

DECEMBER 4, 2024 SCAC FIFTH MEETING MINUTES

MEETING NORMS

- No interruptions
- Meeting Chair will call upon raised hands
- Keep comments concise
- Be open minded
- Assume best intention
- Use facts, not emotion
- Stay on track with the agenda
- Consider the needs of all students in the District

CALL TO ORDER – 6:00 P.M.

The meeting is called to order at 6:00 pm by the Committee Chair. Meeting norms are read.

REGULAR AGENDA

2.01 Review of Meeting Minutes Review

There are no questions or comments.

Minutes approved.

2.02 Review of Schools Based on Criteria (30 minutes) Information/Discussion

Harold Freiman, Lozano Smith, reminds the committee of the option it had selected for the facilitator and District staff to present a summary from the Committee's prior discussions regarding which schools rise to the top as schools to close or not close based on each criteria. This summary is presented for the committee to circle back and make any changes. It is noted that the criteria are provided as a way to objectively discuss the different school sites. Each criteria does not need to be weighted equally.

On Criteria 1, Capacity, Mr. Freiman notes the committee's discussion of the following schools for closure/consolidation: Los Arboles or Lairon, Ramblewood, and Dahl. McKinley is also mentioned as having low enrollment. The schools discussed as not candidates for closure were: Franklin; Windmill; Shirakawa; Bridges; Sylvandale; and CCA. Meadows was also a potential candidate for non-closure.

A committee member proposes to add Kennedy as a closure candidate based on lower capacity and enrollment, and add Stonegate as a non-closure candidate based on capacity. Another committee member notes capacity for Kennedy is 700. A committee member mentions ranking the schools based on enrollment and utilization rate. A committee member shares their top five schools for non-closure based on enrollment and utilization rate: Windmill is ranked number one for enrollment and utilization; Shirakawa is ranked number two for capacity and enrollment; Franklin is ranked fifth for capacity and third for enrollment; Stonegate is ranked fourth for enrollment and fifth for utilization; and Meadows is ranked fourth for capacity and fifth for

enrollment. The committee member proposes to add Stonegate to non-closure based on capacity. The committee member notes that the bottom five schools to be placed on the closure candidate list are: Ramblewood for low capacity and low enrollment; Lairon for low enrollment and low utilization rate; McKinley for low capacity, enrollment, and low utilization; CCA for low capacity and enrollment; and Los Arboles for low enrollment, low capacity, and low utilization. It is noted that CCA is on the non-closure candidate list for other criteria but could be added to the closure candidate list if just based on capacity.

Clarification is made about Sylvandale being on the non-closure list due to its capacity to receive middle school students.

A committee member brings to attention the top five sites with high multi-purpose room/dining capacities, which are: Los Arboles, McKinley, Lairon, Santee, and Hellyer. A committee member brings to attention the bottom five based on enrollment which are: Los Arboles, McKinley, Ramblewood, Kennedy, and Santee. It is noted that Santee is not listed as a recommended closure candidate, but should be based on this criterion. A committee member agrees with adding Santee as a closure candidate based on capacity.

It is clarified that there is no requirement for middle schools or the number of middle schools to remain open; but transportation would be a factor to look at. Superintendent Cruz clarifies that the schools mentioned are from the discussions of the committee and that the schools listed as pro-closure candidates and non-closure candidates are not final recommendations. It is noted that CCA is on a non-closure list for different reasons as discussed by the committee.

It is noted that the district does not pay anything to East Side Union High School District (ESUHSD) for using their space. The only cost for CCA remaining open is personnel and there is no infrastructure cost to the district.

A committee member supports adding Franklin, Stonegate, Dahl, and any site with over 200 multipurpose room/dining capacity as candidates for non-closure. It is also noted that Hellyer, Lairon, Los Arboles, McKinley, Santee, and Windmill have below 200 capacity. Another committee member brings to attention the bottom four sites in regard to multipurpose room/dining capacity, which are Santee, Lairon, McKinley, and Los Arboles.

There is clarification on Sylvandale having the capacity of being able to take 6-8th grade students. Mr. Freiman mentions the many possibilities for different scenarios. It is noted that the middle schools are on the non-closure candidate list due to their capacity to take all 6-8th graders.

A committee member mentions adding Santee and Kennedy as closure candidates and adding Stonegate and Meadows as non-closure candidates based on capacity. These schools are added to the respective lists.

Under Criteria 2: Student Demographics, Mr. Freiman notes that Franklin is one that was discussed frequently as being a non-closure candidate due to the high population of English Language Learner (ELL) and socioeconomic disadvantaged students. Windmill was briefly discussed as being a non-closure candidate due to high ELL population and high socioeconomic disadvantaged students.

Superintendent Cruz shares a comment provided by a committee member via email regarding keeping in mind that many of the district's schools have a high percentage of ELL students. The comment indicated the importance of looking at the percentage and not just the number of students at schools with low enrollments, such as Santee and McKinley. Another committee member notes that Santee has the highest ELL population. A committee member comments that of the District's total socioeconomically disadvantaged students, 10 percent attend Franklin, 8 percent attend Dahl, 8 percent attend Shirakawa, 8 percent attend Stonegate, and 9 percent attend Windmill, which put together comprise nearly 50 percent of the District's socioeconomically disadvantaged students at those schools. A committee member notes that all FMSD schools are high needs schools. It is noted that Franklin is listed as a non-closure candidate for Criteria 2 due to a close proximity to a housing program within walking distance. The Superintendent notes that there is a hotel currently being used for a county housing program; however, there is no guarantee that the county will use it for the same purpose in the future. A committee member mentions the physical isolation of Franklin and its recent renovations.

Mr. Freiman asks the committee to discuss if there are other sites they would like to add to the non-closure candidates based on equity analysis and demographics. Dahl, Windmill, Santee, Stonegate, and Shirakawa are suggested as being added to the candidates for non-closure. Another committee member notes that Santee has a high number of socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Many of those students walk to and from school, and will have to walk farther were Santee to close. A committee member notes that all FMSD schools have a high number of socioeconomically disadvantaged students and based on this criterion, all schools should be on the non-closure candidate list. Another committee member agrees with the proposal. Another committee member opposes the proposal to have all schools on the non-closure candidate list, and proposes just leaving Franklin on the non-closure candidate list. A committee member brings to attention the possible future change in the temporary housing next to Franklin.

Under Criteria 3: Conditions of Schools and Facilities, the schools discussed with the highest facilities needs are Los Arboles, Santee, and McKinley. Ramblewood, although a newer school, is difficult to modernize due to the naturally-occurring asbestos. Although not listed, it is noted that Dahl has not received much money for improvements. Non-closure candidates discussed by the committee were Franklin, Windmill, and Lairon due to recent modernizations. Windmill would require significant power upgrades if portables were added. Bridges and Sylvandale were discussed as non-closure candidates due to recent renovations on fields and athletic programs. Shirakawa was noted as newer school but also is one of the schools up soon for modernization. The front office at Kennedy was recently modernized. Meadows is up next for facility

modernization funding. Superintendent Cruz clarifies that the modernization plans at Meadows are already in the planning and design stage, with significant investment.

Approximately six million dollars was spent on fields and the Kennedy front office modernization project. A committee member notes that Dahl has had the least amount of current bonds, upcoming projects, and past projects, and proposes it as a closure candidate. The committee agrees to adding Dahl to the closure candidate list based on this criterion. A committee member proposes adding CCA to the non-closure candidate list since there is no expense to modernize because the facility is not owned by the district. A committee member proposes adding Meadows as a non-closure candidate. Meadows is already in progress on its modernization plans and has state matching funds available. Meadows is added to the non-closure candidate list based on this criterion.

Under Criteria 4: Operating Cost, Santee is on the closure candidate list due to low enrollment compared to a high operating cost. CCA is on the non-closure candidate list due to the high enrollment and low operating cost. A committee member notes that Santee had the highest utility cost and low enrollment. Superintendent Cruz brings to attention the different costs of different programs at school sites, especially special education, which should be considered by the committee when evaluating this criterion. It is noted that Santee's cost does not include Educare. It is clarified that Santee has high operating costs due to the low number of students enrolled and the personnel cost. It is noted that programs will continue regardless of whether the school sites close. A committee member proposes taking Santee off the closure candidate list and leaving just CCA to as a non-closure candidate under this criterion. Santee is removed from the closure candidate list based on this criterion.

Under, Criteria 5: Special Programs, Mr. Freiman notes prior comments made by Superintendent Cruz that all district programs were previously indicated to be relocatable, but relocation would come with costs. The non-closure candidates previously discussed by the committee are: CCA due to the program and unique location on the high school campus; Windmill and Meadows for their dual immersion program; and Bridges and Sylvandale for their science labs, fields and athletic programs, and centers for the community. Stonegate was mentioned as not having any special programs, but is a dedicated K-8 school.

A committee member brings to attention the Life Skills classes offered at Stonegate, which are better if restrooms are within the classroom or nearby. Another committee member also brings to attention the PK and TK classrooms with restrooms available at Stonegate. It is noted that special programs needing restrooms in the classrooms can be accommodated in other locations, but at a cost. For example, Los Arboles is an inclusion school with many restrooms within classrooms, but technically its facilities could be moved elsewhere. There is brief discussion on relocating programs with restrooms and each site's capacity to take on more students and programs.

A committee member asks what would happen if ESUHSD does not allow CCA to continue. Superintendent Cruz explains that the CCA program involves access to the high school courses and highlights the strong partnership with ESUHSD for this program.

Under Criteria 6: Transportation Needs, from the past discussions the closure candidates are: Dahl, due to the parking capacity; Ramblewood, due to the difficulty of drop-off on the hill and limited parking; and Santee, due to difficulty picking up/dropping off and other safety concerns. The non-closure candidate from past discussions is McKinley, due to its location, as students would either need to be bussed in if it stayed open or bussed out if it closes. It also had some availability of parking. A committee member proposes adding Windmill to the closure candidate list due to limited parking for staff. There is no opposition. In response to a committee member's question, Mr. Vann explains that the schools without designated drop off areas are: Ramblewood, Hellyer, Santee, Windmill, and Los Arboles. It is suggested that all other schools without designated drop-offs should be added to the closure candidate list or to remove Santee from the list. McKinley has two locations for school bus drop off, general education drop-off and special education drop-off. A committee member notes McKinley transporting students and CORAL. It is mentioned that Dahl parking issues are negative. However, it is noted that Dahl has bus drop off and VTA in close proximity. Superintendent Cruz notes that the sidewalk drop off at Ramblewood is further away from the school site due to the hill when compared to other sidewalk drop-offs.

Mr. Freiman notes previous discussions on traffic safety concerns at Santee. A committee member proposes to keep the closure candidate list and to add Windmill to the closure candidate list under this criterion. Windmill is added as a closure candidate for this criterion.

Under Criteria 7: Aesthetics and Community Impact, Mr. Freiman notes the committee's discussions for the non-closure candidate list were: Santee, McKinley, Dahl, and Lairon due to services offered for the community located at these sites such as First 5 and Family Resource Centers (FRC). Sylvandale and Bridges were also discussed for non-closure as they are designated emergency response centers. Shirakawa was also discussed generally as serving a community purpose.

Under Criteria 8: Environmental Factors, Ramblewood was identified as a closure candidate due to its proximity to freeway and naturally-occurring asbestos.

Under Criteria 9: Impact on Feeder School Attendance Patterns, CCA was identified for non-closure due to the effect to the program if closed or moved. A committee member raises whether McKinley students would potentially enroll in the neighboring district, San Jose Unified, if McKinley closes. The process of interdistrict transfers is briefly discussed. The email Superintendent Cruz received from a committee member mentioned the potential loss of Kennedy students to charter schools if Kennedy closes.

Mr. Freiman presents a chart that tallies the number of criteria for each school where it was listed as either a closure candidate or non-closure candidate. Based on tonight's discussion, the

tallies and colors for each school would be updated as follows: Dahl would increase from two to three pro-closure criteria, remain with one criteria against closure, and stay red; Franklin would stay the same and stay green; Hellyer would stay as it was, with no color; Kennedy stays yellow leaning toward red due to the addition of one pro-closure criteria; Lairon had two criteria contra-closure, and remains green; Los Arboles had two criteria pro-closure criteria, so remains red; McKinley did not change; Meadows changed from one non-closure criteria to three, so moved from yellow to green; Ramblewood had no change and stays red; for Santee, one pro-closure criteria was added and one pro-closure criteria was removed, so the counts remained the same; Shirakawa remained the same; Stonegate had one added to the contra-closure, but remains without a color; Windmill had one added to the pro-closure side but still has three contra-closure, so remains green; Bridges, CCA, and Sylvandale did not change. The chart is only meant as a visualization of the discussion and does not constitute any decision.

In response to a committee member's question about the floor of how many schools would need to close, Superintendent Cruz clarifies that at least five schools would need to close to help close the district's twenty-two million dollar budget gap. Measure W does not eliminate the need for school consolidation. School consolidation is needed in order to more effectively manage resources and help resolve budgetary issues.

A committee member notes McKinley has a smaller capacity and current enrollment when compared to sites listed as pro-closure candidates. McKinley is added to the pro-closure candidate list based on capacity. Another committee member proposes adding McKinley to the closure candidate list under the criteria of operating cost. It is discussed that the high operating cost at McKinley is due to personnel services needed, which will not go away if the school closes. McKinley has specialized classrooms with restrooms for special education PK that were built for that purpose; there would be a logistical question of where these could be relocated.

There is a brief discussion on the Educare facility at Santee being accessible for the district which is contingent on the lease with the county. Educare enrolls students from all over the county and does not necessarily feed into FMSD schools. The county owned Headstart at Dahl is not accessible to FMSD. Similarly, the preschool facilities next to Stonegate, McKinley, and the preschool next to Kennedy, are not owned by the district, so they could not be used to increase capacity at those sites..

Potential School Consolidation Scenarios (60 minutes) Information/Discussion

Data regarding middle school attrition is presented by Superintendent Cruz. It is noted that the school year 2021-22 is not included in the data due to the school closures during the pandemic.

Based on the data presented, Superintendent Cruz notes that there is not a lot of attrition from 7-8 middle schools. It is also noted that when compared to K-8 schools there is no difference to the attrition rates. There is discussion regarding middle school-age students leaving K-8 schools to go to CCA. It is also noted that the CCA program helps with bringing FMSD students back for 7th and 8th grade. A committee member brings to attention that Shirakawa and Lairon are the top two schools with losing enrollment when looking at the last six years. It is mentioned that

Lairon middle school students have the option to leave for Sylvandale or CCA with the support of transportation. Another committee member notes that at least ten middle school Shirakawa students leave for the CCA program every year. Another committee member brings to attention that 84 6th graders are leaving Shirakawa.

It is discussed that many students will follow their peers to a different middle school. Some years CCA has a bubble where a high number of students attend CCA that came from a particular school. For example, one year Meadows accounted for half the enrollment at CCA. Based on the data, the K-8 schools do not appear to retain middle school students at any higher rate than the middle schools, as there are fluctuations from year to year.

Superintendent Cruz presents the scenario of middle school enrollment with 6th grade and no K-8 using the current school year's enrollment numbers. CCA stays 7-8 due to being at Yerba Buena High School. Under this scenario, Bridges would increase to 783 students with a utilization rate of 100%; Sylvandale would increase to 944 students with a utilization rate 74%. If this year's numbers were used, Bridges would already be less than 100% because there are 75 fewer 5th graders than the current 6th graders.

Superintendent Cruz describes the different scenarios of reconfiguring all current middle schools to 6-8 and keeping either one, two, or three K-8 schools, as presented in the presentation slides. The effects of the PK-5 are also presented should middle schools reconfigure to 6-8. It is noted that the figures presented do not assume any consolidation or closures since no recommendation has been made at this time.

It is noted that Meadows had an increase in capacity due to additional programs such as CCA and charter programs in previous years resulting in current low utilization rate at Meadows. It is brought to attention that the low utilization rate is due to the additions of approximately twelve portables. A committee member proposes Stonegate and Meadows merging due to the proximity and utilization rate. It is clarified that the district will be redrawing boundaries, and all the students from a closed school are unlikely to attend just one school. Families will still have a school of choice; however, parents will need to provide sufficient advance notice of their desire for attendance outside of their attendance boundary so that the district can ensure the schools are appropriately staffed and have sufficient capacity.

A committee member notes the timeline of the community being informed. Superintendent Cruz notes that the goal is for families to be informed of where their students will be attending before the Summer break for the next school year. It is also noted that in the new year enrollment process, families are being given the information that the district is undergoing a school closure/consolidation process so they have as much head's up as possible.

It is noted that Lairon and Los Arboles have been excluded from the scenario data due to either Lairon or Los Arboles being a 6-8 or K-8.

A committee member requests for a scenario for Stonegate and Shirakawa to remain a K-8 program and Windmill to reconfigure to K-6. The committee member proposes keeping all three K-8 programs open due to the needs of the community. A committee member raises that Stonegate became a TK-8 school because parents petitioned the Board. Another committee member proposes leaving two K-8 programs. Another committee member agrees on keeping two K-8 but not three. A committee member proposes having a TK-8.

There is a request to remove the footnote on slide 16 regarding potential rebranding of Lairon, since this is not a recommendation that was a consensus from the committee. The committee agreed.

A committee member brings to attention that McKinley has a \$30 million bond project coming up, the second highest in the district under Criteria 3: Facilities. The committee member brings to attention adding McKinley to the closure candidate list for Criteria 3.

A committee member asks for clarification on transportation needs and the cost and logistics of transporting students. It is noted that putting monetary amounts to transportation costs is difficult at this stage due to the various consolidation scenarios, since it is not known which schools will close.

3. NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING DATE: January 8, 2025, at 6:00 PM

PUBLIC COMMENT (15 minutes)

Jen McEwen, a teacher at Dahl, Vice President of Franklin McKinley Education Association (FMEA), comments on the chart. Some of the criteria are far more important than others, and it is requested that the committee look at more than just the colors on the chart in forming its recommendation.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourns at 8:00 pm.

4899-2064-4617, v. 2

Date of Approval: January 8, 2025

Committee Secretary: Ella Mullenex

Signature of Secretary: 
1/13/2025