School Closures and Boundary Modifications Reflections & Recommendations Report

2024 PSD Facilities Steering Committee

May 31, 2024

Prepared by:

Members of the 2024 Facilities Planning Steering Committee with support from the Institute for the Built Environment at Colorado State University

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STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Facilities Planning Steering Committee was formed in February 2024 to support PSD's long-range planning efforts, specifically to address challenges related to PSD's declining enrollment and to develop scenarios and recommendations for potential school closures and boundary modifications.The committee consisted of representatives from across the district and included members of staff; parents/guardians from each feeder, including alternative/transition programs; and community members at-large. The work of the committee was facilitated by the Institute for the Built Environment at Colorado State University.

- Aaron Vogt, administrator
- Amy Hoseth, parent
- Andrew Spain, parent
- Bobby Decker III, classified staff
- Bonnie Jacobi, parent
- Brian Carnahan, administrator
- Conrad Crist, administrator
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- Eliot Parks, parent
- Jacqui Walz, licensed staff
- Janet Mann, classified staff
- Jeni Cross, parent
- Jesse Morrill, administrator
- Jessica Kuhn, parent
- Jodie Riesenberger, parent
- John Robinson, Poudre Education Association
- Joni Baker, Association of Classified Employees
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- Kaitlyn Folmer, parent
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the key learnings and recommendations of the 2024 Poudre School District Facilities Planning Steering Committee.

Immediate Opportunities & Recommendations

The Steering Committee recommends taking action on the following for the 2025-26 school year or sooner, as possible. ***Please review the related sections below for additional detail.***

- Secure better facilities for Transitions Pathways and Poudre Community Academy
- Balance enrollments for elementaries east of I-25 (Timnath, Bethke, Bamford)
- Strongly consider moving Bamford feeder to Preston/Fossil to ease enrollment pressures at TMHS while increasing enrollment at Preston MS and Fossil Ridge HS
- Expand and improve Dual Language programming by addressing current structural issues at Irish

Longer-Term Opportunities & Recommendations

Given the School Board's decision to end the current long range planning process and that the conversation about school closures is likely to return, we have an opportunity to learn and prepare for the future. Start by establishing clear data and criteria, followed by developing ongoing committees and structures that foster transparency and a capability for change. From here, develop clear step-by-step processes for how potential closures are identified, communicated, and implemented. Essential to every step will be clear, open communication – beginning with school principals, board members, central administration, and staff – and integrated into every working group, task force, and community conversation.

1. Address Concerns Around Data, Criteria & Methodologies

1.1 Equity Task Force: Form a qualified equity task force charged with understanding and providing recommendations related to long range planning and equity. The group should be charged with examining equity issues across the district, including by conducting a district-wide equity assessment through the lens of long range planning. Topics for consideration include: understanding how choice and charter patterns affect equity, approach to socioeconomic diversity across schools, transportation barriers for low-income families, and systemic evaluation of historic and future investment in school facilities that serve high at-risk populations. The recommended minimum duration of the task force should be one year. (For additional details see the section titled *A Systemic Review of Equity* below).

1.2 Building Utilization Calculation Methodologies: Develop a mutually agreed upon building utilization calculation methodology and database in partnership with building principals. This work should build off of calculations done by the district architect, take into consideration rooms that have specialized facilities for center-based programming, and consider the existence and function of modulars on site.

1.3 Development Forecasting: Continue to improve the cadence and methodology for forecasting enrollment, demographics, real estate development activity, and other key data. While development activity is notoriously difficult to forecast, the committee identified gaps in recent studies and identified opportunities for improving methodology. Improve data inputs and assumptions related to future development by coordinating directly with local government staff (Fort Collins, Timnath, Wellington, and Larimer County). Data should be updated annually. Student yield analyses should account for differences in housing type, trending yields over time, and target demographics (e.g., 55+, student housing, affordable housing).

1.4 Multicategorical Criteria & Rubric: Develop clear multicategorical criteria based on the activities above for assessing potential school closures (see Appendix C: Example Rubric). Include geography, enrollment, building utilization, equity factors from the Equity Task Force (e.g., Title I status, growth scores, graduation outcomes, etc.), program access and continuity, and projected regional real estate development from development forecasting. Criteria and rubric should receive board approval and be revisited every 10 years.

2. Establish Long Range Planning Committees & Activities

Build from the work of the foundational tasks above, hopefully with some carry-over and representation from the groups performing the activities above. Focus on establishing clear, regular communication between a permanent long range planning committee, the board, administration, principals, and the public. Activities should balance defined and predictable processes with enough flexibility and feedback loops to allow for adjustments in response to new information and community input.

2.1 Permanent Long Range Planning Committee: Establish a sustained long range planning committee whose purpose is to provide perspective, direction, and accountability for long range planning efforts. The committee would work in an advisory capacity, providing guidance and recommendations to the administration and board on topics related to long range planning. The committee should have representation from across PSD geographies and across district roles (e.g., staff, parent/guardian, employee associations, etc.), and should include strong local expertise. Ideally the inaugural membership would include individuals involved in tasks 1.1 through 1.4 above. The committee would be responsible for reviewing objectives and metrics for enrollment, building utilization, and equity as it relates to long range planning; and for informing the process for school closures. An initial list of proposed activities includes:

- Quarterly meetings, with potential for more frequent meetings during intensive work times
- Annual review of data (enrollment trends, projections, and building utilization)
- Boundary review every 3 years
- Boundary modifications every 5 years, as needed
- Review and updates recommendations to multicategorical criteria and rubric every 10 years

2.2 Technical Advisory Committee: Establish a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), leveraging the wealth of expertise that exists in the community. Membership would include local partners and experts in land use planning, community development, transportation, facilities management, early childhood education, serving disadvantaged populations, data analytics, and other areas of critical expertise. They could meet twice a year, once to focus on enrollment data (November) and once to focus on facilities data (May). The TAC would support ongoing assessment/validation of data, analysis of trends, and identification of acute potential issues.

2.3 Annual Roundtable with Elected Officials: Continue annual round table with elected officials, enabling regular dialogue among elected officials and the ability to consider these issues across governmental entities for long-term success and collaboration.

2.4 Communication, Collaboration & Stakeholder Engagement: Develop a communications and engagement roadmap that reduces questions and ambiguity for all parties. The roadmap could be a component of *3.1 Process for Closures* (see below; see Appendix A for additional detail and reflection on stakeholder engagement). The overall focus needs to be on developing better structures for communication, information gathering, and learning, and on enabling stakeholders to communicate directly with each other (e.g., board and community, board and committee, committee and principals). Focus on normalizing the conversation around enrollment, building utilization, and potential closures and support the development and emergence of systemic understanding across the PSD community.

3. Define & Clarify Closure Process

3.1 Process for Closures: Develop a step-by-step plan that includes how schools are evaluated for closure and what happens when a school has been identified for closure, including who is communicated with and when, and what steps are taken when a school is closed (see *Change Management* below). Invite principals to collaborate with each other when schools are starting to drop in enrollment. The process should be compassionate, collaborative, and transparent for families, teachers, and staff at impacted schools. School leaders and school communities should be directly involved in understanding enrollment issues, options, and potential solutions, including closure.

3.2 Change Management: Establish the foundations for change, including a culture that supports change, largely by executing the activities outlined above. Seek to understand and employ change management best practices from other school districts or]established methodologies. Include plenty of time and resources to support organizational change management for district employees and a facilitated and transparent approach to help school communities adapt to changes. Develop plans for how to support students, teachers, staff, and school communities at impacted schools (e.g., options for priority choice in other schools for displaced students, commitment to teacher professional development, welcoming an influx of new students, assessing necessary building retrofits, etc.).

Key Learnings & Reflections

Complexities of Declining Enrollment

For PSD, declining enrollment is not as simple as declining birth rates. There are a variety of contributing forces.

Changing Land Use Patterns & New Schools: To accommodate changing geographies and populations, the district has built new schools in high growth areas (i.e., Wellington, Timnath, SE Fort Collins) over the past 25 years, totalling about 3,500 elementary school seats and adding 3,168 middle school seats between Preston, Kinnard, Wellington, and Timnath. The result has been more schools and a higher overall capacity. Meanwhile, the population of school-age children on the west side of town has declined. Enrollment projections are driven by several forces, including demographics, development patterns, housing policy, and housing affordability.

Charter Enrollment: Charter enrollment is also a factor in empty seats across the district. Comparing FY19-20 to FY 23-24, the net enrollments at Liberty, Ridgeview, Montessori, Mountain Sage, and Compass grew by 436 students and the net enrollment in Charter Institute grew by about 1,500 students. Net student population during that period grew by 989 students, while PSD non-charter enrollment decreased by 959 students during the same period. Source: CDE Funding Formula over time FY19 to FY25.pdf (psdschools.org)

Birth Rates & Kindergarten Enrollment: Declining birth rates are a fact across the state and nation, though they do not yet seem to be a driving force in declining enrollments at PSD. The trend of lower birth rates is currently being counterbalanced by regional population growth. The apparent trend for declining kindergarten enrollment should be very closely monitored in the coming years: Track data and alignment with the early childhood sector, which speaks to a growth trajectory in 0- to 5-year-olds. This tracking of historic birth data in Larimer County compared to kindergarten enrollment about 5 years later is part of a strong data analysis protocol.

Mobility: The historical rates of growth in CO (1.9% since 1960) and Larimer County (1.7% over the last 12 years) both exceed national rates by about two times (slightly lower more recently, inclusive of COVID years). The mobility of population into Colorado must be better appreciated in terms of its impact on enrollment. This analysis should also be inclusive of immigration trends and impacts. Additionally, the data points to a growth of enrollment from kindergarten to 12th grade (overall number of students) as a trend over the years, indicating an influx of older (post-kindergarten) students as part of the mobility question. This should be better understood to support better outcomes.

School Choice & Title I Schools: Four of PSD's five Title I schools have the highest transfer-out rates in the district, with the exception of Harris Bilingual, which is a 100% choice Dual Language school. When

looking at the net gain or loss from transfers, Irish, also a Dual Language school, has a net loss of less than 2%. Linton has the highest net loss of students at about 30%, Laurel has a net loss of about 23%. and Putnam has a net loss of about 22%. (See *Appendix B* for additional charts and graphs on school choice compared to free and reduced lunch populations).

Outside of Title I schools, several additional elementary schools have about a 20% net loss, including Bauder, Beattie, Riffenburg, and Timnath. Bacon has a very high degree of both transfer in (30%) and transfer out (40%), resulting in a net loss of about 10%.

Reflections & Learnings Regarding Board Criteria

The following section offers reflections about the effects and utility of the criteria that were provided by the 2024 board of education and were utilized in the development of the April 2024 identification of options for the April 2024 scenarios.

70% NSC Utilization, 400/700 Criteria & Equity

Three of five Title I elementary schools fell below the 70% utilization threshold: Linton, Putnam, and Irish. If modulars were removed from Irish's building utilization calculation, the school was at 70% NSC utilization in October 2023 and experienced enrollment growth from transfer-in students. The remainder of schools that fell below the 70% NSC utilization threshold roughly followed the distribution of percentages of free and reduced lunch for schools across the district (see *Appendix B*).

Regarding target enrollment of 400 students in elementary schools, the district needs to consider whether the 400 student enrollment target is appropriate for Title I schools. Steering Committee members reviewed research on school size and outcomes. There is evidence from the research that 400 students is a good rule of thumb overall for schools, but that for Title I schools, the ideal number at the elementary level may be closer to 300. The committee recommends that the district analyze whether or not a different target enrollment number (and average class size) for Title I schools should be considered. Similarly, target enrollments for middle schools with high percentages of free and reduced lunch should be considered. Additionally, the committee recommends identifying upper limits for middle schools' enrollment and upper limits for class sizes in elementary and middle schools.

It is important that future efforts avoid oversimplifying the reasons that schools are below 70% enrollment and seek to understand the driving forces of geography, demographics, and programming for specific schools.

Creative Grade Configurations & Pre-K Programs

The Board of Education guiding principles stated, “Consider all creative grade configurations (e.g., K-6, K-8 or other school models) to address program demand, create greater building efficiency, and address growing enrollment on the east side of the district.”

Exploration of K-8 Schools: The Steering Committee saw merit in this idea and discussed it at length, both conceptually and in relation to several specific schools. It was noted that this model has been successful in other Colorado school districts. K-8 and K-12 models for Cache la Poudre Elementary School and Middle School were explored and modeled during scenario development. Thompson School district has created two K-8s in recent years, offering an opportunity to learn from their experience.

The Steering Committee was strongly advised by the Cabinet and the Poudre Education Association to not consider K-8 as an option; they stated concerns about licensure, building modifications, and a new/untested model for PSD. Similarly, the Cabinet strongly advised against considering a K-6 shift, given resulting district-wide disruption and the relatively recent shift to a K-5 model. The only exception to this guidance from the Association was K-8 for dual language school (see *Dual Language* below).

Exploration of K-6 & Middle Highs: One idea brought forward by the community was to move toward a K-6 and middle high school model (7-12) as a long-term move for the district. This grade configuration would help preserve neighborhood elementary schools and eventually phase out middle schools, while helping address long-term declining enrollment at the high school level.

Expanding Pre-K Programs: Devote more attention to expanding pre-K programs. Instructional programs for pre-K students should be given equal importance to Grade 12 students, regardless of funding source. Both HeadStart and regular tuition enrollment is essential to provide for PSD families. High-quality, affordable pre-K meets a critical community need and may help boost future PSD enrollment and enable success in subsequent grade levels. With the advent of Universal Pre-K and additional focus on early childhood education at the state, county, and city levels, there are significant opportunities for funding and facilities partnerships to better support children ages 0-5. Ensuring continuous pathways from pre-K to K-12 has demonstrated positive benefits for lower-income and at-risk students when transitions from one building to another can be minimized.

Building Conditions, Costs, AC & Capital Improvements

Building Maintenance Costs: In the Board Guiding Principles, as part of evaluating potential schools for closure, the committee was asked to utilize data from recent McKinstry reports to consider building maintenance costs and estimated costs to add air conditioning to schools.

Because the district intends to retain all of its facilities, all current buildings would still need to be maintained (e.g., boilers, roofs, etc.), so anticipated savings on building maintenance are expected to be nominal. As such, the committee's recommendation is that the district should place little or no weight on

anticipated building maintenance costs in the evaluation of school closures and avoided maintenance should not be construed as potential cost savings.

Air Conditioning (AC) & Capital Improvements: Adding AC to schools is only one item on a long list of potential capital improvements for PSD buildings and would need to be part of a ballot measure. Members of the Committee questioned if adding AC to all buildings was the highest and best use of future capital improvement funds. For these reasons, the costs to add AC was deprioritized for evaluating potential school closures. It is worth noting, however, that it was difficult to justify to the community why a school that already has AC would be considered for closure over a school that did not have AC, given the multi-million dollar cost of adding AC to a building.

This does not mean optimizing capital cost avoidance is not a valid pursuit; rather, capital improvements, including the cost to add AC, did not outweigh factors such as proximity to other schools, building capacity, and student density. It may be worth exploring how capital cost avoidance can be quantified and explained to the public in future efforts. AC is not a valid and viable use of dollars across the entire system: Not all schools "need" AC units because they can mitigate the heat for the three days that it matters in other ways.

Exceptions: There were several places where building conditions took priority: most notably for Poudre Community Academy and Transitions Pathways, both of which are located in sub-par buildings. Similarly, buildings that already had specific building features in place for Integrated Services programming were given weight over schools that did not have such facilities. The rationale was two-fold: avoiding additional capital costs for retrofitting a receiving school with comparable facilities and avoiding the disruption of students with special needs.

Modulars: The committee recommends excluding modulars in utilization calculations and reducing the district's reliance on modulars in general for a variety of reasons. Research on indoor air and environmental quality demonstrates that modulars are significantly less healthy learning environments for students compared to regular classrooms. Reducing reliance on modulars could assist with rebalancing enrollment numbers across elementary schools, as well. The committee encourages the district to conduct a systematic evaluation of modular units and to avoid the use of modulars for full-time/permanent classrooms.

A Systemic Review of Equity

The Need to Address Equity More Systemically: The entire Steering Committee prioritized equity as a key effort in this work, and, at the same time, the committee was reminded throughout their work that inequities are built into the system and society. Addressing equity in a comprehensive manner would require a much more systemic approach than was included in the committee's limited purview.

It is clear that PSD is similar to other districts throughout the country in that socioeconomic status remains a predictor of one's educational outcomes. While PSD has made strides toward advancing more

equitable processes and outcomes (e.g., see PSD work related to Equity and Inclusion and Putnam being named first in the state for Outstanding Student Growth, among many other examples), outcomes for low-income students and students of color are still lower than for their more affluent and/or white peers (e.g., see graduation rates or additional examples in the footnote[1]).
There are multiple factors outside of the district's control, such as how schools are funded by the state, choice patterns, etc. At the same time, any process that exacerbates these disparities and disproportionately impacts students of color and low-income students should be questioned. Thus, we recommend that the district build on its equity commitment and work to address equity disparities by continuing to examine, and ultimately, finding and making public solutions that dismantle systemic inequities.

Prioritizing Support for At-Risk Students: There are trade-offs associated with displacing low-income, non-white, and Integrated Services special programming students from existing schools that currently provide effective support and resources for these students. While ensuring students have equal access to programming is important, ensuring at-risk students have academic, social, and emotional support should take precedence over access to programming.

Increasing Diversity: Boundaries can and should be used to influence equity with the goal of having a truly diverse population at more schools. Give attention to SES, at-risk, racial and other diversity factors when designing and modifying feeder patterns to try and balance factors across school pyramids. Also give attention to situations where students from Title I schools are moved into schools with less Title I funding, as increasing diversity at schools requires dedicated financial bolstering and capacity building for staff and teachers to recognize needs and provide support for at-risk students. Evolving research in this area is conflicting. While PSD's Language, Culture and Equity Director noted that it is best practice to influx students into the more highly impacted schools instead of dispersing highly impacted schools into others, there is differing school closure research.[2]

Quantifying At-Risk Student Populations: When considering the equity impacts of potential closures or changes, it is important to look not only at percentages, but also at absolute numbers of impacted students (e.g., free and reduced lunch, students in Integrated Services, etc.). Focusing only on percentages can obscure the absolute number of students impacted by a change.

Equity & Choice Patterns: As part of *Long Term Recommendation 1.1 Equity Task Force* (above), the district should examine how local choice and charter patterns affect equity and SES diversity in schools, and seek to better understand reasons and patterns in choice, departures to charters, or/and home

[1] According to the City of Fort Collins' Equity Indicators report, outcomes for low-income students and students of color are different than for white students in PSD. Third grade reading and math proficiency is significantly lower for Hispanic and FRL students; AP program enrollment is significantly lower for Hispanic and Native American students; SAT scores are significantly lower for Hispanic, Black, and FRL students; and HS graduation rates and bachelor's degree attainment are significantly lower for Hispanic, Black and Native American students. School discipline rates also disproportionately affect Hispanic, Black, and Native American students.

[2] ERIC Analysis of research on impacts of school closures on student achievement. 2019. Issue brief, https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED599013

schooling. In superficial research into choice patterns, while students appear to transfer out of low SES schools, they do not transfer into higher SES schools (see *Appendix B*). The committee found this topic to be complex and deserving of additional study.

Equity Task Force: To better understand and inform decisions related to equity and long range planning, the district should identify and engage a qualified group of people that includes both contextual expertise (i.e., lived experience) and content or technical expertise in equity. The equity task force should be empowered to develop criteria that will be reviewed by the board, as opposed to vice versa.

- *Composition:* PSD Language, Culture and Equity Director; PSD data lead; one or more PSD Family Liaisons; City of Fort Collins Equity Officer; CSU Inclusive Excellence team representative; PSD DAB representative; PSD IES staff and parent; The Family Center / La Familia; Mi Voz; City of Fort Collins Human Relations Commission; Larimer County EDI Advisory Board; rural schools representation; and others as identified through the process.
- *Applications:* If an application process is used for community representation, encourage those most impacted to apply. Consider application length and approaches beyond written responses (e.g., phone conversations). In the application, ask about barriers to serving on the task force and commit to addressing them so all can participate (meeting time, location, and format; child care, transportation access, etc.); consider anonymous/blind applications to minimize bias; and ensure community members and staff are part of the selection process.
- *Process:* Provide a facilitator to capture notes and manage process; spend time on upfront framing/training to ensure common ground across the diversity of members' experiences; provide the task force with a budget for food and childcare; spend time understanding the process to-date and how the past can help shape the future, and to understand existing data – both within the district and beyond (understand state-wide and national context); create opportunities for feedback/engagement beyond the task force so members are not expected to be "the" representative(s) for their community.
- *Equity Assessment:* Current data clearly shows disparities in educational outcomes for students by race and income. Additional study is needed to better understand the role of long range planning in addressing equity concerns. Topics for consideration should include disruption of low-income students, especially from Title I schools; district-wide ability to support at-risk students; approach to socioeconomic diversity across schools in the district; the role of school of choice and potential for enrollment caps; awareness and transportation barriers for low-income families related to choice; and a systemic evaluation of historic and planned investment in capital improvements and maintenance of school facilities to understand which schools get funding and how, and to ensure capital and maintenance funding are equitably allocated to individual schools.
- *Decision Making & Minimizing Power Dynamics in the Proces*s. Clarify the scope and consider opportunities to shift power to the task force whenever possible (e.g., can they be empowered to develop the criteria, which the board reviews and provides comment on, as opposed to vice-versa?). Create non-verbal ways to provide input to ensure all voices feel safe to contribute, and proactively discuss power dynamics and solutions for a courageous environment where all voices are able to share their perspectives.

Alternative Schools & Dual Language Programming

Alternative Schools: Alternative schools in PSD, including Centennial High School, Poudre Community Academy, and Transitions Pathways, need their own analysis and decision-making. This should be done by PSD leadership in partnership with building administrators and staff who understand the programmatic and building needs of these schools and programs.

Dual Language Programs: Dual Language Programming is in demand and succeeding, and there seem to be opportunities to expand and improve DL programming. One option is to improve Irish's current model. This includes offering guaranteed bussing for all native Spanish speakers who choice into Irish and offering guaranteed bussing to another school (e.g, Putnam) for non-Spanish-speaking students who join Irish in grades 3 and above and/or who do not desire DL programming. Additional opportunities include allowing district-wide promotion of all DL programs and revising school choice policies to allow native Spanish speakers to join Irish or Harris on a year-round basis. A second option is for Irish to become a 100% choice school with guaranteed bussing for Spanish-speaking students (similar to Harris). If Irish's model was shifted to 100% choice, the district could explore a more efficient approach to bussing (e.g., only students west of 287 receive bussing to Irish and only students east of 287 receive bussing to Harris).

It is necessary that the administrators, staff, and community of Irish, and likely Harris, are involved in this discussion with the board so that specific needs are clearly understood. DL schools follow guiding principles and controlled enrollment is necessary to have the best possible program and meet the needs of all students.

At the middle school level, Boltz has an emerging DL program. The program has expanded to two teachers for the DL track for the 2024-25 school year. Boltz will now offer Spanish Language Arts and DL Social Studies across grades 6, 7, and 8; a 6th grade DL specific advisory class; a 7th grade DL health class; and a section of Social Studies for Spanish-speaking newcomers. Additionally, Spanish Literacy for heritage speakers will be offered to specific English language development students who are not part of the DL program to honor their unique multi-language journey. Altogether, this offers DL students at Boltz approximately 40% of their day spent in a two-way immersion program.

Balancing Enrollment in Timnath

Timnath Middle-High School will be over-enrolled in 2024-25 and at least 100 students will be added to its enrollment in 2025-26. Preston Middle School is under-enrolled with the current boundary lines in place. Timnath Elementary School is also over-enrolled currently with expected growth projected to further stress a building that is over 100 years old. The proposal to adjust boundaries to reduce Timnath Elementary students and to shift the Bamford boundary to move students to Preston Middle School and Fossil Ridge High School enables both Timnath Elementary and TMHS to be within capacity for the next several years without the need to add expensive modular classrooms on campus. This also saves money

by reducing the small size factor at Preston Middle School with additional students being added to its boundary. This is an urgent issue that needs to be addressed by the 2025-26 school year.

Nuances of Northwest Schools

Geography: The geography, composition, and programming of elementary schools in Northwest Fort Collins deserves particularly careful consideration. There are only four elementary schools in this area: Cache la Poudre (CLPE), Dunn, Irish, and Putnam. CLPE has an IB program and is located in unincorporated Larimer County in the community of Laporte. Irish, Putnam, and Dunn are all located about one mile apart in the northwest area of town, which has overall low student density. Students from mobile home communities along the North College corridor are bussed to Irish and Putnam, accounting for the disproportionately high percentage of low-income families. Dunn, due to boundary changes some years ago, is a historically high choice-in school as its attendance boundary currently encompasses approximately 180 students and it draws a significant number of students from the Putnam, Irish, Bauder, and Laurel boundaries (all schools at or close to the Title I threshold).

Programming: Dunn has an IB program and is very connected to CSU international families and employees; Irish is a Dual Language school that currently has a neighborhood boundary; and Putnam is the only neighborhood school in northwestern Fort Collins without a specialized curriculum. As a result of Putnam's intentional focus on closing academic gaps for at-risk students, it has some of the highest academic growth rates in the district and state, despite having the highest percentage of low-income students in PSD. There is currently significant development pressure in northeast Fort Collins, particularly within the Tavelli, Laurel, and Shepardson boundaries, thus any potential closures or boundary changes in the northwest cannot significantly be absorbed by Tavelli.

Appendices

Appendix A: Process Reflections & Lessons Learned

Please see the recommendations in the Executive Summary of this document for structural and procedural changes that are meant to reconcile the challenges and opportunities listed below.

Guiding Principles

The Board's guiding principles needed more process and thought put into them. There could have been better collaboration on the guiding principles with the principals, Steering Committee, with PSD staff, and/or with the community. The Committee and community spent too much time guessing at interpretations, making up their own criteria, and dismissing some guiding principles at various points along the way.

Data

Intentional data compilation and validation prior to beginning or moving forward with any future conversations on potential closures is very important. The data need to be seen as a foundational truth that everyone (staff, Committee, board, community) all operate from.

- Ensure consistent data between the district, the Committee and any third party consultants/contractors. Data must be fully validated for accuracy, gaps and limitations by local experts before it is used for analysis. Example: Have principles validate and sign off on realistic NSC capacities for schools. All data and analyses prepared by external consultants should be verified for quality and accuracy, either by district staff or other local experts (when the district lacks in-house expertise).
- It was challenging using an outside GIS consultant (Flo) that wasn't familiar with the district. Consider using an entity that is more local and familiar with the district to ensure the process is faster and boundaries make more intuitive sense. It may be more cost-effective to hire an in-house GIS/Data Analyst position to support the level of analysis (and re-analysis) needed to evaluate potential scenarios.
- Clearly define what all programming is and what programming can be easily moved along with what costs are associated with moving programming.
- Ensure all schools have an up-to-date data set that is validated on a regular basis for room counts, enrollment attendance figures, demographics, choice in/out rates, facility improvement and maintenance needs, equity numbers, and qualitative elements such as IES programming and specialized curriculum models that include equity and IES concepts specifically.
- Ensure understanding between 2- versus 3- versus 4-track elementary schools, small versus standard middle schools, and standard versus alternative high schools to assign ideal benchmarks for each type of school.

Committee Size: Strengths & Opportunities

While a 37-member committee may initially seem impossible, there were both strengths and opportunities for improvement with this size of a committee. If such an approach is considered in the future the following should be noted:

- *Expertise:* The diversity and depth of experiences that members brought to the conversations included both the representation they were selected for and the many areas of professional expertise they brought to the process. Committee members noted multiple times the depth of expertise in the room. However, expertise within a volunteer committee should not be used in place of paid staff or consultant expertise in critical areas.
- *Service to the Whole:* While many Committee members either represented or served at individual schools, they were able to take a district-wide approach to this work. This should be celebrated, as this was a challenging space for members to navigate, e.g., when your school is named in a scenario or considering data that suggest your school should close.
- *Communications:* The Committee did not have an easy way to communicate with each other and instead relied on "reply all" via email, which was unwieldy at best with this large of a group. Consider other mechanisms, e.g., making non-staff members volunteers with a PSD account so they can use PSD communications channels, etc.
- *Meeting Length:* While meetings were initially scheduled from 4:30-6:30, they often ran until 7 or 7:30 given discussion depth and complexity. Create more time and space up front or carve out a budget to provide committee members with food and/or childcare to support additional members' participation.
- *Working in Subcommittees:* No doubt, it was challenging to have a committee with 37 people. Consider subcommittees. For example, when Round 2 Scenarios were developed, the Steering Committee broke out regionally and greater analysis and engagement was possible as a result, the criteria subcommittee, etc.

Communication & Feedback Loops

- There needed to be more clarity around what was going to be communicated to whom and when (e.g., public release of the scenario rationale document).
- It would have been helpful to have more historical documentation from at least the last two closure efforts and have former committee members talk to new committee members.
- The committee would have benefitted from earlier and more direct feedback from the board and principals with a more iterative process.
- It seems like with more time we could have more effectively leveraged the expertise that exists within the district related to Integrated Services; language, culture and equity; facilities management; transportation; specialized programming; mental health support; and other areas. Recognize and acknowledge the gaps in expertise that exist within the district, particularly when key positions are vacant. Those gaps could be filled through paid consultant roles or partnership with other organizations (e.g., local government) rather than relying on volunteer assistance in those areas.

Board Engagement

- There could have been a clearer path for understanding how and when two-way communication was happening and by when.
- Long-range planning topics should have received dedicated work sessions with the Board of Education to ensure adequate time for meaningful discussion. A single or multiple half-day retreat(s) with the Board with the entire Steering Committee to fully walk through scenarios, rationale and recommendations could have been helpful.
- For board interactions and board meetings, have sign-ups occur over several days and then use a random lottery system to select participants. Ensure sign-up information is available in multiple major languages simultaneously. Or, consider relocating meetings so that additional participation and all who want to participate are able, given the scope of impact of these decisions.
- The Board of Education guiding principles did not include clear direction on how to consider community input in the committee's proposed scenarios. The process was not structured to prioritize community-wide conversations early in the timeline. The committee recognized early the potential disconnect between those who were listening (the committee) and those who would be making decisions (the Board), and as such, attempted to advocate for improved two-way communication along the way. The two Board listening sessions were added to the process after the schedule had already been developed and at the committee's urging.

Stakeholder Participation & Feedback

Ultimately better structures are needed to be able to utilize the collective intelligence and knowledge of the whole system. Stakeholders were unnecessarily partitioned off from one another and there was too much indirect communication happening (e.g., between principals and committee members or board and community members).

School Leadership & Central Administration

- Ensure all stakeholders (community, principals, board, cabinet, etc.) have input and feedback opportunities at defined intervals throughout the process.
- School principals have important perspectives about the unique aspects of their schools. There could have been better processes for integrating their understanding and insights into the conversation. For example, there could have been a more comprehensive process to review and validate NSC calculations given that many principals expressed that the NSC building utilization numbers were not feasible after considering what classrooms are required for autism programming, mental health supports, etc.

Volunteers

- Volunteers should not be expected to conduct all community engagement themselves. Steering Committee volunteers made a significant time commitment and sacrifice to participate in this process and putting them front and center at the listening sessions sent a message to the

community that the committee was in a decision making role and/or that they were appropriate targets for frustrations.

General Community Engagement & Accessibility

- Community meetings were generally held in locations that were familiar and convenient for families, and that shifted geographically around the community. This practice should continue with future processes.
- Genuinely engage communities in anticipated changes. Frame the issues in ways people understand and where possible lead with what success would look like if changes were made (i.e., a fully enrolled school offers x, y, and z to its students). These issues are complex and school leaders must prioritize community input. Look outside the system, at the factors influencing schools, be it land use policy, nonprofit community support to vulnerable communities, etc. The district doesn't have all the answers, solutions or information that impacts kids and families.
- Ensure feedback options are compatible with phones and provide opportunities for in-person/paper feedback in multiple languages especially for marginalized communities and groups.
- Better leverage existing groups and partner organizations to help increase feedback and participation. Ensure access to language interpretation, both live and online, in all public meetings, including board meetings.
- While child care was provided at some sessions, it generally wasn't clear to the participants that child care was available. Ensure child care is provided for all after-school community meetings and listening sessions. This is a significant barrier to participation that may be easy for the district to address through overtime pay for K-12 or ECE teachers.

Facilitation

Process Facilitation: Having a facilitator with a strong local understanding and experience in managing challenging, complex community processes was invaluable for the Steering Committee. The Board of Education may have benefitted from their own professional facilitation to guide them through a process of this magnitude and significance. Consider hiring a facilitator to help the Board of Education define problem statements, agree on guiding principles, and establish an equitable and realistic process for future efforts.

Process & Power Dynamics

To our knowledge, this is the first time the district has engaged a community with this scale and scope along with the high level of community impacts from the recommendations - inevitably, there are opportunities to improve from such a starting place. The committee offers the following as a starting point:

- **Who Influenced the Process:** While the committee was technically given a blank slate in regard to scenario development, ultimately the options were very limited when following the board guiding principles. For many on the committee, there was a sentiment that what the committee

was being asked to address was too narrow. The Assistant Superintendents also urged caution when considering equity, which was not included in the initial rubric, and instead, something that could be addressed once the process was complete.

- **Safety & Speaking Up:** Inherently, in a situation where district leadership is in the room and there are committee members who are employed by the district, power dynamics exist regarding who feels willing and comfortable in speaking up. If future processes take place, how to navigate these dynamics should be made explicit from the start, e.g., who is in the room, how employees will be protected, etc.
- **Closing out the Process:** In the final few weeks of the process, the dynamics of who was engaged from the district's leadership changed rapidly and decision making transparency was limited. For example, the committee's rationale document was not immediately shared with the final scenarios as the committee had intended, and that was not communicated in advance. While the district certainly has the purview of what it chooses to communicate, the lack of transparency in decision making was frustrating, at best, and at worst, created a situation of mistrust and inflamed the community.
- **Community Values around Collaboration:** It is worth noting that the initial process that occurred in the fall of 2023 created significant mistrust in our community with the district. The process was top down and did not recognize the community's deep values around collaboration and solving hard challenges together. While the Feb-May 2024 process was designed to include more community members and staff, the overall structure, timeframe, and process was still far from ideal. It is critical for leadership to recognize how deeply the community values collaboration as it designs future processes and to move beyond top-down processes. See notes about creating a permanent, ongoing long range planning committee as one potential approach to address this in future efforts.
- **Rules of Engagement:** Any process like this should have clear statements on key concepts that include, but are not limited to: lines of communication; decision-making authority; involvement of which groups or individuals at which stages or levels of the process; information security and transparency, specifically what is public output and what is a safe working space; timelines and rules for modification of timelines; exclusion and inclusion of data and delineation of appropriate sources.
- **Role Clarity:** Additional clarification of roles, for example facilitator role, and cabinet member roles in relation to the committee may have been beneficial.

Accuracy of Closure Language

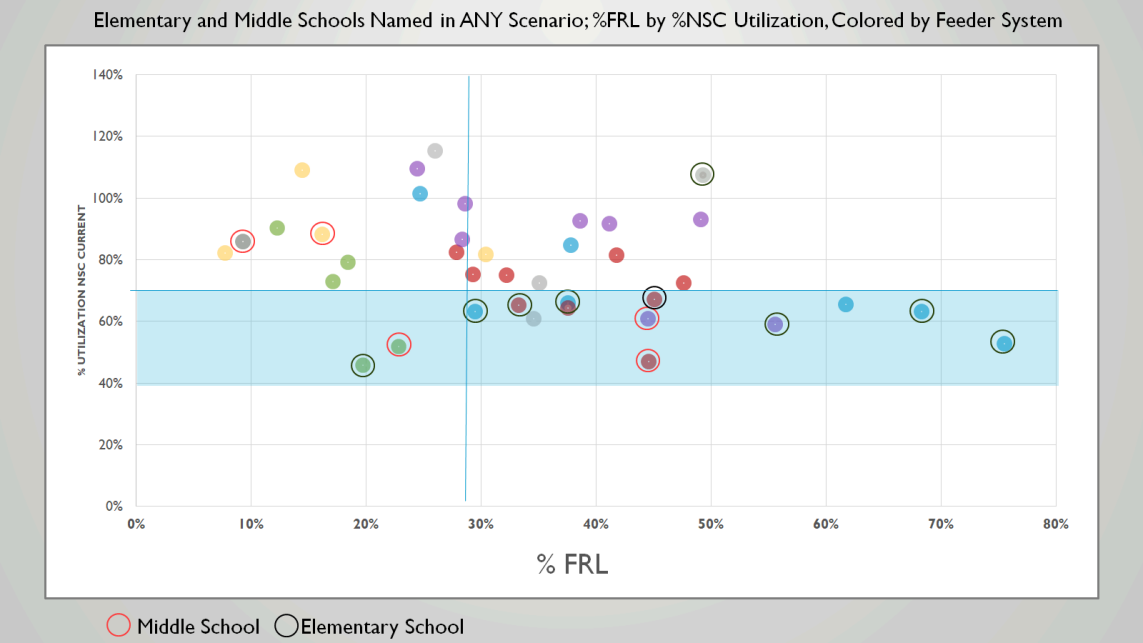
The district and board need to carefully consider how they use the terms, closure, consolidation, and relocation to provide clarity to school staff on potential implications for their future employment status. Work with HR to determine appropriate terminology and implications for terms and what that means related to job security.

Appendix B: Additional Analysis on Poverty, Race & Choice

April 2024 Scenarios: Impact of 70% Utilization Compared to Free & Reduced Lunch

The chart below shows how schools included in the April 2024 Round 2 Scenarios compare to others across the district based on utilization and FRL%. The X-axis shows percent free and reduced lunch and the Y-axis shows percent utilization based on the revised National Standard Capacity (NSC revised). The blue band shows schools that fell below 70% utilization. **Schools that were named for significant changes in the April 2024 scenarios were spread across the district-wide distribution of FRL students.**

The 70% utilization criteria used in the April 2024 scenarios highlights that the four schools with the highest FRL% (above 50%) are also the schools with low utilization; however, across the district, there are schools with low utilization across the spectrum from low to moderate FRL% (8-50%). It is important to note that each scenario includes only a few, never all, of the schools that are below 70% utilization.



Key

- Poudre High School Feeder
- Rocky Mountain High School Feeder
- Fort Collins High School Feeder
- Fossil Ridge High School Feeder
- Timnath Feeder
- Wellington Feeder and 100% choice schools

Comparison of Transfer In and Transfer Out Rates to Free & Reduced Lunch

The chart below shows how many students as a percentage of the school population are transferring in and out of that school as well as the net gain or loss of students as a percentage. The last column shows the percent of students who receive free and reduced lunch at that school.

This chart shows that there are nuances and complexities to consider around choice and the motivations behind choice. Geography, programming, privilege, socioeconomic status, and race are all likely to be contributing factors in specific geographics and schools.

School Name	Transfer In Rate	Transfer Out Rate	Net Gain/Loss	Free & Reduced
Bacon ES	29.7%	39.5%	-9.72%	18.40%
Bamford ES	9.5%	21.4%	-11.90%	19.70%
Bauder ES	11.3%	31.0%	-19.65%	47.60%
Beattie ES	14.9%	33.6%	-18.74%	45.10%
Bennett ES	25.8%	27.6%	-1.77%	41.80%
Bethke ES	10.3%	8.4%	1.92%	7.80%
Cache La Poudre ES	22.3%	33.6%	-11.38%	37.60%
Dunn ES	65.4%	17.1%	48.32%	24.70%
Eyestone Campus	9.9%	21.3%	-11.35%	34.60%
Harris ES	100.0%			49.30%
Irish ES	37.6%	39.4%	-1.80%	68.30%
Johnson ES	29.3%	21.2%	8.14%	33.30%
Kruse ES	23.9%	30.1%	-6.23%	38.60%
Laurel ES	14.3%	37.0%	-22.70%	49.10%
Linton ES	10.5%	40.6%	-30.12%	55.60%
Lopez ES	22.6%	29.6%	-7.06%	37.60%
McGraw ES	40.9%	26.1%	14.81%	27.90%
O'Dea ES	25.9%	25.4%	0.52%	41.20%
Olander ES	39.3%	23.7%	15.58%	32.20%
Putnam ES	34.3%	56.3%	-21.96%	75.50%
Rice ES	13.7%	10.7%	2.95%	30.40%
Riffenburgh ES	8.0%	26.5%	-18.57%	28.40%
Shepardson ES	25.2%	13.4%	11.85%	24.50%
Tavelli ES	20.7%	23.1%	-2.37%	37.80%
Timnath ES	5.9%	27.7%	-21.78%	26.00%
Traut ES	100.0%			14.50%
Werner ES	17.7%	18.2%	-0.47%	17.10%
Zach ES	22.8%	6.2%	16.56%	12.30%

Impacts by Total Number of Impacted Students vs. School Percentages

When looking at impacts to at-risk populations related to school closures, it is important to not only look at the percent of students who are at risk (e.g., low-income, ILS), but to also consider the absolute number of at-risk students who would be affected. For Example, based on 2024 data, these were the 10 elementary schools with the highest numbers of students on Free and Reduced Lunch, and the five highest middle schools:

Elementary Schools:

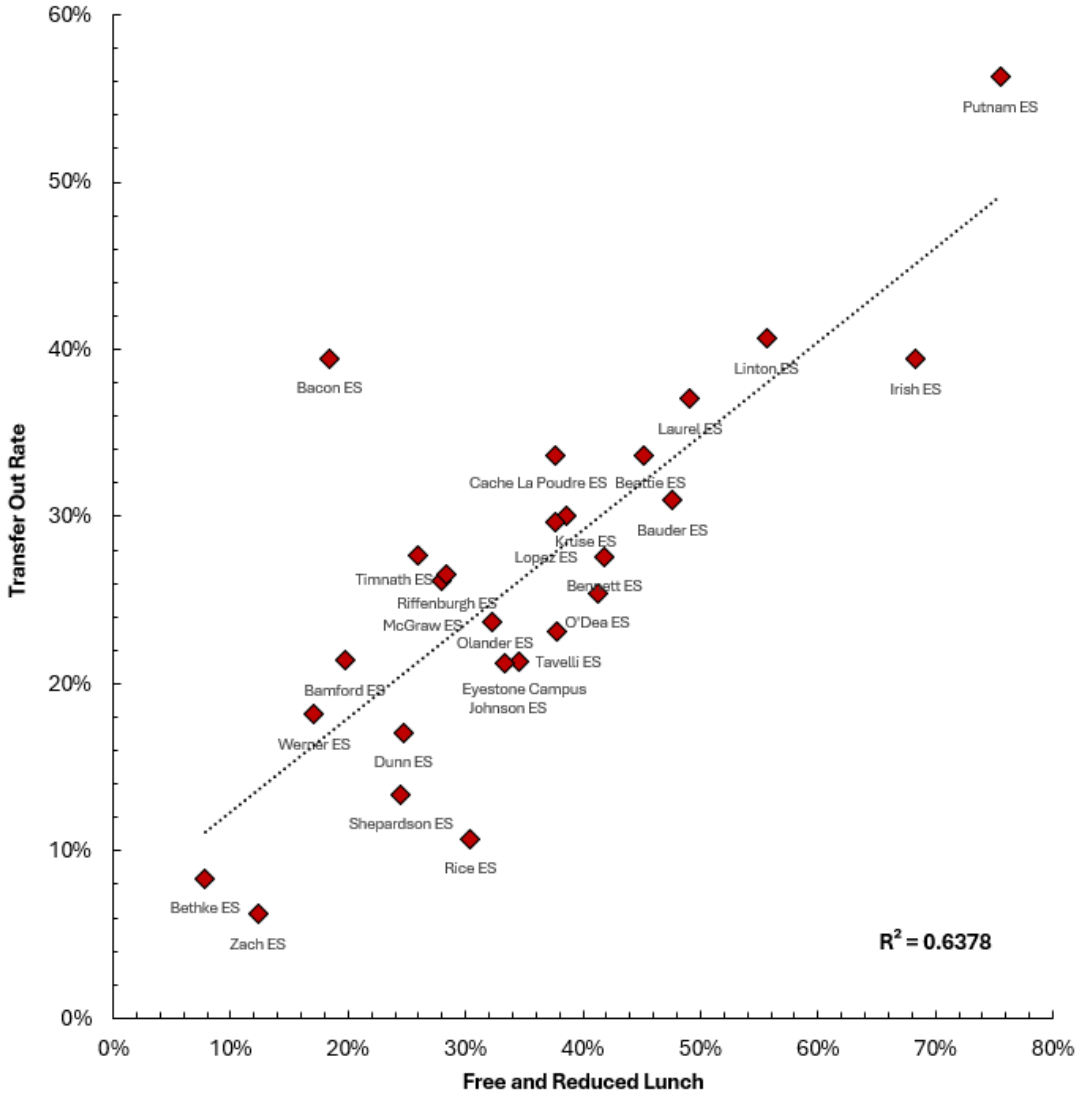
School	Number FRL Students
Irish	240
Eyestone	223
Bauder	222
Laurel	215
Tavelli	204
Odea	196
Kruse	183
Bennett	180
Linton	176
Putnam	164

Middle Schools (not including Middle/High School):

School	Number FRL Students
Lincoln	372
Boltz	290
Lesher	247
Webber	244
Blevins	206

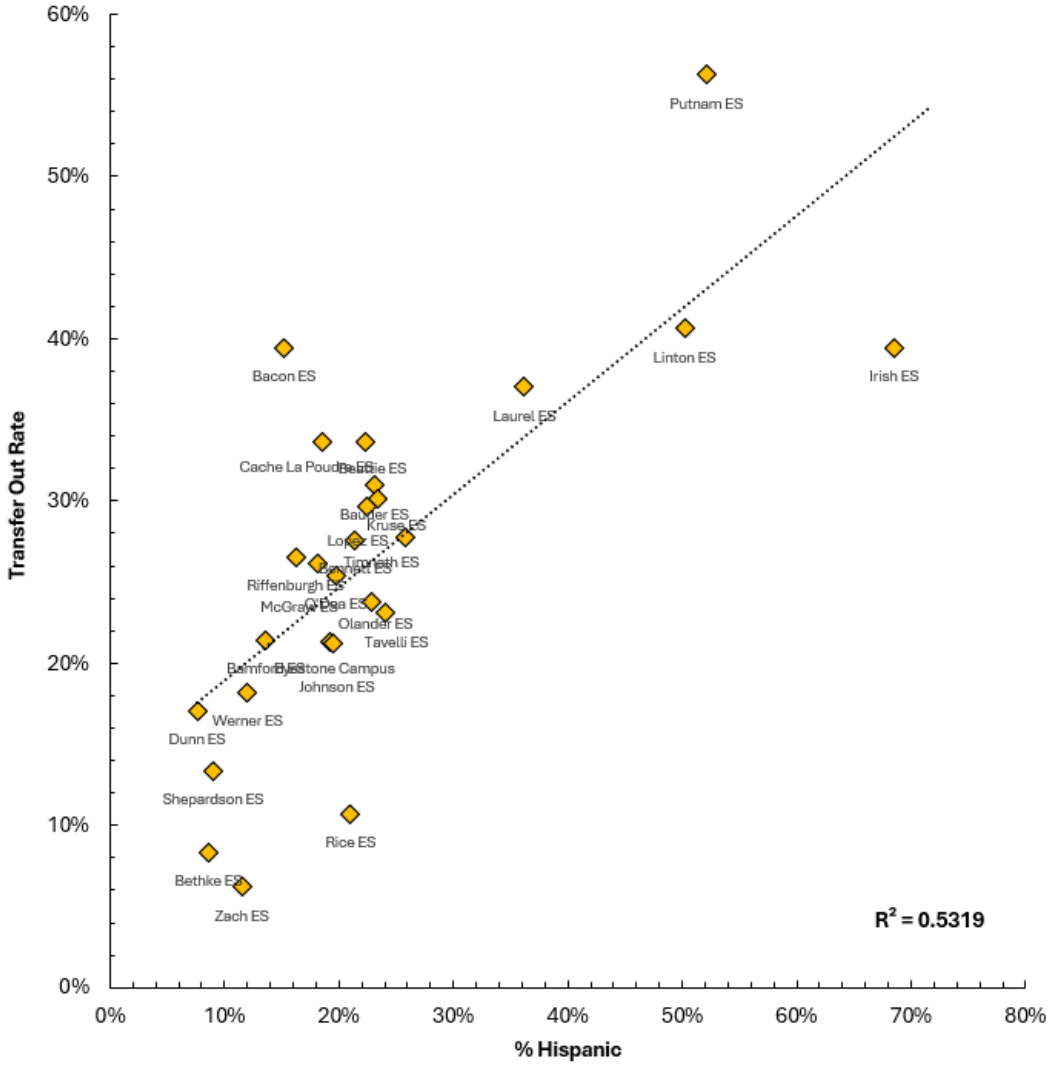
Correlation between Transfer Out Rates & Free and Reduced Lunch

This graph shows the correlation between transfer out rates and free and reduced lunch (FRL). There is a strong correlation of high transfer out rates and FRL.



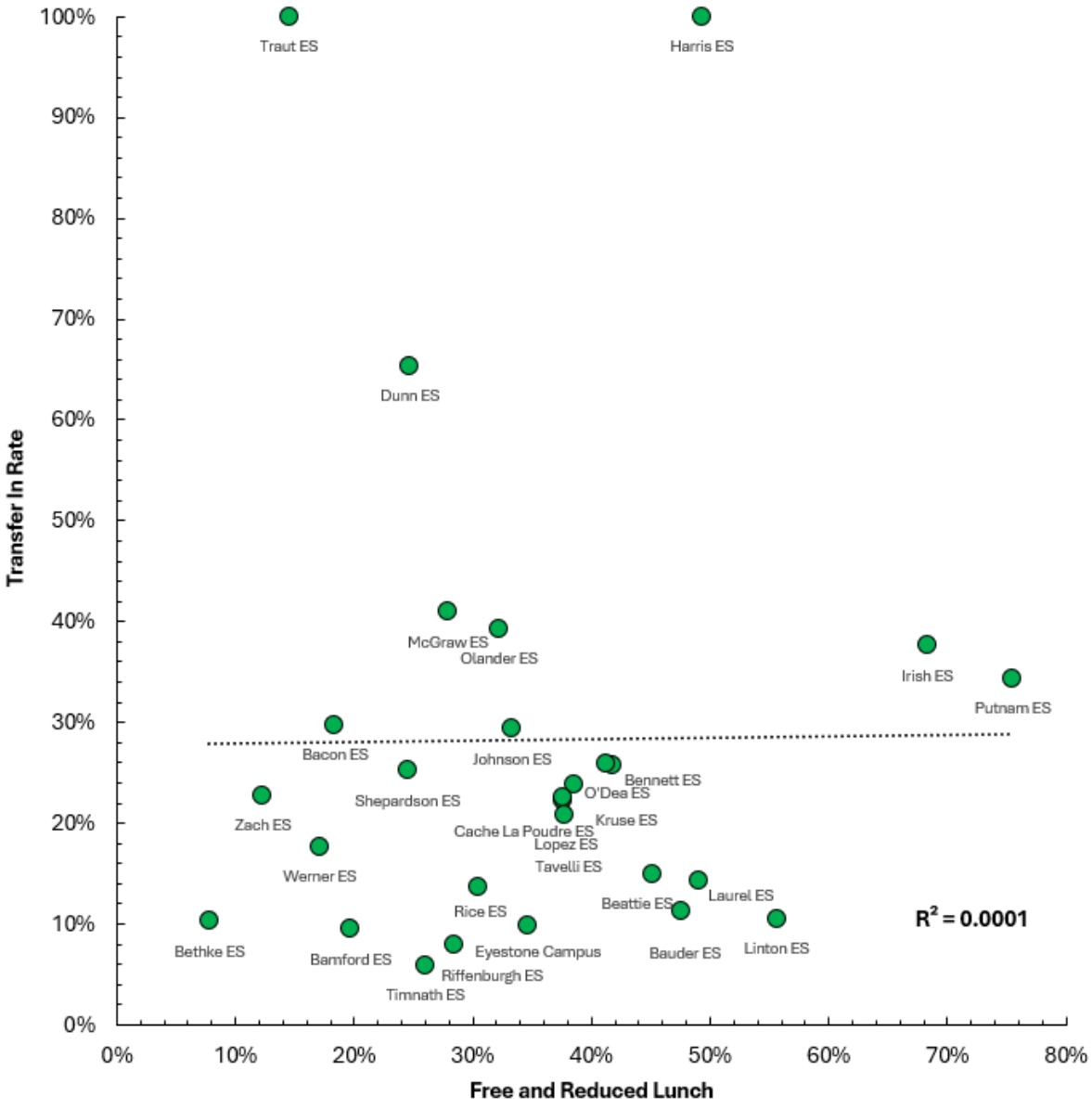
Transfer Out Rates and Hispanic Population

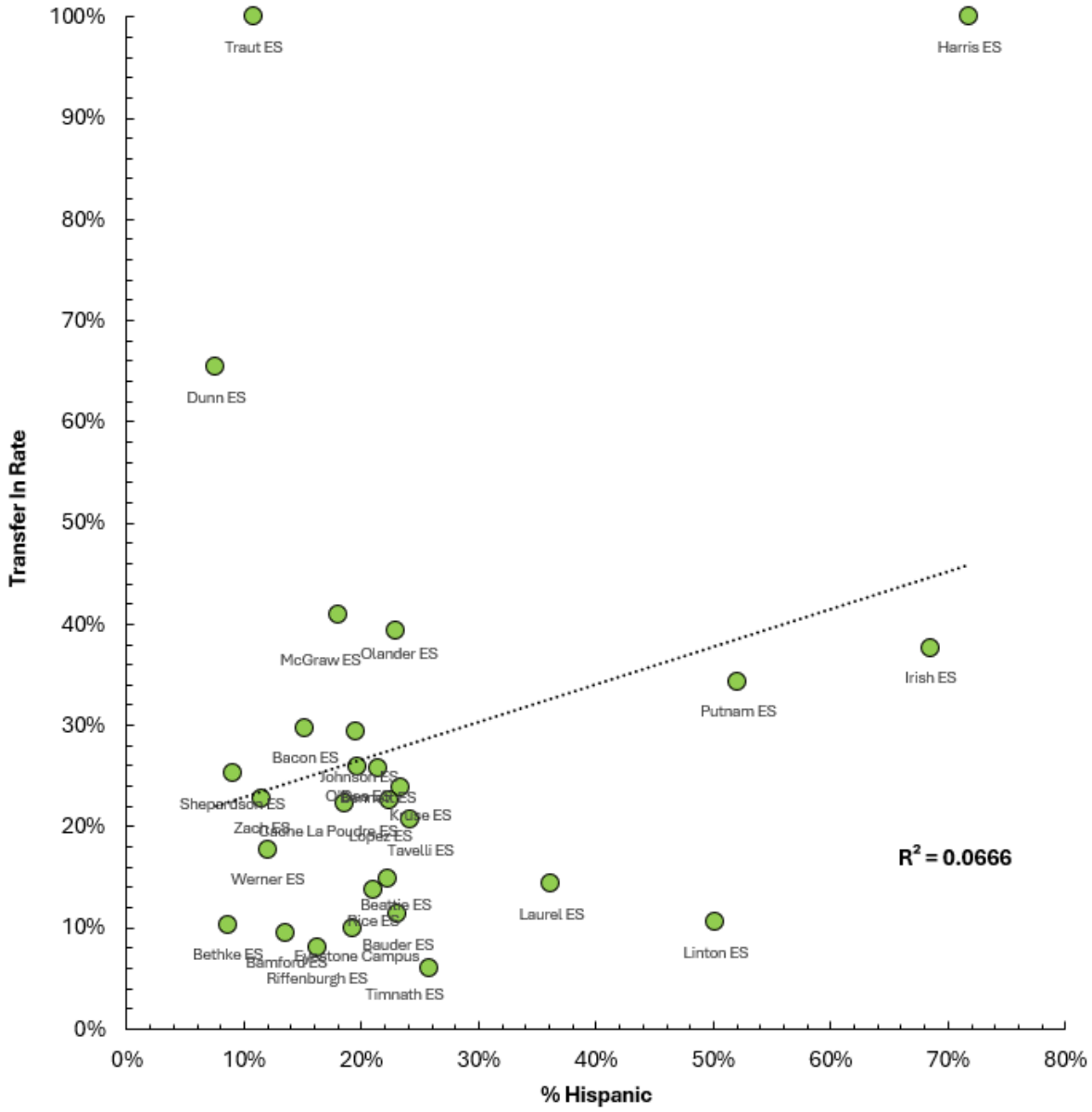
This graph shows the correlation between transfer out rates and Hispanic population, which also has a high correlation with FRL. There is a strong correlation of high transfer out rates and Hispanic students.



Transfer-in Rate vs. Percent FRL & Hispanic Students

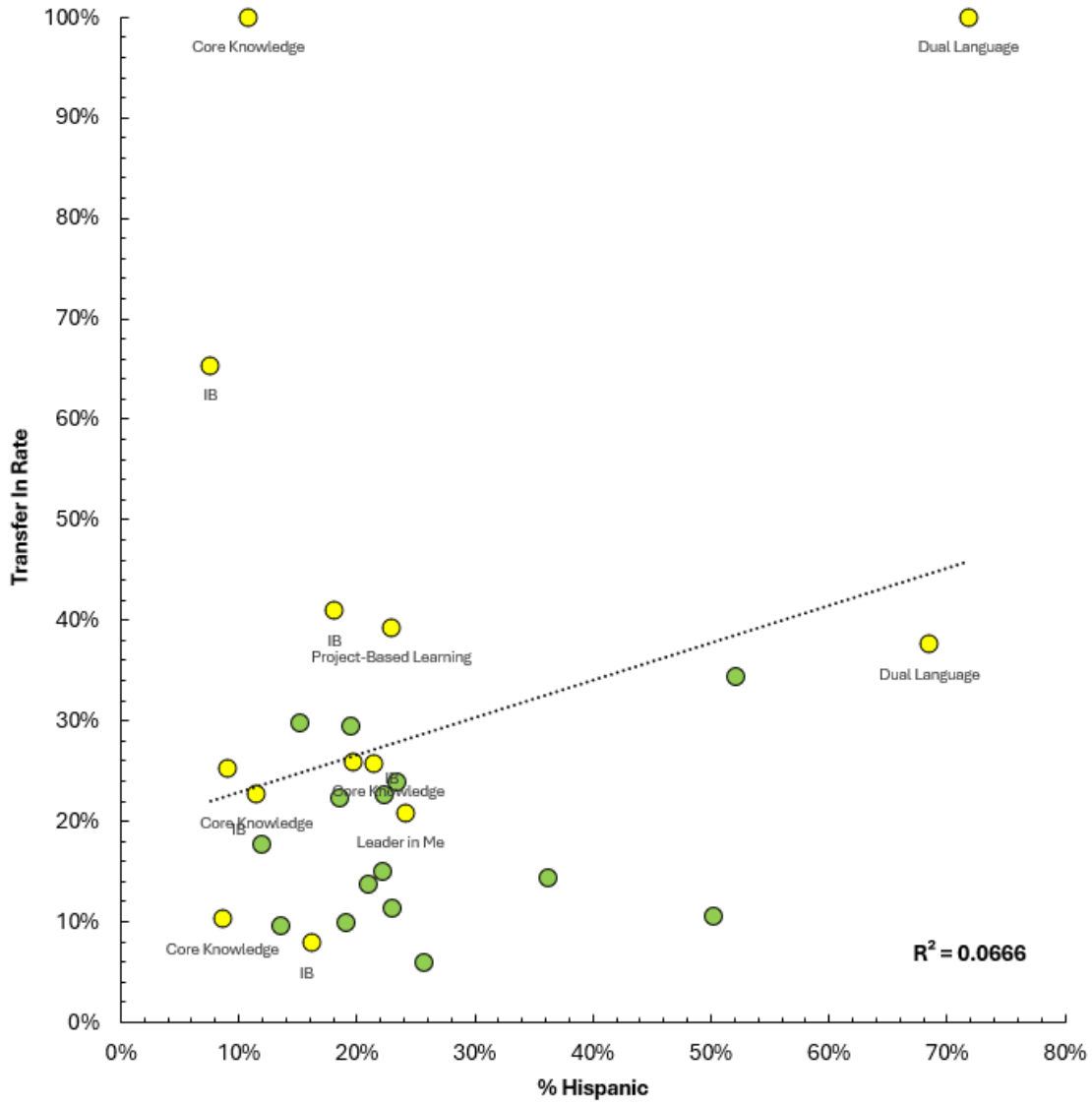
The two plots below do not show a correlation suggesting that more affluent non-Hispanic parents are sending their children to schools with lower rates of FRL rates to flee schools that have more poverty.

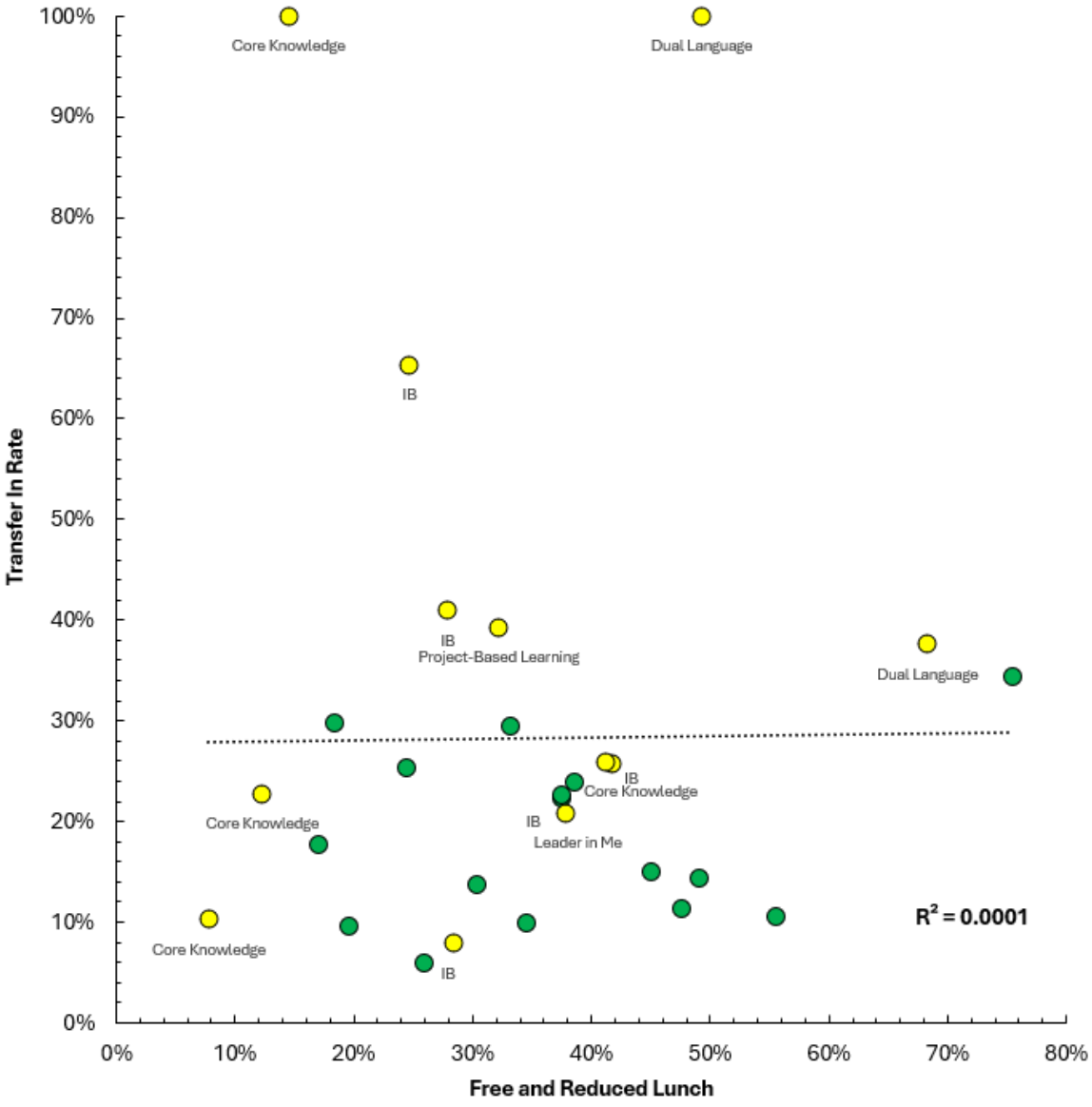



Transfer In Rate
% Hispanic
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
Traut ES
Harris ES
Dunn ES
McGraw ES
Olander ES
Irish ES
Putnam ES
Bacon ES
Johnson ES
Shepardson ES
Kruse ES
Zach ES
Lopez ES
Tavelli ES
Werner ES
Laurel ES
Linton ES
Bethke ES
Bauder ES
Riffenburgh ES
Timnath ES
$R^2 = 0.0666$

Transfer-in Rates vs. Percent FRL &Hispanic Students

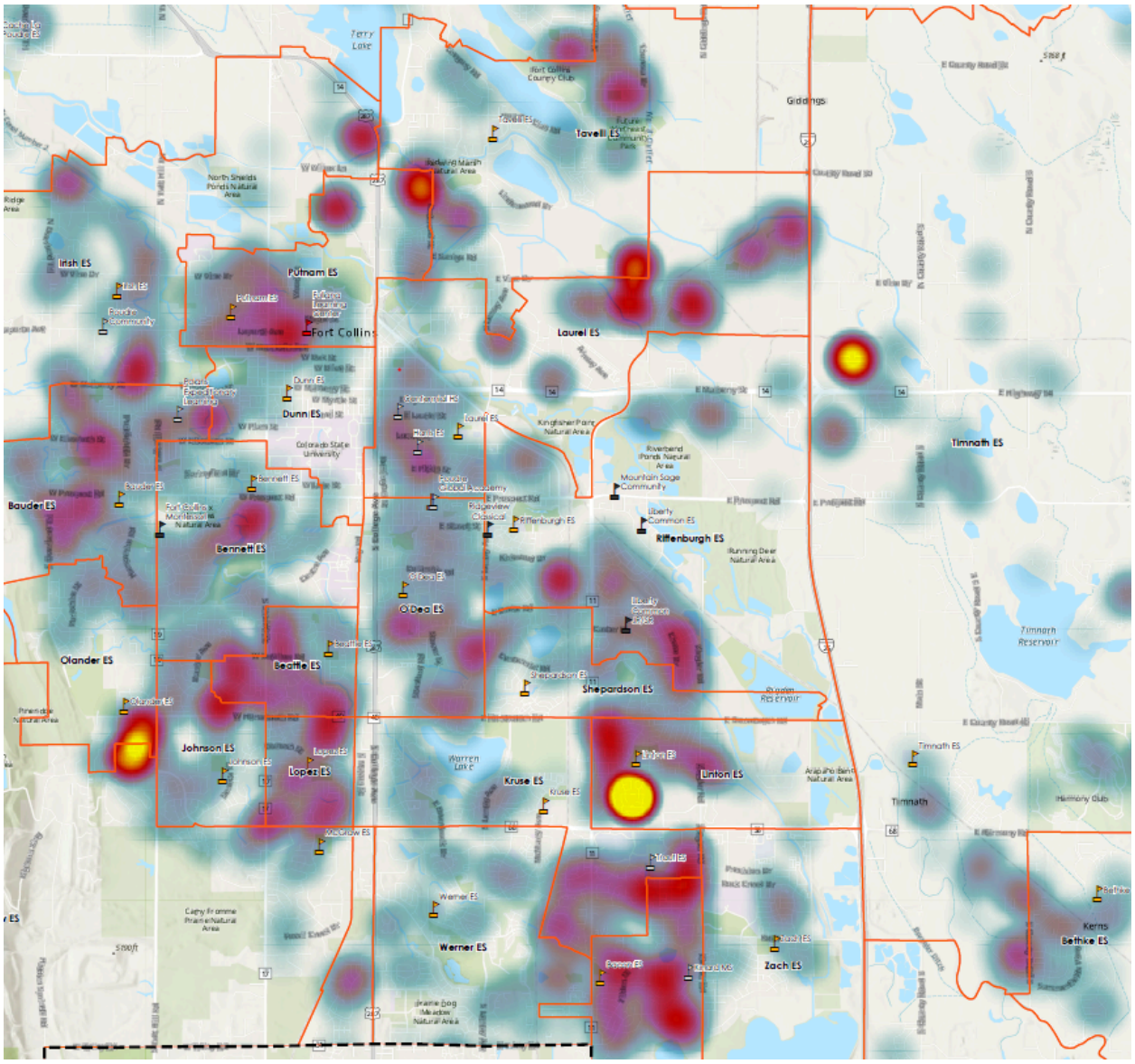
Part of the reason that parents choice into schools appears to be programming. Looking at the transfer-in rates versus percent FRL and percent Hispanic with program labels instead of ES names, we see that the top six transfer-in schools have specialized programming.




Transfer In Rate
Free and Reduced Lunch
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%
Core Knowledge
Dual Language
IB
IB
Project-Based Learning
Dual Language
IB
Core Knowledge
Core Knowledge
IB
Leader in Me
Core Knowledge
IB
$R^2 = 0.0001$

Geography

An additional factor appears to be geography. Students who live near other schools appear to exercise choice to other nearby schools (see the heat map of transfer patterns from Flo). At the elementary level, these two factors likely combine in terms of school program and proximity to where parents/guardians live and work.



Summary

Equity is immensely complex, as is school choice. There may be some relationship between the two, but more time, data, and expertise are needed to really understand drivers behind school choice and the effects on educational outcomes for students. Future efforts need to be cautious about jumping to conclusions around drivers and solutions related to equity and long range planning.

Appendix C: Example Rubric

Members of the Steering Committee developed a draft rubric that could be further developed in activity 1.4 Multicategorical Criteria and Rubric in the executive summary. Below is a high level summary of potential categories, weighting, and criteria. A link to the full worksheet can be found here.

Category	Objective (Want)	Objective Weight (%)	Category Weight (%)	Rationale/ Description	Scoring Criteria
Enrollment & Financials	Meets districtwide optimal enrollment for elementary (400) and middle school (700)	5	40	Enrollments near 400 for ES and 700 for MS anticipated to optimize budget size factors. Include district-wide average for ES and MS.	10 = all schools > ~400/700 7.5 = no schools < 375/650 5 = no schools < 350/600 2.5 = no schools < 250/450 0 = some schools < 250/450
	Balances current NSC utilization across the district to increase utilization on the west side	5		Reflects that some schools have larger NSC than 400/700 students, and there is savings in operating these larger schools at more than 400/700 students	10 = all schools > 75% 7.5 = no schools < 70% 5 = no schools < 65% 2.5 = no schools < 60% 0 = some schools < 60%
	Reduces the total budget size factor applied to school budgets	30		This reflects the savings due to size adjustment change and administrative and custodial savings	10 = maximum cost savings across scenarios Scores distributed quantitatively based on range of cost savings in scenarios 0 = minimum cost savings across scenarios

Facilities & Operations	Optimizes for scenario costs due to transportation.	5	10	Category should include number of added students who need bussing and/or change in number of students who travel over some distance. In PSD, bussing is provided to those in elementary who live further than 1 mile away from school, middle school - 1 1/2 mi away, high school - 2 mi away.	10 = minimum cost increase across scenarios/current Scores distributed quantitatively based on range of cost savings in scenarios relative to current condition 0 = maximum cost increase across scenarios/current
	Optimizes for future maintenance and capital improvement costs	2.5		Optimizes use of limited future maintenance and capital improvement costs	10 = maximum cost savings across scenarios Scores distributed quantitatively based on range of cost savings in scenarios 0 = minimum cost savings across scenarios
	Optimizes opportunities for current and future air conditioning (pending future funding)	2.5		Optimizes use of limited future AC costs	10 = maximum cost savings across scenarios Scores distributed quantitatively based on range of cost savings in scenarios 0 = minimum cost savings across scenarios
Programming & Equity	Maintains educational/curricular program access and continuity K-12 by level and geography	5	35	Considers the number of students who gain or lose access to educational programming. If a special program (e.g., DL, CK, IB, PBL) is closed or if students are not able to attend their current program due to access issues, or if there is not K-12 continuity in the program, score is	10 = Major positive impact 7.5 = Minor positive impact 5 = Neutral impact 2.5 = Minor negative impact 0 = Major negative impact

				lower and it is described here.	
	Maintains or improves access to educational programs and prioritizes positive outcomes for at-risk and/or marginalized groups	15		Addresses poverty (FRL), Title I, ELL, separate from ILS services; includes non-white, and rural students who come into middle school from mountain schools. Should include number of at-risk students displaced/moved in considerations.	10 = Major positive impact 7.5 = Minor positive impact 5 = Neutral impact 2.5 = Minor negative impact 0 = Major negative impact
	Optimizes options and access for students receiving support through Integrated Services and Newcomer Programs	15		Category should address what happens to students disrupted from an existing IS or Newcomer program. All schools have multicategorical services.	10 = Major positive impact 7.5 = Minor positive impact 5 = Neutral impact 2.5 = Minor negative impact 0 = Major negative impact
Geography	Scenario balances enrollment in high school feeder system	7.5	15	Balanced resourcing of PSD high schools; rationale addresses split feeder issues	10 = +/- 5% of average 7.5 = +/- 10% of average 5 = +/- 15% of average 2.5 = +/- 20% of average 0 = > +/- 20% of average
	Protects schools as neighborhood/community hubs, and students who historically walk or bike.	7.5		Reflects impact to safe routes to schools for students, as well as the function of schools as neighborhood/community hubs; rationale includes change in number of ES and MS students who travel over some distance (e.g., 1.5m and 3m respectively)	10 = Major positive impact 7.5 = Minor positive impact 5 = Neutral impact 2.5 = Minor negative impact 0 = Major negative impact

Appendix D: April 2024 Scenario Development Rationale

Note: This document was originally released with the April 2024 School Closure and Boundary modification Scenarios. It contains important considerations, nuances, and factors that may be helpful in future efforts.

Round 2 Modeling Rationale

Overview

This document explains rationale for determining which schools were considered and included as options to develop scenarios for potential school closures and boundary modifications by the PSD Facilities Steering Committee (the SC).

Primary Objective: Increase districtwide enrollment to an average of 400 students per school at the elementary level and 700 students at the middle school level.

To achieve enrollment objectives districtwide, some schools may fall below the target enrollment numbers, while most schools will have higher enrollment. The 400/700 enrollment numbers are considered the minimum optimal enrollment for financially healthy elementary and middle schools with comprehensive programming for students across the district. .

The district has historically been subsidizing schools with lower enrollments to ensure that students in those schools have the same access to specials and resources as students who are in schools with higher enrollment. This subsidy is called the Size Factor Adjustment. While the primary reason for the enrollment objectives is to create well-resourced learning environments for PSD students, reducing the amount of funding to subsidize smaller schools is an important financial consideration as the district faces lower overall enrollment.

Building utilization, which is a calculation based on the number of learning spaces in a building and the number of students who can comfortably be educated in that building, is an additional factor. For example, some elementary schools are designed to have four classes in each grade, while others are designed to have only three. This translates into 20 to 25 students per class in elementary school, or a total of 400 to 450 students in a three-track elementary school and 480 to 600 students in a four-track elementary school.

STEP 1: Initial Screening Criteria

Universal screening criteria: The Steering Committee used screening criteria to identify schools for further consideration. Mountain elementary schools (Redfeather, Livermore, Stove Prairie) were not considered in this evaluation due to their geographic isolation. Wellington schools were not considered due to their growing enrollment and current capacity to accommodate that enrollment.

Primary Objective Move toward districtwide average enrollments of 400/700 at elementary and middle schools respectively, now and based on 5 year projections *		
Initial Screening Criteria for Potential Closure		
	Utilization	Below 70% enrollment or at or above 110% enrollment today. Current Enrollment (at/below/above 400ES/700MS)
	Geography	Physical proximity to other schools and those school's enrollments to identify potentially viable options. Geography also serves as an initial consideration for transportation concerns and & community continuity. Elementary schools were grouped based on three geographic areas:

		• East of College Avenue (East) • South of Prospect and West of College (Southwest Elementaries or SW) and • North of Prospect and West of College Avenue (Northwest Elementaries or NW).
Exclusions		
	Utilization	Neighborhood schools with over 70% (NSC) enrollment were not considered for closure based on PSD Board guidelines.
	Geography	Mountain Elementary Schools were not considered due to their geographic isolation, their role as community centers for rural communities, and long travel times. Wellington Schools given that their enrollment is growing, but they are expected to stay within their building capacity for several years.

Screening Results by Geography for Elementary Schools

Using the initial screening criteria, the following schools were identified for further consideration:

- East: Timnath Elementary*, Bamford, Linton
- SW: Bauder, Beattie, Johnson, Lopez
- NW: Cache la Poudre, Irish, Putnam

*Timnath was the only over-enrolled elementary in the district.

Middle Schools

Using the initial screening criteria, the following schools were identified for further consideration:

- East: Preston, Boltz, Timnath MHS*
- SW: Blevins
- NW: Cache La Poudre, Lincoln

*Timnath Middle High School is projected for over-enrollment, with no bond in place for future school construction.

STEP 2: Evaluation Criteria

Each geographic area is unique in regard to the physical arrangement of schools in relation to each other; the number and distance between schools in the area; individual school and regional enrollment trends; and specialized services, curriculum, and programs.

Primary Criteria for Developing Options		
	Transportation & Geography	Distribution of boundaries to optimize for transportation (bussing, walking, biking)
	Feeder Continuity	Logical distribution of feeders, avoiding future split feeders to the extent possible
	Equity	Identifies and prioritizes positive long-term outcomes for at-risk and /or marginalized students including low income, non-white, unhoused, and special needs students. Solutions vary by geography.

	Programming	Maintain and minimize disruption to existing / established educational/curricular programs and special education programs. Expanding and/or maintaining access to diverse / in demand programming.
Additional Criteria (lower weight)		
	5 year Estimated Maintenance Costs	5+ year estimated maintenance needs (based on McKinstry data)
	Cost for A/C	Although A/C would generally not be a school-by-school expense, if the district were to consider including A/C as part of a ballot measure, buildings that were not housing students might not be considered for A/C installation.

Evaluation for East Elementaries

Evaluation for elementaries in the east was very limited by geography and enrollment trends in that area.

School	Considerations	Inclusion
All East of I25 Elementaries	Balance enrollment across Timnath, Bethke and Bamford to ease enrollment pressures at Timnath Elementary	Included in all scenarios
Bamford	Was not considered for closure due to geographic isolation, lack of space at closest school, and ability to help absorb enrollment as area East of I25 continues to see new development	Not included for consideration for closure.
Linton	Only school in the East to be considered for closure based on low building utilization and geographic proximity to nearby schools to absorb students. Receives Title I funding. Significant Emotional Disability (SED) program.	Included as an option for closure.
Harris	As a 100% choice dual language program that already serves students from the Linton neighborhood boundary, moving Harris to the Linton in the event of a Linton closure was considered as an option to retain a school in the Linton neighborhood. It was also seen as a way to expand access to dual language programming in the district. This option would require Harris to change educational models to accommodate a third track of students.	Included as an option to move to Linton.

Evaluation of Southwest Elementaries

Evaluation of solutions for southwest elementaries was driven by the total number of schools in the area, their proximity to each other, and total enrollment capacity of the area. Programming, including specialized programs and facilities for integrated learning services was a factor in considering options as well.

Southwest elementaries are projected to have 2,208 students spread across seven schools in 2027, averaging 315 students per school. To achieve optimal enrollment and school budgets with 400 students, two schools need to be identified for closure.

Geographically when considering two elementary school closures in the southwest, Beattie and Johnson were identified as being the better candidates for closure among the southwest elementaries. The rationale included several factors including geographic proximity of schools to each other, enrollment at each school, the existence of

specialized facilities for integrated learning services, and capacity of the schools to accept students displaced from nearby closures.

Bauder and Lopez both have higher enrollment and house substantial center-based integrated services programs. For these reasons Bauder and Lopez were not identified for closure. The Lopez building is also a four-track elementary that would be able to accommodate many of the students from Beattie.

School	Considerations	Inclusion
Bauder	Highest enrollment in the SW schools (near 400); Building can accommodate four tracks, or almost 600 students, which is why it shows as below 70% utilization; houses center-based autism integrated services program. Receives Title I funding in 2024-2025	Not included as an option for closure.
Beattie	Lowest building utilization and enrollment number in the SW schools and consistently under-enrolled for nearly 10 years, currently enough students for a small 2-Track; over 33.6% of neighborhood students choice out to a different school; open classroom / team teaching model.	Included as an option for closure.
Johnson	Second lowest building utilization and enrollment in the SW; Geographically close to Webber with an attendance area that is very compact and centrally-located. Students can easily be absorbed into the Lopez, Olander, and McGraw attendance areas.	Included as an option for closure.
Lopez	Large four-track school that could accommodate many of Beattie's students. Center-based ILS integrated services program and Leader in Me program.	Not included as an option for closure.

Evaluation for Northwest Elementaries

Options and solutions for elementaries in the northwest were driven by the limited number of elementary schools, the geographic distribution of schools and by a high population of at-risk students. Two of the four schools receive Title I funding. Evaluation for the northwest elementaries were focused on how to support the unique population and geography of the area. In addition, the northwest is home to a Dual Language school (Irish), further complicating potential options for consolidation.

School	Considerations	Inclusion
Cache La Poudre	Only elementary located in the Town of Laporte; geographically isolated; Significant Emotional Disability (SED) program and IB program.	Included as an option for closure.
Dunn	While not currently underutilized, there was recognition that only 180 students reside in the Dunn boundary, so utilization at this school is dependent on choice behavior and boundary adjustments. There is potential to increase Dunn's neighborhood boundary, while minimizing disruption to area student's school of attendance. Autism program and IB program.	Included as a receiving school with an increased neighborhood boundary.
Irish	Dual-language program with growing enrollment; challenges with current DL model that allows for students in the neighborhood to be enrolled in grades 3-5, past the ideal time a child should enter a	Included in scenarios as a 100% choice school or as having open bussing

	DL school if they are not already bilingual; changes to the DL model by Irish becoming a 100% choice school or having open bussing with a nearby school located could address the current challenges; current building is located in the county and somewhat outside of urban fabric. Receives Title I funding.	with either CLPE or Putnam.
Putnam	Lowest enrollment in the area. Receives Title I funding. Highest percent of enrollment of low income and non-white students. Located near downtown, city infrastructure, and a high density of student residences; ILS programs.	Included as an option for closure.

Evaluation for Middle Schools

Evaluation for middle schools was driven primarily by geography and enrollment trends. In addition to low enrollment projections at several middle schools, over enrollment is anticipated at Timnath Middle High School.

School	**Considerations**	**Inclusion**
Timnath	Projected to be over enrolled.	Included in options including feeder adjustments and making Timnath a HS only.
Preston	Under enrolled primarily due to sharing a boundary with Kinard and students moving to Timnath MHS. Significant Emotional Disability (SED) Program	Included as an option for closure.
Kinard	While not currently underutilized, Kinard is the only 100% choice middle school in the district. Integrated Learning Services (ILS) Program and the district's only middle school Core Knowledge Program.	Included option for moving to neighborhood boundary.
Boltz	Central location. Under enrolled. Houses the largest district Autism program, district Newcomer Program and the district Dual Language Program	Included as an option for closure.
Blevins	Lowest enrolled middle school in the town of Fort Collins. When evaluated in relation to Lincoln (only significant PHS middle school) and Webber (over 70% enrollment), no viable options were identified to increase enrollment. Significant Emotional Disability (SED) Program.	Included as an option for closure.
Cache La Poudre	Geographically isolated, similar to mountain schools with a very large geography for middle school including up to Cameron Pass, to Wyoming border, and to Buckhorn Canyon. Mountain elementaries feed into CLPMS. Serves as a community hub in the town of Laporte. Lowest enrolled middle school in the district and would fit into Lincoln MS. IB curriculum.	Included as an option for closure.
Lincoln	Lincoln is the only significant MS that feeds into Poudre High School. Lincoln was seen as a school that has capacity to absorb students from CLPMS and/or to the north if Wellington MS	Not included as an option for closure in scenarios.

	becomes over enrolled, but not seen as a good candidate for closure. Integrated Learning Services (ILS) Program and IB curriculum.	

Summary of April 2024 Scenarios

	Scenario D1	Scenario D2	Scenario E	Scenario F
East	**East of I-25 Elementaries:** Balance enrollments at Timnath, Bethke, and Bamford Elementary Schools by adjusting boundaries between these schools	**East of I-25 Elementaries:** Balance enrollments at Timnath, Bethke, and Bamford Elementary Schools by adjusting boundaries between these schools	**East of I-25 Elementaries:** Balance enrollments at Timnath, Bethke, and Bamford Elementary Schools by adjusting boundaries between these schools	**East of I-25 Elementaries:** Balance enrollments at Timnath, Bethke, and Bamford Elementary Schools by adjusting boundaries between these schools
East	**Bamford:** Adjust Bamford's feeder so that it feeds into Preston Middle School and Fossil Ridge High School (instead of Timnath Middle High School).	**Bamford:** Adjust Bamford's feeder so that it feeds into Preston Middle School and Fossil Ridge High School (instead of Timnath Middle High School).	**Preston:** Close Preston. Make Kinard Middle School a Core Knowledge neighborhood school with Zach, Bacon, and Bamford Elementaries as feeders. Bethke and Timnath Elementaries go to Timnath Middle High School. Balance enrollment with Boltz.	**Timnath Middle-High School:** TMHS becomes a high school only. All middle school students living in TMHS feeder move to Preston MS. At the high school transition, students residing east of I-25 would attend Timnath HS. Students living west of I-25 (in current Preston boundary area) would attend Fossil Ridge High School. Enrollment overflow at Preston would be managed with adjustments to Boltz MS boundary area.
Central		**Boltz:** Close Boltz, students move mostly to Preston Middle School and some to Lesher Middle School. Move Dual Language program from Boltz to Lincoln Middle School.		
Central	**Linton:** Close Linton, move students primarily to Kruse, adjusting boundaries for Kruse, Bacon, Werner, Zach to accommodate Linton/Kruse combination.	**Linton:** Close Linton, move students primarily to Kruse, adjusting boundaries for Kruse, Bacon, Werner, Zach to accommodate Linton/Kruse combination.	**Linton:** Linton becomes a Dual Language school retaining some of it's current neighborhood boundary. Harris moves from current building into Linton, creating a three-track DL program.	**Linton:** Close Linton, move students primarily to Kruse, adjusting boundaries for Kruse, Bacon, Werner, Zach to accommodate Linton/Kruse combination.
Central			**Harris:** Harris moves from its current building into Linton building. A three-track Dual Language program will be implemented at Linton.	

			Students currently attending Harris would choice to Linton or Irish. Harris Dual Language program would need to be modified to offer a three-track at Linton.	
SW	**Blevins:** Close Blevins. Move students to Webber and Lincoln Middle Schools.	**Blevins:** Close Blevins. Move students to Webber and Lincoln Middle Schools.	**Blevins:** Close Blevins. Move students to Webber and Lincoln Middle Schools.	**Blevins:** Close Blevins. Move students to Webber and Lincoln Middle Schools.
SW	**Beattie:** Close Beattie, move students to Lopez and Bennett Elementary Schools	**Beattie:** Close Beattie, move students to Lopez and Bennett Elementary Schools	**Beattie:** Close Beattie, move students to Lopez and Bennett Elementary Schools	**Beattie:** Close Beattie, move students to Lopez and Bennett Elementary Schools
SW	**Johnson:** Close Johnson, students move to Olander and McGraw Elementary Schools.	**Johnson:** Close Johnson, students move to Olander and McGraw Elementary Schools.	**Johnson:** Close Johnson, students move to Olander and McGraw Elementary Schools.	**Johnson:** Close Johnson, students move to Olander and McGraw Elementary Schools.
NW		**Polaris:** All of Polaris moves to Johnson Elementary School building.	**Polaris:** All of Polaris moves to Johnson Elementary School building.	
NW	**Cache La Poudre Elementary:** Close CLPE, move students to Irish, Putnam, and Tavelli Elementary Schools			
NW	**Cache La Poudre Middle School:** Close CLPMS and move students to Lincoln Middle School.			
NW	**Irish and Putnam:** Irish and Putnam both keep their current boundaries, but students in grades K-2 may choose to attend either school and will receive bussing. New students in grades 3-5 will automatically go to Putnam. Irish will be promoted as a Dual Language (DL) school with guaranteed bussing for Spanish-speaking students. Spanish-speakers will be allowed to enroll any time at Irish Putnam becomes a CK school.	**Irish:** Move Irish to Polaris building as a 100% Choice Dual Language school, with potential to grow into K8 in the future. Former Irish boundary is absorbed by CLPE and Putnam, with adjustments to Dunn and Tavelli boundaries to balance enrollments.	**Irish:** Move Irish to Polaris building as a 100% Choice Dual Language school, with potential to grow into K8 in the future. Former Irish boundary is absorbed by CLPE and Putnam, with adjustments to Dunn and Tavelli boundaries to balance enrollments.	**Putnam:** Close Putnam, students move to Irish, Cache La Poudre (CLPE), Dunn, and Tavelli Elementaries. Students from Poudre Valley Mobile Home Park, specifically, move to Tavelli and Dunn's boundary is expanded to absorb some students, including students from Hickory Village. Irish remains DL, but students in grades K-2 may choose to attend either Irish or CLPE and will receive bussing to either school. New students in the expanded Irish boundary in grades 3-5 will automatically go to CLPE.