

## Annual Capacity Review 22-23 FAQ: Jackson/Carver Clusters

### Enrollment Projections, Capacity, and Utilization

Q1: What is the utilization of Jackson High?

*A1: The current utilization at Maynard Jackson HS is 98%, projected to increase to 102% in School Year 2023-24. More details can be seen on page 9 of 2022-23 Annual Review Report: <http://tinyAPS.com/?AnnualReviewReport>*

Q2: Could you share if we are looking for long-term solutions or more quick fixes? How can we get info on if investing in increasing the capacity of Jackson and Midtown is the best solution long term since the population in Atlanta continues to grow anyway.

*A2: The scenarios address Jackson HS's projected utilization of 100% over the next five years. Currently, APS has over 5,000 excess seats. Our goal is to leverage existing capacity (and the excess 5,000 seats) before adding classrooms to high schools.*

Q3: How do these proposals account for population growth in the district? Can you share the population numbers that are creating this change?

*A3: Enrollment at Jackson HS grew by an annualized rate of 5.2% during the last 10 years. The growth has slowed down in recent years – at an annualized rate of 2.8% during the last three years. There was a small decline in enrollment this year (2022-23) as compared to last year. In the past, Jackson HS was taking administrative transfers from out of zone because their utilization was less than 90%. It has stopped taking them now, which has slowed the growth. Enrollment projections for all schools use building permit data to factor in population growth from new development.*

Q4: This is a very short-term solution for a long-term population growth. Why isn't APS looking for long term solutions that don't involve moving students that are already on a learning path and have social communities?

*A4: If the rezoning scenario is approved by the Board, it would take effect in School Year 2024-25. It would also shift areas experiencing growth from new development to Carver cluster, which is a less-utilized cluster.*

Q5: Based on the notes on how future enrollment was forecast, it seems like there is no accounting for the pressures that something like the Beltline is going to create in the communities in question here. My concern is that we make these disruptive changes and then find in a few years that we have a huge influx of students.

*A5: Enrollment Projections are developed based on the latest information available. The projections are updated annually and include building permit data from the City of Atlanta to factor in new students from new development.*

### Engagement

Q6: Can you clarify when stakeholder engagement will that start and what does that entail?

*A6: Community engagement began in February, with meetings held in March and meetings planned for April. Meeting dates, times, and venues will be posted on the Annual Review page: [https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/annual\\_review](https://www.atlantapublicschools.us/annual_review) and sent out via email.*

Q7: What is the decision timeline?

*A7: The scenarios will be shared in March. A draft recommendation will be presented in April. The community input sessions in March and April will provide feedback to the administration during the development of the Superintendent's recommendation at the May Board meeting. The community will have the opportunity to provide feedback to the Board between its first read in May and their final vote in June.*

### **Board Policy AD**

APS Board Policy AD: <https://bit.ly/3YyZDP8>

Q8: Why is equity not centered or weighted higher on the Board Policy AD: School Attendance Zones? How important is equity to the rezoning question?

*A8: Board Policy AD lists multiple criteria that are considered in conjunction with one another. The criteria are not weighted, nor prioritized—all factors need to be considered.*

### **Scenarios**

Q9: What teams or groups at APS helped create these proposals? Is this a Facilities-led plan? Was the Office of Equity or Innovation included and approving of the scenarios?

*A9: These scenarios were developed in consultation with an internal working group comprised of principals, associate superintendents, and other APS staff, including staff from the Office of Equity and the Office of Innovation, Improvement, and Redesign.*

Q10: Is it just Scenario 1 (no rezoning) vs Scenario 2 (rezoning)? What if Scenario 1 doesn't get us to the results APS wants, does it automatically roll over to Scenario 2 rezoning?

*A10: No, Scenario 2 is not a default if Scenario 1 does not reduce the impact of overcrowding.*

Q11: Is residency review only upon request? Can APS do this more regularly? Has there been a residency review done yet? Why wasn't a residency review done prior to these other proposals? How diligently is the school checking residency?

*A11: Addresses are checked for the zone during enrollment. A comprehensive residency review has not yet been undertaken at the extent that would be in this situation. This would be on top of the current process.*

Q12: Would residency review only happen at the high school level? Or also at middle and elementary?

*A12: The proposed Residency Review will happen at the high school level and rising 9<sup>th</sup> graders from feeder middle schools.*

Q13: Does Scenario 1 only look at innovation options related directly to Jackson, or does it include looking at other options like 9th grade academies, etc.?

*A13: For this process it is just addressing Jackson HS. Opening a 9<sup>th</sup> grade academy is not being considered currently but, the district is exploring long-term solutions to address disparities across the district.*

Q14: What is the innovation plan? How will you innovate to keep the kids at the school? Online learning?

*A14: As part of the review by the Office of Innovation, Improvement, and Redesign, design teams would identify challenges at each overcrowded school, experience a full-day “ideation experience” and ideate potential solutions, engage in design thinking events and charrettes, and propose solutions based on this process.*

Q15: Has the district explored other options to deal with crowding that do not include removing current students from their assigned/chosen school?

*Q15: Yes, Scenario 1 consists of options that do not include rezoning.*

Q16: I am still not clear if Benteen stays part of Jackson cluster or is moving to Carver. Would Benteen be in the Jackson or Carver cluster?

*A16: Part of the Benteen zone (Chosewood Park – Area A here: <http://tinyAPS.com/?JacksonMap>) would become part of the zone for Slater ES in Carver cluster, but the rest of the attendance zone would stay in Jackson cluster.*

Q17: Would current students be allowed to stay at their school, and only make rezoning affect net new students going forward? For example, it would be unfortunate to make kids go to a new school for their 5th grade year after being established at their elementary school with all their friends etc. Would all students be “grandfathered” in? If existing students are allowed to stay, what happens to their younger siblings who are not yet at that school when this change happens? Is it possible that we'll have kids attending two different high schools?

*A17: In accordance with board policy AD ([Board Policy AD](#)), rising 5th, 8th, 11th and 12th grade students who are affected by school rezoning decisions will be given the option of remaining at their present school through the highest grade that school offers, and their parents agree to be responsible for student transportation. Allowing siblings to continue will depend on availability of space.*

Q18: If neighborhood cohesion is part of Board policy and a major focus of APS why on Earth are we recommending splitting up the neighborhood of Peoplestown? Why would you split communities? That’s clearly going to impact the children’s relationships both inside and outside of school.

*A18: While neighborhood cohesion is one of the criteria considered when setting school attendance zone boundaries, it is not the sole criterion and is considered in conjunction with other criteria. The goal is to keep neighborhoods intact wherever possible.*

Q19: Why does Dunbar get to mandate that Pittsburgh and Summerhill neighborhoods stay together?

*A19: The Pittsburgh and Summerhill neighborhoods are not in the same zone. The majority of the Pittsburgh neighborhood is currently in the Gideons ES zone in the Carver cluster. The Dunbar ES zone is made up of the Mechanicsville neighborhood and parts of Pittsburgh, Adair Park, and*

*Castleberry Hill. The Summerhill neighborhood is currently in the Parkside ES zone. Summerhill would become part of the Barack and Michelle Obama Academy ES zone in Scenario 2.*

Q20: Are these numbers current students only? How do you account for dense new construction in Boulevard Heights?

*A20: The numbers of students that would be rezoned are based on the number of students currently in each area, then adjusted to reflect 2024-25 expected number of students, including any students from new developments.*

Q21: Are we really talking about destroying 75 students' development when you haven't completed a residency review yet? What if Jackson enrollment drops by 76 kids?

*A21: Rezoning, if chosen, would not take effect until School Year 24-25 if approved by the Board, allowing time to consider the results of the residency review.*

Q22: There is significant high-value construction going on that is currently mapped to Benteen that, if I read this correctly, you would rezone to Carver's cluster. This would severely impact Benteen's ability to grow beyond our current 50% enrollment. That seems counterintuitive to building Benteen's enrollment at the very least. It will continue to consign Benteen to a second-class school within the district, despite Benteen's IB status and the 40% of enrollment who are there by choice.

*A22: Scenario 2 includes rezoning students from Parkside to Benteen to keep enrollment steady if some Benteen students are rezoned to Slater.*

Q23: If the Jackson elementary schools are redistributed, the dividing line is United Avenue. Will residents on United have access to Parkside ES? We would advocate for that to be the case that all residents on United have the same elementary school and thus are united in their community.

*A23: Under scenario 2, Residents on the South side of United Avenue between the BeltLine and Moreland Avenue would be rezoned to Benteen ES. Rising 5<sup>th</sup> graders would be given the option of remaining at Parkside, but their parents would be responsible for student transportation.*

Q24: Why would you want to move Boulevard Heights students who are closer to Parkside than many of the students who would stay? Why not split the cluster at "east of the park" and "west of the park"? Why move only students in less affluent neighborhoods to Benteen? Is that the goal? Why not split the grades across the 3 schools?

*A24: Currently, split campuses are not being considered.*

Q25: Why do the elementary and high schools need to rezone if only the high schools have capacity issues? If elementary aren't near capacity, why are we moving Summerhill students from Parkside if they are going to King and Jackson anyway?

*A25: Moving students from Parkside to Benteen and BAMO would keep enrollment stable at Benteen and BAMO while addressing overcrowding at the high school level in the cluster by moving parts of the Benteen and BAMO zones to the Slater zone in the Carver cluster.*

Q26: Why is it an option to move families out of this cluster when other clusters get new buildings to alleviate overcrowding. Why is our cluster up for rezoning families out of the cluster?

*A26: The goal is to leverage the existing capacity across the district before adding capacity through new buildings or additions.*

Q27: What tax implications related to education does this have on the community?

*A27: There are no tax implications from this rezoning.*

Q28: Why can't the City use the increase in taxes they have unfairly collected to invest in the neighborhoods for both clusters?

*A28: While the City of Atlanta and Atlanta Public Schools are partners in serving Atlanta communities, they are separate entities. City of Atlanta consults with Atlanta Public Schools as a stakeholder concerning neighborhood investments made by the City, but APS is not directly a decision-maker regarding these investments. Fulton County and DeKalb County collect property and sales taxes on behalf of Atlanta Public Schools, and these funds are used by the district to operate and improve APS schools.*

Q29: Why do the elementary schools and middle schools have to stay with the high school cluster? What is the rationale behind that rule? It seems completely arbitrary.

*A29: The middle and high school cluster is not a hard rule, but to maintain the culture of strong clusters.*

Q30: Is there funding to expand Maynard Jackson HS? What are the expansion possibilities of MHS?

*A30: An addition to Maynard Jackson HS is not included in the APS capital improvements program (BuildSmart Project Master Plan) funded by the Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (E-SPLOST) until 2027.*

Q31: Was Scenario 2 developed in accordance with the strategic plan?

*A31: Yes. Both non-rezoning and rezoning scenarios will be implemented in a way that maintains the core work of the district: teaching and learning.*

## **Charters and Partners**

Q32: Why does Scenario 2 propose moving students to a partner school that isn't run by APS?

*A31: Geographically these students are closer to Slater ES, Price MS, and Carver HS. Proximity is one of the board approved criterion in rezoning.*

Q33: What is the plan for Purpose Built? If it's not working, why would we send more kids there? Is there a plan to end these partner school contracts?

*A33: Currently there are no plans to end partner school contracts.*

Q34: How do charter schools weigh into this capacity analysis? Has the school board evaluated how many school choice children are attending the school and whether that could be addressed before rezoning?

*A34: Administrative transfers are allowed to a school with utilization of 90% or more. Jackson HS is not accepting school choice children.*

## Equity

Q35: There is a large body of empirical literature that indicates that school segregation adversely impacts students of color. What tools is APS using to evaluate the impact of any zoning changes on school segregation? What strategies will APS use to ensure that any zoning changes do not inadvertently increase school segregation across APS? Why can race not be used in decision making? Are there legal reasons that APS could not use a controlled choice (or other) model in the future, to avoid repeated rezoning proposals, the resulting stress and draining of community energy, and address the significant de facto segregation in APS? If race cannot be considered in decision making, how does APS ensure that students of a certain race are not being disproportionately impacted? What about when the kids being moved are disproportionately a certain race and socioeconomic status?

*A35: APS's equity focus is grounded in ensuring that every student has the chance to thrive, not by accident, but by design. In support, our Center for Equity and Social Justice conducts demographic studies and equity impact assessments to determine the potential impacts on school diversity (including, but not limited to race). This helps integrate equity into district decision-making and deliberation processes. A major element of that process is stakeholder engagement. While the district cannot specifically use race to determine school assignment (Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School Dist. No. 1, 551 U.S. 701 (2007)), we leverage data, research, and the stakeholder engagement process to better understand the potential, unintended equity impacts to our decisions.*

Q36: What are the metrics around student demographic shifts?

*A36: Impacts on economic and racial diversity are listed on slides 22-24 of the March 8 meeting presentation: <http://tinyAPS.com/?JacksonCarverPresentationMarch8>*

Q37: Where is the Office of Equity in all this rezoning? Have they done a report?

*A37: The Annual Review Process is going through the Equity Impact Assessment, and they are currently in Phase 2, which includes presenting proposals and stakeholder engagement. The Equity Department has been involved with the process from the beginning. The department is currently working on their EIA (Equity Impact Assessment).*

Q38: Can you give us your definition of equity?

*A38: In APS, equity mean the quality or ideal of being just and fair, regardless of economic, social, cultural, and human differences among and between persons.*

Q39: Has there been any consideration of changes in facilities utilization so that autistic middle schoolers who have attended schools in the cluster from kindergarten and need a self-contained classroom do not have to go out of the cluster to attend middle school?

*A39: Currently, King MS does not have the capacity to accommodate adding a DSE class for students with autism. Changes to enrollment and utilization at King could potentially allow for the addition of one of these classes.*

Q40: The one-pager, map, and video are all in English. Attempts to re-zone a dual language school with students and families that speak Spanish as their first language without translated information is not equitable, and it actually disenfranchises their community.

*A40: Materials are being translated into Spanish and will be posted here: <http://tinyAPS.com/?ProcesodeRevisionAnual>. Interpretation is available at both virtual and in-person meetings.*

Q41: What can be used as the basis for a rezoning if race cannot? Can socioeconomic status and English language proficiency be used?

*A41: Yes, household income, free & reduced lunch status, and English language proficiency can be used in rezoning decisions.*

### **Transportation**

Q42: If walkability, proximity, and traffic and safety were considered in the rezoning, why was Boulevard Heights selected to move from Parkside? BoHo is connected via the car-free BeltLine to Mercer St. Parkside is a closer and safer than the walk for students in Eastern Ormewood. That's closer and safer than the walk for students in the Western side of Grant Park. Instead, Boulevard Heights children would walk up broken sidewalks, past speeding traffic for over a mile of Boulevard. That seems to be in strong disagreement with your stated priorities.

*A42: The primary reason Boulevard Heights and Woodland Hills were selected was to balance the enrollment at Benteen ES and Parkside ES.*

Q43: Regarding board policy of safety, the intersection between Peopletown and South Atlanta is an active railway with NO pedestrian crossway. BAMO was built to avoid children crossing the tracks. Why was the railroad not considered? Do you even know that the train stops for around 2 hours on a regular basis and the kids would have to climb over the train?

*A43: The railroad was considered, with the Beltline being the primary pedestrian route to access Slater ES, which prevents children crossing the tracks.*

### **Vacant Facilities**

Q44: Was re-opening the Coan Middle School building considered as an option in the development of the two options presented today? Maybe as an 8th and 9th grade academy or some other arrangement? Why aren't we talking about creating a cluster at Coan and Crim?

*A44: The Coan facility is currently scheduled to undergo an HVAC upgrade and will house Toomer ES as a "swing" or relocation site for one school year during SY 2023-24 while the Toomer facility is renovated. East Atlanta Campus (formerly known as Crim High School) is used for the Phoenix Academy program and for APS Nutrition. Use of Coan and Crim was considered but is not one of the proposed scenarios. We will leverage existing capacity at active facilities before considering re-opening a closed facility.*