



ALUM ROCK UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

2930 Gay Avenue, San José, CA 95127 · Phone: 408-928-6800 · Fax: 408-928-6416 · www.arusd.org

March 12, 2021

Dear Alum Rock Family,

This is in response to the multiple erroneous flyers and articles published about our district in the last few days. Please read this entire letter. I will give you an important update on school's in our district.

Our district has been in declining enrollment for a long time, but we are not the only district with that issue. Evergreen and Oak Grove closed schools within the last two years. As you know, the economic reality of many families does not support their livelihood in our city. For Alum Rock, in addition to families moving away for economic reasons and the effects of COVID-19, there are other challenges that take away enrollment, including other school options.

Due to these challenges, the district has a structural deficit of about \$7 million. Depending on the budget year, this amount changes due to one-time money the state or federal government may send to the district. That money is never guaranteed each year and we cannot count on one-time funds as part of the solution to address the district's structural deficit.

The loss of funds in recent years and structural deficit has been caused because the number of students in our district has declined dramatically. Some schools that were originally built for 600 or more students now only serve a fraction of that number. The district is paying millions of dollars to operate schools that are not fully used by students. For example, in the school year 2000-2001, the district had close to 16,000 students with 27 schools. Fast forward to this 2020-2021 school year, we have 8,500 students, with 24 schools. These numbers have been shared with the Board and the public numerous times during regularly scheduled board meetings.

Last January, the board approved the formation of the Facilities Repurposing Advisory Committee that is made up of stakeholder groups from throughout our community. Each of the stakeholder groups in our community selected a member to participate in this committee. The stakeholder group includes parents, labor unions, administrators, and members of the business community and neighborhood groups. All the individuals who were selected by their groups and the community members applied for their position on the committee to help review these important issues and make recommendations to you - the public - and to the Board of Trustees. This committee has known its role from the beginning: review district enrollment, and craft a recommendation about repurposing some of our facilities that are being under-utilized, and report to the groups they represent. Here is the link to all the information regarding the committee's work:

<https://www.arusd.org/board-of-trustees/board-committees/facilities-repurposing-advisory-committee>

Hilaria Bauer, Ph.D., Superintendent

Board of Trustees: Corina Herrera-Loera, President · Andrés Quintero, Vice-President
Ernesto Bejarano, Clerk · Linda Chavez, Member · Minh Pham, Member

All the committee meetings are open to the public. There will be a couple of Town Halls designed to offer an opportunity to provide more information to the community about the committee's work. I urge you to follow the committee's work by attending committee meetings, providing input, and reviewing the same materials that the committee is reviewing.

As of now, the committee has discussed some schools that have low enrollment. Those schools include Chavez Elementary, Lyndale Elementary, Fischer Middle School, and Mathson Middle School. No decisions have been made by the committee, and there has been no formal recommendation presented to the board by the committee.

Repurposing facilities is a hard decision to make. All of us have reasons to keep each of the 24 sites open. However, that is not fiscally responsible to our students. Every year, we stretch our budget and have to make the budget work with less resources.

This is a time for all our Alum Rock Family to work together. We must face these challenges responsibly in unity on behalf of our students. If you have specific questions or need more information, please contact me at hilaria.bauer@arUSD.org or (408)928-6822.

Sincerely,



Hilaria Bauer, Ph.D.
Superintendent

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