

The Arkansas Education Commissioner has approved a Little Rock School District plan to close, combine, expand or repurpose around a dozen campuses over the next few years.

The Arkansas Democrat Gazette reports the district's Blueprint Facilities plan is partially dependent on the school district finding sources of revenue. The plan is designed to make a more efficient school system. The district plans to open the new Southwest High in August of 2020 to replace two existing schools, while coping with the loss of hundreds of students per year.

Between the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school years, enrollment dropped by 743 students.

Other components of the facility plan include converting two existing high schools into kindergarten through eighth grade campuses. It also wants to convert Rockefeller Elementary into a building wide early education center.

Critics of the plan say nearly all the schools scheduled for closure or repurposing are south of Interstate 630, which places a burden on lower-income families in the area.