

As we move closer to the December 5<sup>th</sup> vote to approve the Proposed 2017-2022 E-SPLOST V Project List (“List”), Oak Grove Elementary (“OGE”) hereby submits to the DeKalb County Board of Education (“Board”) our position as it relates to our students, our school, and our community. Oak Grove is a close-knit and involved community committed to providing the best quality of education at every level. We appreciate the hard work of the DeKalb County School District (“DCSD”) administration and the Board to help achieve this common goal.

We support the List, in particular with respect to the following items:

- OGE recognizes the immediate need for relief in the extremely overcrowded Cross Keys cluster. We support the construction of two new elementary schools and one new high school, as well as the conversion of the current Cross Keys HS into a middle school. We advocate strongly for the new Cross Keys HS to be constructed in Region 1.
- OGE supports the proposed 750-seat addition to Lakeside High School to relieve the current overcrowding and the expected growth over the next five years.
- OGE supports and appreciates DCSD’s recognition that our OGE facilities are in need of upgrades and repairs. We appreciate specifically the funds allocated for security improvements, restroom fixture upgrades, and the technology refresh. We remain concerned, however, with other issues with our facilities, in particular our leaking HVAC system. The constant water flow through our ceiling tiles and pooling water below create health and safety hazards. We hope to work with DCSD to swiftly address these issues.

We have one primary concern with the List:

- OGE is deeply concerned with DCSD’s “assumed student moves,” namely the move of 250 students from the Lakeside Cluster to the Cross Keys Cluster. We are adamantly opposed to the construction of any new high school or other proposal that would remove any part of the current OGE attendance zone from the Lakeside Cluster. Altering the current OGE school attendance zone would not align with the criteria set forth in the DCSD Policy AD: School Attendance Areas, particularly with regard to geographic proximity, safety and traffic patterns, school feeder alignment, and keeping neighborhoods intact. OGE students should be kept in their neighborhood where they can get to school on safe residential roads and sidewalks, focus their time on academic and extracurricular activities, and maintain peer relationships throughout the Lakeside community. Redistricting OGE students from the Lakeside Cluster would disrupt student academic and social development, exacerbate traffic congestion and safety concerns, and disrupt the Lakeside cluster, a cohesive academic community with a proven record in education. Please see the accompanying petition that reflects the depth of this concern.

We also have concerns with the process that produced the List:

- Elementary schools were not strongly represented in the initial stages of Stakeholder Feedback. For example, elementary schools were not invited to participate in the steering committee for the Secondary School Facility Planning and Feasibility Study. Current

elementary school students are the group that will utilize the new facilities and their voice should have been integral to this process.

- The methods used to solicit stakeholder feedback were flawed for a number of reasons. For example, due to limited communication to all relevant stakeholders, the surveys failed to encompass the opinions of the broader community. Many members of our community, in particular those without school age children, feel completely left out. The design of the surveys only allowed stakeholders to vote for a combined set of competing variables, which we fear may have interfered with meaningful results. The options presented lacked significant details including building site locations, addition renderings, and assumed student moves. The online E-SPLOST V survey administered in October was vague and confusing, missing many of the supporting details needed for stakeholders to make an informed decision. Due to the abundance of relevant and detailed information that was released only after the surveys were administered, the survey results likely do not reflect accurate stakeholder opinion.

Despite our concerns with the process leading up to this point, we recognize the importance of the upcoming vote to release E-SPLOST V funds to allow timely planning and implementation of projects on the List. Moving forward, OGE requests that as new details regarding E-SPLOST V plans emerge, DCSD provide these details to all stakeholders and provide multiple methods for stakeholders to provide feedback on key projects prior to finalizing decisions. Specifically:

- We request that the Board require an additional vote to approve the final site location of the proposed Cross Keys HS, once the location has been selected. If the location is an alternative to the Briarcliff HS site and necessitates the purchase of property, we request a contingency that requires the approval of the Board be included in any contract for purchase of this new property. We request an opportunity for the stakeholders of DeKalb County to provide feedback to the Board before the vote to approve the final site location. Finally, prior to the vote to approve the final site location, we request that DCSD present a more detailed set of assumed student moves which specifies the feeder/elementary schools, rather than just the cluster, from which students will be moved.
- OGE would like to be involved in the construction and planning process for the proposed 750-seat Lakeside High School addition, as it will directly impact current OGE students.
- OGE would like to be part of a redistricting round table that will examine and recommend improvements to policies used to determine attendance zones.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

OGE School Council, OGE PTA, and Oak Grove Foundation