

FUHSD has recently received inquiries from community members regarding the topics of educational capacity, overcrowding on our campuses and traffic around our schools. As part of FUHSD's continued efforts to communicate to parents, students, staff and community members on a number of complex issues, the District has prepared some FAQs that address these questions.

Please view the FAQ document below for detailed responses to these important questions.

(1) What is the difference between Educational Capacity and Maximum Capacity?

The State of California requires school districts to calculate and provide the Board-approved Educational Capacity for each of its schools every year. Educational Capacity is the capacity of a campus as it is being utilized that year, using assumptions that maximize the effectiveness of the campus to meet the current educational needs of the staff and students. Those assumptions are the same across all high schools and may include how many periods a day a classroom is used and the average number of students in each class.

Educational Capacity is different from Maximum Plant Capacity, which is the maximum number of students a campus can safely and effectively contain, without any educational restrictions or limits for that year. These restrictions or limits are the reason that Educational Capacity is usually much lower than Maximum Plant Capacity, which also ensure that going over Education Capacity does not negatively impact the safety and effectiveness of the campus, students or staff.

The resources (sections, teachers, etc.) provided to each school are not determined by Education Capacity or Maximum Plant Capacity, but by the actual number of attending students. All high schools across the District follow the same Section Allocation Methodology to ensure the most efficient and equitable allocation of resources.

Analogous Example (Hotel Capacity):

One might think of school capacity as similar to the capacity of a hotel. For example, a hotel with 100 rooms might have a standard capacity of 2 people per room. This would provide the hotel with a **standard** capacity of 200

people. However, each room is equipped with two queen beds and can safely and effectively accommodate up to four people. This provides the hotel a **maximum** capacity of 400 people.

There are days when the hotel is sold out and may have some rooms with more than 2 people. This is how the hotel may have more people staying there than its standard capacity. However, it would be unusual for the hotel to regularly meet its maximum capacity of 400 people.

Why does Educational Capacity change from year to year?

The annual capacity review by the District is critical for planning purposes due to the ever-changing nature of school campuses and various factors that affect school capacity. These changes can be due to construction, change of use for a particular room(s) or changes in the assumptions used in the Educational Capacity calculation.

Large changes in Educational Capacity from one year to another are usually the result of construction projects being completed. In the last several years, Cupertino, Monta Vista, Homestead and Fremont all completed construction projects that included new classrooms.

As new buildings are completed, a projection of how each new room will be used is made and included in the capacity calculation for the school. After a new building has been used for a full school year, adjustments are often made on how each room is actually used. This can cause educational capacity for the school to change even as total enrollment may remain the same.

However, Educational Capacity can also shift based on changes in how rooms and space within the campus are being utilized from year to year.

One example of this can be found at Lynbrook High School. Because of space available, Lynbrook uses one of its standard classrooms as a Flex Lab that can be used by any teacher through a sign up process. Therefore, this room is not counted towards the educational capacity of the school. If needed, this room could be converted back to a standard classroom, thereby increasing the educational capacity of the campus.

At Fremont High School, a standard classroom was used as teacher offices and textbook storage for two departments. However, with the construction of a new building, the need for these offices and textbook storage was eliminated. Therefore, this room was converted back to a standard classroom, further increasing the educational capacity of the school.

(2) Are FUHSD's schools overcrowded?

The District understands that there continues to be a sentiment from some members of the community that several of our campuses are overcrowded, in particular Cupertino High School.

In some cases, this perception may stem from circumstances where a student did not receive a class that he or she requested. However, the ratio of students to sections is the same across all campuses regardless of school size; so as a school grows the number of staff increases proportionally to keep the student/teacher ratio the same across the District. Students may not get every class they want every year, but all schools have enough classes for students to get all of the classes they want in their four years at the school. Many classes are only offered one to three periods per day, so conflicts between classes do arise. Other students request not to have a first or seventh period, which further limits the classes they may get. Lastly, some classes cater to students in grade 11 and 12, so students in Grade 9 or 10 that sign up for that class will get a lower priority.

Cupertino High School will see the addition of 29 new classrooms (with a net gain of 17 classrooms) via the planned classroom and science building, which is scheduled for completion in December 2017. For more information on this and other construction projects adding capacity at several of our campuses, visit FUHSD's [Measure K webpage](#).

When growth is projected, the District must plan far in advance in order to accommodate the rising student population. At this time, there continues to be growth across the District, and while it is more modest than initially thought, FUHSD is adding additional capacity in line with the original growth projections.

Despite perceptions of overcrowding, each of our schools could accommodate substantially more students if the District were to use every available space on campus for classrooms and use every classroom during all 7 periods a day for

instruction— strategies which have all been used in the past to accommodate more students than we have at some of our campuses currently.

It is also possible that the idea of overcrowding is stemming from traffic issues (see question 3).

(3) What is the District doing to mitigate traffic issues?

The District understands that traffic congestion is extremely heavy in Silicon Valley and that traffic around each of our schools is very heavy for approximately 10-15 minutes at the start and end of the school day. This may contribute to the perception of schools as overcrowded.

FUHSD has attempted to mitigate traffic issues to the extent possible around our campuses, by using official traffic studies to create drop off and pick up plans, reconfigure parking lots and drop off areas, creating spaces for VTA to safely pick up and drop off students at school, working with the City of Cupertino to hire crossing guards, and working with various cities to add signage, and pedestrian crossing lights. The challenge posed by traffic congestion is one that must be continually addressed by a collaborative effort between school officials, city staff, business leaders and community members.

Currently at Cupertino High School, some traffic relief has been achieved as parents are now permitted to drop students off at Main Street Cupertino with crossing guards employed to assist as students cross over to Finch Avenue. More creative solutions of this nature are necessary to address the difficult problem of traffic congestion.

The narrow window of drop off and pick up at each campus does contribute to traffic around our schools, but lasts for two very brief periods of time each day. The District continues to encourage students to bike and walk to school in order to further relieve traffic at these drop off and pick up times.