to meet financial or academic standards.
 - Charter schools in Highlands Ranch are also seeing lower enrollment and they are working to find ways to adapt as well.

What is the impact on class sizes?

- A smaller school does not necessarily mean smaller class sizes.
 - In fact, one of the challenges with a small school is volatility in class size - the fewer sections in a grade level, the more volatile class size is (you may have 20 first graders or you may have 34 - you can't generally turn the 34 into two classes of 17 because then you can't afford the additional teacher). When you have more sections, you can more easily control class size.
- What about portable classrooms?
 - Portable classrooms will only be used for temporary capacity. The 2024 Bond includes \$20 million for permanent facility modifications to accommodate the needed capacity and programming for school pairings

What happens to the buildings?

- The school district needs the buildings for educational programming for DCSD students and staff.
- Building amenities (playgrounds, etc.) will still be available to the community.
- Buildings will not be used for affordable housing, condos, charter schools, etc.
 - Charter schools can only use a district building if it is declared “surplus” by LRPC and the Board of Education. Likewise with selling a building.
 - DCSD has need of these buildings for district-run student programming.
- A list of potential building uses will be released with the pairing recommendations.

Has the decision already been made?

- No decisions have been made. The next step is for policy to be approved by the Board of Education (tonight), then staff will work on formulating recommendations.
- Isn't it obvious that the lowest enrolled schools will be selected?
 - **The choices are not obvious when considering all the criteria. The decision making will be layered and involve the various interests and criteria laid out in the FCB, FCB-R policies. Enrollment is part of the criteria so we would naturally take that into account.**

Are we pairing 6 schools to 3 or 4 schools to 2?

- Conversations to date have included both possibilities.
- LRPC recommendation to staff was 6 to 3 or 8 to 4.
- Based on what we know right now, 6 schools to 3 schools makes the most sense.
 - We do not want to have to go through this process again in Highlands Ranch.
 - Final numbers will be part of the recommendation.

What about the advantages of small schools?

- Small schools have advantages, but are not sustainable over time. Per student, small schools cost \$2,500 more per student. The smaller they get and the more small schools we have, that delta will continue to increase. The only way to continue to sustain small schools, funding for ALL schools would have to be cut (more and more over time), which will impact all students.
- Larger schools allow for greater diversity of opportunities - large schools have the capacity to offer more specialized programs to meet the unique needs of students.



Questions?

