

Ocean View School District

Results of Questionnaire Completed by Members of the Superintendent's Schools Task Force

September 27, 2023

Introduction

Members of the Superintendent's Schools Task Force received information concerning the Ocean View School District's decline in overall student enrollment and under enrollment at several school sites. It also received information about a school consolidation proposal that would consolidate Circle View, Village View, and Golden View elementary schools with other District elementary schools; and repurpose Spring View Middle School into an elementary school.

Twenty-three task force members who have participated in most of the group's meetings were asked to share their views on this topic by completing a questionnaire. Although members of the Superintendent's cabinet also attended most of the group's meetings, they did not submit a questionnaire.

This report summarizes the information generated by the questionnaire and responses to open ended questions respondents wrote after answering specific questions about school consolidation and District and school enrollment.

Respondent Information

Questionnaire respondents were asked to share information about their association with the District by indicating which of the following constituencies they represented: parent of a current or former District student or students; community member, certificated staff member, classified staff member, management staff member, or another constituency. Some of the respondents represented one, two or several of those constituencies in the District. Three survey respondents did not indicate which group they represented. Of those respondents who completed the constituency information, 20 said they were a parent of a current or former District student or students, 12 said they were community members, five said they were certificated staff members, four said they were classified employees, three said they were management employees, and four said they represented another constituency.

Responses to Questions

Respondents were asked to consider the four statements listed below, and to place a check mark next to those statements that reflects their current recommendations on how to address declining enrollment and small school enrollment in the District. Some respondents consequently marked multiple statements.

- 1. Do not consolidate or repurpose any schools and identify other methodologies for addressing declining enrollment and small school enrollment. (Eight respondents checked this statement.)**

2. **Implement the consolidation and repurposing in successive school years, beginning with one or two schools per designated year. (Twenty-two respondents checked this statement.)**
3. **Implement the consolidation and repurposing by consolidating and repurposing the designated sites at the same time, or simultaneously. (Fourteen respondents checked this statement.)**
4. **If you recommend consolidating schools, what options do you recommend for Spring View Middle School? (Respondents provided a variety of written responses to this statement and they are restated verbatim below.)**

Respondents were also given an opportunity to describe alternatives to consolidation or repurposing schools due to declining enrollment or low school enrollment. (Respondents also provided a variety of written responses to this statement and they are restated verbatim below.)

Written Responses Provided by Respondents to Each Statement or Question

The eight respondents who checked statement one, which said, “do not consolidate or repurpose any schools and identify other methodologies for addressing declining enrollment and school enrollments,” provided the following written comments:

- This task force has not even adequately discussed different options besides the closing of four schools. This task force has been comprised of meetings after meetings where District employees are giving facts and figures about declining enrollment and no real discussion about creative ideas to avoid closure. The three elementary schools that were recommended for closure all have enrollments of over 300 and are thriving. Village View has a population that would be deeply (and) negatively affected by its closure. There are too many students that would be displaced, and their facilities are adequate, (and within) a thriving community. Golden View has facilities that are completely unique to Orange County. Its numbers are also above 300 and students are thriving there as well. A \$2 million budget shortfall because of the two loans we are saddled with should not mean the closing of schools. I can understand wanting more students at the middle school level. At the elementary level, smaller class sizes are better for student achievement. I do not know of one teacher who would rather close their school and lose their job than teach a combo class.
- (I am checking this response) because that was the request of the Board and the reason for this task force. We were not asked to be here to vet the already presented option of closure. We know that is already an option put on the table by the District. Anyone that elected to be on the task force and will only check off number four, they are not here for the ask of the Board.
- (I am checking this response) depending on future financial information, hopefully.

The 22 respondents who checked statement two, which said, “implement the consolidation and repurposing in successive school years, beginning with one or two schools per designated year,” provided the following written responses:

- Enrollment is obviously on a downward trend and is not likely to turn around. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to reopen one of the schools if closed prematurely. A gradual approach of consolidation is the most reasonable approach. Also, with the potential of any unused site being taken over by a charter school, closing all the schools immediately could lead to even more enrollment decline.
- I believe there is information which the District could provide about the state of the financials to date for specific sites, and the District overall, to support this option. Notwithstanding my belief that the evidence presented indicates a need to close some schools and repurpose them, I remain steadfast in the belief that we need better insight to make a more informed decision on this approach overall. I’m not ready to say that closing all four schools is required and appropriate. I need to understand the costs related to upgrading the schools, which can be updated without demolition, and whether such costs and expenditures are best investing in, considering the decline. And I would like to know the impact on staff, teachers, and projections on the savings this could support for the District. Finally, I would like to understand the District’s placement of saved funds. I recommend the closure of Circle View.
- Close two schools for one year and reevaluate to see if there is a need to continue school closures.
- Implement the consolidation in successive school years and evaluate whether all schools will need to, in fact, be closed and continue now to address the low enrollment challenges.
- I choose the above because of declining enrollment and birth rates, and (due to) the housing crisis, and families moving out of the area, or even leaving California. I feel it wise, if we ever do not recover, I think at least two schools (should close).
- Go slow to go fast. Do one and see the pitfalls for the rest of the schools. That was super helpful in the modernization of schools. Also, we can’t leave three sites open or charters may come in and steal our kiddos. Must have a plan in place for the open sites.
- I feel like if the students aren’t here then consolidation seems like the appropriate approach to me. It would make sense to close the schools with the lowest enrollment first, whilst attempting to bring up the enrollment numbers across the board. This is just my opinion, having spoken to many families that have opted to remove their children from public school. I would love to see OVSD make known to the public that their children will not have “woke ideologies” shoved down their throats. Parents are so worried about their children being exposed to issues that no elementary age children should be. As I understand it, OVSD elementary schools have seen reductions in enrollment, however, Westmont VAPA has seen an increase this year. Is this because of the programs offered at this school? If so, would it stand to reason that if other schools offered such programs, enrollment may increase?

- Consolidation is needed given the ongoing, long-term, trend of declining enrollment with continued and/or increasing operational expenses of each site. Spring View's middle school enrollment is too low to offer the variety of leveled core sections, in addition to innovative, useful, and modern electives. Teachers are unfairly impacted with multiple grade level (combo) assignments, which also negatively and unfairly impacts students and their families. Middle school teachers are impacted negatively with too many subjects and levels to prepare and manage for a quality learning environment. Circle, especially, and Village need considerable repairs to be a quality, highly functioning learning environment, (and to be) competitive in a community with such a high cost of living. Moving the staffs at Circle and Village to a new reimagined Spring View assures the parents of children at Circle and Village that they will maintain the nurturing and quality teaching and learning that many community members on this task force have spoken about many, many times. The location changes, (but) not the nurturing of their children, or the quality of their education. Golden View should be put on hold. It absolutely baffles me that our school board invested approximately \$1 million dollars in refurbishing a farm there just a few years ago, and now wants to close it. Golden's enrollment has been low, and lowering for years, even before the farm refurbishing. Why not try Golden as a premier TK site, focusing on agriculture and farming? Build programs like 4H and work with Westminster High School and their program. Work with the Huntington Beach Equestrian Center, Shipley Nature Center. Work with the Orange County Department of Education and offer the farm as a field option to pull revenue in to support it.
- (I would select this option) if the mandatory options for transition would be easier on the community and the children. I would not consolidate Golden View. The commute would be too far and as a realtor (I would) recommend having to bus children such a distance would be detrimental to the declining enrollment. It would be better to keep Golden View open and bus some students in from the other consolidated schools and enhance the environmental focus at Golden View.
- While I acknowledge that enrollment is low, I don't agree with closing all four schools at once. Ideally, I don't want any schools to close, and I think that the District should consider selling property, especially if the birth rate issues are so low that we will not need these sites in the future. I do not feel we have looked at any options outside of consolidation. If we were forced to consolidate, I would like to see it done in phases. I don't think the community would respond to such a drastic move and it would negatively impact our enrollment. In addition, I strongly believe that schools that are chosen should not be based off enrollment, but rather need. The medically fragile students will be impacted greater than other sites. Classroom/school site scores are not based off buildings, they come from amazing teachers, involved parents, and student achievement. All of which should remain the same if one school simply relocates to another site. I am not advocating to consolidate; I am only indicating that if it is necessary that it is done slowly
- (This option should depend) on projected financial outcomes possibly.

- I think this can be one of the many options brought to the table. It's not my first choice, but a choice that should be suggested, shared, and researched.
- I really want to understand how many schools we would absolutely need to close, is it just two? Is it four? I want to identify other methodologies for addressing declining enrollment and small school enrollment. In looking at the enrollment data, budget deficits, staffing numbers, future projections, etc., it seems clear to me that we need to both consolidate and/or close schools and focus on how to increase enrollment in the future. One area that needs to be very clear is exactly how many schools must be closed to resolve the budget, enrollment, and staffing issues. Taking a phased approach while also having clarity beforehand on those details would allow us to check in and see whether the cost savings projections pan out and whether there are further impacts on enrollment. On the cost savings, it would keep the District accountable in their financials to better ensure that there is transparency and accuracy. On enrolment, if we see further downward trends due to these changes, or the inverse, we can adjust as appropriate. Meanwhile, the District should simultaneously be taking proactive steps to mitigate declining enrollment in any way possible. The new marketing/PR firm engagement is one way, but it will take time to see that bear any fruit. The District needs to remain committed to that engagement for the longer term to see benefit with the projected savings from the school closures/consolidation. The District needs to remain committed to offering dynamic, robust programs that are in line with current trends, more DLI, broader STEAM, strong GATE and so much TKI, that make parents seek out OVSD as a district of choice, and provide more purity in programming across the schools.

The 14 respondents who checked statement three, which said, “implement the consolidation and repurposing simultaneously, essentially a ‘rip the bandage off quickly’ approach,” provided the following written statements:

- It is the most logical solution to the issue of too many schools with not enough students and the amount of money needed to run the school district. All the data given to us indicates that we need to take decisive action if we are going to survive as a destination school district. The issues have been discussed for several years at Board and administrative levels. This isn't a new problem. To continue to kick the can down the road is not the solution. While I would wish for another less painful solution, I have not heard one option coming from task force members that makes sense and doesn't cost the District more money.
- I selected this option because OVSD is not the only school district in California that is going through declining enrollment. Declining enrollment and having school sites that are not being used to their full potential is reducing the quality of education each child is receiving. The main goal of a school district is to provide the best education possible and prolonging the process of school closures will only harm the children the District is intended to serve. I feel that coming to the task force meetings really solidified my

decision to choose this option because we were presented with data to back up the moving forward with consolidation. I learned that OVSD is in a much better position financially than many school districts nearby. OVSD generates income from many of the properties while many school districts do not. Even with this, OVSD will still have difficulty maintaining quality, teachers, etc. These discussions are not easy, but are necessary.

- I'm aware this is already an option presented by the District.
- Depending on the repurposed plans, e.g., what each site is intended for, and a dire financial future projected, I'm hoping this won't be the case though.
- This would be my first choice. The data presented shows a clear picture of where our District is standing today and where we were. The housing is not going to be reduced, allowing families to purchase, or rent in the area, due to the high cost. The prices of houses keep going up and are at least \$1 million. Renting a house starts at \$1,300. Families can't afford the cost and are moving out of the area. I would not want to see OVSD in danger of bankruptcy. It would be scary to think what would happen if the State took over for the parents and community members. Staff will lose their voice. OVSD is like a family and not being able to voice our opinions would be very sad.
- If we are to consolidate at all, it needs to be done all at once. Boundary lines will be redrawn and I'm not sure how that would work with closing in a phased process. The only way I would be okay with consolidating schools is if Circle moved as a unit into Spring View. Take the name, awards, students, and teachers, or if Circle stays where it is, and consolidate Village and Golden, and maybe College, to Spring.
- In the event of consolidation we (need to) make sure to use our own facilities to be useful to our growth. Pre-K, TK, etc., instead of clearing out. Use them as facilities to build up to "the new repurposed Spring View that embodies all focuses."
- When making changes of this gravity, I believe all changes need to happen at once for many reasons. Closing schools, I'm expecting, will require redoing boundaries. This can't be done on a year by year basis. Teacher placement could also be highly disruptive on a year by year basis. We could have a year of change, make some districtwide activities to welcome all new students and staff, go through it together, get it done, and move on. I'm not sure how this works in the plan to transition Spring into an elementary school, though. I would think there would need to be a whole year needed to make the changes for middle school to elementary. However, I guess it's possible to bring in things over summer. I don't know enough to give input here. I also think Spring should not become a super school as the enrollment from the other schools is needed at the lower enrollment schools. Basically, I don't think all Golden, Circle, and Village students should go to Spring. We're not getting more enrollment in our district based on the information shared. It doesn't seem like cutting a few teachers, or changing class size, is going to give us the financial impact we need.
- Things need to move forward, but I'm not sure why we aren't looking at consolidating more middle schools we don't have the numbers for.

- We know we need to close more than one school. Do it once so the District can begin to recover. There are boundaries that will need to be changed. Completing the consolidation process at one time allows decisions to be made at one time, considering all the connecting pieces. I would (redo District boundaries) after closing four schools, placing a new school community in Spring is ideal. I would put ELAP at one of the elementary sites. Turning another site into a place where students (learn to) code afterschool, or have a music/art conservatory is another great use of funds and facilities. I do not have another idea for the third elementary school. I would factor in the square footage of each site to see how much funds we would be able to acquire. We can truly begin the process of healing if we close them all at once.
- Based on all the information that has been presented over the last six years, this is the most appropriate selection available. I believe that it is better to consolidate and repurpose at the same time to avoid the stress and strain of this type of action over a prolonged amount of time. It is financially irresponsible to continue maintaining all schools when it has been proven that declining enrollment is accurate and that our schools are facing the strain of declining enrollment. Schools have multiple combos and limited electives due to a lack of students attending. The information that has been shared is not new information. It is unfortunate that community members did not stay informed and up to date regarding the fiscal dilemma that we are headed for. Board meetings are public forums where important information has been presented over the years. This is probably why consolidation does not surprise me. I have been hearing about declining enrollment and the repercussions of that for years via board meetings.
- Why not try using Golden as a premier TK site, focusing on agriculture and farming. Building programs like 4H and work with Westminster High School and their program. Work with the Huntington Beach Equestrian Center, Shipley Nature Center. Work with OCDE and offer the farm as a fieldtrip option to pull revenue to support it.
- It might be in the best interest financially to close three schools and restructure them into one. Close three elementary and Spring, then move the three closed elementary school children to Spring View. Then all shifting/movement will be done at one time. Families might leave and go elsewhere. Allow families to move to another school of choice in our District if that would keep them in our District.

The fourteen respondents who responded to question four, which sought recommendations for how to consolidate Spring View Middle School, provided the following statements:

- I really love the idea of a K-8 option. This would make life so much easier for families with multiple children in different schools
- Turn it into a K-8 school, maybe on year-round? It would really help the families in the area to access a neighborhood middle school. K-8 would be so nice for parents, teachers, and kids. Such a great opportunity for collaboration, SEL, and inter-grade level groupings. As a Spring View Middle School parent, I'd hate to see no middle school in the area. My

second son went to Mesa. It was way too far and unsafe for him to walk from the College View tract. I had to pay someone to drive him for three years.

- If elementary schools are to be consolidated into Spring View, it will need substantial work to make it into a school families will feel excited about being displaced to. If there is capacity at the schools that have already been modernized, or upgraded, and we do not have the funds remaining from Measure R to make Spring View adequately modernized (in line with other modernized schools), then it doesn't seem like a good option for any of the schools to use. If those conditions are not met, as a parent, I would rather my child be transferred into an existing site that meets the current needs of students and is functioning well within the community. In my opinion, consolidating schools into Spring View without a substantial financial investment, feels like the worst of all scenarios for the displaced families, and would likely contribute to further declines in enrollment, or at the very least, even more discontent that this process would already create.
- With the understanding that the District continues to owe on the loan for an additional six years from the gym build out, I recommend that Circle View be upgraded, remediated, and remodeled to current standards. I would recommend Circle View to relocate to Spring View as it could accommodate a K-5 adjustment easily. The substandard carpet, light infiltration, and other issues would require an adjustment of the building to raise to current educational levels. Once the loans are paid, can the city reevaluate whether funds can be recouped from the community by use of the gym? As previously stated, it would be easy to adjust the current building since it previously housed an elementary school.
- (Use it for) preschool, K-8, and special education.
- After speaking with both teachers and parents, we have many options for various school sites. However, since you asked about Spring, here are the opinions/options that have been expressed to me:
 - Close Spring View, but what will become of the property?
 - Repurpose Spring to house students from closing elementary schools, noting that some boundary lines may need to be redrawn.
 - Repurpose Spring as a K-8 school, which thus can become a GATE campus for K-8.
- I would love to openly discuss with the group options for Spring View.
- Move District office to Spring View campus. Leave the District office to College satellite campus, and/or Spring View into sports complex for public rent. Spring View is not conducive to hosting an elementary school as it is, nor do we have the money to refurbish it. It is centrally located, which makes for a perfect OVSD headquarters, and the gym could host large OVSD events.
- Spring View does need to close due to its very low enrollment. It should be repurposed as an elementary school. However, it is not set up to house an elementary school. So, is there proper funding to prepare it to become an elementary school and is there enough time to do so? Also, if Circle is to move as a unit to Spring, maybe we delay Circle's closure by a year to give the Spring campus time to become an elementary school.

- In the event of a consolidation, then absolutely take this opportunity to merge Spring View into an elementary that has a focus in multiple areas so that the middle school can continue to grow or piggyback, and encourage the development. Busing will need to be mandatory, at no cost to our community, because this option takes away from having a school to be able to walk to. Example: Spring View should have GATE, VAPA, STEAM, environmental (studies) and it should mirror (*unclear written information*), prepare for the transition to feeder schools.
- There are a few options that may be viable. Repurposing Spring for Golden and Village, along with the special education students that would be displaced. The school is large and could easily handle those schools. This makes the most sense to me.
- It makes sense to use Spring View as a K-5 elementary school and consolidate the middle school students currently located there to the other three middle schools. It makes sense because of the location of the school.
- I would revisit the gyms and look at how much it would cost to reverse the court order not to rent them out. I believe it would be a great option to bring in money. Though I do understand it would not have a school, I would hope to support some of the programs offered at OVSD. I believe in supporting the students and bringing or exploring programs for OVSD
- I think Spring View should be repurposed into a K-5 school and Spring View kids should be given the option to go to one of the other three middle schools. I would keep it open for one more year and not take any incoming sixth graders. Move three elementary schools over into Spring View, taking teachers and as many staff as possible. Spring's facilities are in better condition and there is a lot of land to house the number of children. I would provide busing for the school children whose school got closed, making it easier on the children who live in the neighborhoods of the school that got closed. Make Spring View the new GATE school for K-5 children in the District. Spring View's facility is in good condition. It can house a lot of students.

The fourteen respondents who responded to an opportunity to provide other alternatives to consolidation or repurposing a school provided the following statements:

- Park View has a huge area of unused green space not even utilized by Ocean View Little League. Can we look into ways to monetize this property in a way that the community would get behind?
- Sun View will be unused after the 22-23 school year. Can we look at a way to modernize this property in a way that the community would be behind?
- Low-income housing should not be discussed when it comes to utilizing these properties or any of the four that the superintendent put on the chopping block. Huntington Beach residents would most likely be outraged.
- I do not have any specific ideas related to funding alternatives that will generate the income necessary to sustain all OVSD's buildings without consolidation. A suggestion

would be to build multifamily housing on underutilized sites around the existing schools to see if levels increase, but even then, development may take three to five years. In addition, there will be a reduction of green space, which is already very scarce in the Huntington Beach region.

- Has the District looked at land swapping to provide funding options for the District? Other districts have done this. Looking at consolidation to only two middle schools. Schools do need to be closed. I feel that not all ideas were developed.
- Repurpose Pleasant View District Storage as leased property to child friendly association/foundation or recreational facility (dance academy, football leagues, Kumon academy, mathnasium, etc. Repurpose the current District office (Lark View) as leased property to child friendly association/foundation or recreational facility. Cut administrative positions. This District is extremely top heavy. Streamline the administrative roles. Utilize software and online forms to eliminate support roles and outdated processes. Refocus on traditional academic standards without political agendas.
- I recommend building low income housing on existing vacant property. I recommend closing one elementary school and one middle school. I recommend reviewing the Measure R schools to see if there has been a significant improvement in enrollment and academics. The District has stated we have too many teachers. In what schools are these teachers located?
- I agree we need to consolidate. I thought this committee would get to help with how to do it, not just if we do it.
- From the outset and in line with all the data presented, this whole situation feels like something that needs to be attacked at all angles. It is clear that this should have been discussed and schools considered to close five years ago, along with finding ways to spark enrollment. We are now in a position that we need to close multiple schools to fix a problem plaguing the District for a while. We need to take substantive steps, as unpopular as they may be, to fix this situation. OVSD District reps and the Board need to own and actually solve this situation, instead of, in the case of the Board, being more concerned with their ability to be reelected. Short term hard decisions with long term positive effects need to be made.
- Better investments into cost producing items, targeted investment in each school to continue to draw students from other districts, evaluate charter-like alternative in depth, including traditional school initiatives.
- In the essence of time I will keep this short and sweet. Golden View student enrollment is quite low, but it needs to be repurposed. It is a perfect home for the OVSD preschool, and possibly expanded TI and junior K programs. As was stated by the District during the tour of College, "careful thought was put into bringing in light." Studies show nature improves learning. The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education is perfect for this space.
- Would love to discuss openly with group to brainstorm but here are some rough ideas:
 - ADA-Saturday school for makeups as other districts do this.

- Lease out dead properties
- Look at the district budget line by line to see what specific cuts can be made. This should be done first.
- Look at multiple different consolidation scenarios, not just one.
- There are many more experienced people than me in our community who wanted to join the task force. If we are gathering all creative options, let's bring them on board too. Share!
- Lease solar, for our own consumption, or to a solar company who wants to use our roofs to lower utility costs and possibly subsidize impoverished areas, like Oak View. Develop our currently empty sites for senior living, employee housing, sports complex, etc. Reduce salaries or halt raises of administrators until population and kids increase. Bolster independent study outreach and execution. Improve after school care options to attract families and retain them. Entice teachers to retire so we're not overstaffed. Monetize farm at Golden and labs at Village and Lake for surrounding schools. Partner with local realtors to market OVSD.
- California recently passed a bill that allows to build low income housing on school properties. This is an option to create additional income/partnering with a property development company. Make College View a districtwide preschool and preschool offices. This is a school that has lower enrollment but has been modernized. I've heard the preschool offices are at Oak in the portables near the city dump. Relocating all to College would benefit all. I still believe there could be additional ideas presented, however, like the low income busing idea, can it happen fast enough for our budget to not go into the red?
- I believe it would be in the best interest to refine the schools and encourage more creative, innovative, and specific focus to each school, rather than consolidating. Also to encourage whichever feeder middle school to adopt similar focuses across the board. Example: STEAM elementary feeds to STEAM so there is a good flow.
- Possibly move all TK classes to one site. Golden View, with the farm, could work for this purpose. Golden View could become a destination site for other schools to learn about environmental sciences. Create a field trip destination for other schools and school districts to visit and learn about a working farm, farm animals, and crops. Children in our District can visit once a year and we could charge outside districts who visit. If possible, open the middle school gyms to our community to use for athletics (basketball and volleyball), just like we let AYSO use the fields and FNL.