



Norfolk Public Schools

Steering Committee #2

MAY 14, 2025



Agenda

- 1 Survey Questions
- 2 Executive Summary
- 3 Planning Criteria
- 4 Summary by Criteria | Qualitative Responses to Criteria



Survey Questions

Rate your level of agreement with using the criteria below and please note what you would like NPS to consider when applying this criteria when creating options to rebuild, renovate, or consolidate schools.

Other Considerations (Open-Ended)

<p>Criteria One:</p> <p>Every student should be educated in a world-class facility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measure: Building condition [Facility Condition Index (FCI)]- Renovate or rebuild schools in the worst condition	<p>Criteria Two:</p> <p>NPS should operate efficiently to maximize direct investments in students’ education and well-being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measure: Building & Area Utilization [Enrollment/Capacity]	<p>Criteria Three:</p> <p>Every community should have equitable access to a world-class school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measure: Concentrate schools near population centers. School locations will be plotted on a student density map to concentrate schools near where most students live.	<p>Criteria Four:</p> <p>It is time for NPS to begin rebuilding schools for tomorrow’s students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measure: NPS will operate newer, fewer schools to achieve the aforementioned three objectives. The School Board’s Educational and Facilities Planning Advisory Committee will recommend up to 10 consolidations and priority rebuilds & renovations.
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Slide 3

SMO [@Grass, Janice] can you add the survey criteria questions? thanks
Miller, Susan, 2025-05-08T18:54:14.248

Executive Summary

Norfolk Public Schools provided a survey to the community in April 2025 to solicit input on the district's plan to close ten schools over the next decade. This consolidation process began in response to the City of Norfolk's request to address declining enrollment that is impacting the district's financial sustainability.

As schools close, there may be opportunities to renovate and rebuild facilities that will be receiving the students from the closing schools. The district asked survey respondents to evaluate the criteria for the prioritization of consolidations and future investment in the district's facilities.

Upon evaluation of the qualitative responses, key themes emerged that carried across all criteria. These global insights are included on the following pages with editorial detail.

The survey provided for both quantitative and qualitative responses. The quantitative provided for level of support for the criteria depicted in the question. The qualitative questions allowed for respondents to provide context for their quantitative response.

Executive Summary Narrative Responses

findings

- Prioritize investments in **historically underserved and disadvantaged communities**.
- Concerns about **racial and socioeconomic equity** were frequent, especially regarding which schools are closed or rebuilt.
- Ensure **equitable access to quality education** across all neighborhoods.

Equity and Fairness



- Address issues like **mold, HVAC, asbestos, outdated facilities, and outdated infrastructure**.
- Ensure buildings are **modern, safe, and conducive to learning**.
- Incorporate **modern technology, green infrastructure, and flexible learning spaces**.
- Schools like **Sherwood Forest, Jacox, and Maury High** were repeatedly cited as needing urgent attention.

Facility Conditions



- A major concern was **overcrowding** due to consolidation.
- Many called for **smaller class sizes, more support staff, and better teacher compensation**.

Class Size and Staffing



response

Comments reflect concerns of economic inequalities in the city of Norfolk. Long-term facility plans should focus on renovating and rebuilding schools, especially in those regions with higher concentrations of poor condition, under-enrolled (and therefore under-resourced) schools. This strategy will result in “newer and fewer” facilities, providing greater resources per student in world-class facilities.

There is a common misconception that school consolidations necessarily lead to larger class sizes. In reality the majority of NPS schools, especially at the elementary level, are significantly under-enrolled. Facility plans should target ~85% utilization to avoid risk of overcrowding (>100% utilized). Current average student: teacher ratios in NPS elementary schools is 13.5:1 in a range of 10.3 – 18.8:1.

Executive Summary Narrative Responses

findings

- Preserve **community schools** and consider their **historical significance**.
- Engage **parents, educators, and community members** in the decision-making process.
- **Maintain transparency** and thorough communication about plans and their impacts.
- Consider the emotional and logistical impact of closures on families, especially those without transportation.

Community Impact



- Ensure schools provide a healthy environment free from hazards like **mold and poor air quality**.
- Incorporate spaces for **mental health support, sensory rooms and wellness activities**.
- Provide **modern safety standards** to protect against bullying, vaping, school shootings and other threats.
- Ensure **safe transportation routes and adequate parking and accessibility**.

Safety and Student Well-being



- Some respondents expressed distrust in the process, feeling that decisions were already made.
- There were calls for more community engagement, clearer communication, and public oversight.

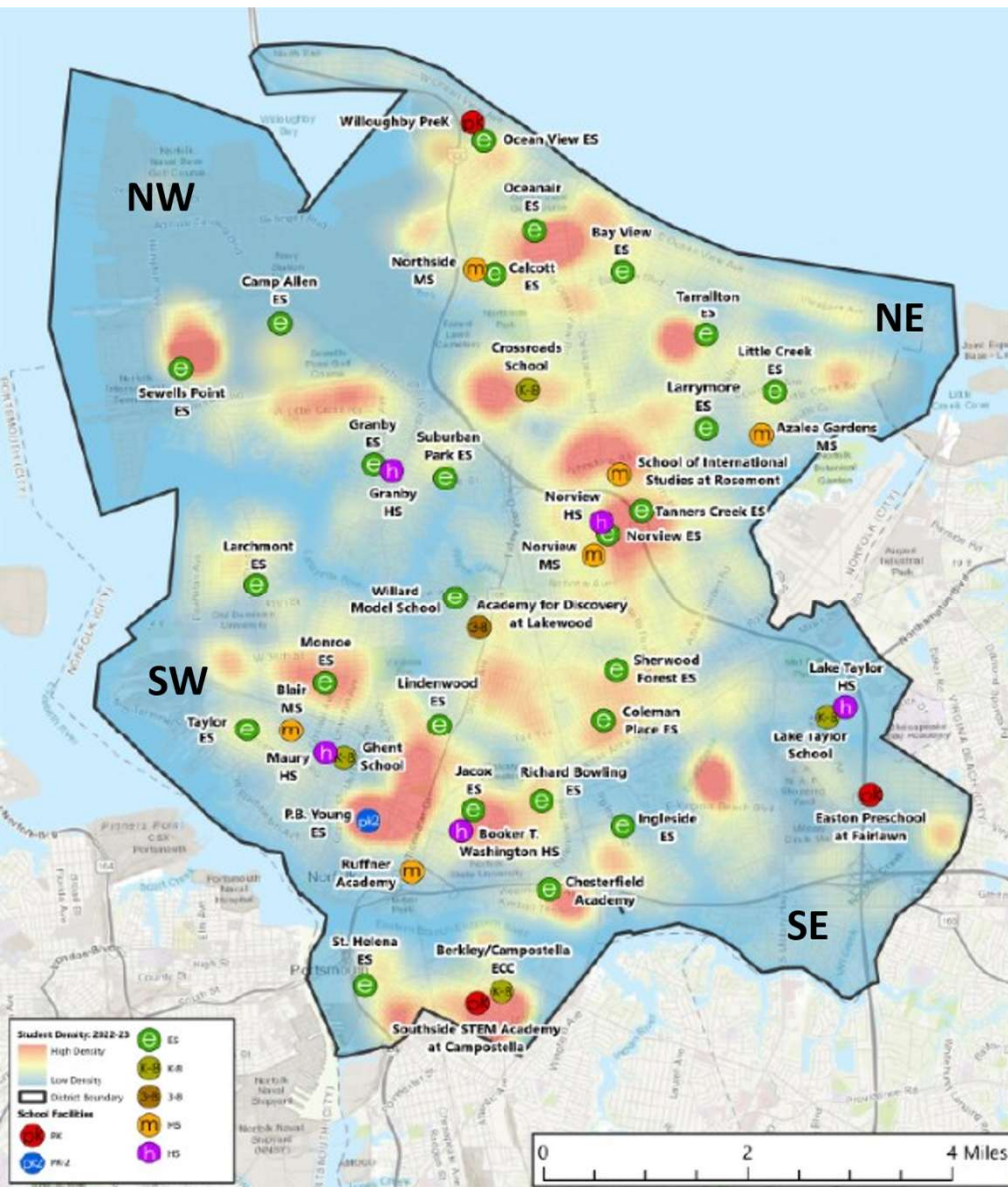
Transparency and Trust



response

Comments insist that student safety and well-being be at the center of future facility decisions, and that those decisions be made in good-faith through transparent, authentic community engagement.

The work of this Steering Committee should continue to center its recommendations on providing every community equitable access to a world-class school, using data and compassion to create an actionable plan to achieve this goal within the operational and financial realities facing the District.

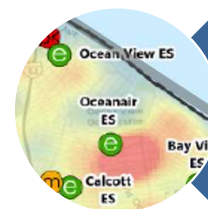


Criteria for renovations and rebuilds



Facility Conditions

- Reference FCI & age



Location: density

- Consider the location of a school to both population centers (high student density) and adjacent schools covering the same grades



Utilization

- Look not only at one school's utilization but also surrounding school capacities and enrollments



Consolidation and Facility Investment

- Consolidation of schools should provide better learning spaces for impacted students.

Level of agreement: Planning Criteria Survey Questions

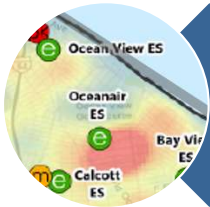


- Every student should be educated in a world-class facility

64% Strongly Agree

24% Agree

88% agreement



- NPS should operate efficiently to maximize direct investments in students' education and well-being

58% Strongly Agree

28% Agree

86% agreement



- Every community should have equitable access to a world-class school

54% Strongly Agree

25% Agree

79% agreement



- It is time for NPS to begin rebuilding schools for tomorrow's students.

45% Strongly Agree

28% Agree

73% agreement

Criteria: Building Condition [Facility Condition Index]

Respondents emphasized the importance of considering the physical state of school buildings, including issues like mold, leaks, HVAC systems, and overall structural integrity.

Many responses highlighted the need for **equitable distribution of resources** to ensure all schools, regardless of location, are safe and conducive to learning.

- **Prioritize schools** with the **highest FCI scores (worst condition)**.
- **Consider environmental health factors** (air quality, lighting, temperature control).
- **Focus on schools in historically underserved neighborhoods**.
- **Concern for student and staff safety** (including portable classrooms and security).
- **Invest in sustainability**: green building practices, energy efficiency, and future-ready infrastructure.
- **Plan for modern technology**, Wi-Fi, flexible learning spaces, STEM labs, arts spaces, and special education accommodations.

Quantitative Responses: 1,466

Qualitative Responses: 1,007

Criteria: Enrollment and Capacity [Utilization]

There were concerns about overcrowding in classrooms and the impact on the quality of education.

Suggestions included consolidating underutilized schools and ensuring that any changes do not lead to excessively large class sizes.

- **Ensure efficient use of space**, matching building capacity with enrollment.
- **Consider the impact on educational quality, community services and support systems.**
- **Avoid overcrowding** and maintain balanced class sizes
- **Ensure equitable** investment across all neighborhoods.
- **Plan for long-term** sustainability to support students and staff. Consider demographic trends and potential population shifts.
- **Build flexibility** into long-range plan to allow for fluctuating student populations and specialized programs (e.g. Special Education, Gifted & Talented, English Language Learners and Behavioral supports.)

Quantitative Responses: 1,459

Qualitative Responses: 753

Criteria: Student Density and Neighborhood Schools

Respondents stressed the importance of ensuring that all communities have access to high-quality educational facilities, regardless of neighborhood or socioeconomic status.

Equity in resource allocation was a recurring theme, with calls for prioritizing historically underserved neighborhoods (low-income or minority communities).

- **Ensure all students have access to high-quality education close to home.** Safe routes for children.
- **Address historic patterns of disinvestment.** Avoid segregation by race or income. Allow for diversity.
- **Engage communities in planning and decision-making.** Community ties and parental engagement are critical.
- **Solicit community input.** Ensure transparency and consider emotional and logistical impacts on families.

Quantitative Responses: 1,462

Qualitative Responses: 679

Criteria: Consolidation, Closures and Modernization

Safety and modernity were key considerations, with many respondents advocating for renovations that include updated technology, improved air quality (HEPA), natural lighting and better facilities overall.

The importance of community input and involvement in the decision-making process was also highlighted.

- **Consider long-term community impact and partnerships beyond academics.**
- **Evaluate each school's community integration and support services.** (e.g. Title 1 schools)
- **Ensure decisions strengthen community and student outcomes.**
- **Align educational** curriculum reform alongside facility upgrades. [Project based learning, outdoor learning, career technology education, and flexible spaces]
- **Balance the costs of renovating versus rebuilding of schools.** Ensure efficient use of resources and potential savings from consolidating underutilized schools.

Quantitative Responses: 1,466

Qualitative Responses: 729

Other Considerations

Several themes were repeated when asked what other considerations the community may have as the district moves forward with the consolidation process. A data driven process that is transparent and engages the community will provide the foundation for the implementation of the long-range plan that incorporates the potential closure of ten schools over the next decade.

Additional areas to incorporate into the long-range plan include:

- **Support teachers through this process.** Consider retention, management of class sizes, and compensation.
- **Build a process to** preserve historic buildings or repurpose them creatively.
- **Plan to support neighborhoods and property values.**
- **Attend to special need students and staff.** Incorporate sensory rooms, accessible facilities, and better training for educators and support staff.
- **Provide for clear communication, public oversight, and data transparency** in decision-making process to build community trust and support.

Qualitative Responses: 657

