

Frequently Asked Questions for Academic Transformation Plan

Planning/ Implementation

What is the purpose of the Academic Transformation Plan?

The purpose of the plan is to provide all Cleveland's children with an excellent educational opportunity to prepare our students for success upon graduation from our school system. More specifically, transformation has seven overarching goals:

- Graduate all students ready to compete in the 21st century global economy.
- Provide high quality schools that raise student achievement in every neighborhood so that all families have choices.
- Hold everyone accountable for success, using performance data—teachers and principals, central office staff, parents and students, and community
- Recruit, support and retain high-quality principals and teachers.
- Expand what is working today and be bold in rethinking and changing what is not working for students.
- Attract and retain students and families in Cleveland.
- Right-size the District by eliminating excess capacity, addressing overcrowding and ensuring effective use of resources.

When will the plan become effective?

The plan is the district's recommendation to the Board of Education that will remain preliminary until a final Board vote. All school closings will be effective for the start of the 2010-11 school year. Other district wide supports and reforms will begin in the 2010-11 school year and continue to build over time.

Are these recommendations final?

The plan is the district's recommendation to the Board of Education that will remain preliminary until a final Board vote, which is expected in early-mid February. The district will consider significantly new information during a 3-4 week comment period throughout the month of January before final recommendations are presented.

Will the plan be implemented all at once or in phases?

The plan will be implemented in phases. Transformation is a multi-year plan that continues to improve support for schools and options for students and families over time. Examples of the phases include high school academies which will start in 9th (and possibly 10th) grade in the 2010-11 school year and grow into the upper grades each year. Another example is at the K-8 level, some schools will begin receiving supports in the first year, while some schools will continue to be monitored until the 2011-12 year.

What is the timeline for implementing this plan?

Transformation is a 5-10 year process. Success will require keeping a long-term perspective and goals in mind, while also setting and meeting yearly milestones and targets

Who will be affected by the Academic Transformation Plan?

Academic Transformation represents the most dramatic change effort CMSD has undertaken in decades; success will require a cohesive citywide effort

- For students, committing to stretch goals and a high level of achievement
- For CMSD staff, focusing everyday on what matters most for students
- For community partners, providing services for students and building deep explicit relationships with schools
- For parents and teachers, holding students to the highest of expectations

Will this plan balance school enrollment?

Yes, at current levels of enrollment, the plan will be within the target range for a “right-sized” district (80-90% school utilization district-wide).

Who played a part in developing the Academic Transformation Plan?

Many CMSD stakeholders were a part of the plan development. The senior CMSD team developed the plan with input from multiple community forums, community advisory committee meetings, a sub-team of K-8 and high school principals and administrators, as well as research support from the Boston Consulting Group (an external consultancy) on best practices from peer urban districts.

In addition, CMSD applied the recommendations from three external audits (Council of Great City Schools on specialty programs/schools, Education First on turnaround strategies, and BCG on facility utilization)

How much will the plan cost?

The plan will cost between \$20-25M per year to implement (or roughly 2-3% of the CMSD operating budget). The plan will be paid for primarily through three sources:

- Federal funding sources (Race To The Top, School Improvement grants, etc)
- Local foundation and business community support
- Creative reallocation of internal funding sources

School Assignments

What if my senior attends a closing or relocating school, will his/her diploma read the school they've attended the past three years or will it read their new school?

Students will receive a diploma from the school they attend their fourth year.

When will students who are currently enrolled in a school that will close or relocate be required to move to the new school?

School closings and relocations will occur over the summer of 2010 and students will be assigned to their new school for the 2010-11 school year.

If a siblings' school is closing, will they automatically be assigned to the same school attended by their sibling?

Generally, siblings who attend their neighborhood school assignment should expect to attend the same school together. However, because some students attend one of the district's many thematic schools and other students need special services (special education or English language services, for example), students cannot always be guaranteed to attend the same school as their sibling. More information about school assignment options can be found in the Parents and Families section of the CMSD website (click the Parents and Families button on the CMSD home page, and then select School Registration from the District Resources section of the page).

Will the District still employ an open enrollment policy?

Yes.

What if I opt not to send my child to the newly assigned school and my school of choice is full?

If the school of choice is full, the student and family have three options:

1. Families may choose to apply for any one of the multiple city-wide "choice" school options available throughout the district
2. Students may apply for an Intra-district Open Enrollment Transfer to another school in the student's academic neighborhood
3. Students may attend the neighborhood school assigned by the district's Student Assignment Office.

More information about Intra-district Open Enrollment Transfers can be found in the Parents and Families section of the CMSD website (click the Parents and Families button on the CMSD home page, and then select School Registration from the District Resources section of the page).

How will student assignments work under the new plan?

Once approved by the Board of Education, the district will review every child's student assignment for the 2010-11 school year and each student will be assigned a "home" school for the 2010-11 school year. Students and families will also have the opportunity to apply for the many themed school options available in the district and families will have the opportunities to apply for the district's Intra-district Open Enrollment Transfer as well. Final school assignments will be printed and mailed with the final report card of the 2009-10 school year.

When can I expect to receive my new assignment?

Each student should expect to receive his/her tentative 2010-11 school year assignment by the end of April 2010. Once tentative assignments are made, students and families may choose to apply for any one of the multiple city-wide "choice" school options available throughout the district, may choose to apply for an Intra-district Open Enrollment Transfer to another school in the student's academic neighborhood, or may choose to attend the neighborhood school assigned by the district's Student Assignment Office. Final student assignments will be printed on the June 2010 school report card so that every student knows his school assignment for the 2010-11 school year at the conclusion of this school year.

Transportation

Will transportation be provided for students to newly assigned schools?

All regular students living over a distance of two miles will be provided transportation by school bus or provided RTA tickets in 6th grade or higher. This distance requirement applies to students attending their neighborhood school or newly assigned school.

Will the District make changes to how it provides transportation?

No changes are anticipated at this time.

Involvement/Feedback

What was the Board's process for considering this plan?

The Board was presented a portion of the plan in August and continuously updated throughout the planning process. After hearing community input, the board is expected to vote on the Transformation Plan, tentatively at the February 23, 2010 board meeting.

Will there be future community meetings or engagement opportunities related to the Academic Transformation Plan?

Yes. There will continue to be community meetings and individual school meetings. The dates of these meetings will be posted on the CMSD website. Information will be

consistently updated, as changes occur and more information is made available. Input can be shared by posting a comment on *Talk to the CEO*, an online feedback form located on the CMSD website.

What does the City or the District intend to do with the vacant buildings?

Ohio Revised Code Section 3313.41 prescribes the action the Board is to take once a school is no longer used for Academic Instruction, Administration, Storage or other educational purposes. Once classes have ended in June 2010, the closed buildings will be secured for protection. After approval of the Transformation Plan, the Board will then adopt a resolution, within a year of school closing, that outline plans for the closed schools.

What Safety and Security considerations were made in determining the recommendations?

Consideration was given to schools with existing neighborhood issues. Additional support will be provided to those schools with increased deployment, consistent with our Humanware/ Hardware strategy. The size of the student body was also considered and population will be considered as the buildings are staffed and hardware is deployed.

Support Services

Will there be any transition services provided to assist children with adjusting to a new school environment?

Yes. There will be transition teams that will help students who are leaving a closed school adjust into their new school. Referrals to appropriate outside social service agencies may also be provided.

Will my child have all new teachers or will the teachers be reassigned with the students?

Closed Schools: The teachers will be reassigned through the voluntary transfer and the necessary transfer process per the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Cleveland Teachers Union. The teachers will not be reassigned with the students. There may be several programmatic differences where teachers may move with the students.