

***Planning for Our Future:
Creating the Plan with Our Community***

Superintendent's Evaluation of Ideas

Over the last six months, we have embarked on a process to plan for our future and rethink how to focus on our core mission: educating every child for success. We are doing this work because an independent financial consultant analyzed the RCSD budget and concluded that with declining enrollment, RCSD cannot sustain 16 schools with 7,500 students. Last spring the San Mateo County Office of Education gave us a December 15 deadline to come up with a three-year plan for a \$10 million reduction. As difficult as this work is, we also see it as an opportunity to rethink how we educate our students and how we meet the needs of our community.

I asked the Superintendent's Council, made up of parents and staff, to review a vast amount of financial, enrollment, Schools of Choice/transfer data and financial information that is usually studied only by staff so that I could get fresh thinking on how we might "right-size" the district, and strengthen our district to better meet the needs of RCSD families. When we as educators study this type of information we see it through the lens of laws and regulations that might limit our ability to implement certain ideas and this sometimes limits our ability to think outside the box. I wanted the Council to look at the same information and see if they came up with new solutions -- and they did! Now that that is done, it is my responsibility, with the support of my staff, to sort through the ideas and input, determine what can be implemented, add new ideas that have surfaced through the process, and form a plan that will address the situation at hand.

I have studied the rationales and "pros and cons" submitted by the Council, read more than 400 emails submitted to Board members and me, and reviewed all the additional "pros and cons" submitted by parents, teachers, students and staff. The evaluation of ideas below are based on my review of all community input, as well as my understanding of the legal, financial and logistical realities we face at this time.

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I have divided the ideas into five categories:

- 1. Ideas eliminated**
- 2. Ideas to implement partially or fully for next year (including modifying some ideas based on community input)**
- 3. Ideas to implement in 2020-21 or 2021-22**
- 4. Ideas that need more exploration before considering implementation**
- 5. Ideas to consider in the future once funding is available**

Please note that related ideas have been grouped together.

I used the following ideals as guidelines to sort the ideas into the five categories:

- The idea must be legal (Ed Code, state & local laws, Partner MOU)
- The idea must be realistic to implement given staff capacity and community support
- The idea should promote racially and socioeconomically balanced schools and not further segregate our students
- The idea should save money or generate new revenue
- The idea should enable our progress toward innovation & excellences
- The idea will not cause loss of students, which would exacerbate financial difficulty
- The idea will not cause loss of grant dollars
- The changes will not contribute to inequity
- The changes will not not lead to academic decline

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I want to acknowledge very directly that the revised ideas below are still not yet a fully-formed plan with a complete analysis, but they are getting closer to what is likely to be included in my recommendations to the board on November 14. We will take this revised list of ideas back to the Board on November 1 and will listen to testimony from the community, and after hearing input, we will analyze the costs and impacts, and develop a proposed plan that the board will discuss and review on November 14. After that meeting we will make any changes requested by the board, and the board will vote on a final plan on November 28.

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Please note that in some cases related ideas have been grouped together in the evaluation below.

Ideas eliminated

- Close Clifford School and rezone existing students. (idea #14). Rezone existing students, close K-8 program, and rent campus. Clifford would no longer be a neighborhood boundary school. (Vacating campus saves \$1.26m/year) (idea #15) Clifford campus could be rented to a neighboring district or used to house 3 charters (Part of idea #15)

Superintendent's Response: Although I have concluded that this is not a feasible idea to implement, it is important to understand that the sub-committee that suggested this did so based on an analysis of enrollment numbers and requests for transfer out of Clifford by incoming kindergarten families. Further, they believe that putting all three charter schools on one campus would be in the best interest of the district and Clifford is a campus that had the physical space to do so. While I acknowledge the thorough analysis, these are the reasons that I do not believe this idea is implementable at this time:

- Clifford is one of the most racially diverse schools in the district, and we want to maintain that diversity. (43% Latino, 45% White, 3% Asian, 6% two or more races, 1.5% Pacific Islander, 1.4% Filipino)
- While I agree that it is ideal to place all three charter schools on one campus, Clifford is not the best location.
 - Most of the families attending the charter schools live east of El Camino Real, and while we want them to choose RCSD, we also feel a responsibility toward making decisions that are in the best interest of the students who live within our boundaries. Requiring students to travel across town to attend school is not the right thing to do.

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- Taft could be used to house 3 charters (Part of idea #15)

Superintendent's Response: I agree with trying to find a location where all three charter schools can fit on one campus, but I have received several other ideas on ways to utilize the Taft campus that I think would better serve the district. I will continue to study those other ideas and plan to detail those ideas in the proposal that comes to the Board on 11/14.

- Increase facility rentals--charters. (#5)

Superintendent's Response: We are limited by law in how much we can charge charter schools. This idea is not implementable.

- The summer school program should be closed. (#6)

Superintendent's Response: Eliminating summer school will lead to academic decline. We have data that demonstrates that summer school has been highly effective at lifting the academic performance of struggling students. We will seek funding from partner organizations to operate summer school.

- RCSD is no longer a district of choice - neighborhood schools and Schools of Choice. Schools of Choice are Immersion schools, North Star and Orion. (e.g. the Schools of Choice programs will only be language immersion, North Star and Orion). (Part of Idea #8A)

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Superintendent's Response: By law, we cannot eliminate the ability of parents to request transfers between schools. Additionally, school choice has been a strong part of our culture in Redwood City and it is something our community values.

- Use extra space [from changing Roosevelt to a K-5) to accommodate rezoned John Gill/Clifford/Selby students. (Part of Idea #11)

Superintendent's Response: Since I am not recommending changing to a K-5, 6-8 configuration for the 2019-20 school year or rezoning Clifford, this idea will not be implemented at this time.

- Find a renewable energy source for a lower cost and not increase the overall monthly energy bill. (idea #4)

Superintendent's Response: This is a great idea, and in fact we are already implementing renewable energy strategies through our bond reconstruction.

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Ideas to implement partially or fully for next year (includes modification of idea based on community input)

- Cut more than \$4 million to allow bona fide programs to be offered. (idea #1) **Implement as recommended.**

Superintendent's Response: Comments submitted by the community showed confusion as to the purpose of this idea from the budget subcommittee. The intent of this idea was to suggest cutting more in 2019-20, rather than spreading the cuts over three years. This was to free up funds to strengthen other programs. The idea of cutting more than the minimum necessary in order to offer more robust programming to our students is sound, and I agree we should attempt to make deeper cuts than \$4 million in the first year. This will be my goal as I review the financial analysis for the ideas that follow.

- Close/merge 4-6 school sites. (idea #2) **Implement with modifications.**

Superintendent's Response: I agree that we need to close or merge schools to save more money. I recommend closing school sites in 2019-20, and depending on further study, possibly closing more in Year 2 or Year 3.

- Consolidate charter schools on one campus (idea #9A) Location(s) for Charters: Option 1: Place charters at Taft and rezone all existing neighborhood boundary students. Taft would no longer be a school with a neighborhood boundary. Move ALL charters to Taft with the addition of some portables. Option 2: Move ALL charter schools to Clifford campus with the addition of portables. (#9B) **Implement with modifications**

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Superintendent's Response: If possible, I agree that it would be best to place all charter schools on one campus, but I do not believe that Taft or Clifford would be the most appropriate locations. Over the next week we are doing further analysis that will help me to determine whether we can place all three charter schools at one location, and if so, which school site would be the most appropriate.

- Move Orion to John Gill campus and house with Mandarin Immersion. Keep Orion as a School of Choice (idea #13). **Implement with modifications.**

Superintendent's Response: There is strong support for this idea, based on the comments from the community and I recommend moving forward with implementation of moving the Parent Participation program at Orion to the John Gill campus and sharing the site with Mandarin Immersion for the 2019-20 school year. I have started conversations with Cabinet to implement this idea and we have determined that current John Gill students would have 1st priority to stay at John Gill and be part of Parent Participation (Orion) program. They can also attend Clifford or Roosevelt schools.

- Combine both Spanish Immersion programs (Adelante, Selby Lane) and house at Selby Lane. Keep Mandarin Immersion at John Gill to allow it time to grow. In the future, *possibly* move Mandarin Immersion program to join Spanish Immersion at Selby Lane. Spanish immersion middle school program left for discussion. Merge Adelante program with Selby Immersion program on Selby school site. Impact on Selby Lane: Rezone existing English program students. Selby campus would house Adelante/Selby Spanish K-5 immersion program with room to grow. Selby would no longer be a neighborhood boundary school. Impact on Kennedy: Maintain 6-8 Spanish immersion program at Kennedy. (idea #10) All immersion K-5s go to one middle school (not split between the three). (Part of idea #8A) **Implement with modifications.**

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Superintendent's Response: I recommend implementing the merging of Adelante and Selby Lane on the Selby Lane campus for the 2019-20 school year. I also agree with maintaining the 6-8 Immersion program at Kennedy. My Cabinet and I have met to start discussions about the best plan to transition out the non-immersion program students from Selby Lane School to other schools for the 2019-20 school year.

- Maintain K-5 PBL focus at Roosevelt, expand geographic enrollment boundary to grow student body. (Part of Idea #11) **Implement with modifications.**

Superintendent's Response: Roosevelt has become increasingly popular over the last few years. I do not recommend moving the 6-8 from Roosevelt for the 2019-20 school year, but I agree that expanding the geographic boundary to feed more students to Roosevelt would make the program even stronger by allowing for more classrooms at each grade level. The November 14 recommendations will include ideas for feeding more students to Roosevelt.

- K-5 have to be rich and have hooks for all. **Implement as recommended.**

Superintendent's Response: Yes, I agree that we need strong programs and compelling hooks in order to attract new families to our district. As we move forward with an implementation plan, ensuring a strong “hook” for each school will be a top priority.

- Open Transitional Kindergarten classrooms to replace the ones at closed schools (Part of Idea #15)

Superintendent's Response: Yes, we need to replace TK classrooms at any schools affected.

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Ideas to Phase in during 2020 or 2020-21

- Move the District Office and lease out Bradford St./Close the District Office and move District Office to function out of MIT campus. Rent District Office. (ideas #3A and #3B) **Implement with modifications.**

Superintendent's Response: I agree with the recommendation to move the District and lease out this building, if it is legally possible, which still needs to be determined. The Bradford Street building was obtained through a land trade with the City of Redwood City, and the City paid for the construction of the building as part of the agreement. This arrangement was made with certain conditions imposed on the use of the land, and we need to do some research and analyze the financial implications before we can move forward with this idea. I have already reached out to our legal counsel to start the exploration process. We need to determine which school site to utilize for the district office if we are able to move forward with this plan.

- North Star Academy. Expand North Star Academy to support more students in grades 3-8, utilizing more space in the MIT building. 1. North Star Academy: Leave at existing campus, and offer the *option* to grow/expand into the existing MIT building. (Idea #12) **Implement with modifications.**

Superintendent's Response: We have heard loud and clear from the community concerns about the impact of North Star Academy on the other schools. These concerns were expressed around three areas: disruption to other schools at the 3rd grade level, perception of elitism, and access to Bayside students. At the same time, North Star is one of our most popular programs, and contrary to perception, it is also one of the most ethnically diverse schools in the district. (48% white; 19% Latino, 18% Asian, 11% 2 or more races, 2% Filipino, 1% African American) I do not believe that the idea as stated above can be implemented, but several intriguing ideas have been raised by the community throughout this process on how we might solve some of the

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challenges. I will be analyzing and exploring a modification of this ideas to share in the recommendation with the board.

- Existing Adelante campus could be rented. (Vacating campus saves \$910k/year). (Part of ideas #10 and #15)

Superintendent's Response: Yes, if Adelante moves to the Selby Lane campus, we will need to determine how to maximize potential revenue from the Adelante campus.

- Orion campus can be rented. (Vacating campus saves \$736k/year) (Part of idea #13) Orion campus could be rented to a private preschool/day care (Part of idea #15)

Superintendent's Response: Yes, if Orion moves to the John Gill campus, we will need to determine how to maximize potential revenue from the Orion campus.

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Ideas that need more exploration before considering implementation

- Make all neighborhood schools K-5 and 6-8 (idea #7)/2-3 middle school options (Bayside, Hillside and North Star), with North Star as a middle school (part of idea #8A). One Bayside middle school at Hoover in order to expand choices to families so that students can have opportunity for electives that otherwise they couldn't have. (idea #8B) Consolidate Garfield, Taft, Fair Oaks and Hoover students at two locations for elementary (K-5). Create one middle school at Taft for grades 6-8 (idea #8C). Middle Schools (MIT to move campus, 6-8 reduction at schools) (idea #8D). Open STEAM Middle School at Hoover. (Part of idea #9B) Rezone Roosevelt 6-8 students to Kennedy or new STEAM middle school. Close PBL Middle School program. (Part of idea #11)

Superintendent's Response: Several sub-committees from the Superintendent's Council submitted variations of the changes to our middle school program, and these various ideas need to be considered together. I see both pros and cons in changing to a K-5, 6-8 configuration so that we can offer 2-3 strong middle school programs in multiple geographic locations. We received MANY comments on both supporting and opposing these ideas. Many community members brought up the possibility that offering a Bayside middle school will increase segregation in our community. Others brought up the possibility of significant loss of enrollment from families who are very happy with the K-8 configuration of their current school. These are serious concerns that deserve further exploration before we can implement. In discussing both these ideas with staff, it became apparent that we need to do much deeper exploration and engagement with the community around middle school preferences before this idea could be implemented. I recommend formation of a committee to study these suggestions in detail so that we can determine what is best for our community.

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- Full -Day Kindergarten. Expand all Kindergarten programs to be full day. (ideas #16 and #17A)

Superintendent's Response: This idea, as many pointed out, will not necessarily save money in the short term, but may bring in more students if parents of young children are seeking all day kindergarten. It may also result in stronger academic performance. I am interested in exploring this idea further, but it needs more input from the community, and also would require negotiation with the teachers' union. It is not an idea that can be implemented immediately, but warrants further study.

- District-wide pre-school: Sliding payment scale, Grants, Interns/students (idea #18)

Superintendent's Response: This is another idea that will not necessarily save money in the short term, but could generate revenue through tuition. In addition, families enrolled in pre-school will be more likely to remain in the district when they reach TK or K.

- Expand After School Care. Expand after school care options at all schools for working parents: Sliding scale cost (Idea #19)

Superintendent's Response: Again, this may cost money to set up, but may allow us to more effectively recruit students whose parents work and need a longer school day.

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Ideas to consider in the future once funding is available

17A: [Engaging Hook] equitably across the district. This doesn't mean all schools will be the same, but all will provide both the basics and interesting and engaging hooks.

- Music programs
- Art programs
- SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) at each school site
- Minutes of instruction
- Before/after school programming
- Longer Kindergarten day
- Core curriculum as district/state required
- PreK for all
- Grant writer for district
- Increasing RCEF and parcel tax opportunities
- Get volunteer coordinator
- Regardless of program: we need to have similar rates of English proficiency and reclassification (Bilingual example)

17B: Consistent and Equitable enrichment during school day

20: Music and art programs at every school; District-wide curriculum or use outside contract (for art), Instruments accessible to all middle school students (idea #20)

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21: Create a maker space at each school site and Makers Fair

- Part of STEAM
- Teachers collaboration (teachers & students)
- Social/emotional development
- Fieldtrip - San Mateo Fairground Maker Fair in May

22: Social/Emotional support at each site

- District-wide program
- Specialist at each site or shared specialist
- Grant writing

23: Gardens at each school.

24: Highlight District strengths

- Working with realtors
- Great Schools ratings increase -- campaigns at local school level
- Individual school websites must be improved
- Customer centric
- Celebrate growth
- Market to whole community - all community invested in student learning/success
- Spotlight former students
- Marketing visuals (where kids are going for college)
- Hooks to attract students