

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
REGARDING
DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS' REALIGNMENT PLAN FOR 2007-08

Q: Why is Detroit Public Schools planning to close and consolidate schools?

A: There are several reasons:

1. The District needs to realign its inventory of buildings with the number of students. The District operates too many buildings for the number of students enrolled in DPS. Despite losing over 60,000 students in the last 10 years, the District has only closed about 30 buildings. There are currently at least 54,000 empty seats within our existing schools. Continuing to heat, clean and maintain extra space costs money that could be better spent on educational programs.
2. The District is operating under a Deficit Elimination Plan, which is an agreement with the State of Michigan. In the most recent amendment to the Plan, one of the strategies the District agreed to use to eliminate its deficit was to close and consolidate schools.
3. A number of DPS buildings are in very poor condition and students need to be moved to better buildings.

Q: Why can't the District reduce the number of closures by reducing Central Office staffing or other cost savings initiatives?

A: The District will be implementing a number of initiatives to reduce administrative costs and become more efficient – including reductions in Central Office staffing. However, these reductions cannot completely address the District's deficit. Savings from school closures will be needed.

Q: What criteria will be used to determine which buildings will close?

A: The District will evaluate all buildings based upon a combination of factors, including:

- **Utilization and Operational Efficiency** – How many empty seats are in the building? Is the building an efficient use of resources?
- **Facility Condition** – Does the building need major repairs or capital improvements? Have there been significant capital improvements made to the facility?
- **Educational Adequacy** – Does the building have appropriately sized classrooms, technology, athletic amenities? Does it meet ADA requirements?
- **Enrollment Trend** – Is the population of students near the school declining or increasing?
- **Academic Success** – How well are the students learning? Is there progress?

Q: Is the Preliminary Realignment Plan “final” or will there be an opportunity for a school community to save a school from closing?

A: No, the list is not final; it is truly “preliminary”. The District will spend the month of January holding a number of community forums and public hearings on the realignment plan throughout the City. In the public meetings, each closure and consolidation scenario will be explained in detail and feedback from students, parents, school staff and community will be obtained. This feedback will be considered by District staff before a final recommended list of closures and consolidations will be presented to the School Board. In addition, two Official Hearings will be held to receive comments and alternative proposals. at the following locations and times.

East Side Closures

Location: Pershing High School

Date and Time: Friday

February 2nd

6 p.m.

West Side Closures

Location: Central High School

Date and Time: Saturday

February 3rd

9 a.m.

Comments and alternatives to closures may be presented in writing, along with twenty (20) copies. Written comments and alternatives to closure may also be submitted in writing on or before Friday, February 2nd at the following address:

Detroit Public Schools
Darrell A. Rodgers, Ph.D.
Chief of Facilities Maintenance and Auxiliary Services
10th Floor Fisher Building
3011 W. Grand Blvd.
Detroit, MI 48202

Comments may also be sent on or before February 2nd via e-mail to:
SchoolClosings@detroitk12.org

Q: If my child’s school is closed, will he or she receive bus transportation to the new school?

A: The District will provide bus transportation as follows:

- for any student grades kindergarten through 5th grade who resides .75 miles from the assigned school;
- for any student grades 6th through 8th who resides 1.5 miles from the assigned school; high school students residing more than 1.5 miles from their neighborhood high school receive reduced rate bus passes;
- special education students receive transportation based upon their individualized education plan.

Q: What will the District do to help my child transition to his/her new school?

A: The District is working hard to provide an improved academic and physical environment for all students. For those students who will be moving to a new school, the District is working extra hard to make the transition smooth. In addition to the public meetings in January 2007 to help explain the closings, the District will hold open-houses and orientations at each receiving school for parents and students to tour the new school, meet the principal and teachers and learn about the new school's academic programs. Additional support for students and staff at the closing and receiving schools will be provided. Stay tuned to the District's website for additional information about transitioning to a new school.

Q: What if I don't want to send my child to the assigned school?

A: Detroit Public Schools is an open District and allows parents to enroll their children in any school with space and the appropriate grade, except for certain examination schools. Bus transportation will not be provided, however.

Q: Who is involved in making the recommendations of buildings for closure or consolidation?

A: All District divisions are assisting in the process to identify buildings for realignment.

Q: Will recent building improvements at a school such as new boilers, kitchens, roofs, windows and athletic facilities be considered in the decision to close?

A: Yes. Our goal has been to address immediate building needs and provide the safest and most secure environment possible for our employees and students.

Q: How much does the District expect to save by closing and consolidating buildings?

A: The District expects to reduce annual expenses by over \$27 million by 2008, assuming all of the schools identified in the Preliminary Realignment Plan are closed. This includes staff reductions at the school sites as well as savings from utilities, site maintenance and environmental. In 2007, most of the savings will be offset by the cost of closing, boarding up and securing the buildings and the cost for moving materials.

Q: Will closed school buildings and other District-owned properties be secured and maintained?

A: Yes. The District intends to be a good neighbor. We will provide sufficient window boarding and grounds maintenance on a routine basis.