Board Workshop
Comprehensive Schools Strategy Plan

February 26, 2026

Enrollment

6,600 empty student seats in Alachua County Public Schools

2,666 empty **elementary** seats (equal to 4 average-sized elementary schools)



1,981 empty **middle school** seats (equal to 2 average-sized middle schools)



983 empty **high school** seats (equal to about half of an average-sized high school)



Elementary School Capacity*

Schools at or above 90% capacity

School	% Capacity
Idylwild	101%
Littlewood	92%
Meadowbrook	101%
Newberry ES	125%
Parker	95%
Wiles	97%

Schools under 90% capacity

School	% Capacity
Archer	78%
Alachua	60%
Chiles	84%
Duval ELA (PreK)	30%
Foster	84%
Glen Springs	84%
Hidden Oak	82%
High Springs (K-8)	87%
Irby	69%
Lake Forest	45%
Metcalfe	61%
Norton	71%
Rawlings	69%
Shell	65%
Talbot	73%
Terwilliger	75%
Williams	66%

*Includes High Springs K-8 and Duval Early Learning Academy

Middle School Capacity

Schools at or above 90% Capacity	% Capacity
Ft. Clarke	90%
Schools below 90% Capacity	
Bishop	71%
Kanapaha	84%
Lincoln	56%
Mebane	49%
OakView	80%
Westwood	84%

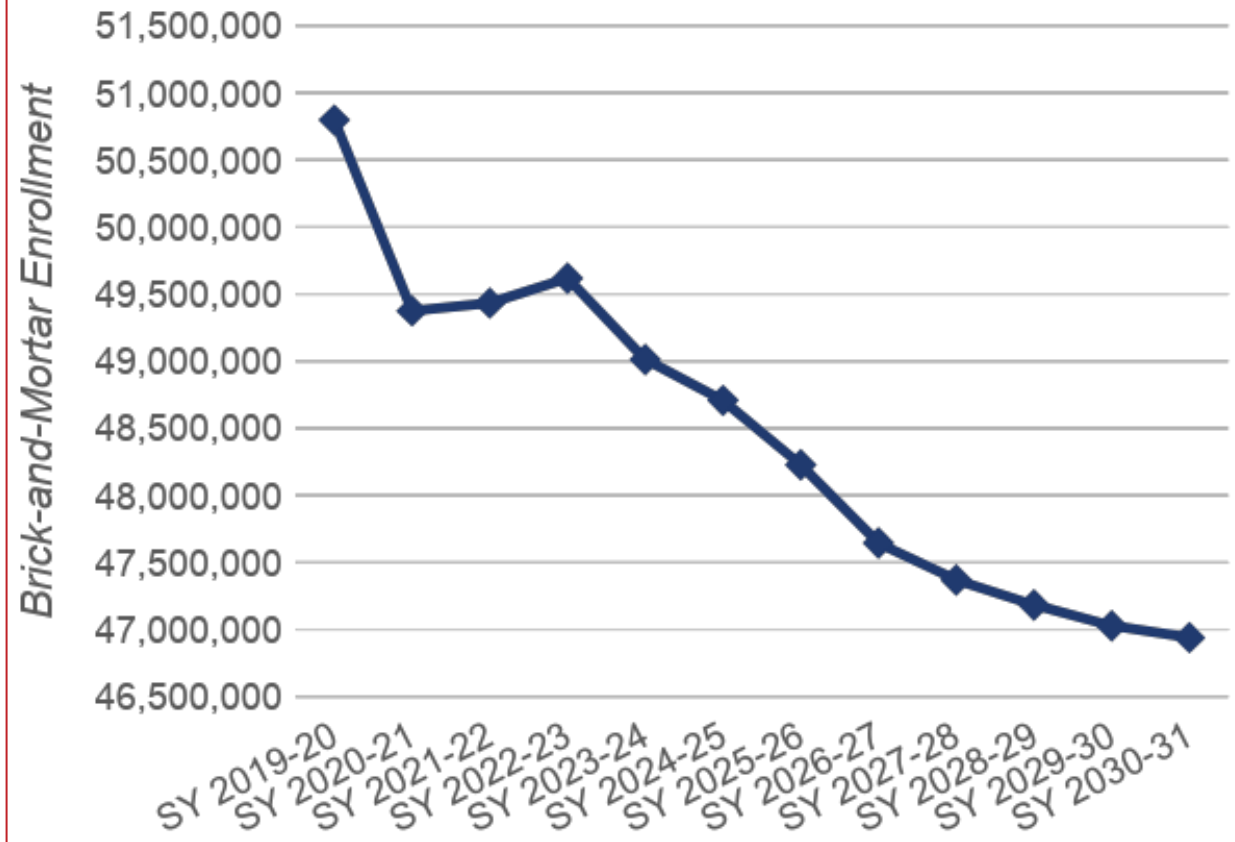
High School Capacity*

Schools at or above 90% Capacity	% Capacity
Buchholz	115%
Gainesville	94%
Newberry	111%
Schools below 90% Capacity	
Eastside	68%
Hawthorne (6-12)	59%
Professional Academies Magnet at Loften	71%
Santa Fe	87%

*Includes Hawthorne Middle High School

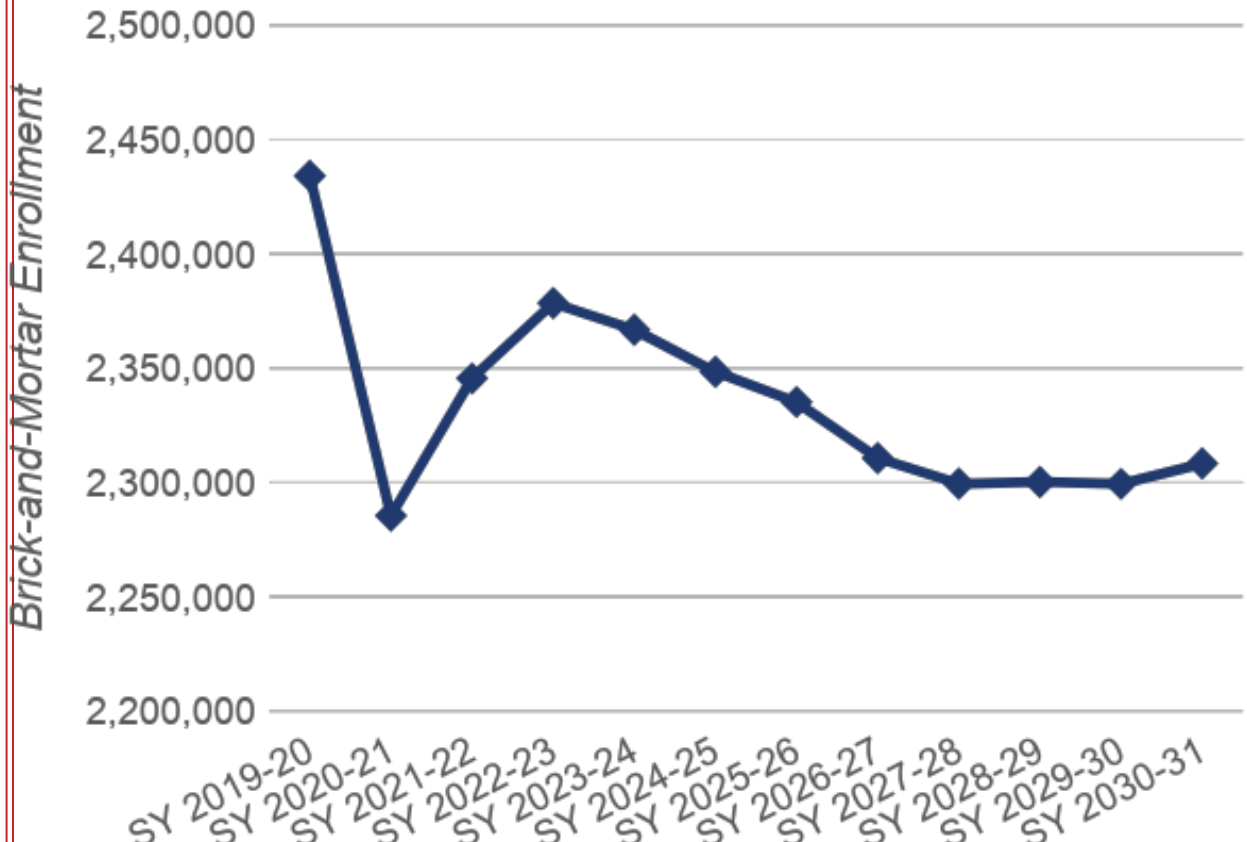
Enrollment Trends and Projections through 2030-2031

National



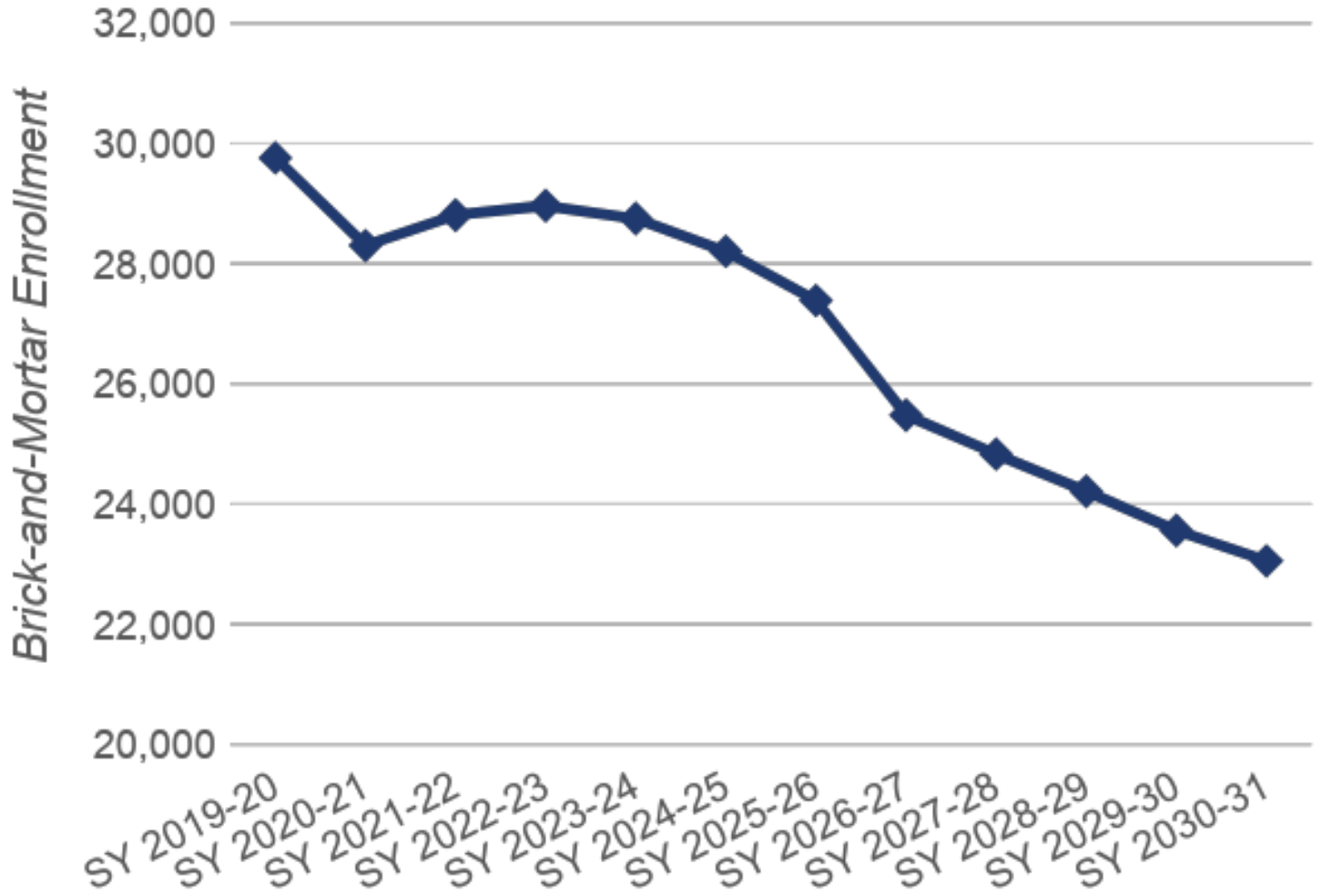
Source: National Center for Education Statistics

State of Florida



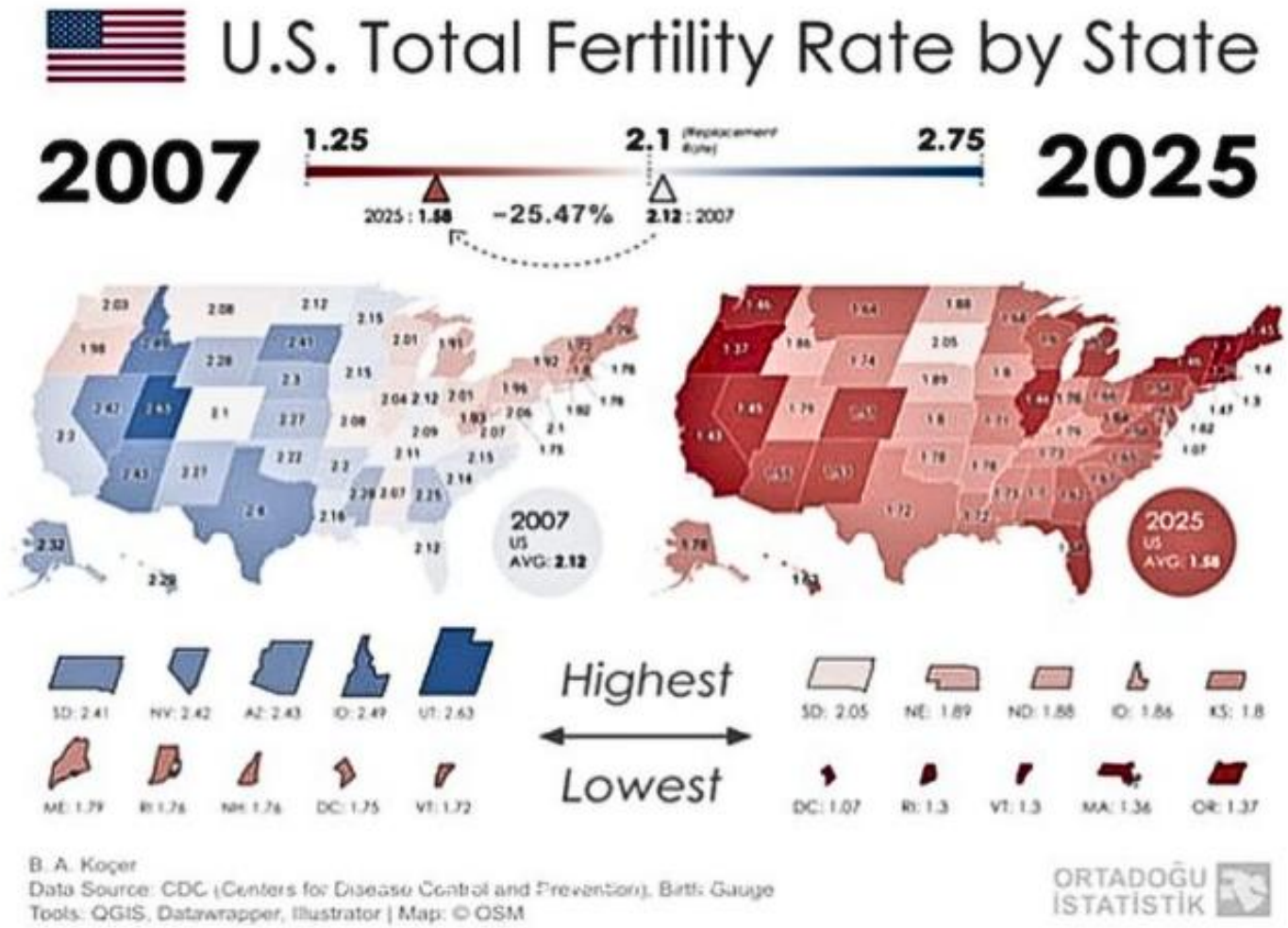
Source: *FLDOE COFTE Forecast*

District Enrollment Trends and Projections through 2030-31

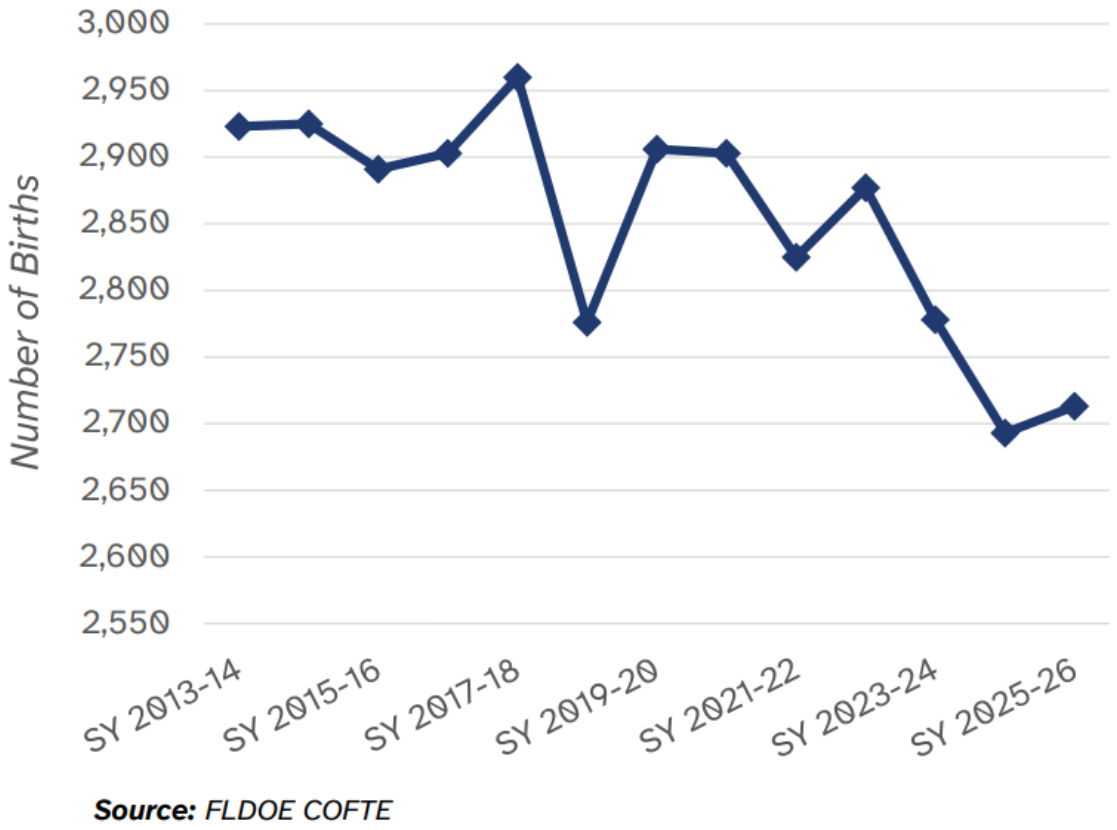


- Approximately 7000 fewer students from 2019-20 to 2030-31
- Amounts to approximately $64 million in decreased funding

Birth Rate Trends



Birth Rate Trends



Source: *FLDOE COFTE*

Enrollment changes due to:

- Birth rate trends
- New housing developments
- Population shifts
- School choice participation

Right-Sized Schools

With right-sized schools, the district is able to:

- Align school enrollment with building capacity
- Respond to demographic and community changes
- Avoid both overcrowded and underused schools
- Support safe, high-quality learning environments
- Use facilities and resources more efficiently
- Focus on long-term sustainability, not short-term fixes

Right-Sized Schools

With right-sized schools, the district is able to:

- Expand and enhance offerings in advanced coursework (Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Cambridge, Honors, etc.)
- Offer more magnet and speciality programs at all grade levels
- Provide additional Career and Technical (CTE) pathways
- Expand elective and exploratory course offerings
- Increase offerings in fine arts, music, theater and world languages

Right-Sized Schools

With right-sized schools, the district is able to:

- Match enrollment and programmatic needs
- Align future capital planning and enrollment projections
- Maximize the impact of every resource
- Free up funds to upgrade and modernize facilities
- Reduce deferred maintenance and long-term capital costs

Driving Factors and Considerations

- Long-term sustainability
- State enrollment
- District enrollment
- Population shifts
- Program Opportunities
- Facility optimization
- Fiscal stewardship
- Transportation costs
- Approved new housing developments
- Condition of facilities

Approximate General Fund Cost Savings

- Each school closed saves **$1,100,000** per year, at a minimum

- Savings are for annual recurring costs
  - 1 year of savings for five schools = **$ 5,500,000 total**
  - 5 years of savings for five schools = **$27,500,000 total**

Why March - Operational Logistics

- Parent and student notification of 2026-27 school placement
- School staffing allocations and notifications
- Skyward Student Information System set-up - new school paths, enrollments, etc.
- Student orientation visits to newly assigned schools
- Transportation set-up - bus routes, riders, notifications
- Preparation of facilities
- Moving classrooms - learning materials, furniture, books, computers, etc.

Approximate Potential Savings

- In addition to the **$1.1 million** per school per year operational savings, all future capital funds for projected needed result in further savings

- Total Facility Condition Needs Assessment by school
  - Alachua: $20.60 million
  - Duval: $15.44 million
  - Foster: $22.48 million
  - Rawlings: $18.19 million
  - Williams: $21.58 million

TOTAL
$98.29 million saved
for other needs

Benefits of K-8 Schools

- Siblings attend school on the same schedule, simplifying family logistics
- Students experience fewer school transitions, including a smoother path through 6th grade
- Long-term relationships with teachers, staff, and peers strengthen connection and belonging
- Stronger family–school partnerships develop over time
- Consistent services and progress monitoring support steady academic and emotional growth, with shared specialists such as Exceptional Student Education teachers, reading interventionists, and counselors
- Increased collaboration between elementary and middle school educators improves instructional continuity.
- Reduced transition-related academic decline supports sustained achievement
- All K–8 schools would be located on existing middle school campuses with access to established athletic facilities
- Greater flexibility across grade levels allows schools to better meet student needs

Oak View PreK-8

- Projected opening **August 2026**
- Physical separation of older and younger students
- PreK-4 students to be housed in transitional buildings, including:
  - 25 classrooms
  - dining/warming kitchen
  - media center/art/music
  - clinic
- Recommendation for new building, pending School Board approval of capital funding for design and construction

Mebane/Alachua K-8

- Projected opening **August 2027**
- Physical separation of older and younger students
- Renovation, remodeling and/or new construction, pending School Board approval of capital funding for design and construction

Lincoln/Williams K-8

- Projected opening **August 2028**
- Physical separation of older and younger students
- Renovation, remodeling and a separate new building for elementary students, pending School Board approval of capital funding for design and construction

Elementary Scenarios – Proposed Closures

Duval Early Learning Academy

Capacity: 408 student stations

Enrollment: 120 students (30% of capacity)

Student Home Zones:

- 33 students from Idylwild zone
- 26 students from Rawlings zone
- 24 students from Lake Forest zone
- 14 students from Williams zone
- 8 students from Metcalfe zone
- 6 students from Shell zone
- 9 students from other schools

Elementary Scenarios – Proposed Closures

Foster Elementary School

Age: 74 years – one of the oldest schools in the district

Capacity: 467 students

Attendance:

- 393 students* (84% of capacity)
- Smallest number of students living in their zone (districtwide)
- 209 of 394 students (55%) do not live in the school's zone

- Walk zones overlap walk zones of other schools
- Magnet program moves to Norton Elementary

*October Count

Elementary Scenarios – Proposed Closures

Williams Elementary School

- **Age:** 89 years old, oldest in the district
- **Capacity:** 590 students
- **Enrollment:** 388 students* (66% of capacity)
- **Property:** Co-located with Lincoln Middle School

*October Count

Elementary Scenarios – Proposed Closures

Alachua Elementary School

- **Capacity:** 768 open seats in Alachua-area schools
  - Alachua: 60% capacity
  - Irby: 69% capacity
  - Mebane: 49% capacity
- **Age:** Nearly 3 decades older than Irby Elementary
- **Location:** Irby is located within proposed elementary zone

Elementary Scenarios – Proposed Closures

<u>Rawlings Elementary School</u>

Age: More than 3 decades older than Metcalfe Elementary, which was redeveloped in 2018

Location:

- Within 1½ miles of Metcalfe
- Walking zones almost entirely overlap; majority of Rawlings students within Metcalfe walking zone

Capacity: 463 students

Enrollment: 318 students*, 69% capacity

*October Count

Closure of District Support Facilities

- In addition to potential school closures, the district will right-size support facilities once final school decisions are made.
- Opportunities to close, consolidate, repurpose, or reconfigure district support sites will be evaluated.
- The process will prioritize operational efficiency and long-term sustainability.
- Decisions will be guided by data, cost-benefit analysis, and alignment with the district's strategic priorities.

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