

Viewpoints

Transforming Education in Des Moines: District Proposes Big Changes



The Des Moines Public Schools District has announced a series of proposed changes that will overhaul Iowa's largest district in response to "declining enrollment and an increasingly diverse student population." The Reimagining Education, Reinvigorating Schools plan, which was drafted by more than 80 people within the community, includes dramatic changes to reshape the structure of the district in an effort to ultimately improve students' academic outcomes and ensure that the district remains competitive.

Among these proposed changes are plans to divide the district into three separate regions, move sixth graders to elementary schools, expand all-day preschool for four-year-olds, and create "signature schools" that specialize in areas such as arts or STEM. Additionally, the plan calls for the eventual closure of multiple of the district's 60 schools over the next several years.



But before this plan can fully actualize, Des Moines voters must first approve a bond issue that could be more than \$500 million over the next ten years. If approved, this money will be used to revamp the current infrastructure of Des Moines schools through renovations and building add-ons. Though Des Moines officials have emphasized the importance of public support and have indicated that the bond will likely be on the November 2025 ballot, they have not yet released the full, projected cost of this program to the public.

Just given the change in dynamics of our pre-K-12 reality with declining enrollment, we wanted to make sure that we were setting ourselves up to be competitive

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