

SUMMARY

Seven Questions About DeKalb County's Attendance Boundary Process

New and expanded schools are opening across six clusters between 2027 and 2029. As the DeKalb County School District (DCSD) draws attendance boundaries, the process raises questions about whether the district is using current methods — or methods the field left behind years ago.

Board Policy AD — the policy governing DCSD's redistricting — was last revised in 2013. The field has since moved to equity-informed, multi-criteria approaches that include socioeconomic data, academic performance, choice school modeling, and demographic impact assessment as standard inputs. DCSD's process includes none of them. This document asks seven questions about that gap.

1 Why is Policy AD from 2013 and not updated to current redistricting standards?

The policy contains no socioeconomic, academic performance, English learner, or equity impact criteria — all standard in peer districts. In July 2026, the federal disparate-impact enforcement mechanism was removed. District-level policy is now the primary guardrail. DCSD's contains no equity criteria.

2 How does a majority-minority district exclude equity factors from its boundary process?

DCSD is 89% students of color and 82% FARM-eligible. The SAP page promises review of "demographics" — but that term appears nowhere in Policy AD. The engagement survey asks parents to rank existing 2013 criteria only. Parents are not asked what criteria *should* exist — they are asked to rank criteria the district chose thirteen years ago.

3 Is HPM performing the redistricting analysis — and does reducing their visibility address the trust concerns that paused the previous SAP?

HPM's Director of Planning, Scott Leopold, confirmed at a focus group that HPM is conducting the analysis. The community was told district officials would drive this process. The response to broken trust was not to change the methodology — it was to reduce HPM's visibility.

4 HPM's own planning lead used equity and SES methods at his previous firm. Why aren't those methods being applied here?

Leopold personally led redistricting in Howard County (MD) and Champaign (IL) using FARM ratios, academic performance, and SES balancing — describing the scenarios as promoting "a diverse and inclusive student body" at each school. DCSD's process uses none of those methods.

5 Policy AD requires "condition of facility" data. Not all schools have been visually inspected — so why was \$300,000 spent on building-size assessments instead?

HPM offered — and DCSD bought — a \$300K "educational adequacy" assessment that measures room counts and square footage against a template — not facility condition and not educational quality. For 4-section elementary schools, building size alone explains

95.7% of the score variance ($R^2 = 0.957$). Kittredge — the #1 elementary school in Georgia — scores 70.2 because it's small, not because it fails students.

6 Why are choice school communities excluded from the engagement process while the district says magnet placement is on the table?

Specialty school families are told to represent their home-zoned school. Kittredge, Wadsworth, and Robert Shaw are not selectable in the survey. No advisory team seats represent these schools. Yet Leopold confirmed that programs are part of the discussion. The #1 and #2 elementary schools in Georgia (2024–25 U.S. News) have no seat at the table.

7 Why is the redistricting process being used to address capital budget shortfalls — and why were Kittredge and Allgood targeted before any analysis began?

COO Hofstetter named Kittredge for capital deferral in February 2025 — 33 days after HPM's contract and before any assessment. In July 2026, Kittredge was deferred again (\$21.4M) alongside a \$12M budget error the administration's own numbers showed was already covered by interest earnings. Board Vice Chair Eyasu: "Why are we talking about taking out these projects that had nothing to do with the overage?" Policy JBCC gives the board authority over program moves — but the process provides none of the data needed for an informed vote.

The governance gap: The COO — an operations official — named Kittredge twice for capital deferral: in February 2025, before any analysis existed, framing it as a program relocation — and in July 2026, when the school lost the \$21.4M in capital work it needs. Policy JBCC gives the board authority over program moves. But the engagement process excludes choice school communities and provides none of the data the board needs to exercise that authority. Kittredge Magnet — the #1 elementary school in Georgia, with 742 applications for 146 seats and 100% proficiency — was named for deferral before any analysis existed.

What the Board Can Do

Add the missing criteria

Use Policy AD's "other criteria" provision to add FARM/SES, academic performance, choice school modeling, feeder pattern analysis, EL data, and equity impact assessment.

Publish the methodology

Who generates scenarios? What tools? What data? What weights? Disclose before the board votes.

Require demographic impact assessment

FARM, EL, academic, and feeder pattern impacts of each scenario — published before the board votes.

Require multiple options

Competing scenarios with published criteria and trade-offs — not a single recommendation.

Represent choice schools

Advisory seats, survey inclusion, and analytical visibility for magnet and theme communities.

Require visual FCA inspections

Complete visual Facility Condition Assessments for all schools in scope. Modeled estimates are not inspections.

Exercise JBCC authority with full data

Before any program move, require community input, demand data, and academic impact analysis.

Full analysis with sources, data, and supporting evidence available in the complete document (39 sources). These documents reflect publicly available records, documents, videos, and meetings, and we have made every effort to verify accuracy. If you believe any information here is incomplete or incorrect, please contact dcSDsapauditemail@proton.me — we will review and correct as necessary.

Board Policy JBCC (Student Assignment): [https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?](https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Policy/ViewPolicy.aspx?S=4054&revid=aUmtFbsAgFvxdCYdPpb0bA==&ppage=0&st=magnet&mt=Exact&ptid=amlgTZiB9plushNjl6WXhfiOQ==&fromPageld=6)

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