

From: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Poudre School District

Date: February 18, 2026

RE: Comprehensive Planning Committee Update

On Wednesday, February 18, 2026, the PSD Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) was joined by Dr. Julie Chaplain, PSD Assistant Superintendent. Dr. Chaplain shared updates from the Comprehensive Planning Committee. This committee acts as a recommending body and supports long-range facilities planning. The core conclusion of the committee is that due to declining enrollment, PSD has too many vacant seats in their buildings with 5-year projections showing the number of empty seats will increase across the district. In order to provide more ideal educational programming, the number of open seats needs to be reduced by consolidating some schools together into fewer locations. PSD should then utilize newly available buildings with alternative uses that support PSD educational services and goals. The next step for the Comprehensive Planning Committee is to review utilization data and draft specific criteria for a consolidation process.

SEAC members discussed the information presented and offered feedback and recommendations for developing an approach to school consolidation as outlined below:

When developing an approach to school consolidation, ways to keep our community informed include:

- 1) Continuing the community outreach and feedback sessions that are currently taking place.
- 2) A fully transparent process that addresses student-teacher ratio, where the savings will come from, and what effects school consolidation will have.
- 3) Inviting community members to meetings to provide the information and a timeline.
- 4) A comprehensive communication plan that includes multiple forms of communication in different modalities such as text, email, phone calls, and website.
- 5) Communicating how students in center-based programs will be considered.
- 6) Following the process that has been decided upon and shared with the community.

When developing an approach to school consolidation, a successful process would include:

- 1) An understanding of class size for center-based programs as large class sizes could be detrimental.
- 2) Maintaining the unique qualities and opportunities that add value to PSD, such as bilingual schools.
- 3) Ensuring that equity is a priority and that funding does not dictate the services provided to students in federally protected classes (ex. students with disabilities).
- 4) Considering how school closures affect home values and those community members who do not have children.
- 5) Considering the value of each school (newness, air conditioning, less maintenance, etc.) rather than automatically closing schools with low enrollment.
- 6) Collaborating with the Fort Collins City Planner on long-term roadway/sidewalk improvements to ensure improvement doesn't happen by closed schools.
- 7) Continuing to consider gaps in the current education process with regard to different learning groups.

- 8) Considering that there are different needs for different students and taking intersectionality into account in the criteria for school consolidation.
- 9) Considering the concerns regarding higher caseloads for Integrated Services case managers.
- 10) Ensuring equity and that those on the committee are representative of all of our communities and understand the difference between things being equal and things being equitable.
- 11) Considering cost-cutting alternatives such as a 4-day week to reduce operational costs.
- 12) Considering service delivery for special education services.
- 13) Considering the need for small class sizes to allow for flexibility even within large schools.
- 14) Considering transportation times and routes (via transportation surveys), start times and bell schedules, and specific services (discoverable and site-based).
- 15) Considering how staff will be redistributed.

When developing an approach to school consolidation, *ways to be unified as a district, rather than divided as schools or groups, include:*

- 1) Sharing with parents the benefits of closing schools and the negatives of keeping some schools open (such as no specials classes, no counselors, etc.)
- 2) Explaining the goals of this process and what the transition is going to look like.
- 3) No curve balls – do what the district says it’s going to do.
- 4) Trimming needs to include administrative/overhead staff, not just school staff.
- 5) Having a plan for how to handle staff reductions, including teachers at schools that are being closed.
- 6) Facilitating community building during the transition of new boundaries being drawn.
- 7) Messaging about meeting IEP needs.
- 8) Communicating how services at small schools could be maintained or expanded by moving to a large school.

Thank you for bringing this topic to SEAC for feedback and consideration.