HACIENDA LA PUENTE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

RECONFIGURATION RECOMMENDATIONS (EFFECTIVE 2024-25)

ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 1912 FINAL REPORT AND PLAN



PREPARED FOR HACIENDA LA PUENTE DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION – NOVEMBER 9, 2023

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ASSEMBLY BILL 1912

- Requires School Districts under financial distress to conduct an equity impact analysis in its consideration of school closures or consolidations.
- The purpose of the Bill is to guard against discrimination and ensure community input.
- In an April 11, 2023, letter, the Attorney General opined that following AB 1912 best practices, including for Districts not in financial distress will reduce the district's legal risk and improve community trust and parent engagement.
- The bill requires the governing board of the school district to develop a set of metrics, as specified, for the development of the equity impact analysis and to make those metrics public at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing board of the school district so that the public can provide input regarding the metrics being used to conduct the analysis, as provided.
- The Metrics used to determine which schools are recommended for school closure or consolidation are contained in this report and are available for the public to provide input regarding these metrics.
- The governing board shall review and consider the feedback presented at the public meeting(s) and make its decision on any school closures or consolidations at a subsequently scheduled regular meeting.
- The final recommendation for school closure must include a review of how the public input was incorporated and considered.
- Once the action is taken to close or consolidate a school, the district must provide information to parents and pupils in multiple formats, including but not limited to email and paper notifications, and be in the family's primary language.
- The notification must include the date of the approval for closure, the pupil's new assignment (if applicable), available resources to support pupils and parents in the transition, and district contact information.

SCHOOL RECONFIGURATION COMMITTEE (SRC)

- The Superintendent's advisory committee consists of Labor Representatives, Principals, Human Resources, Facility, Special Education, Transportation, and Education Services Directors assisted by legal counsel and a school consulting firm
- The committee established and reviewed the metrics to evaluate the schools for closure, consolidation, or reconfiguration and is providing the governing board with recommendations
- The committee met six times between August 22nd and September 27th
- The committee also reviewed information from three virtual community meetings, four in-person community meetings, as well as a summary of results from community, staff, and student surveys
- Using the metrics and results of community meetings and surveys, the committee provided a recommendation of which schools the governing board should consider for closure as well as changes to the grade level configuration. The community survey and meeting results are shared on the District's Reconfiguration web page: https://www.hlpschools.org/community/reconfiguration-information

THE METRICS

- Availability and transfer of special programs
- Enrollment
- The capacity of other schools to absorb students
- Environmental factors (traffic, freeway access, etc.)
- Balance of pupil demographics
- Pupil transportation needs
- Aesthetics and opportunity for blight
- Impact on feeder school attendance patterns
- Physical conditions of a school facility
- Operating cost and potential savings

ENROLLMENT

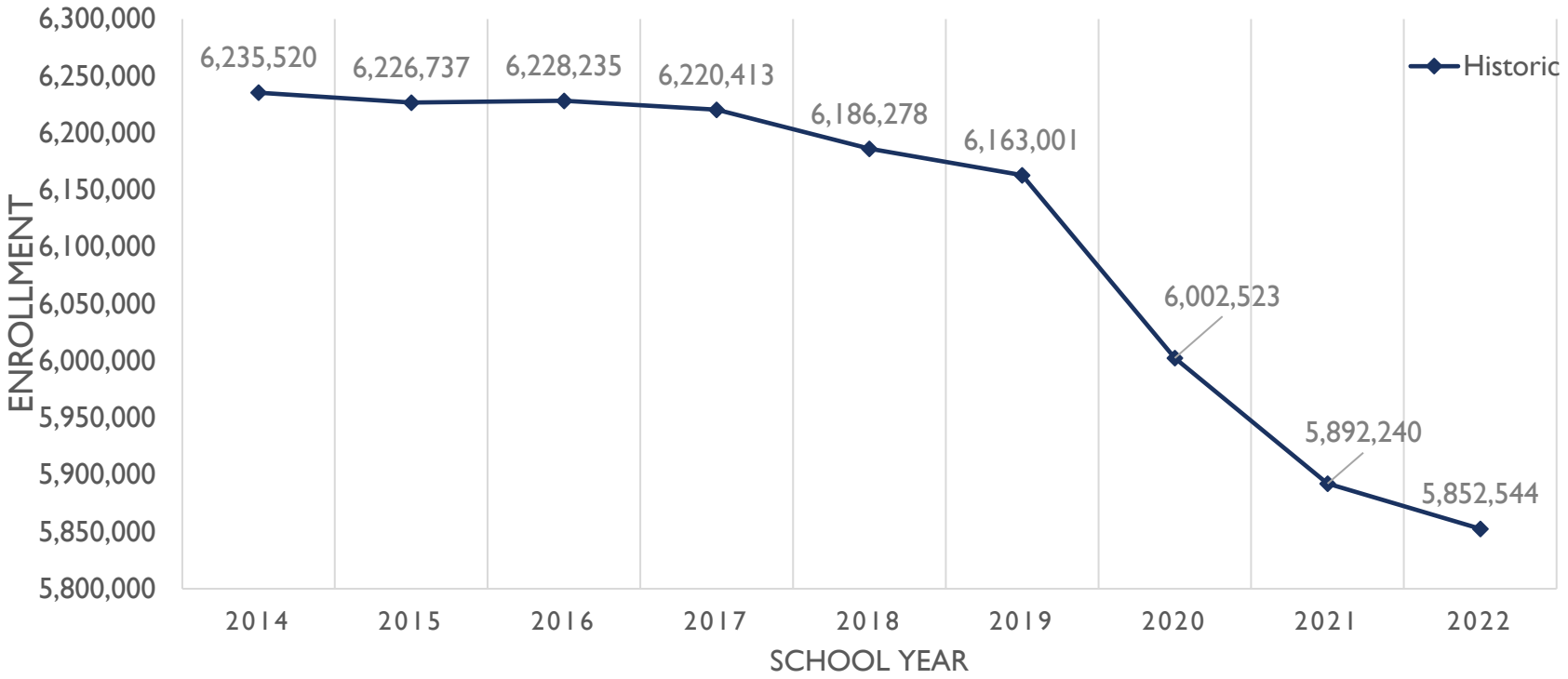
State and County

- California has lost 382,976 students between the 2014 and 2022 school years
- This loss is approximately 6%
- State-wide enrollment is expected to decrease an additional 7% over the next 10 years
- Los Angeles County has lost 225,325 students between the 2014 and 2022 school years
- This loss is approximately 17%
- Los Angeles County's enrollment is expected to decrease additional 17% over the next 10 years

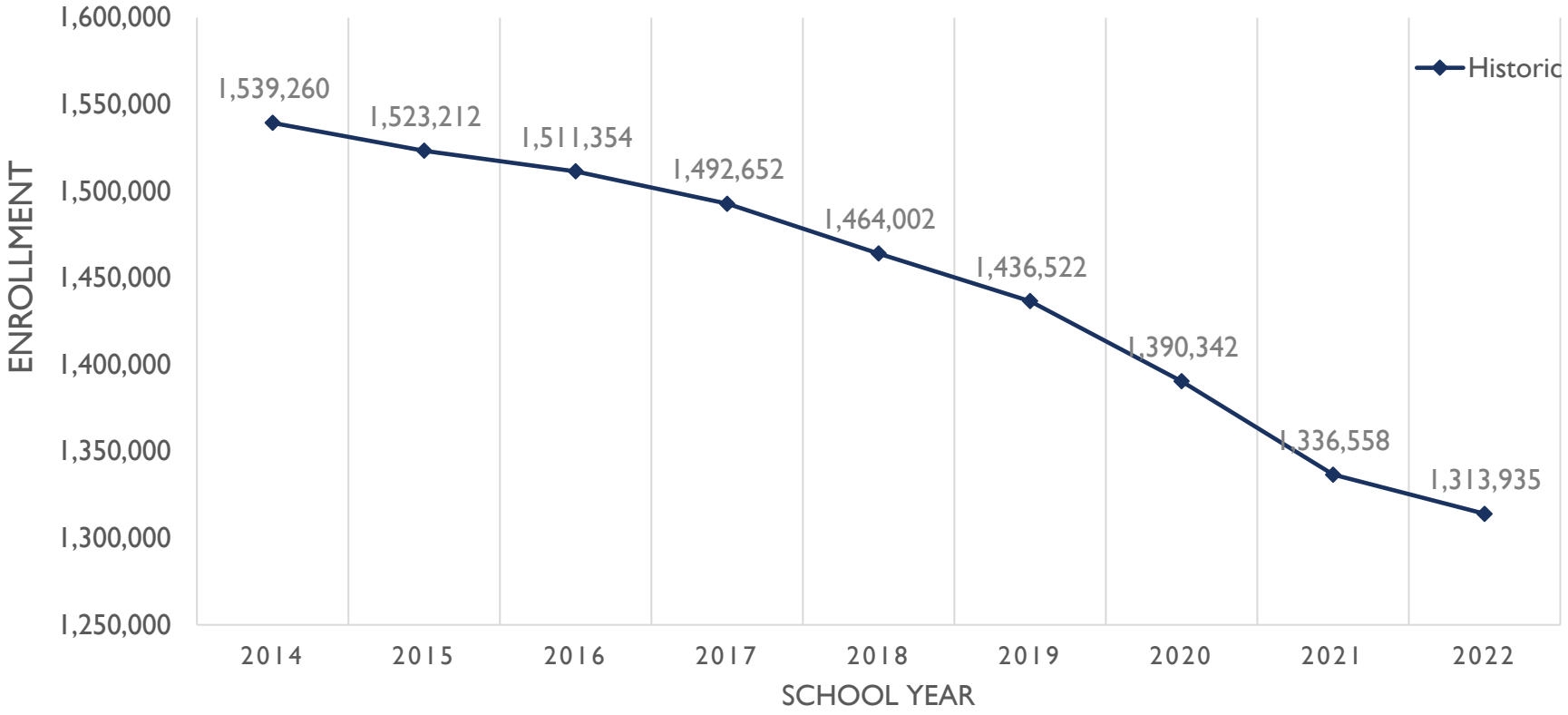
HLPUSD

- HLPUSD has lost 3,436 students between the 2014 and 2022 school years
- This loss is approximately 17.5%
- The District projects that enrollment will continue to decline in the foreseeable future
- Smaller schools cause academic challenges

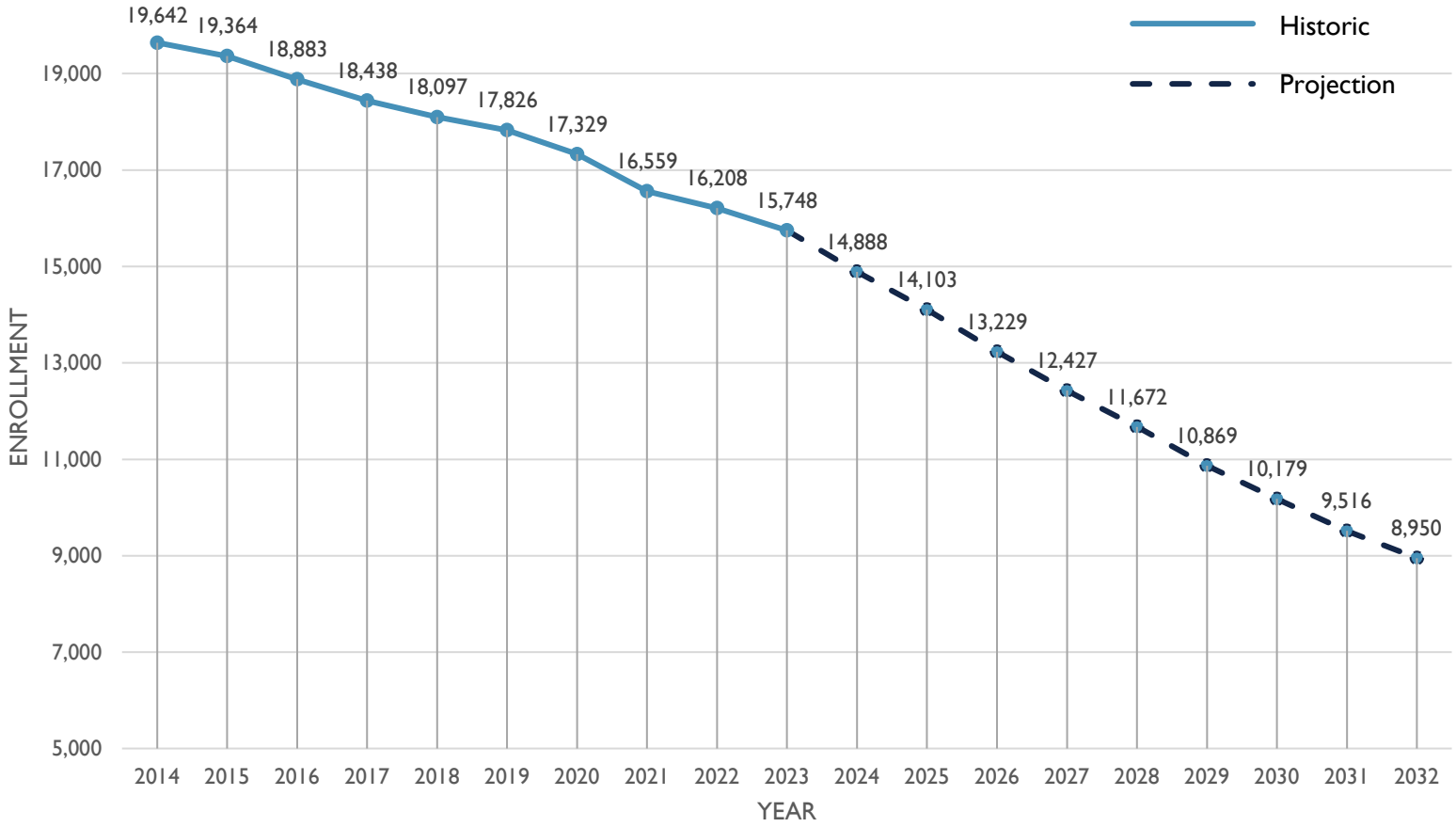
CALIFORNIA
2014-2022 HISTORIC ENROLLMENT



LOS ANGELES COUNTY
2014-2022 HISTORIC ENROLLMENT



HLPUSD 2014-2025 HISTORIC* AND PROJECTED** ENROLLMENT



*Historic enrollment data available at the California Department of Education "Data Quest" web site: https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/

**Projected enrollment provided by demographer through HLPUSD

SRC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE 2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR

Los Altos Quad

- Move Los Robles students to Palm Elementary

La Puente Quad

- Move Sunset students to Lassalette
- K-6 schools become K-5 and 6th grade students go to Sparks Middle School
  - California
  - Nelson
  - Sparks El
- Lassalette becomes K-5, grades 6-8 go to Sparks Middle School
- Sparks Middle becomes a 6-8

Workman Quad

- Move Del Valle students to Workman El
- Move Grandview K-5 students to Wing Lane
- K-6 schools become K-5 and 6th grade students go to Sierra Vista Middle School or Grandview based on current feeder pattern
  - Baldwin
  - Workman El
- Valinda becomes K-5, students grades 6-8 go to Grandview
- Sierra Vista and Grandview become 6-8

Wilson Quad

- Move Bixby students to Cedarlane Academy

PHYSICAL CONDITION OF A SCHOOL SITE

Attorney General Guidance

- The District should review and disclose how specific district decisions (historical or current) may have led to resource divestments from schools primarily serving students of color.
- The concern is that some districts may have directed money to modernize one school while ignoring the needs of schools that “primarily serve students of color” or that local parent groups generated additional funding for landscaping or additional custodial services that a low-income neighborhood school could not generate.

HLPUSD

- The District utilizes the California Department of Education recommended Facility Inspection Tool (FIT) to evaluate school facilities annually.
- None of the recommended schools for closure are due to issues with the condition of the facility, and there is no evidence of discriminatory divestments in any of the District schools.

OPERATING COSTS AND POTENTIAL SAVINGS

Attorney General Guidance

- To ensure the district are not targeting a school for closure because it serves students with high needs or disabilities, the state recommends reviewing potential cost savings to ensure that a school is not being penalized for serving these populations, who are provided additional funding and would be more expensive to serve as compared to the general student population regardless of what site they attend.

OPERATING COSTS AND POTENTIAL SAVINGS

HLPUSD

- The SRC reviewed potential expenditure reductions from a school closure, which typically generates savings between approximately $500k and $600K annually. ***This amount does not include funds directed towards high-needs students or special education, and none of the funds targeted for these populations is counted as closure-related savings.*** It is also important to note that reductions in FTEs do not necessarily mean that the existing employees at the school will not have a position with the District following a school's closure. Generally, reductions in the workforce are determined by seniority, and employees with seniority from the closed school would be offered the same positions in the District at a different site. Normal annual attrition is likely to create continuing employment opportunities for less senior staff. Also, school districts typically have vacancies in many classified positions, and reducing positions because of school closures may help the district fill some of these vacancies with experienced employees from the closed schools.

CAPACITY OF OTHER SCHOOLS TO ABSORB STUDENTS

Attorney General Guidance

- It is incumbent upon the District to ensure there is adequate space in receiving schools when a school is considered for closure. Also, districts should know that special day classes (SDC) serving high needs impact school utilization. These classrooms can only enroll about half or less of what a general education classroom can accommodate.

HLPUSD

- The receiving schools identified have adequate capacity to absorb students from those recommended for closure or reconfiguration. Also, in some elementary schools, the SRC recommends that the 6th grade be moved to other schools to create larger, more robust middle school programs. This change may free up more space at the elementary schools the students are being relocated from.

AVAILABILITY AND TRANSFERABILITY OF SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Attorney General Guidance

- AB 1912 is most concerned with site-related special programs at schools that serve the needs of the school's specific population. Such programs include specific after-school programs, language programs, or programs for special needs students that require customized facilities. Most programs can be moved from one site in a District to another, and larger schools typically provide an opportunity to offer more programs.

HLPUSD

- In general, programs can be moved from one site in a District to another as services follow the students. Also, larger schools typically provide an opportunity to offer more programs. At the schools recommended for closure, programs available at these sites could be offered at other sites. Also, reconfiguring the 6th graders to middle school campuses would provide more opportunities for these students.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Attorney General Guidance

- The Attorney General reminds districts to be mindful of the environment surrounding school sites and to identify any hazards, such as new highways or polluting industries.

HLPUSD

- The SRC reviewed all quadrants to determine environmental hazards that could impact a school closure. The District is located in Los Angeles County, which is prone to heavy traffic and, in some areas, pollution. Although several highways and major arteries run through the District, no environmental factor was identified that would prevent the closure or reconfiguration of any school recommended for closure.

BALANCE OF STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

Attorney General Guidance

- According to AB 1912, the balance of pupil demographics, including race or ethnicity, pupils with disabilities, English learners, foster youth, and homeless youth, in the schools being considered for closure and the resulting demographic balance of pupils after placement in other schools should be considered. This analysis determines if the decision to close or consolidate will disproportionately impact any particular demographic group and if the benefits of the reorganization outweigh any potential negative demographic impact.

BALANCE OF STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

HLPUSD

- The pupil demographics by ethnic group and student group were reviewed for each proposed closure. The schools being considered for closure are very small; therefore, the number of students in each group being impacted is much less than it would be if a larger school in the District were to close. Also, schools being considered for closure generally have similar percentages of ethnic and student groups, so there would not be a significant change to these percentages. Finally, the academic benefits to the students, including reducing the frequency that a student may be assigned a combination class, increased teacher collaboration, and stronger student programs, outweigh any potential negative demographic impact.

TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF STUDENTS

Attorney General Guidance

- The attorney general has stated that districts should analyze the transportation impacts of school closure on families to determine the possible impacts the closure has on student needs, especially for Black and Native American students, who, according to an article published by the Los Angeles Times, are less likely to have access to a vehicle and more likely to be chronically absent.

HLPUSD

- The schools being considered for closure are close to other District schools, and students in the closed school are within walking distance to another school. For students already being bussed to school due to a hazardous path of travel, transportation services will continue to their new school if a hazardous path of travel still exists for students walking from home to the receiving school site.

AESTHETICS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR BLIGHT

Attorney General Guidance

- Without proper planning, closing a school can have a negative effect on a community, including the opportunity for blight. Vacant school sites can be targets for vandalism and crime. Therefore, the Attorney General recommends a community-centered plan for a school's use after closure.

HLPUSD

- HLPUSD has engaged legal counsel and is prepared to quickly take the next steps to form an Asset Management Advisory Committee, which will make recommendations regarding property repurposing options as soon as the Board decides to close a school. The District is NOT required to sell the property, and the Board could choose to repurpose the campus to fill a District or community need. By being proactive, HLPUSD is minimizing the risk that the site will become a blight or have a negative impact on the community.

IMPACT ON FEEDER AND OTHER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE (EDUCATION CODE SECTION 41329 (A)(1)(I))

Attorney General Guidance

- The attorney general states that "all school districts must analyze not only how closure decisions impact student demographics at the closing and receiving schools, but also how the decisions may impact patterns at the middle and high school level. A closure decision that maintains or intensifies racial segregation at the middle or high school to which receiving schools feed may be unlawful."

HLPUSD

- HLPUSD is divided into quadrants, and there is one comprehensive high school in each quadrant. The merger and reconfiguration of schools are happening within each quadrant and should not change the demographic patterns at any of the District's middle schools or high schools.

NEXT STEPS

- The District will take public comments about the reconfiguration plan
- Board decision regarding reconfiguration
- All students for each proposed closed school will be assigned to the identified receiving school
- The school will continue its open enrollment policy and allow students to apply to transfer to other District Schools; students in impacted schools will have priority in the open enrollment process
- The District will hold school-site meetings for parents at the schools proposed for closure or grade reconfiguration to discuss the logistics of the transition and provide support for families in the transition
- The District will hold staff meetings at the schools proposed for closure to discuss the procedure for how employees will transfer to other District schools

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT

DISTRICTS RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS: BACKGROUND

Assembly Bill ("AB") 1912 requires the District to make public how the incorporation of public comment was considered in the District's final recommendation for school closure. Also, the Board must adopt a resolution that verifies the District completed a community engagement process. Specifically, AB 1912 states:

"At the subsequent regularly scheduled meeting, the Governing Board of the school district shall present its final recommendation for school closures or consolidations, which shall include a review of how public input was incorporated into the final recommendation..."

Questions and comments regarding the proposed closure and reconfiguration of HLPUSD's Schools touched on similar themes. The following page lists the most common themes, followed by overarching concerns and the District response.

COMMUNICATION

Concerns: Some parents were surprised to hear that the District is considering closing and reconfiguring some schools and want to know why the District did not inform them sooner.

Response: The District strives to be as transparent and communicative as possible with parents and also realizes that the District can always improve communication. The District regrets that some parents only recently became aware of the closing and reconfiguration of some schools, which the District understands is upsetting. The District began presenting its plan in May of 2023. The District is reacting to a significant decline in enrollment and reconfiguring schools in ways most beneficial to students. To help improve communications, after the District presented this EIA report, the 11 potentially most impacted sites scheduled staff and community discussions to provide additional disclosure, to have further conversations, and to hear feedback from the community.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Concerns: There were several comments questioning if the proposed school closures and reconfiguration will help student achievement.

Response: The District's primary focus is on student achievement, and it believes the reconfiguration will help in several ways:

- Small enrollment in grades 6 – 8 struggle to offer a sufficient number of programs and to have qualified staff in all programs
- Small elementary enrollment creates more combination classes and greatly limits teacher collaboration
- Small school enrollments allow for an inequitable distribution and inefficient use of resources, which limits District efforts to provide the best possible experience for students

TIMING

Concerns: There were several comments that the District was moving too fast and requested that the District slow down the process.

Response: Reconfiguration discussions began in the District in 1984 in response to declining enrollment and resulted in six site closures including Valley Continuation HS, formerly housed at Lomitas Ave. (2010), Shadybend ES (2008), Glenelder ES (2010), La Subida ES (1989), Hilllgrove ES (1984), and Temple Academy (2021). Based on projected enrollment figures, the District may need to consider further reconfiguration in future years to address the continuing anticipated decline. District staff understand that sudden changes like this are difficult and regrets that these needed changes are causing some families to experience stress. The District is proposing reconfigurations and school closures because they will benefit students academically, and making the changes sooner rather than later will benefit students in the immediate future. Also, enrollment at some sites is very low, which is one of the main factors driving this change, and demographic studies project continue decreasing enrollment, exacerbating the existing challenges.

Also, the District proposed timeline is based on backwards planning for Phase 2/Asset Management tasks to be completed for a Fall 2024 implementation.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

Concerns: There was a concern that the focus of the reconfiguration needed to be on improving programs for students.

Response: Programs will significantly benefit from the proposed reconfiguration. Programs that may have expanded support and/or access include:

- Speech and Debate
- Science Olympiad
- After School Clubs
- Increased Visual and Performing Arts support
- Potential Transitional Kindergarten/Dual Immersion expansion

SAFETY

Concern: There was a concern that some of the sites could be a safety concern.

Response: The District is planning to enhance safety/security measures and to staff to support schools with safety concerns and will respond individually depending on the needs of each campus. The District will also make accommodations/upgrades at facilities for universal student access (e.g. ADA access/ramps, rails, and other improvements) as well as provide enhanced safety/security measures and possibly additional staff to support schools with safety concerns.

TRANSPORTATION

Concern: Community members expressed concern that, in some cases, transportation for students would be difficult due to the distance from the new school site or a hazardous crossing.

Response: According to related Administrative Regulation regarding transportation to address the transportation needs of students. According to this policy, the District provides transportation to students based on the students' grade level:

- TK/Kindergarten: 1 Mile
- Grades 1-5: 1.5 miles
- Grades 6-8: 2 miles

The District will provide Del Valle Elementary School students who reside in the current Del Valle Elementary attendance area transportation from Del Valle Elementary School to Workman Elementary School for safety. Ridership will be evaluated annually.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Concern: Several community members expressed concern that with school closures and reconfigurations, the District would not offer special education services at the same level as the District currently provides.

Response: Special education is a service, not a place; therefore, the services will follow the student. The special education and SELPA administrators will facilitate the successful transition of programs to new sites. California Children's Services (CCS) is a state agency, and services will continue to be provided to students regardless of the site the students are attending.

FUTURE USE OF SCHOOL CAMPUSES

Concerns: Community members expressed concerns about what the future use of the school campuses would be. These concerns included who would be deciding the future use of the property and the process and guidelines the District would use to determine the future use of the facility.

Response: Education Code Section 17388 mandates that the governing board appoint a District Advisory Committee (DAC) (often referred to as the "7/11 Committee") to advise the governing board in the development of district-wide policies governing the use of disposition of surplus property. The District does not intend to dispose of the school properties recommended for closure. District asset management committee will discuss the repurposing/alternative uses.

TRANSITIONS

Concern: Community members expressed some concerns that students could have difficulty with this transition to a new school.

Response: The District acknowledges that change can be difficult for families and wants every student to feel welcome at their new school. Based on this concern and in response to community members' comments, the District will schedule staff "meet and greet" events, provide tours, and host parent information/orientation meetings at all receiving schools. The District will also offer counselors for academic and social-emotional support for all grade spans, direct staff from closed schools will provide additional support for academic needs and social-emotional development, and utilize existing site-based student support programs for academic, behavioral, and SEL support.

CLASS SIZE

Concern: Some community members expressed concerns that the school closures and reconfigurations would cause class sizes to increase to unmanageable sizes.

Response: The District needs to keep classroom enrollments at a reasonable size for teachers to manage their classrooms properly. Increasing class size is not a goal of these closures and reconfigurations. One of the key objectives of these closures and reconfigurations is to organize classroom enrollment in a way that maximizes the opportunity for student achievement. The District's goals include:

- Reducing the number of combination classes.
- Enhancing instruction through teacher collaboration.
- Expanding access to middle school electives and programs.

CLASS SIZE (CONTINUED)

- Class size will continue to be regulated by the staff to student ratio capacities as described in education code and collective bargaining agreements.
- Small enrollment schools that may only be able to offer combination classes across the grade levels. Larger enrollment schools can offer multiple classes within each grade level including single grade classes. Combining small schools increases the likelihood of reducing the number of combo classes in which a student would participate.
- Consolidation of small schools into a single location leads to more efficient allocation of resources and the potential for more individualized attention for students (small group intervention, enrichment opportunities, etc.)

FOSTER FAMILIES

Concern: How will the District support foster students and families during this transition?

Response: The District Foster Liaison will coordinate with the sites' social workers and foster family teams to facilitate transition and provide community forums with students, counselors, administrators, and teachers. Receiving schools will organize visits for foster families, and the District will give high-priority students case management to support the transition, as well as provide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports venue training.

CONCLUSION

The District has complied with the AB 1912 process in the consideration of proposed closure and reconfiguration of several schools in the District. The Attorney General mandates this process for school districts in financial distress and recommends this process for all other districts. The process HLPUSD followed included the formation of a Superintendent's Reconfiguration Advisory Committee, a recommendation from this committee, Board approval of a set of metrics used to evaluate the closures, an analysis of these metrics, a public disclosure of the analysis of metrics, several opportunities for public engagement, and district responses to these public comments and concerns. There were no discriminatory practices that came to light during the creation of this report, and it is recommended that the District proceed with the consideration of the school closures and reconfiguration as recommended by the Superintendent's Reconfiguration Committee.