

BUFFALO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Closure Proposal
2027 – 2028



BUFFALO BOARD OF EDUCATION



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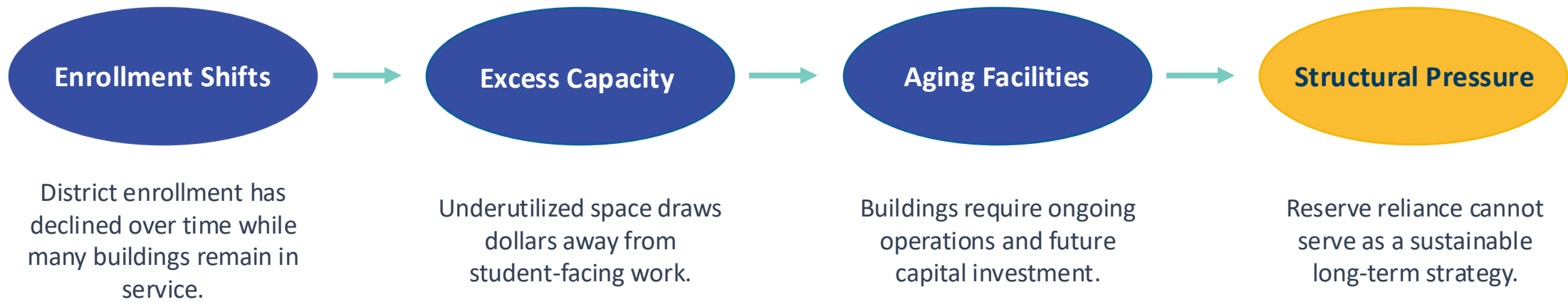


Hon. Lawrence Scott
Board Member At Large



Why Change is Necessary

BPS must maintain high-quality programming while responding to enrollment decline, underutilized space, aging facilities, and fiscal pressure.



Consolidate underutilized space and reinvest resources where they most directly support students.

Why the district is considering structural change

Enrollment & reserves

3,000+ fewer students

The district continues to carry a system footprint built for a larger enrollment while reserves are being used to close recurring gaps.

Special education

More PreK SPED capacity

Additional space and supports are needed for a growing number of preschool special education students entering the district.

Facilities & leases

Several urgent moves

PS 366's lease ends; DaVinci needs a permanent home; PS 4 has major boiler concerns; PS 59 still needs safety improvements.

Access & pathways

AP / CTE / NY Inspires

NY Inspires increases the need for broader AP access and CTE pathways; Buffalo Rising Academy is identified as a community-driven need.

Transportation

Daily delays

An average of 8–10 delayed/late buses each day and a need to reduce transportation burden.

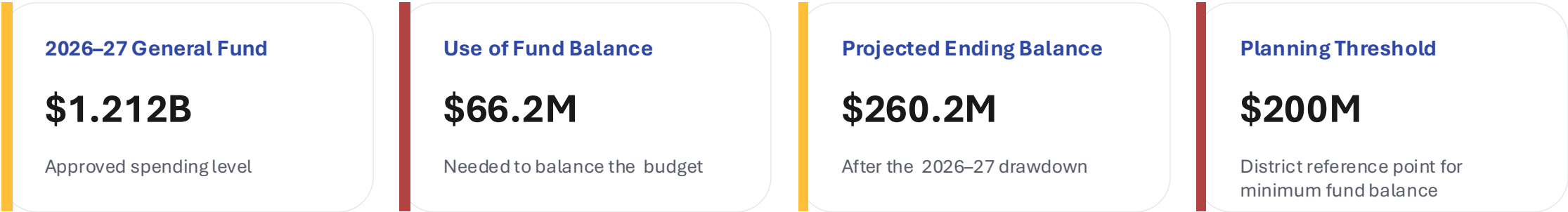
Board direction

Six board districts

The Board request calls for one closure in each of the six board districts.

The financial pressure is structural

This proposal responds to a recurring gap, not a one-year budget problem.



The 2026–27 budget states that this is the last year the District can rely on a significant use of reserves and identifies school closures in 2027–28 as the remaining strategy to materially reduce the structural deficit.

This is why the closure conversation must connect educational quality, utilization and cost, not treat any one metric as the decision.



Guiding Principles

The proposal should be judged by what students retain, gain, and experience, not by the number of buildings alone.

Student success first

Every transition should protect access to rigorous instruction and student supports.

Preserve high-value programs

Bilingual, special education, CTE, and university-connected pathways should move with students.

Invest in learning, not empty space

Shift resources from underutilized facilities toward classrooms, staffing, interventions, and programs.

Comparable or stronger placements

Receiving schools must have capacity and programming that meets or exceeds current student needs.

Equity and cultural responsiveness

Bilingual families and other high-need communities should retain appropriate language and cultural supports.

Transparent implementation

Public engagement, clear transition rules, and visible progress monitoring should guide implementation.

The Proposal

This proposal is not simply about reducing buildings. It is about creating stronger schools.

The recommendation aligns facilities with current enrollment, protects student supports, and redirects limited resources toward classrooms and programs.

1 Student Opportunity

Strengthen access to academic programming, intervention, CTE pathways, and special education services.

2 Responsible Stewardship

Reduce underutilized space, facility costs, lease exposure, and future capital liabilities.

3 Long-Term Stability

Protect the District's ability to invest in teaching, learning, staffing, and student supports.

Guiding Principles

The proposal considered school in each district, identifying schools with low student enrollment, especially in specific programs such as early childhood centers, bilingual programs, elementary programming, and high school pathways in across the six districts.

Central District	East District	Ferry District
Hon. Lewis D. Hawkins	Hon. Dr. Kathy Evans-Brown	Hon. Stephon Wright
6 BEST 17 Early Childhood Center 31 Harriet Ross Tubman 32 Bennett Pk. Montessori 37 Futures Academy 42 Occupational Training Center 48@39 MLK Multicultural Institute 59 Drew Science Magnet 99 Makowski ECC 192 Bflo. Academy Visual & Performing Arts 195 City Honors School 302 Emerson School of Hospitality 304 Hutchinson Technical High School 355 Buffalo School of Culinary Arts and Hospitality Management Adult Education	43 Lovejoy Discovery School 80 Highgate Heights Elementary 82 Early Childhood Center 90 Drew Science Magnet ECC 92 BUILD Community School 97 Harvey Austin School 156 Olmsted School 309 East Community High School	53 Community School 54 Dr. Blackman School of Excellence 61 Early Childhood Center 74 Hamlin Park School 84 Erie County Health Center 89 Lydia T. Wright School of Excellence 197 Math, Science, Technology School (9-12) 363 Lewis J. Bennett High School 301 Burgard High School 366 Research Laboratory High School for Bioinformatics & Life Sciences 415 Middle Early College High School Adult Education
North District	Park District	West District
Hon. Roscoe Henderson	Hon. Erik T. Bohen	Hon. Talia Rodriguez
64 Olmsted School 65 Roosevelt ECC 50 North Park Academy 79 PFC William J. Grabiarz School of Excellence 81 PreK-8 School 94 West Hertel Academy 131 Academy School @86 305 McKinley High School Adult Education	27 Hillery Park Academy 33 Bilingual Center 67 Discovery School 69 Houghton Academy 72 Lorraine Academy 93 Southside Elementary 206 South Park High School Adult Education	3 D'Youville Porter 18 Dr. Pantoja School of Excellence 19 Native American Magnet 30 Sedita Community School 45 International School 76 Herman Badillo Bilingual 95 Waterfront School 198 International Preparatory School 207 Lafayette International High School 208 Riverside Academy 212 Leonardo daVinci High School Adult Education

Metrics for School Selection

The proposal reflects a multi-factor review; no single measure should be viewed as conclusive.

Enrollment & Trend Data

Current enrollment, multiyear trends, and the sustainability of student cohorts.

Building Utilization

Available seats, use of instructional space, and excess capacity.

Program Sustainability

Enrollment in programs and the ability to maintain a strong educational offer.

Facility & Operating Requirements

Ongoing building costs, lease arrangements, capital needs, and operating efficiency.

Nearby Placement Options

Capacity to place students in nearby schools with comparable or stronger programming.

Preserve Specialized Pathways

Ability to maintain bilingual/ENL, special education, CTE, and university-connected programs.

Staffing & Resource Alignment

Opportunities to move staff and supports with students and address needs in receiving schools.

Long-term stability

Educational impact, fiscal sustainability, and the ability to reinvest in student-facing supports.

Protect high-value programs and shift resources toward student-facing supports.

What the data tells us

A strong recommendation requires the same questions across school types, then a school-specific explanation.

Enrollment

5-year trend

Is the school sustaining enough students to support a strong program?

Student outcomes

Graduation rate, Attendance rate, Proficiency

Are students consistently accessing and succeeding in instruction?

Accountability

LSI / ATSI / CSI

Is improvement sustained, or has low performance persisted?

Fiscal efficiency

Cost per pupil

How much is invested per student, and can resources be better concentrated?

Additional considerations include location, facility needs, specialized programs, transportation, receiving-school capacity, and the value of the proposed reuse.

Close

When the educational + fiscal case points to a more sustainable placement

Repurpose

When the building remains useful, but the current school model is not sustainable

Merge

When programs are valuable but separate footprints are inefficient

Reconfigure

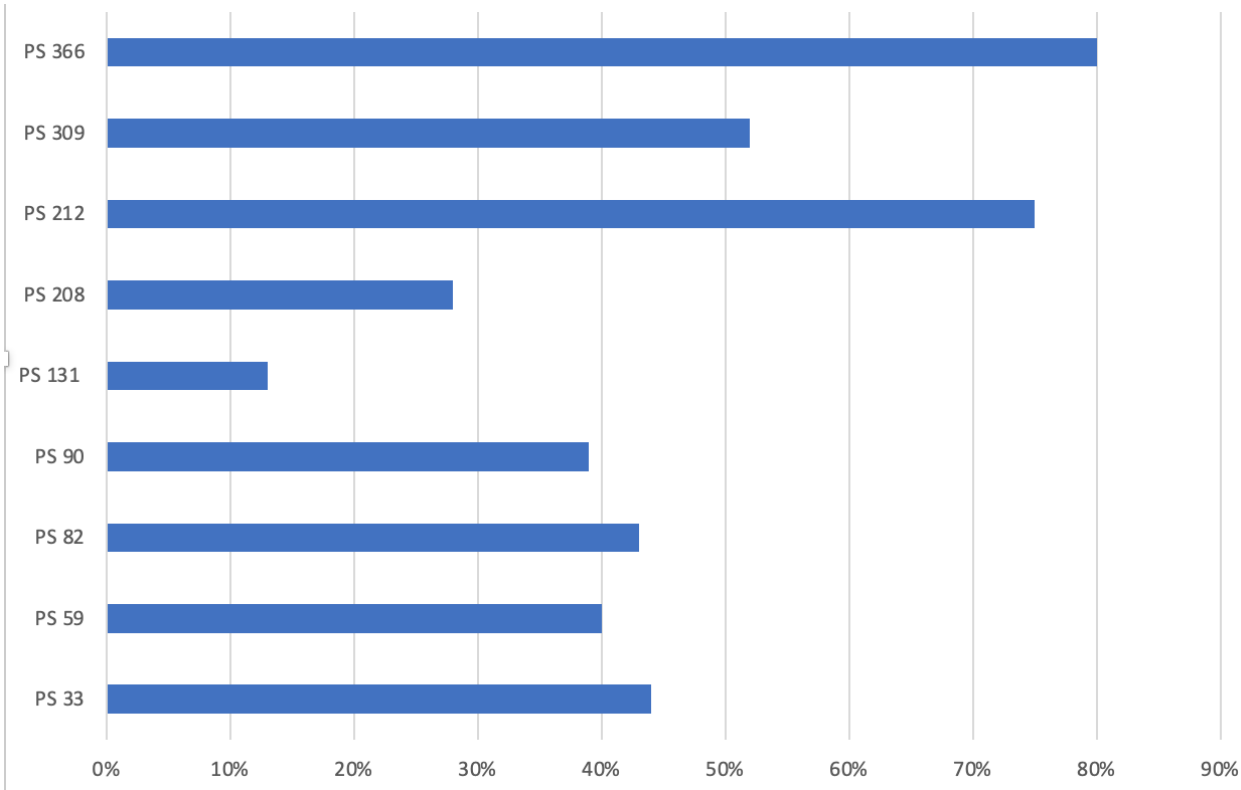
When the building can meet a higher-priority district need



Enrollment and capacity add critical context

A school’s size only becomes meaningful when considered against the space being operated and the action being proposed.

Preliminary 2026–27 utilization



This proposal uses different actions. Low utilization can support closure or repurposing; stronger utilization can support preservation of an impactful program.

PS 59

40% utilized

263 preliminary students compared with capacity of 657.

PS 82

43% utilized

252 preliminary students compared with capacity of 588.

PS 33

44% utilized

367 preliminary students compared with capacity of 767.

PS 212 / 366

75% / 80%

Higher utilization supports a merger/relocation rationale rather than a simple low-enrollment closure.

PS 131

13% utilized

The clearest stand-alone sustainability challenge.

PS 309

52% utilized

379 preliminary students compared with capacity of 727.

PS 208

28% utilized

275 preliminary students compared with capacity of 988.



PS 33: why this recommendation is different

The case is not “cost alone.” It is the combined effect of scale, long-standing performance, location, and the ability to preserve bilingual programming elsewhere.

Smallest Park District school

367 students

2025–26 BEDS enrollment; district context identifies PS 33 as the smallest school in the Park District.

Highest-cost bilingual school

\$22,715 / pupil

Highest among PS 3, 30, 33 and 76 in the budget comparison.

Long-standing low performance

CSI since 2022–23

The bilingual comparison shows PS 33 in CSI for four consecutive years.

Program can move

PS 3 • 30 • 76

Proposal keeps bilingual programming and consolidates certified bilingual staff.

Location matters

PS 33’s location creates a distinct geographic footprint within the Park District. The recommendation is being presented as a deliberate consolidation of a smaller school, not as removal of bilingual services from the district.

What students retain

- Bilingual/ENL programming
- Certified bilingual teachers
- Family transition support
- Access to larger, more stable school communities

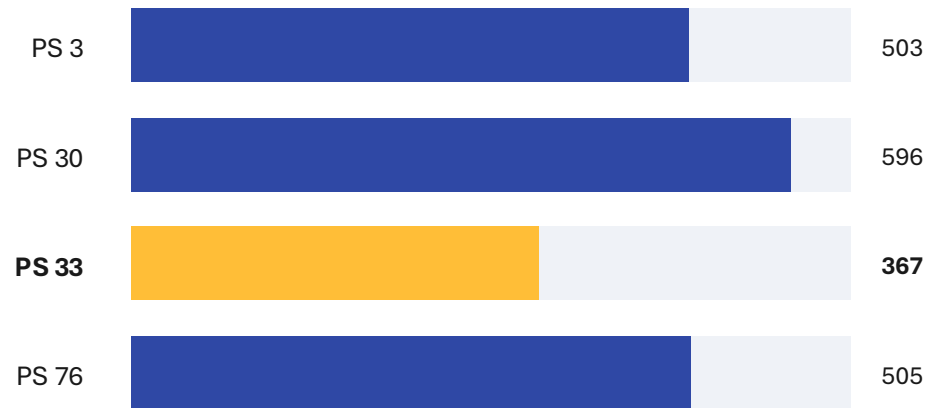
We are consolidating a small, high-cost, persistently low-performing school while preserving the bilingual program and moving resources with students.



PS 33 in context: bilingual elementary schools

PS 33 is the smallest school in the bilingual comparison and carries the highest school-based cost per pupil.

2025–26 BEDS enrollment



2026–27 budget cost per pupil



Attendance | 2025–26

80.37%

Comparable to PS 3 (79.26%) and PS 30 (81.44%); above PS 76 (75.19%).

ELA proficiency | 2025–26

12.79%

Below PS 30 (16.90%); above PS 3 (8.37%) and PS 76 (7.14%).

Math proficiency | 2025–26

14.95%

Near PS 30 (15.38%); above PS 3 (13.44%) and PS 76 (8.46%).

Outcomes alone do not make PS 33 uniquely lowest-performing among bilingual schools. When accountability history, small scale, cost, Park District context, and preservation of bilingual programming are considered together, the rationale to close become stronger.



PS 59: why this recommendation is different

PS 59 is not a “highest-cost” closure. PS 59 is underutilization, with declining enrollment, facility/safety considerations, and a credible transition plan.

Enrollment after merger

350 → 263

From 2023–24 to preliminary 2026–27: down 87 students, about 25%.

Building utilization

40%

263 preliminary students compared with a stated large-capacity figure of 657.

Cost per pupil

\$19,804

Above the elementary comparison average (\$18,896), but not the highest.

Building condition / use

Strategic reuse

The proposal notes continued safety needs and returns classroom space to the Buffalo Museum of Science.

What makes the recommendation valid

- A school operating at less than half of stated capacity
- Enrollment continuing to decline after the PS 59 / PS 90 merger
- Resources can be concentrated in nearby schools with available seats
- The building has a defined post-closure use rather than remaining vacant

What students can retain

- Continuity in STEM programming for eligible students through PS 99
- Nearby receiving-school options such as PS 48 and PS 92
- Individual review of IEP, sibling, transportation, and program needs
- Family transition meetings, registration support, and school visits

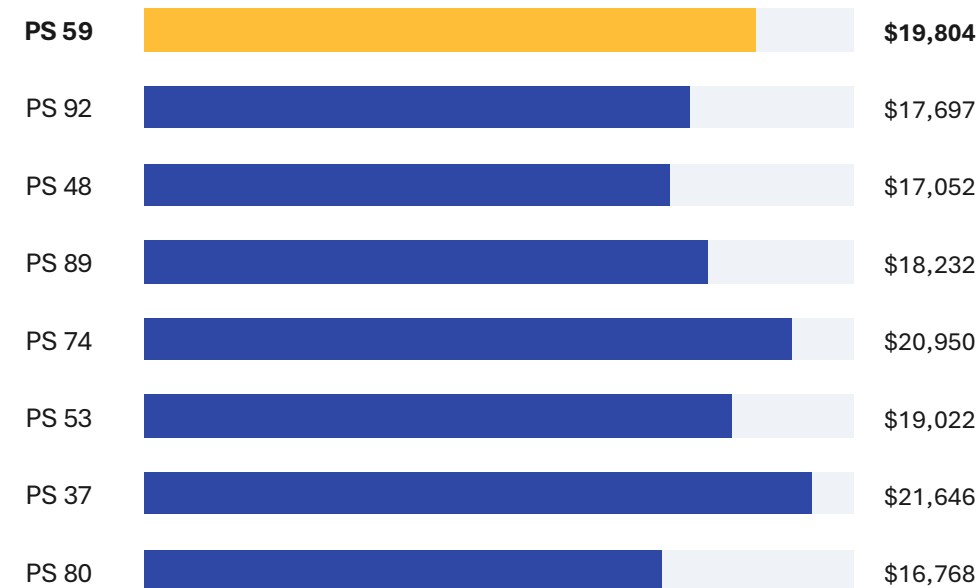
PS 59 is a utilization and portfolio decision, not a claim that the school is the District’s most expensive elementary program.



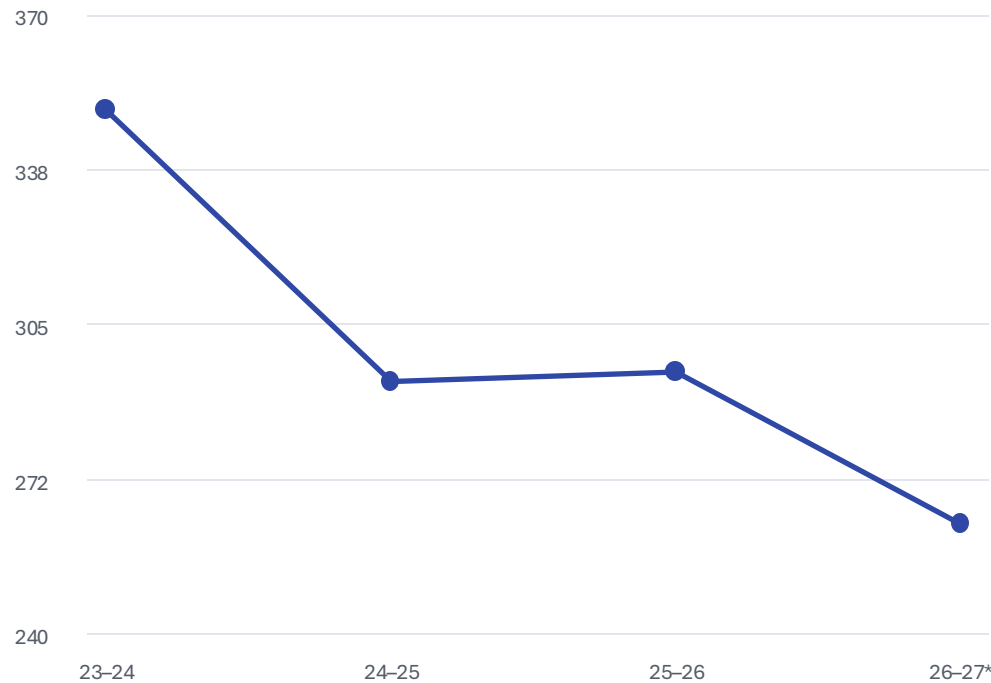
PS 59 in context: the utilization case is stronger than the cost case

Cost provides context; enrollment, capacity, facility use, and transition options explain the recommendation.

2026–27 elementary cost per pupil



Enrollment trend after PS 59 / PS 90 merger



Group cost position

Near the middle

PS 59 is about \$908 (4.8%) above the simple elementary comparison average.

Capacity

657 seats

Preliminary 2026–27 enrollment uses about 40% of the stated capacity.

Transition advantage

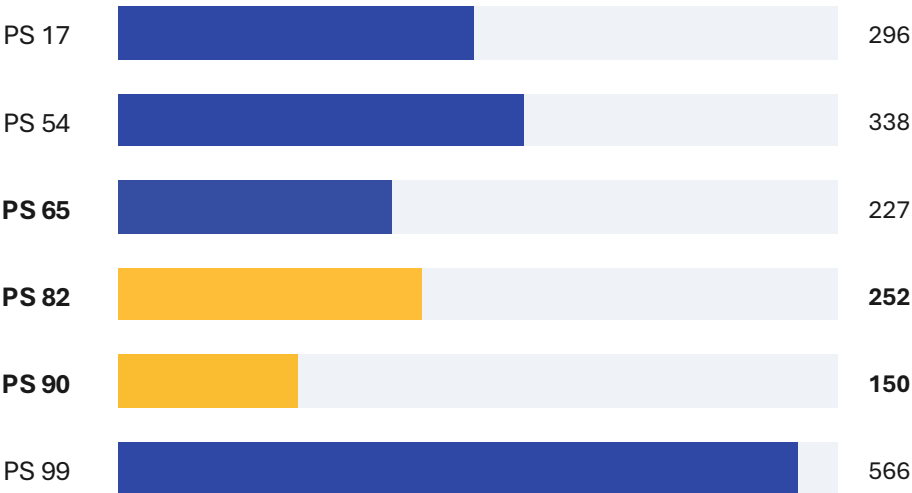
Defined options

PS 99 can preserve STEM continuity for some students; other nearby schools can receive students based on capacity and need.



Early Childhood Centers: two different problems, two different actions

2025–26 BEDS enrollment



PS 82

252 students

Down from 279 in 2021–22; CSI in 2025–26 after three years of LSI.

PS 90

150 students

Smallest ECC; moved from LSI to CSI.

PS 82 action

Close + repurpose

Use the building for administrative functions; transition students to nearby schools.

PS 90 action

Reconfigure

Use the building to meet the growing need for a dedicated PreK Special Education Center.

The District is not applying a one-size-fits-all closure formula. It is matching each building to the strongest educational and operational use.



PS 82: the data supports repurposing

PS 82 combines declining enrollment, renewed CSI identification, and one of the highest per-pupil costs in the ECC budget comparison.



2026–27 ECC budget cost per pupil



PS 82 is the highest-cost school in this six-school ECC budget comparison at \$22,629 per pupil. Repurposing keeps the building in District use while allowing students to move into more sustainable school settings.



PS 131: the clearest sustainability challenge

Across enrollment, attendance, graduation, accountability and cost, PS 131 is an extreme outlier.

Enrollment

95 → 49

Down 48% from 2021–22 to 2025–26.

Attendance

65.80%

Improved from 42.84%, but remains low for a high school.

Graduation rate

12.00%

2025–26 cohort measure in the work-session dataset.

Cost per pupil

\$87,918

Far above the other high schools in the budget comparison.

Accountability trajectory

CSI → CSI → CSI/Receivership → CSI/Receivership → CSI/Receivership

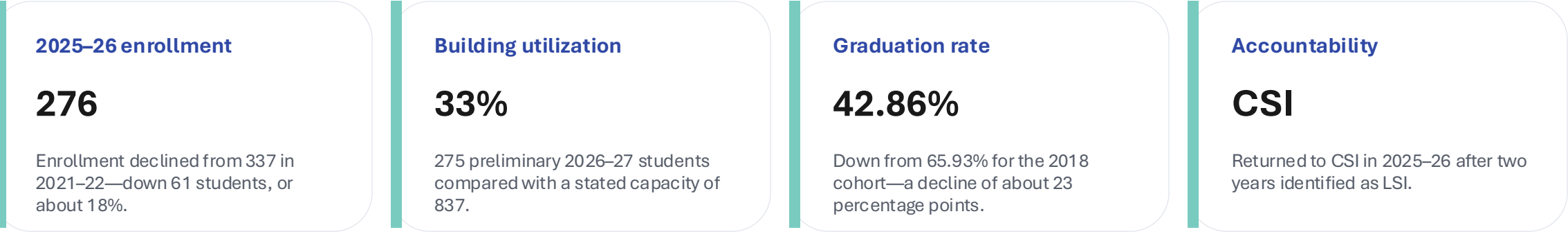
The recommendation to close PS 131 is supported by multiple independent indicators, not a single metric. The transition plan should focus on placing each student into the strongest available pathway: CCI, Buffalo Rising Academy, GED, or another appropriate seat.

Continuing a stand-alone school at this scale does not provide students with the breadth, stability, or fiscal sustainability available in stronger programs.



PS 208: why this recommendation is different

PS 208 is not primarily a cost-driven recommendation. The case is low building utilization, weaker secondary outcomes, and the opportunity to use a large District site to preserve and strengthen the PS 212 + PS 366 programs.



Strategic + program context

PS 212 and PS 366 are approximately 89% and 95% utilized. Their preliminary 2026–27 enrollment totals 577 students, compared with PS 208's 837-seat capacity.

Moving the combined PS 212 + PS 366 model to Riverside would use roughly 69% of the PS 208 capacity, while preserving the daVinci/Research Lab pathway and college-connected programming.

Current PS 208 students would receive transition support and the opportunity to enroll in available CTE pathways or other appropriate secondary placements.

What the data says

PS 208 combines substantial excess capacity with weak secondary outcomes. At the same time, the Riverside site is large enough to house programs that are currently operating in much tighter space. This makes the recommendation a repurposing decision, not simply a closure.

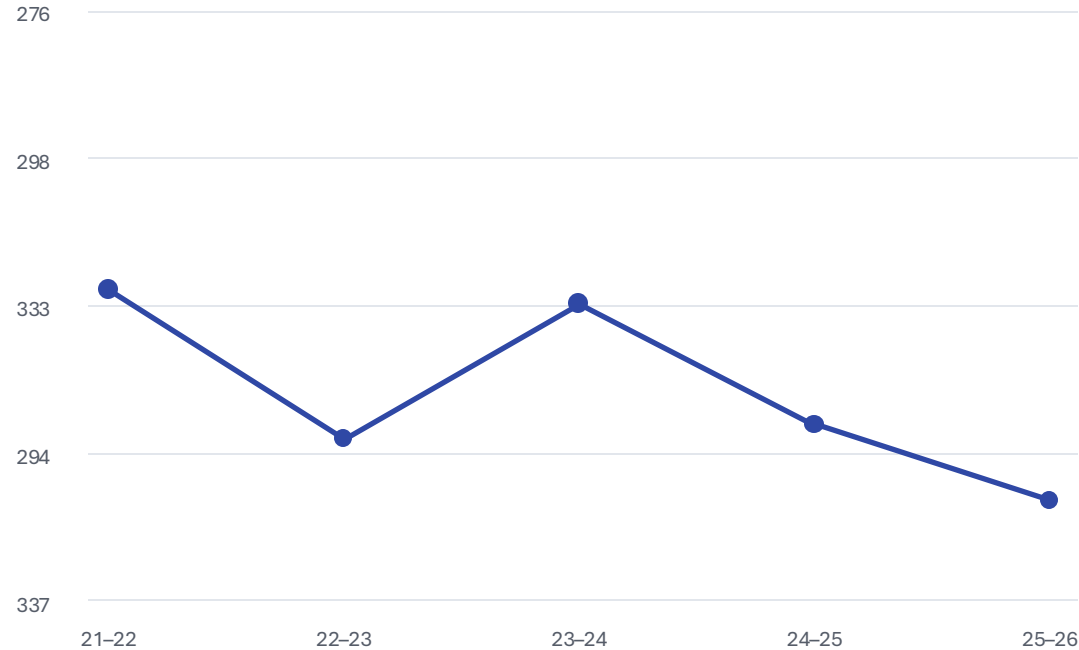
PS 208 is a repurposing decision. Sunset the current school model, transition current students through appropriate CTE and graduation pathways, and use Riverside to create a stronger combined home for PS 212 and PS 366.



PS 208: enrollment decline and underutilization

The five-year data shows that the issue is not one metric alone. It is the combination of declining enrollment, weak secondary outcomes, and the opportunity to repurpose a large site for stronger programs.

BEDS enrollment

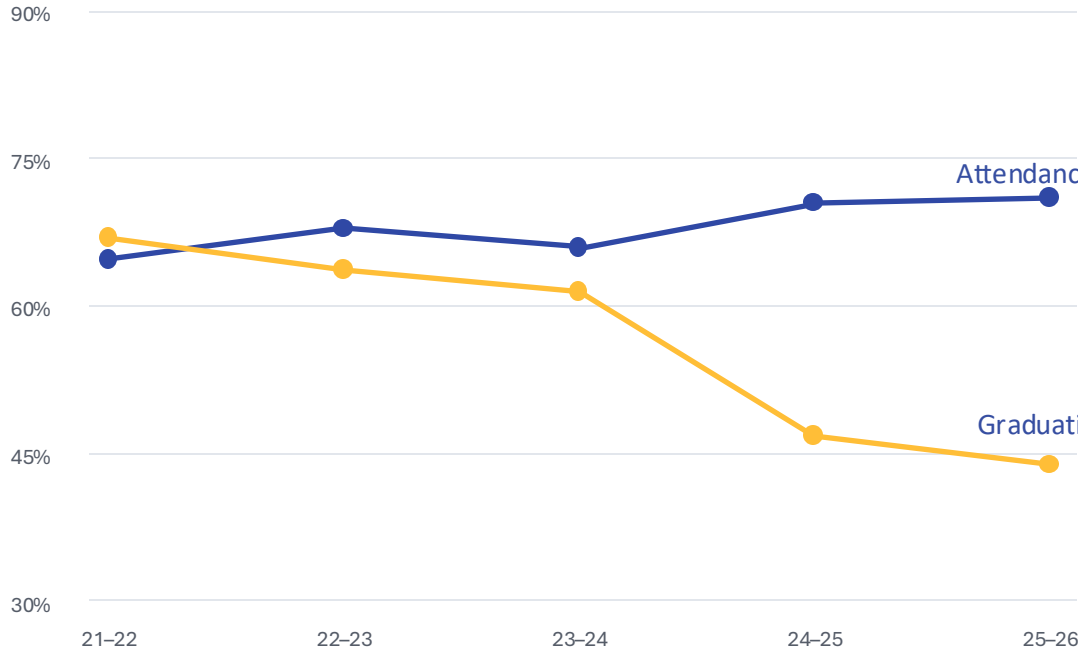


Enrollment

-61 students

337 → 276 from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

Attendance and graduation rate



Graduation

-23.07 points

65.93% → 42.86% over the same period.

2025-26 status

CSI

After Good Standing in 2021-22, CSI in 2022-23, and LSI in 2023-25.



PS 309: why this recommendation is different

PS 309 is not being recommended because enrollment disappeared. The case is weakening outcomes, high operating cost relative to peers, and the opportunity to reimagine the site for Buffalo Rising Academy.

2025–26 enrollment

396

Enrollment grew from 276 in 2021–22; this is not primarily a low-enrollment closure.

Attendance

61.72%

Lowest 2025–26 attendance among the non-criterion high schools in the attached work-session dataset.

Graduation rate

38.71%

Second-lowest 2025–26 graduation rate in the attached comparison, ahead of PS 131 only.

Accountability

CSI

Returned to CSI in 2025–26 after two years identified as LSI.

Fiscal + strategic context

\$20,152 per pupil, above the roughly \$18,219 average of the nine comparison high schools when PS 131 is excluded.

The building remains educationally valuable: the proposal uses PS 309 as the new home for Buffalo Rising Academy.

Current students retain options to enroll in Buffalo Rising Academy or continue in available CTE pathways.

What the data says

Enrollment has increased while attendance and graduation outcomes have weakened. That combination points to a need to change the educational model, not simply maintain the current configuration because seats are filled.

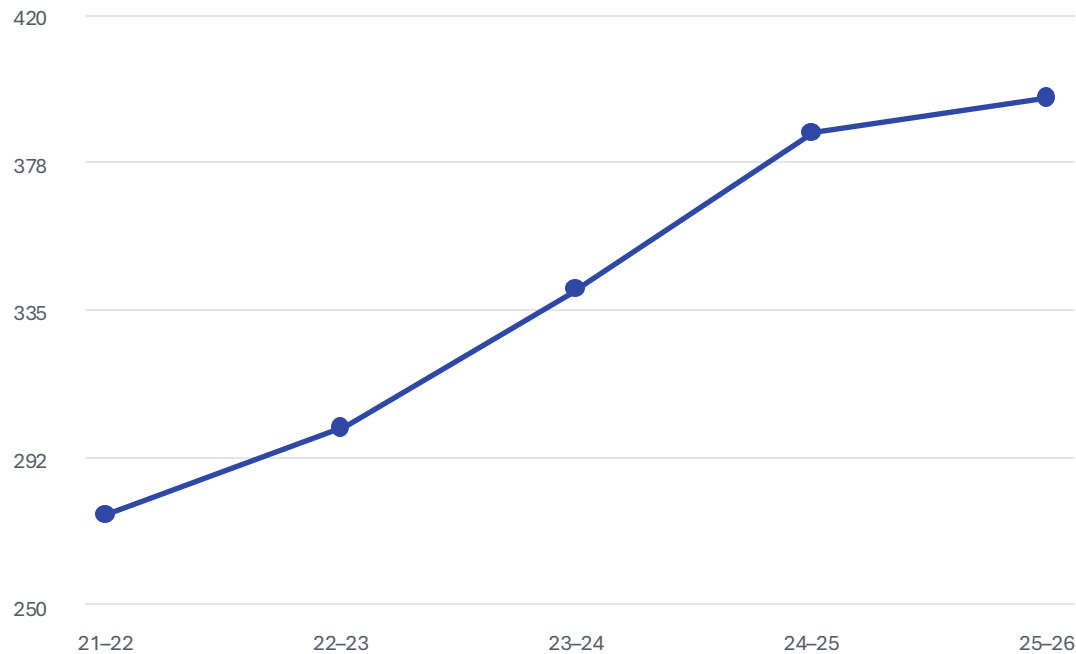
PS 309 is a reimagination decision. Keep the East site in active educational use while replacing a struggling model with a community-requested program and preserving pathway options for current students.



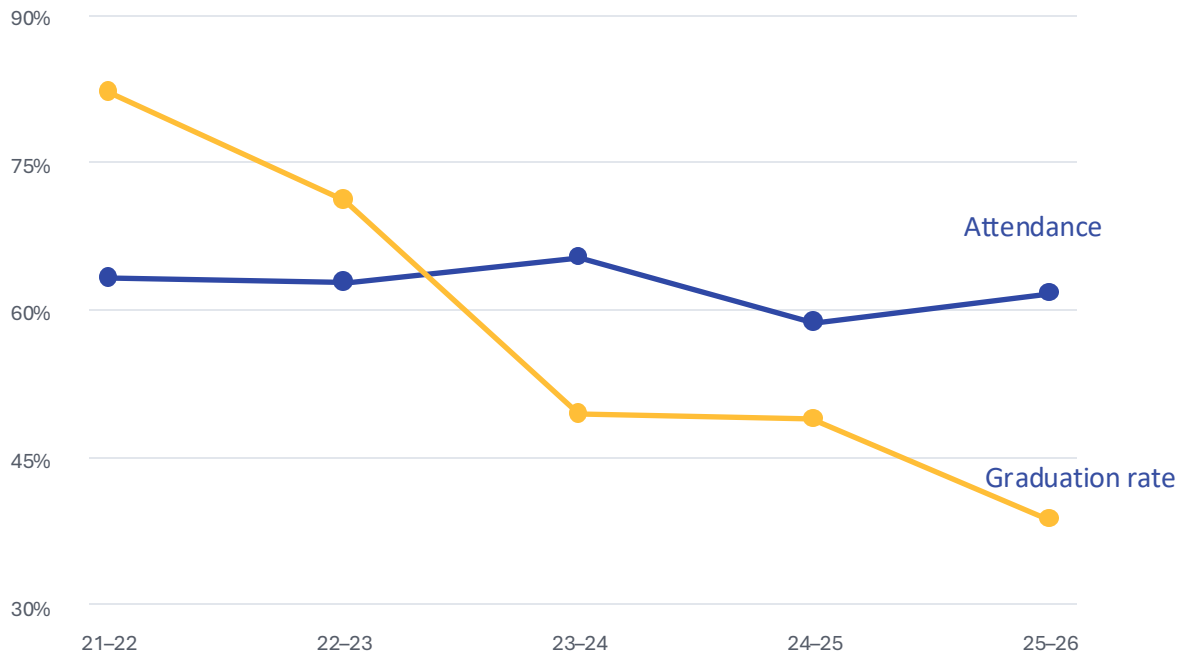
PS 309: enrollment grew while student outcomes weakened

The attached five-year data makes the rationale clearer: scale alone is not the concern; the educational model is not producing sufficiently strong outcomes.

BEDS enrollment



Attendance and graduation rate



Enrollment

+120 students

276 → 396 from 2021–22 to 2025–26.

Graduation

–43.48 points

82.19% → 38.71% over the same period.

2025–26 status

CSI

After Good Standing in 2021–22, CSI in 2022–23, and LSI in 2023–25.



Secondary schools: different data lead to different actions

The high school recommendations are not all low-enrollment closures; several are program relocations or reimagined uses due to four-year graduation trends.

School	2021-2022 Cohort 2018	2022-2023 Cohort 2019	2023-2024 Cohort 2020	2024-2025 Cohort 2021	2025-2026 Cohort 2022
131	33.33%	14.81%	10.00%	15.38%	12.00%
197	79.61%	82.61%	71.05%	75.00%	62.71%
198	86.75%	84.81%	75.34%	62.65%	55.09%
206	81.06%	87.04%	84.24%	80.66%	72.48%
207	85.71%	77.78%	64.13%	50.00%	42.19%
208	65.93%	62.69%	60.49%	45.74%	42.86%
301	74.05%	66.96%	67.67%	61.83%	54.03%
302	70.91%	76.47%	61.45%	55.56%	63.22%
305	77.00%	70.54%	70.79%	58.13%	44.08%
309	82.19%	71.21%	49.40%	48.89%	38.71%
355	83.75%	78.89%	81.00%	79.25%	76.77%
363	91.49%	88.42%	83.33%	81.91%	68.14%
366	97.73%	91.84%	83.78%	82.93%	80.00%

The data supports the portfolio strategy: close where the stand-alone model is unsustainable, but preserve strong programs by moving them into better-aligned facilities.



What is Proposed?

The proposal includes closures, mergers, repurposing, and service reconfiguration, not one single type of action.

School	Action	Planned Use or Transition
PS 59	Sunset BEDS code	Return classroom space to Buffalo Museum of Science; transition students to nearby receiving schools.
PS 131	Sunset BEDS code	Return building to City of Buffalo; transition students to the best program of support.
PS 33	Sunset BEDS code	Repurpose as BPS Administrative Building & Data Center; transition students to PS 3, PS 30, PS 76 to continue bilingual programming.
PS 82	Sunset BEDS code	Repurpose as Ronald Peoples Academic Building; transition students to nearby receiving schools.
PS 208	Sunset BEDS code	Become daVinci at Riverside for merged PS 212 + PS 366; students will have the opportunity to enroll or continue in a CTE pathway.
PS 309	Sunset BEDS code	New home for Buffalo Rising Academy at East; students will have the opportunity to enroll or continue in a CTE pathway.
PS 90	Grade Reconfiguration	Dedicated PreK Special Education Center; transition students to nearby receiving schools.
PS 212	Merge/Relocate	Merge with PS 366 and move to PS 208 location.
PS 366	Sunset BEDS Code/ Merge/Relocate	Merge with PS 212 at PS 208; students will be enrolled at PS 212.
PS 8	Maintain as swing site	Permanent swing site + selected administrative functions

Preserve the Programs Students Rely On

Consolidation should move programs, not just students. The strongest implementation preserves specialized services and pathways.

Bilingual / ENL

PS 33 Bilingual Center

Transition students to PS 3, PS 30 and PS 76; preserve bilingual programming, language supports, and culturally responsive community connections.

IEP / Related Services

Special Education

Review placements individually for IEP requirements, program model, student need, and seat availability.

Early Childhood

PS 90 PreK SPED

Create a dedicated early childhood special education center designed for young learners.

CTE

Secondary Pathways

Maintain CTE access through PS 206, 207, 305, 198, 197, and 363; preserve graduation progress and career interests.

College Partnerships

PS 366 + PS 212

Transition daVinci to Riverside at PS 208 and strengthen two college partnerships within one secondary model.

Student Experience

Extracurriculars + athletics

Use larger, more stable cohorts to expand opportunities and increase educator collaboration.

Impact on Transportation

Repurpose at
least 18 First
Student
buses

Increase
availability of
at least 3
NFTA Specials

Cost savings
of \$2.25
million
annually

Projected staffing and implementation impacts

The fiscal plan includes both recurring savings and one-time transition costs. Planning estimates remain subject to vacancies, leaves, retirements, and bargaining obligations.

BTF

73 FTE

20 already planned + 53 associated with closures in the talking points.

BCSA

8 FTE

6 principal + 2 assistant principal positions in the planning estimate.

Transportation

\$2.25M

Estimated annual savings from the proposed configuration.

Other planning estimates

PCTEA: 4 FTEs + 8 security officers

BEST: 9 FTEs

Early-retirement incentives for eligible employees are being explored.

Transition investment

Moving + renovations

\$1M set aside

Important: these are *planning estimates*, not final layoff counts. Final staffing actions depend on actual vacancies, retirements, contractual rights, and placement decisions.



Community Engagement & Safeguards

Because schools are central to neighborhoods and families, implementation requires a clear, respectful, and transparent engagement process.

Who will be Engaged

- Principals and school staff
- Families and students
- Faith-based and civic organizations
- University partners
- Employee associations and unions

What Supports will be Addressed

- School options and registration
- Transportation and timelines
- Special education and IEP alignment
- CTE pathway continuity
- Student Support Services

How Feedback will be Used

- School-based meetings
- QR codes and comment cards
- Meeting summaries
- Cabinet review
- Proposal refinements where appropriate

Community Engagement Timeline

The current schedule moves quickly from socialization to Board action.



Elementary Student Transition

The plan identifies nearby receiving schools with available capacity; implementation needs clear placement rules and family-facing assurances.

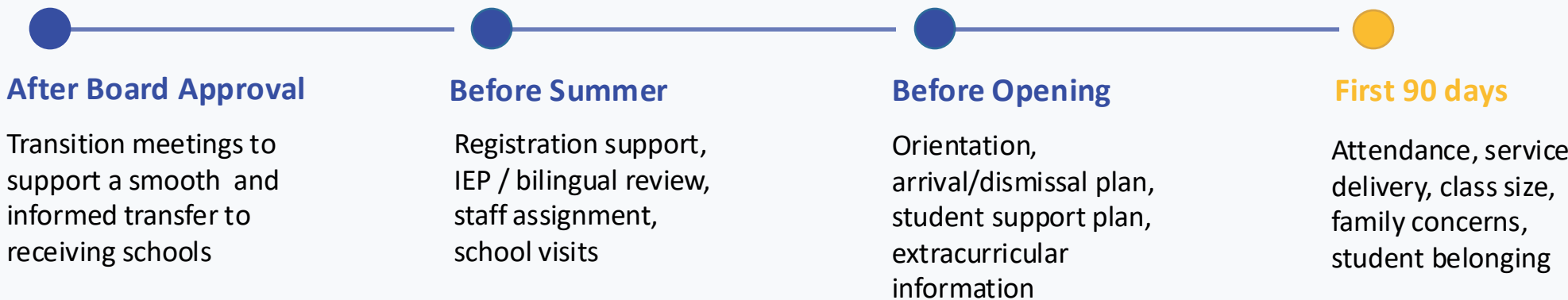
Potential Receiving Schools

PS 37	PS 48	PS 53	PS 74
PS 80	PS 89	PS 92	PS 99
PS 30	PS 3	PS 76	

Placement Considerations

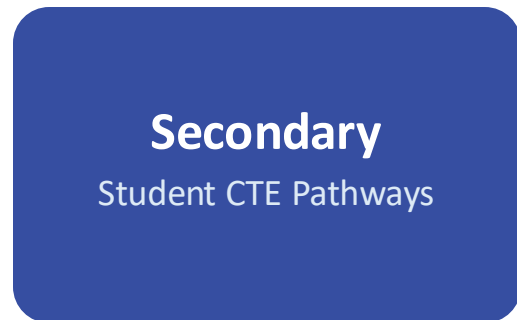
- Program match and IEP requirements
- Seat availability and class-size impact
- Neighborhood proximity and transportation
- Sibling continuity where possible
- Family choice parameters and timelines

Transition Experience for Families



Secondary Student Transition

Student placement will be managed through nearby capacity, program continuity, individual supports, and family-facing registration guidance.



CTE and Graduation Pathway Alignment

Conservation → PS 305

Health & Wellness → PS 197, PS 206

Entrepreneur → PS 198, PS 207, PS 197, PS 206

Police / Forensics / Fire → PS 197

Paralegal → PS 363

**Special education placements reviewed individually for IEP alignment, service needs, and seat availability.*

Educational Benefits

Concentrating resources creates more stable, better-supported learning environments.

- Expanded academic programming and intervention services
- Larger, more stable student cohorts
- Stronger collaboration among educators
- Expanded preschool special education services
- Stronger university partnerships at Riverside
- More extracurricular and athletic opportunities



Goal: move resources from underutilized space into student-facing supports.

Proposed Family Transition & Registration timeline

The current schedule moves quickly from socialization to Board action.



CLOSINGS ARE NOT SIMPLY ABOUT REDUCING BUILDINGS

It is a strategy to align facilities, people, programs, and dollars with where students are and to make the educational offerings stronger through the transition.



SCHOOL CLOSURE COMMITTEE

- Dr. Ebony Prophet-Bullock, Interim Superintendent
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- Curtis Johnson, Chief Operating Officer
- Dr. Sharon Brown, Chief of Student Support Services
- Anne Botticelli, Chief Academic Officer
- Dr. Tanika Shedrick, Associate Superintendent of School Leadership
- Dr. Giovanna Claudio-Cotto, Associate Superintendent of School Leadership
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