

FAQ - COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL PLANNING REVIEW



The School District of Philadelphia has a clear vision: For all children to have access to a great school, close to where they live. To achieve this vision, beginning in fall 2019, the District will partner with industry experts to lead a multi-year Comprehensive School Planning Review (CSPR) designed to take a strategic, system-wide look at how populations and communities across our city are projected to change in the coming years.

1. WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE WORK AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES?

The overall goal is for the District to design schools in every neighborhood that meet the educational needs of the changing population by:

- optimizing utilization of our buildings to ensure students have access to a high-quality school close to where they live
- investing limited capital dollars where needed most
- creating thoughtful transitions for students at elementary and middle grades

2. DOES THIS INVOLVE MY SCHOOL?

All District schools are included in this initiative. Schools are grouped into one of four cycles. Review cycles are scheduled to begin the fall of each year. Charter schools are not part of the review process.

3. WHEN WILL IT START?

The first cycle starts fall of 2019.

4. HOW CAN I FIND OUT WHAT REVIEW CYCLE MY SCHOOL IS IN?

The list of schools by cycle can found on the CSPR website: www.philasd.org/cspr

5. HOW DID YOU DECIDE TO GROUP THE SCHOOLS IN EACH CYCLE?

All of our neighborhoods are important. We grouped schools by a series of considerations, including:

- their location and proximity to each other,
- existing awareness of fluctuations in enrollment, and
- existing plans for capital investment.

6. WHY WILL THE CSPR TAKE MULTIPLE YEARS TO COMPLETE?

This type of planning takes time and we have a lot of schools, across many neighborhoods with their own unique stories. We have to do this thoughtfully. So we've placed schools into smaller study areas within four cycles to give each grouping the individual attention it requires.

Among other reasons, we are especially committed to engaging school communities in important dialogue about decisions impacting their schools and ensuring that parent and community voice is evident in the final recommendations that will be presented to the Board of Education for approval. So the timeline reflects including a number of meetings around community engagement.

7. IS THIS JUST ABOUT BOUNDARY CHANGES?

Not at all. There are many factors to consider and many solutions to choose from, depending on the needs. For example, we might find that the best solution is to expand or reduce classes in certain grades, build additional spaces, invest in ways to use existing space more effectively, bring programs together to share resources or move programs to more logical locations. Changes to the boundaries are sometimes necessary but that's only one of many options.

8. WHO IS HELPING WITH THIS REVIEW?

We are hiring national experts to complete projections on the number of students the District expects to serve over the next 10 years. This information along with data about school performance and building quality will be used by planning committees to make recommendations to the Superintendent and Board of Education.

9. HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Two ways. Each Study Area will have a planning committee that includes two parent representatives. These committees will work alongside District staff and industry consultants to advise and inform recommendations to be presented to the School Board, and share information back to the community. If you are interested in serving on your school's planning committee, please contact your School Principal.

But you don't have to be on the Committee to have a voice. All parents and community members will have multiple opportunities to attend informational meetings throughout each review cycle, and can also offer testimony at the monthly Board of Education Action meetings.

10. WHEN WILL THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EACH CYCLE BE IMPLEMENTED?

Recommendations approved by the Board in the spring will take effect no sooner than the fall of the next calendar year. For example, recommendations approved in spring 2020, will be implemented for the 2021-2022 school year.

11. HOW CAN I STAY UP-TO-DATE ON ALL OF THIS?

We've gathered all the information to-date about the CSPR, including the process and timelines, on our website www.philasd.org/CSPR. It will be updated regularly with meeting schedules and progress reports, as they become available. There is also an email form on the site, for you to submit any additional questions, at any time. A member of our team will reply in a timely manner.