BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Closure & Reconfiguration Proposal

Community Frequently Asked Questions | 2027–2028 | Updated October 21, 2026

Answers to the questions families, staff, and community members asked most often.

STATUS These are proposed changes. School assignments, staff placements, transportation, and some program details are not final.

What we heard most often

WHY THESE SCHOOLS? How each decision was made and why another school was not chosen.

WHERE WILL STUDENTS GO? Placements, school choice, special education, bilingual instruction, and safety.

WHAT ABOUT BUSES? Longer rides, late buses, walking access, and transportation cost.

WHAT ABOUT STAFF? Transfers, job reductions, seniority, and whether teachers move with students.

WHAT HAPPENS TO PROGRAMS? Science, college partnerships, career programs, clubs, and school identity.

WHAT WILL THIS SAVE? Recurring costs, buildings, offices, and revenue risk.

HOW CAN WE PARTICIPATE? Meetings, materials, timelines, and unresolved decisions.

About this FAQ The 59 questions below consolidate recurring concerns from the October 8 community town hall and October 9 staff webinar.

Proposed changes at a glance

A school may change its program or close under its current school code while its building stays in use. The summary below distinguishes those actions.

School	Proposed action	What it means for students
PS 33 – Bilingual Center	End present school model; use building for district offices and a data center	Bilingual programming proposed at PS 3, 30, 64, 76 and 156
PS 59 – Science Magnet	End present school model; use building for new Buffalo Rising Academy and Career Collegiate Institute (CCI)	PS 37, 48, 53, 74, 80, 89, 92, 99 identified as possible options
PS 17 – ECC	End present school model; use building as an administrative building	Receiving schools to be determined by student need and available seats
PS 90 – Early Childhood	Reconfigure as dedicated prekindergarten special education center	Existing students outside the new model will transfer to appropriate placements at receiving schools
PS 131 – Academy Schools	End current school; proposed building return to the City	Placements at individual secondary options, including other schools and programs
PS 208 – Riverside	End present high school model; use Riverside building for two high schools – daVinci and Research Laboratory High School	Current Riverside students require individual graduation/pathway plans
PS 212 – da Vinci	Relocate to Riverside as part of a two-school model with PS 366	Program, admissions, and staffing details remain under review
PS 366 – Research Lab	Merge into combined two-school model at Riverside; separate school identity/code would exist	College/research pathway intended to continue
PS 309 – East Community	Replace current school model with Middle Early College High School	Current students will transfer to academic and career-pathway options
PS 8 – Swing site	Continue as a swing site with some administrative functions	Not listed among current closure recommendations

Important: The listed destinations are proposed possibilities, not guaranteed placements.

Find your topic

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1 Understanding the proposal

01 What is the District proposing for 2027–2028?

ANSWER The proposal includes several different actions. The current schools at PS 17, 33, 59,131, 208, and 309 would end in their present form. PS 90 would change to a prekindergarten special education center. Research Laboratory High School (PS 366) would become part of a two-school model with Leonardo da Vinci High School (PS 212), based at the Riverside building. Middle Early College will move to the East building. Some buildings would continue to be used for schools; others would be used for district offices or other purposes. These are proposals, not completed changes.

02 Has the Board already approved the school changes?

ANSWER No final approval is established. The proposal identifies October 21, 2026, for Board consideration. Until the Board acts, the school changes and related transition arrangements are described as proposed. Families and staff will receive updates after any Board decision.

03 Why is the District considering these changes?

ANSWER BPS have more than 3,000 fewer students than in the past while continuing to operate many of the same buildings. The District also faces building repair needs, rising operating costs, a shortage of appropriate preschool special education space, and a recurring budget gap. The proposal aims to reduce the cost of underused space while protecting or improving student programs.

04 How were schools selected?

ANSWER The District reviewed several factors together: student enrollment over time, how much of each building is used, student attendance and academic results, building conditions, program needs, cost, and where students could go. It also considered services such as bilingual education, special education, career programs, and college partnerships.

05 Why are some schools with promising results included in the proposal?

ANSWER A school can have strengths and still be considered for a change because of space, cost, facilities, or the need for another program location. However, multiple metrics were used to determine the specific schools selected for closure.

06 Why weren't other small or lower-performing schools selected?

ANSWER The comparison considered the type of program a school offers and its role in the district. Community questions about PS 17 and other schools are reasonable and was addressed with side-by-side enrollment, school-program, building, and transportation information.

07 How is building capacity measured, especially in special education classrooms?

ANSWER Capacity is an estimate of how many students a building can serve under a stated classroom-size model. It is not the same as the number of usable seats for every grade or program. Self-contained special education rooms, bathrooms, shared spaces, and rooms not currently available for instruction can change usable capacity. The District will verify room-by-room capacity before finalizing receiving-school placements.

08 How does the residence of a student impact the closure proposal?

ANSWER The District created heat maps that show the ZIP codes in which students live, not their individual home addresses. The maps show that families at many of the affected schools live across Buffalo rather than in just one neighborhood. For example, the PS 33 map includes 331 students across 18 ZIP codes; the PS 82 map includes 253 students, with 127 living in 14215. These mapping totals may reflect a different data snapshot from the enrollment figures used in the proposal due to finalized basic enrollment data counts.

09 Does closing a school always mean closing its building?

ANSWER No. The proposal would reuse PS 33 for district offices, PS 17 as an administrative building,, PS 208 as the proposed home for Research Laboratory High School and Leonardo daVinci, and PS 309 for the Middle Early College. PS 90 would remain in educational use with a different grade configuration. The stated plans for PS 59 is that it will become the new home for Buffalo Rising Academy and Career Collegiate Institute. Final property and renovation decisions require separate confirmation.

2 Student assignments and support

10 Where will students attend school if their current school changes?

ANSWER Students would be matched with receiving schools based on their grade, educational program, available seats, special education services, language needs, and transportation. The proposal identifies possible elementary receiving schools including PS 37, 48, 53, 74, 80, 89, 92, and 99, along with PS 3, 30, 64, 76, 156 for bilingual programming. High school placements would also consider courses and progress toward graduation.

11 When will families know their child's new school?

ANSWER The proposal calls for family transition meetings after Board action, followed by registration help, school visits, program reviews, and placement information before the 2027–2028 school year. It does not provide a confirmed date on which every family will receive a final assignment. Families should receive school-specific information before they are expected to make transportation or childcare arrangements.

12 Will families be able to choose a different school?

ANSWER Family preferences are among the factors the District plans to consider, but no document guarantees admission to a particular receiving school. Available seats, grade levels, program requirements, and admission rules will affect options. The District will publish the school-choice and appeal process, including how families can request another placement when travel, safety, or program access is a concern.

13 Will siblings and classmates be kept together?

ANSWER Sibling continuity will be considered when possible. It does not promise that every student or friendship group will stay together. School assignments must also account for grade levels, services, and available space. Families who need siblings placed together will have a clear way to explain that need during the transition meetings and placement process.

14 How will services for students with disabilities continue?

ANSWER Special education services must be considered for each child, not only for an entire school or grade. The proposed approach calls for reviewing each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), classroom setting, required therapies, support staff, transportation, and receiving-school capacity before placement. The materials do not yet identify every classroom location or staff assignment. Those plans need to be confirmed and discussed with families.

15 Will class sizes increase?

ANSWER The school closure proposal is not intended to change the District's existing class-size framework. They identify 18 students for pre-kindergarten, 25 for kindergarten through grade 3, and 30 for grades 4–12 as the general planning figures in use for 2026–2027 school year. Specialized classes may have different required limits.

16 How will students be helped with the emotional impact of moving schools?

ANSWER The transition plan includes orientation, school visits, family meetings, individual support reviews, and follow-up during the first 90 days of the new school year. Students may also need time with counselors, trusted adults, and peers. Resources shared with impacted schools currently address ways in which the school should support students and staff who are grappling with the proposal. The District will develop school-specific plans for welcoming students and responding to worries about loss of community, friendships, routines, and safety.

17 How will the District address bullying and differences in school culture?

ANSWER The proposal recognizes that receiving schools need to be suitable for students. The District will review safety concerns, explain how families can report incidents, and provide orientations and adult check-ins for students who transfer. School climate concerns raised during public meetings will be considered before final assignments.

18 Will school starting times or after-school activities change?

ANSWER The proposal does not establish a change bell schedules, start-time tiers, or activity transportation for every receiving school. Families and employees should expect the start and end times to remain the same as stated for the 2026-2027 school year.

3 Transportation and neighborhood access

19 Will students have longer bus rides?

ANSWER Some proposed moves could increase travel for individual students, even if the District reduces the number of routes overall. Exact ride times, stops, and routes have not been established in the proposal. However, if eliminated bus routes are repurposed within the projected routes, delays could be reduced.

20 How can transportation improve when buses are already late?

ANSWER The District acknowledges an average of about eight to ten late or delayed buses each day. The proposal assumes that combining some school routes could free buses for other needs.

21 What is being done to hold the bus company accountable?

ANSWER Current bus performance and contract accountability are separate from the school closure proposal.

22 How will the plan affect children who currently walk to school?

ANSWER Walking distance and neighborhood access are important placement concerns, especially for younger students. A move could change whether a family can walk and whether transportation is required. The District will check proposed assignments against walking eligibility, safe routes, and actual travel burden before making decisions.

23 How much money is the District expecting to save on transportation?

ANSWER If all 8 routes are eliminated, there is an estimate of $1 million in annual transportation savings. That amount is a planning estimate. If eliminated bus routes are repurposed within the projected routes, delays could be reduced; however, transportation savings will also be reduced.

24 Why is PS 33 proposed for closure?

ANSWER The District identifies PS 33 as the smallest of the four bilingual schools in its comparison and the highest in that group for school-based cost per student. It also notes a history of state school-improvement identification. Additionally, PS 33 is the smallest school in the Park school district. The Board of Education requested that a school from each district be suggested in the proposal. The recommendation is based on those factors together with building use and the plan to continue bilingual instruction at other schools. The proposal does not claim that PS 33 has the lowest results on every academic measure.

25 Does the PS 33 proposal assume bilingual students live on the West Side?

ANSWER No. PS 33 students live across 18 ZIP codes, including 14215, 14204, 14201, 14211, and 14210. The proposal identifies PS 3, PS 30, PS 64, PS 76, and PS 156 as potential schools for continuing bilingual instruction.

26 Will bilingual instruction and certified bilingual teachers continue?

ANSWER The proposal calls for preserving bilingual instruction and English language support as students move, with certified bilingual staff assigned as needed.

27 Why is PS 59 proposed for closure?

ANSWER The District identifies a decline in enrollment since PS 59 and PS 90 became separate schools, underutilized space in the building, and continuing facility and safety concerns. It does not describe PS 59 as the most expensive school or say its museum connection has no value. The proposal includes possible student placements and continued science learning opportunities.

28 What will happen to PS 59's connection with the Buffalo Museum of Science?

ANSWER The new proposal discusses using the space for the Buffalo Rising Academy and Career Collegiate Institute.

29 Where could PS 59 students go, and can the science program continue?

ANSWER The proposed options include PS 99 for some students to continue science-focused learning, as well as schools such as PS 48 and PS 92 depending on grade, seats, and needs.

30 Why was PS 82 proposed for closure?

ANSWER PS 82 has a relatively small enrollment, the highest school-based cost per student in the early-childhood comparison, and renewed state school-improvement identification of CSI. The former proposal also recognized that attendance and some academic results improved. The recommended action is to close PS 17.

31 Why PS 82 and not PS 17, which has a similar number of students?

ANSWER Enrollment is not the only factor the District says it used. The proposal considers student outcomes, program type, cost, building needs, and other available schools. The residence maps show that PS 82 has many students in 14215, while PS 17 draws students from a different mix of ZIP codes; hence the addition of PS 17 to school closures. The mix of zip codes spreads the shift in transportation load throughout our system.

32 What will happen to PS 17 students who need specialized classrooms or who walk to school?

ANSWER The District will identify appropriate classrooms and services for children with disabilities, including students who need smaller, specialized settings. It would also address families who currently walk to PS 17. Classroom accessibility, age-appropriate settings, transportation, and individual IEP requirements will be checked before assignments are issued.

33 Is PS 90 closing or changing its purpose?

ANSWER The proposal is to change PS 90 into a center focused on prekindergarten special education, responding to the District's need for more specialized preschool space. That differs from shutting down the building. Children whose present programs would not continue at PS 90 will receive appropriate placements elsewhere. Details about classrooms, staffing, start times, and family transitions remain to be finalized.

34 Is PS 90 ready to serve more prekindergarten children with disabilities?

ANSWER The proposal identifies the need for more prekindergarten special education seats. The number of classrooms could support the request for additional prekindergarten seats for students with disabilities. The District will complete a facility and program readiness review and correct any issues before children are placed there.

5 High school changes and pathways

35 Why is PS 131 proposed for closure?

ANSWER PS 131 has a very small enrollment, a low graduation rate, a long history of CSI/Receivership, and an unusually high school-based cost per student. The proposal would end the current school and return its building to the City of Buffalo. Students would need individual plans, which could include CCI, Buffalo Rising Academy if eligible, GED programming, or another appropriate school placement.

36 Why is East Community High School (PS 309) being changed if enrollment grew?

ANSWER The proposal acknowledges that PS 309's enrollment grew. The concern is that attendance and graduation results declined during the period reviewed. The District therefore proposes a different school model at the same location rather than simply leaving the building empty. Students who currently attend PS 309 would need clear options for continuing their education and career programs.

37 What is Buffalo Rising Academy, and who will be able to attend?

ANSWER Buffalo Rising Academy is a proposed school model developed in response to a community-identified need, with PS 59 identified as its potential home. The proposal describes it as a new educational opportunity. The enrollment requirements will be shared at a later date.

38 What will happen to current Riverside High School (PS 208) students?

ANSWER The proposal would end Riverside's current school model and use the building for the two-school model of da Vinci and Research Laboratory high school. Riverside students will receive individual graduation plans, with appropriate options to continue academic and career programs at schools with space.

39 Why combine Leonardo da Vinci (PS 212) and Research Laboratory (PS 366)?

ANSWER The proposal shares that PS 366's lease is ending and its site lacks a traditional cafeteria, auditorium and gym, while da Vinci needs a lasting location with improved facilities. The Riverside building offers space for a two-school high school building. The proposal describes keeping valuable college-connected and research opportunities, not simply eliminating them. The schools currently have different admissions approaches, programs, and cultures, so the details of a two-school model require further discussion. Both schools would exist in the same school building and maintain separate identities.

40 Why move da Vinci and Research Laboratory to Riverside instead of PS 8, East, or another location?

ANSWER The proposal identifies Riverside as a building large enough to support the combined model and its school activities. The planned Buffalo State location for da Vinci is not financially feasible under current conditions. The community recommended the use of East as the new home for daVinci and Research Laboratory. This is currently under review.

41 How will admissions work when one school uses criteria and the other uses a lottery?

ANSWER There could be a possible mix of criteria-based and lottery-based seats, but that is not a final admissions policy. No particular admissions ratio or exception is recommended at this stage.

42 Will students still have university partnerships, clubs, sports, and research opportunities?

ANSWER These opportunities will be preserved and, where possible, expanded through the two-school model. Families and staff have raised specific concerns about university courses, science fairs, clubs, research sites, athletics, and travel between locations.

43 Can students continue their career and technical education programs?

ANSWER The proposal lists career pathway options at several schools, including conservation, health and wellness, entrepreneurship, public safety, and paralegal studies. Student transfers would need to match their chosen programs and graduation requirements with available seats. The District will verify each student's credits, required courses, transportation, and program sequence so a move does not put graduation or career preparation at risk.

6 Employees and school operations

44 Will teachers or other employees lose their jobs?

ANSWER The District's planning estimates include 73 Buffalo Teachers Federation positions, but 20 of those reductions were already included in earlier plans and 53 are connected with this proposal. Estimates also identify eight school-administrator positions and reductions in some other employee groups. These are position estimates, not a confirmed list of employees who will lose jobs. Vacancies, leaves, retirements, contracts, and final school staffing will affect the results.

45 Will teachers and support staff move with their students?

ANSWER The proposal recognizes that keeping educators connected to students and specialized programs can support successful transitions. The District does not guarantee that all current staff will automatically move together. Actual assignments must account for certification, positions available, student needs, and collective bargaining agreements. Human Resources explained the assignment process during the staff webinars held Friday, October 9, 2026.

46 How will transfers, seniority, tenure, and vacancies be handled?

ANSWER Individual decisions will follow the applicable employment contractual agreements and rules.

47 Will employees have to change their work hours or school locations?

ANSWER Some staff could be assigned to different buildings or schedules under the proposal. Specific bell schedules and final staff assignments have not been shared.

48 Are reductions at City Hall and district offices also being considered?

ANSWER The proposal includes moving central office teams from buildings with facility or space needs into buildings proposed for administrative use. The reductions will occur through the School-based budget process.

49 Is an early-retirement option available?

ANSWER Early retirement incentives are being explored.

7 Financial impact, accountability, and next steps

50 How serious is the District's financial challenge?

ANSWER The 2026–2027 general fund budget is approximately $1.212 billion. The District plans to use $66.2 million from reserves to balance that budget, with an estimated $260.2 million remaining afterward. The proposal explains that drawing down reserves year after year cannot be a permanent solution. School changes are one strategy the District has identified for reducing ongoing costs.

51 How much would the newly proposed changes save?

ANSWER The savings estimate approximately $19 million in annual operating savings and separately identify an estimated $1 million transportation impact. Actual results depend on staffing, students' new schools, transportation routes, building operating costs, any lost enrollment, and transition expenses.

52 Why use closed school buildings for offices if the goal is to save money?

ANSWER The District also has central office teams working in buildings that need repairs or could be used more fully for students. Reusing PS 33 and PS 17 for offices is intended to consolidate space and address those needs. However, buildings that remain open still cost money to operate, but not at the same threshold needed if the building were occupied by students.

53 Why not repair schools rather than move students?

ANSWER Repairs and school programming are both part of the decision. The proposal considers building maintenance needs along with enrollment, space, and educational outcomes. The District continues to operate beyond its current enrollment. To correct this practice, school closures and consolidations are necessary.

54 Could the District lose state revenue if families leave BPS?

ANSWER Yes, enrollment changes can affect funding, and families have raised that concern. The District intends to retain families by protecting programs and providing workable placements.

55 When can families and staff ask questions or offer alternatives?

ANSWER The engagement plan includes community town halls, employee meetings, meetings with partner organizations, school-level conversations, and opportunities to submit written feedback. The proposal includes virtual and in-person events before Board consideration and student-specific meetings after a decision. Suggestions about different receiving schools, transportation, special services, and school configurations will be recorded and considered. Feedback forms are posted on the district webpage in the top languages of the school suggested for closure.

56 When are school-specific transition meetings proposed?

ANSWER The presentation lists proposed family meetings for *PS 17 on (TBD)*; PS 59 and PS 90 on November 9; PS 131 and PS 208 on November 12; PS 212 and PS 366 on November 14; PS 309 on November 21; and PS 33 on December 1, 2026. These dates are part of the proposed schedule and will be confirmed by the District after Board action. Families should receive direct notice of locations, times, accessibility, and interpretation services.

57 Will presentation materials, webinar recordings, questions, and translations be available?

ANSWER The outreach plan calls for public materials, an FAQ, a feedback process, interpretation at in-person meetings, and translated information.

58 How will the District know whether the changes are working?

ANSWER The proposed transition plan calls for monitoring student attendance, required services, class size, student belonging, and family concerns during the first 90 days.

59 What decisions are still open?

ANSWER This is a proposal. All decisions are still open. The District continues to use feedback gathered to determine a finalized proposal for board approval.