



2025-26 Enrollment Planning Update

Public Information Session 2
December 10, 2025

*Presented by: McLean County Unit District No. 5
and Cropper GIS Consulting*



Cropper GIS

Welcome and Introductions

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Tonight's Purpose

- **Learn** how the community-based enrollment planning process has been working.
- **Review** the work of the Internal Planning Team (IPT) and review DRAFT facility considerations that are being discussed.
- **Complete** online survey related to the potential DRAFT facility recommendations that are being considered and to provide valuable input to the IPT.

Enrollment Planning Process

Cropper GIS Consulting was hired by McLean County Unit 5 to facilitate and manage the project. Our firm is tasked to:

- A. **Develop** supporting materials to help facilitate the process.
- B. **Facilitate** an expert-based process of developing a student enrollment plan.
- C. **Empower** the community throughout the process.
- D. **Leverage** expertise to develop logical, efficient, and effective student enrollment options with the planning team.
- E. **Recommend** an enrollment plan to the district.

The Facilitator

Cropper GIS Consulting, LLC

- K-12 school planning is our business and our passion. Our specialty is facilitating enrollment planning processes.
- Cropper GIS works with K-12 school districts to:
 - Develop enrollment plans
 - Facilitate community engagement
 - Perform demographic studies
 - Prepare long-range facility master plans
 - Conduct housing and pupil yield-factor studies

Matthew Cropper, Cropper GIS

- 20+ years experience providing GIS mapping and analysis services to school districts and other clients
- Facilitated enrollment planning projects across the U.S.
- Published numerous times on topics related to K-12 facility and enrollment planning processes

Stakeholders

Outline of Stakeholder Responsibilities	
Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schedule and facilitate internal planning team meetings.• Communicate updates with planning team, including updated handout and meeting schedule logistics.• Conduct public meetings to solicit feedback related to draft options that are under consideration.• Support the district in providing materials such as presentations, handouts, and online interactive maps for the public's consumption.• Coordinate and summarize online feedback received from general public and internal planning team.
Internal Planning Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consists of key school district administrators including central office, transportation, planning, school principals, and board representation.• Group will work to review draft options that are being developed in preparation to share with the district and public.• Review input provided from the consultant and general public regarding draft options and continue to modify maps with a focus on the best solution for all students as a whole.• Recommend an enrollment plan that best meets the criteria for the district.
General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Informed through website.• Invited to submit comments and input throughout the entire process.• Invited to participate in public information sessions (both virtual and in-person), and to provide input via surveys and online general feedback form.
Board of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Charge internal planning team with its responsibilities.• Identify questions the planning team is expected to answer.• Advise staff and the process regarding policy related considerations.• Vote on enrollment plan.

Internal Planning Team Members

Board of Education:

- Stan Gozur (Board Member)
- Amy Roser (Board Member)

District Leadership

- Dr. Weikle (Superintendent)
- Michelle Lamboley (Assistant Superintendent)
- Marty Hickman (Chief Financial Officer)
- Curt Richardson (Attorney)
- Dr. Shelvin (Executive Director of Student Supports)
- Heather Rogers (Director of Human Resources)
- Dayna Brown (Director of Communication and Community Relations)
- Joe Adelman (Executive Director of Operations)
- Deidre Ripka (Director of Secondary Education)
- Maureen Backe (Director of Elementary Education)

- Leslie Webb (Director of Multilingual Education)
- Darrin Cooper (Director of Assessment and Accountability)
- Carrie Chapman (Director of Special Education)
- Dr. Caffey (Director of Student Services)
- Shane Hill (Director of Safety and Security)
- Kris Pennington (Early Learning Coordinator)

Building Leadership

- Dr. Zbrozek (High School Principal)
- Dr. Codron (High School Principal)
- Sarah Crowder (Junior High Principal)
- Kimberly Martin-Boyd (Junior High Principal)
- Leslie Davenport (Elementary Principal)
- Scott Peters (Elementary Principal)

Timeline

Process & Timeline for Enrollment Planning

	Sept. 2025	Oct. 2025	Nov. 2025	Dec. 2025	Jan. 2026	Feb. 2026	March 2026	April 2026
<i>Data Collection</i>								
<i>Data Analysis / Assimilation</i>								
<i>Demographic Study Development</i>								
<i>Baseline Options Development</i>								
<i>Planning Team Work (1-2 meetings per month)</i>								
Public Information Session #1 : Present Project Process, Criteria, Timeline, and Objectives to Community. Web-based meeting.		10/27 (Webinar)						
Public Information Session #2: Present DRAFT Facility Concepts to General Public for Comment/Feedback. Web-based meeting to review options and q/a at end of session.				12/10 (Webinar)				
Public Information Session #3: Present DRAFT Options to General Public for Comment/Feedback. On-site meeting to review options and gallery walk at end of session.						2/19 (On-site)		
<i>Presentation of Final Recommendations to the Board of Education</i>							3/18	
<i>Board of Education Votes on Plan</i>								4/15

Project Objectives

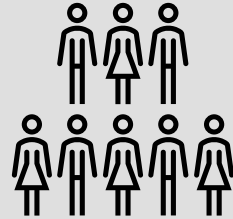
McLean County Unit District 5 is undertaking an enrollment planning study to achieve the following objectives:

- To evaluate school utilization and programming across the district at all levels (Early Learning, Elementary, Junior High, and High School) and recommend potential boundary and facility changes that achieve the best utilization of Unit 5 schools.
- While utilization is the focus of the effort, the district also wants to ensure that the impacts on other criteria, such as feeder patterns, proximity, and demographics, are taken into account.

Enrollment Planning Criteria



- Balance school facility utilization – Make every effort to have equitable utilization (where possible) across the district and in accordance with school capacities. Make efficient use of available space.



- Consider economic, cultural, and ethnic diversity – Ensure schools are inclusionary.



- Close Proximity – Students should be assigned to the school within the closest proximity to their homes where possible.



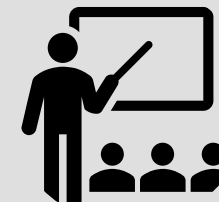
- Maximize busing efficiencies in transportation of students – Make every effort to account for transportation (school bus, car rider and walker), parent commuting patterns, balance busing travel time, and costs.



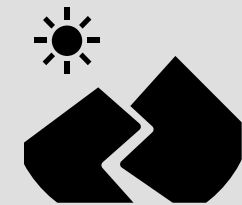
- Make every effort to establish contiguous zones – Avoid creating zones that are not connected to the primary attendance zone, where possible.



- Account for future growth – Allow for increasing attendance in high growth areas.



- Minimize impact on students - Attempt to minimize the number of students impacted when making boundary adjustments.



- Use major roads and natural boundaries wherever feasible to define attendance zones – Minimize the number of students who need to cross major intersections and other barriers to maximize the safety and security of students.

IPT Progress

Work done to date

- Data and information examined includes school enrollment (grade level, attending school and counts in neighborhoods, demographics), school capacity, zoning maps, & future development trends.
- Meetings with staff and IPT members to review relevant data and draft options for consideration.
- Options are considered DRAFT throughout the process; continued dialog and consideration of data is always encouraged.

Planning Team Progress

Work done to date

- Several meetings have been held with IPT members to establish consensus around facility concepts that are being considered.
- Extensive discussion and review of enrollment, capacity, and facility condition/needs to help provide direction regarding potential changes to facilities in Unit 5.
- Next steps after December 10 is to begin modeling conceptual boundary scenarios to align with facility considerations.
- Modeling will confirm the viability of facility changes and give the district a better understanding of how implementation of facility changes could affect where students are assigned to schools.

General Feedback from Public

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC RESPONSE SUBMITTED VIA THE GENERAL FEEDBACK FORM

- **Keep Carlock Elementary Open:** Many responses stressed the importance of keeping Carlock Elementary open, highlighting its value to the community, smaller class sizes, successful student outcomes, dedicated staff, and the negative impact closure would have on the community.
- **High School Enrollment Imbalance:** A significant concern was the major enrollment disparity between Normal Community High School (NCHS) and Normal West High School, resulting in overcrowding, larger class sizes, and limited space for activities/assemblies at NHCS.
- **Feeder Patterns (Junior High to High School):** Several respondents requested a change in the feeder patterns so that two junior high schools feed entirely into one high school, avoiding the current situation where students' friendships are impacted when they are split between the two high schools after junior high.

General Feedback from Public

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC RESPONSE SUBMITTED VIA THE GENERAL FEEDBACK FORM

- **Socioeconomic Diversity and Equity:** Multiple comments emphasized the need to better balance economic diversity across all schools, especially elementary schools, by adjusting boundaries.
- **Class Size and School Overcrowding:** Feedback noted significant disparities in class sizes, with some schools having classes in the mid-to-upper twenties while others are at 12-15.
- **Enrollment Declines and School Closings:** A few respondents suggested that the district should consolidate buildings and close one or two elementary schools due to significant enrollment declines since 2018 and the trend of lower kindergarten enrollment.
- **Boundary Fairness and Logistics:** Some respondents found current school boundaries illogical, noting cases where proximity to one school doesn't align with the assigned school.

Planning Team Feedback

- Committee members were asked about the condition of existing school buildings and the enrollment and utilization of existing buildings (are buildings overcrowded or under utilized?)
- Brigham, Carlock, Towanda, and Eugene Field were mentioned frequently as buildings that need improvement.
- Normal Community HS and Evans JHS were mentioned as buildings where enrollment is too high, along with Parkside ES and Cedar Ridge ES.
- Planning team members also indicated that it is difficult to sustain a building with an enrollment of under 150 students.

Planning Team Feedback

Considerations about low enrollment at Carlock:

- **Facility upgrades and discontinuation:** Adding more students would require facility upgrades, making it more cost-effective to discontinue students attending this building.
 - Also, the school is so small that it cannot take much more than 1 classroom per grade level of students.
- **Feasibility and enrollment issues:** It does not seem feasible to pull students from nearby schools due to their enrollment and capacity, and there has been no substantial change in enrollment over the last 15 years.
- **Community and location challenges:** The location makes repurposing difficult.
- **Communication and equity:** A well-communicated campaign informing the public of educational opportunities nearby and a clear vision for the plan is essential, and any redistricting should consider more than just numbers, such as accessibility for parents without cars for students experiencing economic marginalization.
- **Alternative use:** Consider using the school for town-related activities and community engagement events for issues related to Unit 5.

Planning Team Feedback

Other considerations about facilities planning:

- **Capacity and space needs:** Evans Junior High will need an estimated 4-6 additional classrooms next year, and Normal Community High School requires 10 classrooms for current needs, plus space for special programming like CTE.
- **Planning and vision:** A clear vision is needed for future growth, including collaboration with the City and using industry/Census Data, to ensure proactive planning.
- **Financial responsibility:** It's important to fully demonstrate financial responsibility for any proposed changes, especially since building an entirely new facility may not have public support; plans should utilize existing facilities as much as possible.
- **Community impact:** Understanding how areas of housing instability impact school population and special services is necessary and plans for facility additions must minimize disruption to students already in the buildings.

How will Unit 5 fund any building / renovating of space?

The Good news is that Unit 5 does not have to ask the taxpayers for more money to do most of the work that is being explored for this study!

The district can issue alternate revenue bonds to fund most of these projects, which would prevent the need from issuing a tax levy and asking the public for support that would increase property taxes.

No referendum would be needed to fund this work.

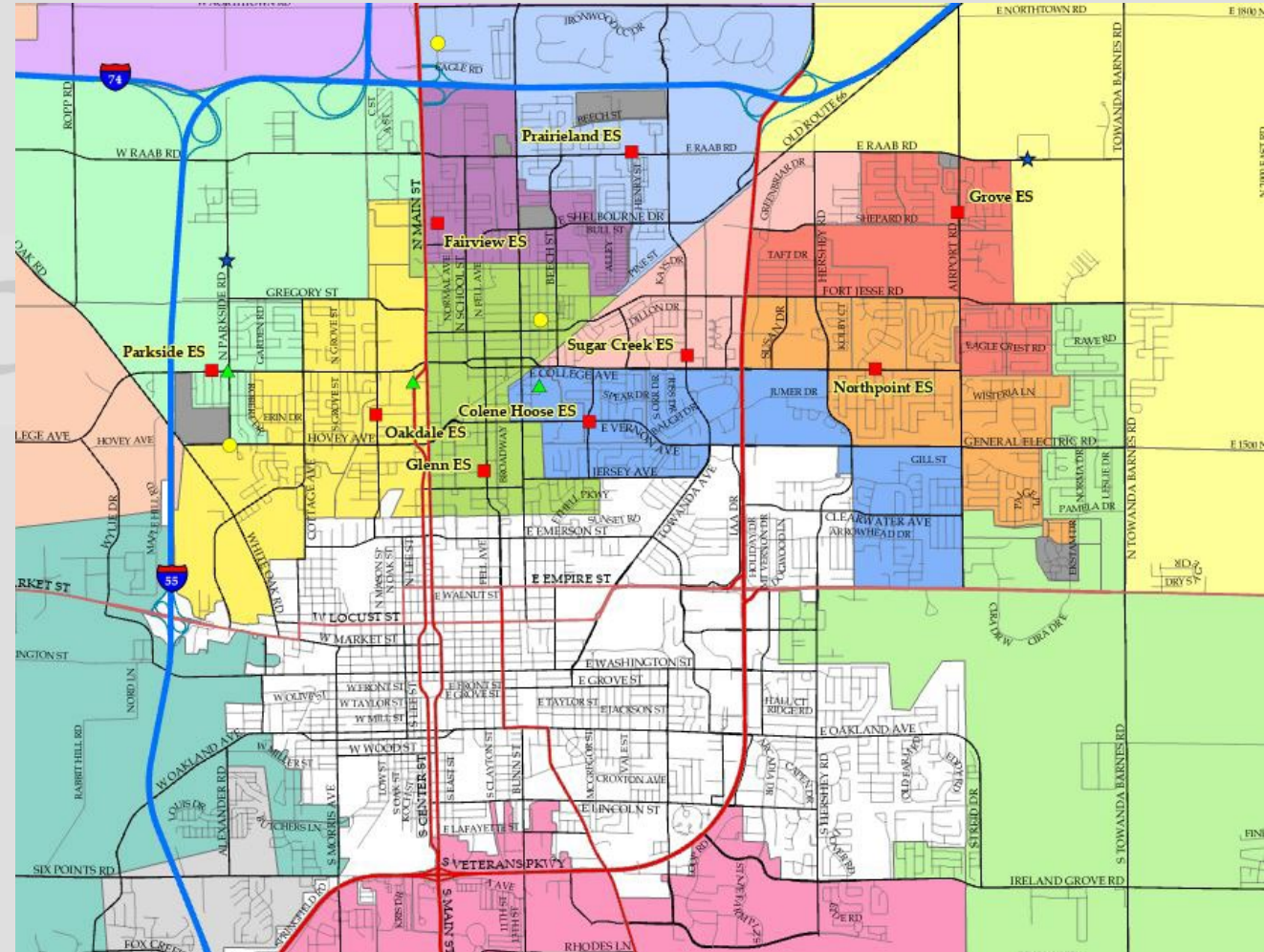
The Survey and Expectations from the Public

- The survey outlines a series of topics that are being considered by the planning team, ranging from Early Learning Program to High School needs.
- Please provide any feedback you wish related to these topics. We don't expect that everyone is knowledgeable on all topics in the survey so please provide input on what you feel is appropriate.

Survey Topics

EASTERN AREA ELEMENTARY (EAST OF VETERANS PKWY/NORTH OF BLOOMINGTON)

- When comparing school capacity vs. where students live, the planning team has found that there are over 500 more students living on the eastern part of the district than there are elementary school seats.
- Attendance boundaries for the central schools stretch east to serve these communities and open attendance areas are used to manage/balance enrollment at schools.



Survey Topics

EARLY LEARNING and SPECIAL SERVICES (18-22 yr old)

- The district is in need to address the continued demands for space to provide specialized services to students (Early Learning, 18-22 yr old Special Services). Brigham and Sugar Creek serve early learning students, but there is not enough space to meet the needs of early learning program demands. Brigham and Eugene Field is in need of updates and improvements.



Survey Topics

SOUTHERN AREA ELEMENTARY (SOUTH OF BLOOMINGTON INCLUDING CEDAR RIDGE, PEPPER RIDGE, and FOX CREEK ATTENDANCE AREAS)

- The southern part of the district has a relative balance of available school seats vs. students in this area. Cedar Ridge ES, however, has been identified as a school that needs more classroom space.

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Survey Topics

CARLOCK ELEMENTARY

- Carlock has experienced a gradual decline in enrollment over the decades. Carlock has 93 students as of September 2025, and the building only has space to serve one section per grade level (i.e. one class per grade level) at the school. More than 1/2 of the students that go to Carlock ES do not live in Carlock and are bussed from out of town to attend school.
- The planning team has discussed that schools with enrollment near/below 150 students are not sustainable and the cost to operate and maintain is too great to justify keeping open.

Survey Topics

TOWANDA ELEMENTARY

- Towanda Elementary School is in need of renovations and also has portable classrooms on-site to meet the needs of their students.
- The district could build a new school in a location south of Towanda to serve the town of Towanda and students in the east/northeastern part of the district. The alternative option is expanding/renovating Towanda on the current site.

Survey Topics

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

- Junior High Schools in Unit 5 are mostly operating within their capacity, although there are some imbalances in utilization and small feeder pattern splits.
- The planning team has discussed that some Junior High Schools could use expanded core spaces (i.e. cafeteria, gym, auditorium) and classroom spaces to meet the needs of students that they serve.

Survey Topics

HIGH SCHOOLS

- High Schools in Unit 5 are mostly operating within their capacity, although there are some imbalances in utilization.
- There is a need to expand core spaces (i.e. cafeteria, gym, auditorium) and classroom spaces at high schools, particularly Normal Community HS, to meet the needs of High School students.

Stay Informed – Provide Feedback

- Visit the Enrollment Planning web site at www.unit5enrollmentplanning.com
- Participate in an Online Survey from Dec 10 – Jan 4, 2026
 - Link is located on the school enrollment planning website or you can go directly [HERE](#)
 - You can also access the survey by referencing the QR code on this slide.
 - Available to translate to multiple languages.
 - Survey can be taken on any PC/Apple/mobile device with Internet access
- Although the formatted survey is preferred, you can also submit comments via the online [General Feedback Form](#).
- Presentation of a Recommendation will take place in March 2026.





Q/A

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the website:





Thank You!

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