

GCCISD High School Configuration Options

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is the Board of Trustees considering a change in our high school configuration?

Currently, our three traditional high school populations break down as follows:

Campus	Student Enrollment	Capacity	% Utilized
REL	1,539	2,319	66%
RSS	2,384	2,408	99%
GCM	2,146	2,200	98%

**Most recent enrollment data as of 12/14/17*

Most of the growth that we have experienced, as well as projected growth, has occurred in the north part of town. It's not feasible to have one or two schools at or above 100 percent capacity with one at about 66 percent capacity.

2. What options are the Board considering?

There are two options being discussed. One is to rezone to maximize the use of available seats at all three campuses.

The second option is to consolidate the three traditional high school in GCCISD into one consolidated high school on three separate campuses. Under this scenario, Lee and GCM would become 9th and 10th grade campuses (North and South campus). Sterling, the most central campus, would become an 11th and 12th grade campus.

3. Why is the Board considering this now?

The current Board – and previous Boards – recognizes that rezoning can be a big change. However, high school attendance boundaries have not been addressed since the opening of GCM in 2008. Since that time, GCM has reached, and almost exceeded, its instructional capacity while the utilization of REL has decreased to 66% percent. Demographers predict significant additional growth in the current GCM and RSS attendance zones. It's imperative that we take action to make our campus sizes more equitable.

4. If we were to rezone, when would rezoning occur?

That will be a decision of our Board of Trustees, but it could be as early as the 2018-2019 school year.

5. If my home falls within the boundaries that would be rezoned to a different school and I have children in different grades, would they be allowed to attend the same school?

That will be a decision of the Board of Trustees.

6. If the Board elects to move to a consolidated school model, when would this occur?

If approved, the consolidated school model would begin with the 2020-2021 school year.

7. What other districts have a consolidated school concept?

Deer Park ISD, Galena Park ISD, Plano ISD, Allen ISD and Lewisville ISD are a few examples. Lewisville ISD is an example of the two 9th and 10th grade campuses model.

8. Would operating a consolidated school save the district money?

There would be an initial expense in preparing the facilities, purchasing uniforms and other associated costs. We don't anticipate the need to add additional teaching staff or auxiliary personnel. While school finance is an important issue, the Board of Trustees aims to make decisions that are in the best interest of students.

9. Would the high school campuses retain their names and mascots?

That has yet to be determined. We anticipate establishing a committee of community members and staff to help make recommendations about school names, mascots, colors, etc.

10. How would teachers and staff be affected if the district moved to a consolidated school model?

While we don't anticipate that this model would result in a reduction of force, faculty and staff could be relocated based on programmatic offerings.

11. Would school start at the same time and the 9th and 10 grade campuses and the 11th-12th grade campus?

This has not yet been determined.

12. Would a consolidated school model affect graduation recognition?

No. There would still be magna, summa and cum laude graduates, just as there are today.

13. If I had a sophomore playing varsity sports or participating in an advanced Fine arts program, how would they get to the 11th-12th grade campus for after school practice?

Transportation will be provided between campuses for extracurricular activities.

14. Where would the special education programs be housed?

That hasn't been determined as of yet.

15. Would Sterling need to be expanded and/or additional facilities added for a consolidated school?

Under the consolidated school model, there would need to be some modifications to the campus; however, until we determine which direction is best for our district, we don't know exactly what work will be necessary.

16. If we rezoned, what would the boundaries look like?

We have not yet drawn official maps. This would be a task for the Board of Trustees and the demographer.

17. Is there enough parking at Sterling to accommodate all district junior and senior students?

If the current parking is not adequate, there is ample space for parking expansion.

18. How would a consolidated school affect student participation in Athletics and Fine Arts?

We anticipate that there could be more offerings for students. Increased competition would likely result in a better product on the field, on courts, etc. Currently, about 35 percent of GCCISD students participate in athletics and about 60 percent participate in a fine arts program. Expansion could mean more teams, more opportunities and better results.

19. How could we expect a consolidated school to impact student academic achievement?

There is no research to support that it would have a negative impact.

20. What are the pros and cons of rezoning?

At a recent Board workshop, the Trustees discussed the pros and cons of rezoning. Below is a list they developed:

BOARD PROS OF THE TRADITIONAL THREE HIGH SCHOOL CONFIGURATION

- Community tradition
- Opportunity for more students to achieve individual honors
- The academy programs established in 2013
- No increased cost in transportation
- One less school for students to attend during student academic career (one elementary, one junior school, one high school)
- Community-based schools based on geography
- Smaller schools equate to higher student success

BOARD CONS OF THE TRADITIONAL THREE HIGH SCHOOL CONFIGURATION

- Inequity in program opportunities between schools
- Lack of high-level competition currently exists at the three campuses
- Schools are at low end of enrollment for UIL classifications (currently have two small 6A campuses and one mid-size 5A)
- Current lack of depth in programs / low enrollment in many extracurricular activities
- Configuration makes it difficult to handle growth and maximize facility use
- Distribution of students with current system (transportation issues to balance numbers)

21. What are the pros and cons of a consolidated school?

At the same workshop, the Trustees developed a list of pros and cons of a consolidated school. Below is that list:

BOARD PROS OF A NON-TRADITIONAL CONSOLIDATED HIGH SCHOOL CONFIGURATION

- Possibility for true feeder patterns between junior school and high school (contingent upon a sixth junior school)
- Possibility to unite the community (over time)
- Opportunity to provide in-depth, comprehensive programs
- Balances socio-economic concerns that currently exist
- Eliminates the continued lack of growth on south end of district
- Increased competition among students could increase student performance / results
- Eliminates need to rezone with changing demographics
- Possibility of increasing UIL success (by eliminating watering down of competition for positions)
- Eliminate inequities that exist among the existing three campuses
- Raises the bar for all students and teachers
- Opportunity for increased on-campus CTE expansion
- Increase programmatic opportunities
- Increased opportunity for student socialization

BOARD CONS OF A NON-TRADITIONAL CONSOLIDATED HIGH SCHOOL CONFIGURATION

- Currently do not have the facility to accommodate the 11-12 campus
- Increased cost in transportation
- Smaller schools drive student success – some students could get “lost in the shuffle”
- Fewer leadership opportunities for students
- Outside-the-box concept may be difficult for community to embrace
- ESL / SPED populations would be adversely effected

22. Has the Board of Trustees already made up their mind?

The Board is seeking input from the community at public forms. The first public forum will be in the GCM Auditorium on **Thursday, Jan. 11, beginning at 6:30 p.m.** The second public forum will be at the REL Auditorium on **Monday, Jan. 15 at 6:30 p.m.** Spanish retranslation services will be available.

UPDATES TO FAQ

23. How many REL students are currently attending GCM or RSS?

There are currently 37 students living within the REL attendance boundary who attend school at RSS and GCM combined.

24. Under a consolidation plan, would both 9th and 10th grade campuses have freshman teams for all sports?

Not necessarily. In districts that have the proposed concept, all 9th and 10th graders have an opportunity to compete together as one school.

25. Under a consolidation configuration, with two 9th and 10th grade campuses, how does scheduling work in a district when all other member schools will have only one team?

All teams will have full schedules. This will occur by playing teams that offer more sub-varsity teams and/or by picking up single games, just as we currently do.

26. What will the teacher/student ratio be per classroom?

There is no plan to change the student/teacher ratio in GCCISD. Currently, the ratios are 29/1 for high school, 27/1 for junior schools, 25/1 for grade 5 and 22/1 for grades K-4. There is a possibility that the student/teacher ratio at the 9th and 10th grade campuses could be changed to allow for smaller class sizes.

27. What would be the cost difference be between the two options and how would it affect school taxes?

The annual cost to implement either option would not change from our current structure. The M&O tax rate cannot be increased without voter approval, as it reached the approved maximum tax rate allowable under Texas law via voter approval of a TRE in 2016.

28. How would the academies change if we consolidated?

That would be a decision made during the planning process for 2020-21 if the Board votes to consolidate.

29. How will consolidating impact students who take higher level courses (honors)?

There would be no impact. It is possible that more high-level courses could be offered due to more student interest to justify offering the course.

30. How will inequities that exist be eliminated?

Under the rezoning scenario, all three campuses will have a much more similar population. Under the consolidation concept, the 9th and 10th grade campuses would have an equal number of students who would all ultimately funnel into a central campus for 11th and 12th grade.

In addition, we could be able to offer more equitable course offerings – in other words, courses that might not currently “make” at one campus today due to low student enrollment could potentially be available to students under the consolidation model.

31. What does “programmatic opportunities” mean?

One example of “programmatic opportunities” is Robotics. Currently, the students in this program must meet outside of school hours as the program cannot be sustained on three individual campuses. Having the program on a consolidated campus would allow more students the opportunity to participate in the program.

32. Why don’t we just build a new high school?

The goal of the school board is to effectively and efficiently utilize the facilities that exist. Building a new high school would be impractical, poor stewardship of taxpayer money and would not allow the board to reach this goal.

33. Won’t there just be more problems with discipline at a larger 11th/12th grade campus?

With the projected numbers on the 9th and 10th grade campuses being 1,500, we would be creating a smaller learning environment and less-crowded facility for these students, thus reducing some of the problems that exist in high schools across the nation. The 11th and 12th grade campus of approximately 2,800 students will house students who possess a higher maturity level and an established vision of their post-secondary plans. Demographic data says that two of our existing campuses will exceed 2,800 students by 2027, so the problems being questioned now will have to be addressed.

34. What is the date that the district will make a decision?

The board has not set a definitive date at this time.

35. How does REL being a historical monument affect your decision?

REL’s status as a state historical marker has no impact on the Board’s decision.

36. What would consolidation do to class rankings and scholarships?

The consolidation model will rank all members of the graduating class in the same way we currently rank students. The number of students in the top 10 percent (summa cum laude, magna cum laude and cum laude) would not change with consolidation. For example, if our three current high schools have 30, 35 and 50 students in the top 10 percent of the class rankings, the consolidated school would have 115 students recognized as top 10 percent. There is no reason to believe scholarship opportunities will be decreased by consolidation.

37. What are the chances that kids who have excelled in sports at their current high school not play their senior year?

The expectation is that they would play. There is no reason why they would not excel under a consolidation format. Currently, there is no guarantee that all seniors play, as the district philosophy is to put the top athletes, regardless of classification, on varsity teams.

38. Would drop out rates decrease with a consolidated school model?

With proper counseling and intervention programs, the district should continue to have a drop out rate lower than the state average. Just as we do today.

39. How would dual credit be affected by consolidation?

Dual credit would not be affected.

40. What does “lack of depth in programs” mean and how would rezoning or consolidation increase the depth?

Some programs do not have the number of participants needed to fill all teams expected by the UIL, particularly at the sub-varsity level. Creating three equal-sized traditional high schools could possibly prevent a school from fielding a full slate of sub-varsity teams. .

41. What will happen to programs like Sterling Stars and REL Celebrities?

All extracurricular programs would consolidate as one. The district does not implement participation numbers, so all students who qualify for programs would still be able to participate. Most consolidated high schools have extracurricular programs such as band, cheer and drill teams with squads larger than GCCISD does.

42. What would enrollment look like at all three campuses based on today’s enrollment numbers?

The projected enrollment of the campuses would be approximately 1,590 students at each of the 9th and 10th grade campuses, and approximately 2,885 at the 11th and 12th grade campus. One thing to note: The projected student population at the 11th and 12th grade campus is no greater than the student population was at RSS before GCM was built. These projections include anticipated growth in our community.

43. Are the names of the schools going to change?

Building names cannot be changed without board approval. There wouldn’t be any reason to change actual building names.

44. If you choose the consolidation option, what will happen to current freshmen who will be seniors the first year in the consolidated school? Will they be treated as one class and combined into one rank after they have been treated as separate classes for three years?

That would be a decision made during the two-year planning process prior to consolidating into one school located on three campuses.