

Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting – March 21, 2024

CAC Members: Shirley Frantz, Wes Morse, Kevin Du, David Fung, Carol Gao, Lori Cunningham

FEA Representatives: Carley Stavis, FEA President

Students: Neel Sudhakaran

FUHSD Administrators: Superintendent Graham Clark, Associate Superintendent Trudy Gross, CBO/Associate Superintendent Christine Mallery, Director of Administrative Services Jason Crutchfield, Lynbrook High School Principal Maria Jackson, Monta Vista High School Principal Ben Clausnitzer, Fremont High School Principal Bryan Emmert, Cupertino High School Principal Kami Tomberlain, Homestead High School Principal Greg Giglio, Coordinator of Communications Rachel Zlotziver

Welcome & Presentation

Director of Administrative Services Jason Crutchfield gave a presentation which covered enrollment projections and an update on transfer programs, which was previously provided to the Board of Trustees on Feb. 13, 2024. The presentation included a look at enrollment projections for the next five years, information to help the committee better understand the projections and an update on how the transfer program process is going.

Mr. Crutchfield reviewed the history of district attending enrollment since the 2017-2018 school year. In that time, FUHSD has declined from a high of approximately 11,000 students down to the current level of approximately 9,500 students. Projections show continued significant enrollment declines in the coming years. The continued differences between larger graduating classes and smaller incoming ninth grade classes will lower enrollment even further in the next few years.

Mr. Crutchfield reviewed the resident enrollment projections for grades K-12, which includes our two feeder districts (*Slides 7 and 8*).

This year we expected a drop of 666 students, however, we only dropped by 377 students (*Slides 9 and 10*). While the overall district enrollment still declined, staff worked with the demographer to understand why the drop was not as steep as projected. One of the reasons for this discrepancy was due to the closure of Summit Denali Charter School, which brought an additional 116 students into the district. The other major cause of this year's variance is believed to be the continued disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, we likely captured the return of more students who finally returned to public schools (*Slides 11 through 13*). The district is also seeing new patterns of immigration that we haven't seen in the past. For next year, we are projected to drop by 383 students (*Slide 15*). In the next five years, we are projected to drop by 1,691 students (*Slide 16*). The gap in enrollment between the schools gets narrower as we get further out.

As of March 12, there were 110 eligible applicants for the Lynbrook High School transfer program, or the LSSAP. We have confirmed 65 transfers, meeting our goal. As of March 12, there were 28 eligible applicants for the Monta Vista High School transfer program, or the MSSAP. Last year, there were only about 15 applications. We have confirmed 17 transfers and 11 declined. The goal was to have 30 transfers.

In looking at the application data this year, both programs have increased applications compared to the prior year. The increased promotion and communication of the MSSAP has drawn more students from our eligible feeder middle schools. Last year, a high number of MSSAP private school applicants declined the transfer. Staff is feeling positively about both transfer programs and the communication and outreach efforts that have been made this year.

Mr. Crutchfield shared that based on the projections we have, nothing points to needing drastic measures to balance school enrollment (*Slide 21*). However, the data does support that the district will need to continue to navigate various issues caused by prolonged enrollment decline. (i.e. course offerings).

Discussion

- CAC member: Looking at the five-year projection by school, there is a noticeable drop in the size of Lynbrook. I guess you can't really increase the number of students coming in without changing the parameters.
 - Jason Crutchfield: The next two years will tell us a lot. Things may look different than the projections.
- CAC member: At what point do other schools say we are also declining now and we don't want to transfer as many students.
 - Jason Crutchfield: We have already heard that sentiment from Cupertino for a few years.
- Superintendent Clark: We have heard community concerns about school closure and we have been reassuring the community that we are not at a place that that is a concern for us.
 - CAC member: The unknown is what really creates the uncertainty and fear. Anything you can say to the community about what is the threshold of when you would have to open up a conversation about school closures could help to remove some of that fear.
- Student CAC member: I have a question about the evolving purpose of this committee. In the five-year projection, there is such a big decline in some of the schools – Homestead for instance. Five years isn't that long. How do you prevent a massive disruption to a student's high school experience in that time?
 - Jason Crutchfield: Because of how the enrollment decline happens gradually, we learn how to deal with it in a way that minimizes student disruptions. Even in five years, Homestead will just be getting to the size where Lynbrook and Monta Vista are now. We are able to manage the decline in a way that it doesn't significantly

affect a student's four-year plan. We make changes slowly to lessen any negative impacts on the student experience.

- Principal Ben Clausnitzer: There are also some positives as schools get smaller, more access, particularly when it comes to school therapists, school counselors, etc.
- CAC member: Is there any talk about a new charter school opening?
 - Jason Crutchfield: No, we are not aware of any such efforts.
- CAC member: Does the demographer look at the aging homeowners, since eventually, there will be turnover?
 - Jason Crutchfield: Yes, but he looks more at birthrates and the cost of housing. With higher interest rates, people are staying put.
- CAC member: I recall that the demographer doesn't account for new construction, like condos or apartments, because the student generation rate is very low.
 - Jason Crutchfield: Our demographer does account for every single building that has a chance to be open and occupied within the next five years. We look at the historic generation rate of similar buildings. What we know historically is that high-density housing attracts mostly single tech workers or couples that are dual-income with no kids. As those buildings age and get older, they sometimes get more affordable and may produce a few more students.
- CAC member: There is always a concern about how many classes we can offer, and this is tied to student-teacher ratios. Is the school district going to look into that and see if it can be relaxed a little?
 - Jason Crutchfield: We have lowered lots of ratios in collaboration with our teachers union. We also have departments not meeting their ratios, including world language. Lowering the ratios further won't really help with the languages that already don't have many students enrolling in them. We are always looking at solutions for this issue and this remains something we are always in discussion with the union about.

Continued work of the CAC

Staff shared that we are in a little bit of a holding pattern right now, but once some of the other work of the board and district winds down we will be looking to revamp and reconvene this group. Superintendent Clark thanked everyone for their service to the CAC.

The meeting was closed at 7:04 p.m.