



To: Oroville Union High School District Board of Trustees
From: Corey Willenberg, Ed.D, Superintendent
Date: April 3, 2017
Subject: Information Only-Possible Re-configuration of OUHSD Comprehensive High Schools

OUHSD does some things very well, they are:

- High graduation rate
- Smaller class sizes compared to other districts
- Offer a variety of AP and Honors courses
- Offer a comprehensive Career Technical Education program
- Provide varied opportunities to participate in athletics and extra-curricular activities
- Award winning band and extra-curricular programs (FFA, Mock Trial, Academic Decathlon, etc.)
- 80% of our 10th grade students scored at or above standard on the biology State assessment
- Offering credit recovery and intervention opportunities for students
- Offering a consultation period for students to receive extra assistance from their teachers
- Providing weekly collaboration period for teachers
- Maintaining our facilities
- Providing professional development
- Having a balanced budget

As the Board and staff review our data, there are some areas for concern:

- Continued declining enrollment
- Many 9th graders not being prepared academically or socially for high school
- Low enrollment in AP, EL and special education courses
- Low number of students participating in athletics and extra-curricular activities
- Inequality of AP/honors course offerings (AP Bio only at OHS, Honors Chemistry only at LP, etc.)
- Losing 9th grade students to charter schools and neighboring districts
- Suspension rate is very high especially with 9th and 10th graders
- Expulsion rate is very high especially with 9th and 10th graders
- Chronic absenteeism is very high especially with 9th and 10th graders
- 8% of our 11th grade students scored at or above standard on the math State assessment
- 48% of our 11th grade students scored at or above standard on the ELA State assessment
- 21.35% of our students qualify to attend a CSU or UC as freshmen
- Unknown future state academic indicators
- Lack of parental involvement
- Businesses not being able to support two schools (2 football programs, 2 Safe Grad Nights, etc.)

The Board has been concerned for some time about the number of students leaving OUHSD. Some of the reasons given by parents for attending another high school are:

- Lack of flexibility in course sequence
- Parents work in Chico, Paradise, etc.
- Ability to take college courses while taking high school courses
- Athletic program
- Transportation issues (Bangor to Gridley, Concow to Paradise)
- Lack of an online program
- Lack of spots in independent study
- Small school
- Academic Performance

The Board directed the Superintendent to provide information on the possibility of changing grade configurations of both comprehensive high schools beginning with the 2018-2019 school year. Many community members and business people have talked to Board members and district staff about the benefits of having one high school in town that the community can support.

Reasons reconfiguration of OUHSD makes sense:

- Create schools that graduate students who are college and career ready
- Design an educational program that gives students choice and flexibility (ability to offer AP or honors courses in more than one period, possibility to add more CTE courses, like medical, etc.)
- Provide a support system for incoming 9th graders to help them learn how to be successful high school students.
- Create a smaller learning environment for freshmen
- Provide a closed campus for freshmen
- Possibility to reduce class sizes
- Possibility to offer credit recovery during the school day
- Possibility to increase parental involvement
- Create larger departments that will allow for better collaboration
- Unify curriculum district-wide by grade level
- Reduce duplication of services
- Reduce the number of walk-on coaches
- Create an educational program that is equitable for all grade levels
- Provide more AP/Dual Enrollment/Honors opportunities for all students
- Bring the community together around one school
- Create schools where students feel a sense of connection to multiple adults
- Create schools with multiple systems of coordinated support for all students
- Create schools that parents want their kids to attend
- Create schools that will attract business people to live in the community

In 2009, OUHSD studied combining the schools. The proposal at that time was to redesign both comprehensive schools and create a 9-10 school and a 11-12 school. That design would create many difficulties with master scheduling.

With the focus being on what is good for children, it would make sense to create a 9th grade program that would focus on the unique needs of young adolescents. That program could be on a single campus with teachers specifically targeted to work with ninth graders. Research shows that success (or lack thereof) in the ninth grade year is a predictor of students graduating from high school. For 2018-2019, OUHSD is projecting an enrollment of 573 ninth graders.

For 2018-2019, OUHSD is projecting an enrollment of 570 tenth graders, 481 eleventh graders and 490 twelfth graders for a total of 1,541 students. A school of this size would provide an opportunity to offer multiple sections of AP courses, add Career and Technical Education pathways, and add a strong academic pathway for students planning to attend a university right out of high school. A key to a redesign in the 10th-12th grade program would be to develop a bell schedule that allows students flexibility in scheduling while also providing opportunities for teachers to collaborate regularly.

Some areas that would need to be addressed if both schools were to be reconfigured:

- Staffing
- Transportation
- Freshmen athletics
- Remediation and credit recovery

The next step is to seek input from all stakeholder groups. Once stakeholders have provided input to the Board, the Board can choose to move forward with an action item at a future Board meeting.

The Board has scheduled a Public Hearing on this topic on Tuesday, April 25, 2017, at Prospect High School at 6:30 p.m.