

Akron Beacon Journal

EDUCATION

Akron Public Schools proposing relocating STEM High to Robinson elementary building

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Akron Public Schools is proposing closing Robinson Community Learning Center as an elementary school in order for the building to become the new home for STEM High School.

Students at Robinson, located just east of downtown, would be rezoned to David Hill and Mason community learning centers, keeping them within the East cluster of schools. Students could also open enroll at another school within the district but would have to provide their own transportation if they don't choose David Hill or Mason.

If approved, the change would take place next school year. District administrators said they would reopen the already closed open enrollment process for students affected by redistricting.

Robinson has about 280 students this year. As an elementary school, it can hold more than 400 students.

The building would have to be outfitted to fit a high school, especially one as specific as STEM High, which has additional offerings, including a robotics team. That cost is estimated to be between \$500,000 to \$1 million.

The proposal would rename the school Robinson STEM Community Learning Center.

The Family Resource Center, a partnership with United Way to serve all families in the East cluster, would still remain at Robinson, and resources would still be available to any family within that community, leaders said Monday night.

STEM High is in need of a new home because its lease with the University of Akron for use of the former Central Hower High School building is ending after this school year. The board has heard several proposals on where to put STEM, with previous possibilities including

Leggett CLC, STEM Middle, vacant space within East CLC and vacant downtown space not owned by the district.

Robinson said parents have expressed their children want to stay in the same space, but "we're not able to do that."

In lieu of that, he said, this solution would give parents other things they wanted for their STEM students, from ample parking to a free-standing building, not just a wing of an existing school.

"I think this opportunity is the best we are able to do in order to ensure the integrity of the program," Robinson said.

Other updates to Akron Public Schools' redistricting plan

The administration gave an overview of the updated redistricting proposal at the school board's business meeting Monday night.

Previously announced closures of Firestone Park Elementary and Essex and Stewart Early Learning Centers are still moving forward in the most recent proposal.

In the proposal, Firestone Park students would be rezoned to Glover, McEbright and Voris CLCs.

Early learning classrooms now at Essex and Stewart would be distributed across the district.

Harris Jackson students who have been at Essex due to overcrowding at their home school would be returned to Harris Jackson, which will have boundary lines redrawn so some students will be rezoned to Barber CLC. Forest Hill CLC will also have some students rezoned to Harris Jackson, and a small number will be moved from Barber to Seiberling CLC.

The board could vote on the plan at its Feb. 26 meeting.

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