

Summary of Listening Session Input

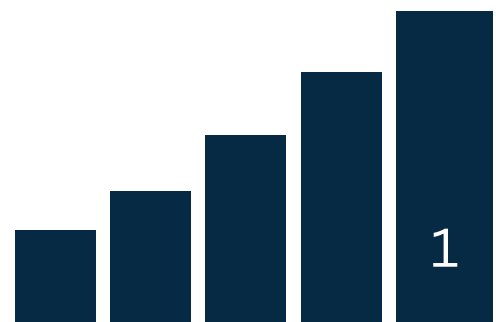


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Background

The Board of Education and the Pacific School District have faced a persistent budget deficit, temporarily covered by one-time state funding following the pandemic. This ongoing financial challenge necessitated implementing strategic measures to ensure the district's sustainability.

Resolution

On January 22, 2025, the Board approved a resolution which includes:

- Staffing Efficiencies: Implementing strategies to optimize staffing levels while maintaining educational quality.
- Reduction of Special Education Contracts: Explore opportunities to reduce the use of outside vendors.
- Utilization of Parcel Tax Funding: Continued use of available parcel tax.
- Enhance Education Programs for Grades 6-8: Focus on improving educational offerings and resources for middle school students.
- Approve Plan 3a:
 - Reconfigure Ocean Shore to a K-5
 - Relocate OSS to Sunset Ridge as a co-location.
 - Retain independence as separate schools
 - Share resources
 - Vallemar K-8 reconfigured to a K-5 (remains in the current location).
 - OSS and Vallemar 6-8 students attend remaining middle schools (Ingrid B. Lacy (IBL) or Cabrillo).

| Listening Sessions



The recent decision by the Board of Education to approve Plan 3A prompted strong reactions from various stakeholders, including parents, staff, and community members.

As a result, the district organized a series of community listening sessions to facilitate open communication and gather feedback starting on January 27, 2025. These sessions were designed to allow people to voice their concerns and ran multiple times throughout the day to accommodate different schedules. The meetings took place in person in the District Boardroom or via Zoom. The 19 sessions, primarily attended by staff, parents, and community members from the affected schools, drew close to 150 participants over the two-week period.

During the sessions, attendees discussed key topics, including the financial challenges driving the changes, the specifics of Board Approved Plan 3A, and potential revenue-generating ideas. The primary goal of these sessions was to listen to the community, understand their concerns, and engage in collaborative problem-solving.

The open dialogue raised various questions and concerns, which were later addressed in a frequently asked questions (FAQs) section on the district's website. Additionally, the staff developed timelines and an implementation plan, formed district-wide transition teams to review logistics and facilities, and held three budget meetings to clarify and address questions related to the budget and enrollment.

By engaging the community through these listening sessions, the district aimed to foster transparency and ensure that all voices were heard as they navigated these challenging transitions. The following themes emerged from the sessions:

| Central Themes



Pause

Despite consensus on addressing the budget deficit, many participants advocated temporarily pausing Plan 3a. They believed such a pause would help alleviate concerns regarding the abrupt changes to two K-8 programs and their potential impact on families, staff, and teachers.

Equity

Community members express concern about the limited availability of smaller, more intimate K-8 middle schools, which are highly valued and considered by participants as essential for some students in this age group.

Additionally, they shared concerns about equitable access to resources, particularly regarding K-8 models, as there are perceived regional disparities, especially for students in the district's north end.

There is also a call for an equity report to ensure fairness and to prevent potential legal issues.

| Definitions

Co-Location:

The term "co-location" was often seen as confusing and perceived to potentially be used as a loophole to avoid conducting an equity study or to bypass the term "closing" a school. Participants felt strongly that this raises concerns about transparency and fosters distrust.

Shared Resources

Participants felt strongly that clarity is needed regarding the term "shared resources" and sought a clear rationale behind this model.

Participants expressed confusion about "co-mingling" or "sharing" students from both schools in one class. There was a strong belief that this verbiage and practice contradict the resolution's "retain independence as separate schools" statement.

Enhanced Programs 6-8

The term "Enhanced Programs 6-8" is unclear, leaving concerns about its impact on IBL, Cabrillo, and the budget.

| Feedback



Co-Location Logistics

Feedback from multiple sessions indicated the perceived need for a collaborative committee with staff from both sites to oversee campus space mapping and identify program design needs and possible student visitation field trips to alleviate fears.

Perceived Rush

The decision-making process was perceived as rushed, with a significant change in urgency between December 11 and January 9. Participants indicated this left families little time to consider the changes, resulting in a feeling of being blindsided.

Traffic and Environmental Studies

Concerns exist about the lack of traffic and environmental studies, especially regarding the impact of increased traffic from co-located schools.

Trust

There is a strong consensus that the community and families felt the decision to co-locate two schools and move 6-8 students to IBL was unexpected. They firmly believed there was insufficient input from the community, families, and staff before the decision was made, which has led to a significant loss of trust.

Additionally, there are questions surrounding the data provided by the demographer and its subsequent use in the decision-making process, which some community members perceive as questionable and inconsistent.

There is a strong call for greater transparency concerning the criteria for selecting schools for consolidation. Community members seek clarity on the decision-making process to ensure that the criteria were applied appropriately and considered the needs of all stakeholders.

Facilities

Concerns about the adequacy of facilities at the co-location site, including space for K-5 students, special education, and anticipated growth at Sunset Ridge.

There were multiple requests for updated maps and documentation to clarify the co-location plan.

| Feedback



After-School Care

There are concerns about the availability and communication regarding after-school programs and the sites impacted by this change.

With the limited options for K-8 programs, the belief is that restricted space in after-school care programs may create an equity and access problem for families.

Parents seek a survey to coordinate space allocation planning.

Mental Health Concerns

Transition-related anxiety, trauma, and the need for counseling are significant concerns shared during the listening sessions.

There is a belief that student needs have been minimized in the decision-making process for reducing access to K-8 schools and the impact on students who have already made multiple transitions due to COVID-19 and their overall well-being with this unexpected transition.

Bond

Participants raised questions about why recently modernized schools are being moved to facilities seen as less adequate.

The mixed message of modernizing facilities and subsequently “closing” them has caused many stakeholders to question fiscal planning and decision-making.

Budget Committee/Subcommittee

Participants on the budget committee shared concerns about inconsistencies in communication following each budget work session. There is agreement that some sites had little to no communication regarding discussions generated during these meetings. They believe the inconsistencies may have led some sites to be far less informed than others and felt a uniform message from the district was missing from these sessions.

Participants from the various budget committees expressed concern that during the budget workshop on January 9, they were surprised by the financial scenarios presented by the subcommittee and corresponding timelines. They raised concerns about a significant increase in the budget deficit from the previous meeting on December 11, leading to questions about what caused this change and an increased sense of urgency to address it.

| Feedback



Communication

Many community members indicated they felt blindsided by the approval of Plan 3a on January 22.

Participants expressed concerns about being blamed for not being more informed after the last board meeting.

While acknowledging the need to address budget concerns, many participants believed more time for public input and discussion was needed to foster a supportive outcome and reduce community division.

Consultants

Participants shared a strong sentiment that the district should reduce its reliance on outside consultants for tasks that are seen as the responsibility of employees at the District Office.

Divided Community

During the meetings, a consensus emerged that the unexpected approval of Plan 3a has created tension between schools, strained relationships among parents and teachers, and even caused conflicts between teachers. It is believed that this situation has disrupted what was previously a cohesive group of staff, families, and community members.

Potential Risk

Participants indicate an increase in community members considering tax exemption waivers due to their disenfranchisement with the decision-making process, which may negatively impact future parcel tax approvals.

It was noted that many parents have indicated they have explored private and charter schools or are considering homeschooling options.

Data

There are concerns regarding the selective use of demographic data and calls for an independent audit to ensure fairness and transparency.

Board Participation at City Council Meetings

Frustration was expressed regarding the perceived absence of Board members at City Council meetings, which is believed to enhance understanding of the district's needs and potentially build support.

| Community Requests



(1) Transition Costs: Provide detailed information about anticipated costs associated with the transition, including moving expenses, substitutes for transition meetings, movers, facility preparation, etc.

(2) Cost Savings from Consolidation: Share detailed information on the savings realized by consolidating programs and co-locating OSS and SSR.

(3) Plans for Vacant Facilities: Outline plans for using vacant facilities resulting from co-location and program reductions.

(4) Strategic Planning and Sustainability: Present detailed strategic planning and sustainability initiatives to prevent further relocations for affected students.

| Community Suggestions



Alternatives:

1. Consider moving Ocean Shore School (K-8) to Sunset Ridge with one CDS code, implementing Ocean Shore-type programs and Sunset Ridge Priorities as a merged site. If necessary, add portables from other sites.
2. Due to Vallemar's location and recent modernization, keep it as the district K-8 program and move Cabrillo 6-8 classes to IBL.
3. Make all schools K-6 and have only a 7-8 option for middle school at IBL.
4. Move Ocean Shore K-8 School to IBL and co-locate on that campus. OSS 6-8 could be dually enrolled in IBL Middle School classes to enhance staffing and reduce costs, with OSS K-5 co-located on the IBL campus.
5. To create more options for K-8, keep both Vallemar and Cabrillo open.
6. Continue the OSS 6-8 programs at IBL with opportunities for 6-8 students to go to SSR/OSS K-5 to continue collaborating with 6-8 and K-5 students.

Revenue Generating:

1. Place the district homeschool program at the vacated site to capture students in other homeschool programs.
2. Use an empty site for a district-wide afterschool program.
3. Consider enhancement programs like Gifted and Talented Education (GATE), Dual Immersion School, and Project-Based Learning to attract new students.
4. Consider merging with the Franklin K-8 district.
5. Use PEF to offset general fund.
6. Advocate for different funding models at the State level.
7. Move OSS to Linda Mar and rent out OSS.
8. Use empty facilities to generate revenue.
9. Advocate with the City of Pacifica regarding increasing housing to increase enrollment.
10. Write more grants to offset costs.

| Conclusion



This report summarizes insights and feedback from listening sessions with stakeholders to inform the Board and staff as they navigate cost-saving decisions. During most of these sessions, it became evident that participants strongly desired to rebuild trust, transparency, and confidence in the district's direction. They expressed considerable faith in the programs offered by the Pacifica School District and valued the unique instructional practices implemented in each school.

Participants acknowledged the urgent need to address budget deficits, with many advocating for a phased approach. They believe this method would provide sufficient time for preparation, adjustment, and decision-making while prioritizing student well-being during transitions. Some district and site staff present shared their understanding of how challenging these decisions have been for families and the community. However, they also voiced concerns that delaying these decisions could lead to long-term fiscal implications. Although challenging, some staff recognized that postponing decisions might not be in the best interest of the district's financial health.

Many teachers from affected schools expressed gratitude for the chance to discuss their logistical needs openly. They stressed the importance of receiving timely answers to support their students and the community better. Staff acknowledged these logistical needs and took steps to provide guidance, documents, and information requested during the sessions whenever feasible.

The listening sessions revealed a spectrum of emotions, including anger, hurt, fear, and frustration, highlighting the difficulties of these decisions. Despite the challenges, there was a strong commitment to finding viable solutions and alternatives. During several sessions, staff, teachers, parents, and community members raised concerns about hurtful remarks made throughout this process. It became apparent that healing these wounds may require time and intentional effort. Some staff and community members suggested restorative conversations to address the hurtful comments made during this time.

Making significant decisions, such as consolidating schools, closing budget deficits, or altering cherished programs, is painful and challenging for everyone involved. Those engaged in these decisions operate with the best intentions and must carefully consider the most suitable way forward. The Pacifica Board and the community face these choices while continuing to strive for the district's fiscal stability.

| Conclusion



District staff expressed their commitment to maintaining transparent and collaborative communication throughout the upcoming transition process. It is hoped that these listening sessions and the subsequent actions based on stakeholder input will help strengthen the valuable relationships discussed in most of the sessions.