Azusa Unified School District

School Reorganization Q & A

Programs

Which elementary school is going to have the arts focus? We are working on programmatic offerings and will communicate once decided.

When will you inform parents of schools' focus and programs? Where will the arts Program, Project Lead The Way, and the Dual Immersion program be? Dalton will continue to have PLTW, and the Dual Immersion program will remain at Hodge and Valleydale. We are working on other programmatic offerings.

Will the ROP Health medical program be at Azusa? Yes

How will sports/arts programs/mariachi programs function in the new MS and HS? The middle school sports program will shift to playing teams from other school districts; the high school sports programs will continue to function similarly. The Arts programming will remain the same, and Mariachi will relocate to Gladstone Middle School.

Will Studio 26 move from Slauson to the new middle school? Yes, that is the plan.

What will happen to students who are in special education for middle school? How many students will be in special ed classes? All middle school students will attend Gladstone Middle School in the 23-24 school year; class sizes will remain as stipulated in the contract.

Is Longfellow the only campus that will offer 1st-5th grade, or are there other campuses that just weren't mentioned on the chart? Longfellow will not serve 1st-5th.

Will our new HS include the International Baccalaureate Program (AHS) and the Medical Pathways/Early College Program (GHS)? Considering kids will need to be bused across the city, will that change the start time for school? Per new state law, 1st period will start at 8:30 am. The plan is to continue to offer IB, Medical Pathway, and Early College Program.

With Longfellow staying open, will Hodge still be getting a preschool? Longfellow will remain open; preschool at Hodge will be determined by available space and state licensing requirements.

Will there be strong GATE programs for students identified as gifted at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels? Each elementary and middle school has a GATE coordinator who coordinates programming. The instructional program is differentiated to

meet students' diverse learning needs. In addition, GATE students are encouraged to take advanced coursework in high school.

It does not seem like you are adding new programs. Why? What about Woodshop? Autoshop? Home Economics? Life skills-banking, daily life skills?
Our middle and high school programming is aligned to college and career pathways. For example, we offer STEM, Automotive, Media Arts, and Health Sciences Pathways.

What is the safety plan for the one middle school and one high school? Each school is required to have a safety plan. The new plans will align with our current safety practices.

Regarding 9th and 10th graders coming from Gladstone High School already recovering from homeschooling during school closures. What will you be doing to provide support and resources to students who have trouble adapting to new settings during the transition? Azusa High School is one of 15 Community High Schools in Los Angeles County and provides many resources to support students' emotional, mental, and social health.

Will there be additional mental health services? Such as counseling or school psychologists? We have hired additional school psychologists and offer many services to support students' emotional, mental, and social health.

Timing

For TK parents, what are our options for kinder next year? Is it open school of choice? I also have another student, so will we prioritize school of choice so siblings can be kept together? We offer an Open Enrollment Process. TK/K parents with siblings will be given priority. For more information, visit https://www.azusa.org/Page/660.

When will Magnolia and Center close?
Magnolia and Center will close in the 2023-2024 school year.

Why don't we move 10th graders from Gladstone to Azusa next year?
We want to ensure that the transition is as effective and successful as possible. Moving only the 9th-grade students next year will provide us with ample opportunity to ensure our programs and facilities are as ready as possible.

Is Ellington closing entirely or just pre-k and kindergarten?
Ellington will not have TK and Kindergarten students in the 2022-2023 school year, and it will close in the 2023-2024 school year.

What benefits are there for keeping your Gladstone students at Gladstone in the 2022-2023 years of school, knowing it will close the following year with teachers possibly being laid off? We want to ensure that the transition is as effective and successful as

possible. Moving only the 9th-grade students next year will provide us with ample opportunity to ensure our programs and facilities are as ready as possible.

School Size & Location

Why leave the Eastside of town without an elementary? We made the best possible decision, knowing that closing schools is not easy.

Will the district provide transportation? How robust? Just from closed school sites?
The District will provide school-to-school transportation. During the 2022-2023 school year, there will be pick-up, and drop-off stops at Ellington, Magnolia, Powell, and Gladstone. During the 2023-2024 school year, We will add stops to include Center, Foothill, and Slauson.

If we start putting class sizes at their actual maximum, won't that increase the spread of covid and increase the likelihood of covid exposure?
We currently have class sizes at their actual maximum, and there is no indication that COVID spread increases in those classes. We will continue to make sure that we follow all of the Los Angeles County Department of Health protocols and guidelines.

As it is, drop off and pick up at most schools is horrible. So how are you going to make it better when you add more students to each school? We are currently working to increase or improve all pick-up and drop-off locations at the remaining elementary sites.

Why are there no elementary schools open on the southern side?
Valleydale Elementary and Murray Elementary are on the southern side of our District.

Will new classrooms be built to fit Gladstone students?
No. Next year all students will fit at Azusa High School. In the 2023-2024 school year, we are also planning to use the Foothill Middle School campus.

Have you thought that the low enrollment is because of the pandemic? What happens when those students need a campus?
Declining enrollment was happening way before the pandemic, and it continues. We have students in our independent studies program which factored into these decisions.

Why are you putting 30+ students in one class?
In the TK-3rd grade, the maximum number of students in one class is 26. Currently, we have many classrooms with 30+ students in 4th-12th grade.

If you are not going bigger in classrooms, where will you be putting the students that are merging? All of our schools are operating below capacity and have empty classrooms available for growth.

We live two blocks away from Ellington. Will we now have to go/ be able to go to Valleydale since that is the next closest school to us? Yes.

Process & Rationale

How was the school reorganization committee put together? Who decided who was going to be a part of the committee? When did the committee first meet? When was the community advised of this? We put the School Reorganization Committee together in the fall of 2020. A message was sent out on October 20, 2020, asking interested parents to be involved and on this committee. We invited all of the parents that showed interest to attend a live meeting where we chose, at random, the 12 parents that would serve on the committee.

What were the deciding factor(s) to eliminate TK and K starting next year vs. the following year? Additionally, what are the plans to communicate this to the existing TK families whose children will go to K next year? The idea was to transition a group of students that would not have to move and minimize the impact.

Why is Magnolia closing when it is a more modernized school than the other schools?
All of the schools that are closing have had some form of modernization.

What factors were taken into consideration when deciding what schools to close. Also, when does school of choice open for the next school year? Many factors over the course of 14 months were taken into consideration. Open Enrollment will open soon; we are re-establishing our school boundaries.

What will the buildings be used for when the schools close?
We anticipate beginning a process to determine what will happen with the empty buildings soon.

Why are the five board members allowed to make decisions for the whole District?
They are officials elected to serve on the Board of Education for this purpose.

For those of us that are blind and cannot go on your website, how are we supposed to be involved in any decisions? Our website is responsive and can be read with a screen reader for the visually impaired.

Magnolia was not part of the initial restructure survey. What changed?
Many factors went into the decision to close schools.

Why is Lee staying open when it is on a fault line?
A study to determine a possible fault line at Lee was conducted, and the results that came back determined that Lee could remain open.

Covina has three high schools, and W. Covina has three high schools. Pomona has 2. Why do we have to go down to 1? Those are much bigger districts than ours. Charter Oak, Glendora, Bassett, and Monrovia, to name a few, only have one high school.

Earlier, you mentioned the 2nd phase of reimagining our district. Can you elaborate on the decision process? Will you continue to include all stakeholders (i.e., parents)?
Yes, we will always push ourselves to be collaborative and transparent.

What was the reasoning behind Powell closing when it was not an original option presented to the community last Fall 2021? How did the Board make this decision after presenting it to the parents and community?
Many factors went into the decision to close schools.

Budget & Facilities

I know from past work experience that your estimates for rebranding the high school are extremely low. For example, mid-quality band uniforms for 150 students run around $40,000. The costs of the fields alone are going to be a significant amount. Where do you plan on getting this money if grants are not available? Will this be taking money away from academic programs and social-emotional supports? No, this will not affect any educational programs.

Latasha mentioned an assessment that will be provided to the Board of Education with a list of the conditions of each school site and the report would include the needs of each site including safety, upgrades, timelines, and costs. When will this report be available to the public? We are working to have this report completed by March.

How do you justify the spending in branding a new mascot for the school when you will be laying off employees? These two items are not connected. Employee layoffs are due to declining enrollment.

Any plans to improve/update Azusa high school pool? As we move into the next phase of our capital facilities, the pool will be part of the conversation.

Will new P.E clothes be provided for all students? Or will we be forced to pay again?
Purchasing PE clothes is not required; students can wear their own clothing that is appropriate for PE. Each school will provide the type/color of clothes required for PE.

How will the sports uniforms come into play? Will they also be paid for and covered in the reconfiguration costs? Many parents have contributed a lot of money towards uniforms. I'm asking for both Gladstone and Azusa students who may be concerned about paying for all new uniforms and equipment in the new colors and logo.

Yes, uniforms costs were included in the rebranding costs.

Why put money into a school then close it in just a year or two?
We know this is difficult, but closing schools is necessary to ensure we are offering the best programs and facilities for our students.

Staffing

To minimize the impact on the workforce are you developing different options or just going to go straight to layoffs?
We will use the options available to school districts undergoing a reorganization of schools. While this does include eliminating positions through a reduction in force/layoff process, the District will also use attrition attributed to resignations and retirements to address the staffing changes we project in the coming years.

MISCELLANEOUS

Do you know that there is a petition that has 3500+ signatures to keep Azusa High as it is?
Yes.

At a Board meeting, it was mentioned by a board member that she would be willing to have another conversation regarding the change of mascot. When is this conversation going to happen and is the community invited? If I misheard what she said, will there be another meeting after tonight and will the community be invited? When will the mascot and colors be finalized? We are currently working on a process for the selection of a mascot and the colors. That will be shared at a public Board Meeting in the near future.

Are you aware of the petition going around to save the Azusa High mascot? Will you take this into consideration? Yes, we are aware. A decision has been made around the mascot and colors.

Are we the only district with dropping enrollment? No. All of the surrounding school districts are facing declining enrollment.

Why is it that the less modernized schools that are attended by board members' children, stay open? Many factors went into the decision to close schools.

What school will children in grade levels TK and Kindergarten go to if Magnolia would have been the closest school? We are working on the boundaries and should have information soon.

How will you process district transfers? Covina Valley is next door to us. My children can easily go to CVUSD which is closer and more advanced with classes and technology or even COVID. AUSD offers rigorous, advanced coursework. We continue to equip our students and facilities with advanced technology. For more information on the transfer process, visit https://www.azusa.org/Page/660.

Why does the Pomona district get to dictate what happens at AUSD? They do not.

Any plans to improve/update Azusa high school pool? As we move into the next phase of our capital facilities, the pool will be part of the conversation.

How are you ensuring you will have enough bus drivers? We are currently hiring bus drivers.

Why would merging the schools require a mascot change? There was much input on the two sides of this topic. Some wanted us to change the name of the high school, the mascot, and the colors. Others wanted us to keep all three. The Board of Education decided to keep the name of the high school, change the name, and leave it up to a process to decide about the colors.

Communication

What is the address for the web page with information on reorganization?
The school reorganization website can be found using this link https://bit.ly/AUSDReOrg or by going to azusa.org, clicking the Board of Education tab, and selecting school reorganization from the menu.

When is the next school reorg meeting? The school reorganization committee will not have any additional meetings. The Board of Education will continue to discuss school reorganization at upcoming Board Meetings. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend these meetings.

Will there be more Town Hall meetings when there are more answers? Yes, we will have additional Town Hall meetings as plans progress.

How will we know what changes are made to the information you shared today? When will things be finalized? How will you share information? As decisions are made and information is available, we will update the school reorganization AUSD website, send emails and app notifications through our blackboard platform. To ensure you receive all communications download the AUSD app and make sure you have an updated email address on file with your school.