



Public Boundary Meetings Notes

TRANSPORTATION

General

Q. How many students does TUSD transport each day? What are the ages of those students? What is the performance rate (how many students arrive at their intended destination)?

- TUSD transports between 10,000 – 11,000 students per day.
- Students range in age from pre school to high school.

Q. How will my child (dren) be transported to the new school?

- K-8 students who live a specified distance from the new school will be transported on yellow school buses from bus stops in the neighborhood. Many high school students use SunTran passes from their neighborhood to the school. In special circumstances we may contract the transportation to a private carrier.

Q. How will my child (dren) know how to get on the correct bus?

- About two weeks before school starts parents will receive a letter with their bus stop information. Buses have magnetic numbers on the outside indicating the route number. Monitors assist children with boarding at school and Transportation Supervisors help support the transfer sites.

Q. Will my child (dren) be safe getting on and of the school busses?

- Loading and unloading areas at schools are well monitored by school personnel. Kindergarten students are issued lanyards with identification information that helps the bus driver, teacher and monitor in getting them to the correct neighborhood stop in the afternoon. Kindergarteners sit in the front of the bus and have specific pick-up and drop-off procedures for each student. Buses are equipped with cameras which are useful in identifying students and monitoring unsafe behavior.

Q. Will my child (dren) be safe on the school bus?

- School buses have an excellent safety record. All buses are equipped with cameras and radios. Drivers undergo a thorough new hire screening, extensive training, periodic refresher training and are subject to random drug testing.

Q. Will there be enough monitors to supervise the transportation of students in their new schools?

- Not every bus has a monitor. Monitors are assigned to exceptional education routes when required by a student's IEP (Individual Education Plan). Monitors on regular education routes are assigned based on individual situations.

Q. How will parents who do not have transportation get to the new schools for PTO meetings, Parent Teacher Conferences, Student Concerts, Holiday and other School Activities, or to pickup sick children, etc..?

- TUSD does not provide parent transportation to school events. However, support for parents needing transportation will be addressed at individual schools, by parent representatives. Check with your child(ren)'s school.

Q. What school choices will TUSD provide transportation?

- Transportation will be provided in accordance with district policy: Any k-5 or K-8 student more than 1.5 miles from the school is bused, any 6-8 student outside 2.5 miles is bused and any student that does not have a safe walk path is bused. Parents with questions can call 225-4800 about transportation options.

Q. Will my child (ren) have to wait for long periods of time on buses that are not air conditioned?

- Approximately two-thirds of TUSD's buses are air conditioned therefore some students will be riding on buses without air conditioning. The district is working to replace the older buses without AC by ensuring that all new buses purchased will have air conditioning.

Q. What is the distance before TUSD provides transportation for students to the new school? Is it appropriate for a kindergarten student to walk 1.5 miles?

- 1.5 miles for k-5 and K-8 schools; 2.5 miles for middle and high schools. Please contact TUSD transportation for other arrangements. TUSD will try to accommodate students whenever possible.

Q. When will students find out if they are eligible to be transported to their schools? Where will TUSD place bus stops? Will I have this information in time to process my open enrollment application?

- Two weeks before school starts, all parents whether or not they are in walking distance of the school will be mailed a letter indicating transportation options, including bus stops and safe walking paths. Bus stops will be established in the neighborhoods according to the new adopted boundaries.

January 22, 2013, Menlo Park

(see General)

January 23, 2013, Howenstine

Q. Does TUSD provide transportation for students who attend Howenstine High School?

- Yes. IEP Students as well as Magnet School Students are provided transportation. All Howenstine students are either Magnet or Open Enrollment. Transportation is provided for students who live more than 2 ½ miles from the school.

January 24, 2013, Corbett

Q. Will transportation be provided to the new school? (Wilmot is a dangerous crossing.)

- Safe walk paths are provided for student travel. TUSD will also ascertain whether crossing guards will be needed for the new walk paths. Hawk lights (pedestrian crossing lights) will also be requested if appropriate after school safety has studied the intersection. If students live more than 1.5 miles from their new Elementary or K-8 or 2.5 miles from their new Middle or High School; transportation will be provided. [Note: A crossing light is already at Wilmot and 29th.]

Q. Is there a mandate for traffic lights to be added at school crossing intersections?

- No, there needs to be at least a crossing guard and a designated cross-walk.

Q. I live 6.6 miles from the new school. Will my child have to use the City Bus to get to school?

- Middle School students are transported by a yellow school bus. Only High School students use City transit busses.

Q. What are the start times for the new schools including pre-schools? (This information is needed in order to figure out transportation, drop off and pick up times for working parents.)

- Not decided yet.

January 26, 2013, Townsend

Q. How do parents know if bus drivers will pick up children who are not scheduled for that bus route?

- Drivers are given routes and stops. At least two weeks before the start of school, a letter will be sent to all parents who have enrolled students to let them know what the bus stop location and pick up time.

January 28, 2013, Wakefield

Q. What if students want to attend a K-5 and then 6-8, instead of a K-8?

- Those students will be given preference to go to Van Buskirk for K-5 for one year. All students in the area are in the Utterback attendance area so they automatically may attend Utterback; transportation will be provided.

January 30, 2013 Carson

Q. Will there be a bus to Secrist for Carson students?

- Yes.

Q. Can we add more busses to the route to cut down on the 45 minute or longer rides for students?

- TUSD cannot guarantee more busses or shorter rides than those in place at this time.

Q. How can parents decide whether or not to keep their children in TUSD when they do not yet know how their children will get to school?

- There will be a bus from Carson to Secrist.
- Guidelines dictate a bus stop every half mile.
- Stops cannot be designated prior to the completion of the enrollment process and the development of routes to serve the enrolled students.

Q. Will Corbett GATE students be transported?

- GATE students are eligible for transportation if they live more than walking distance from the school or if there are no safe walk paths.

OPEN ENROLLMENT/ENROLLMENT

General

Q. Did Open Enrollment end December 31, 2013?

- Open Enrollment was extended to January 31, 2013.

Q. When do parents need to apply for open enrollment?

- You do not have to apply for open enrollment to attend the receiving schools. If you don't want to attend your designated receiving school, then you must apply for open enrollment by January 31, 2013.

Q. How can parents choose schools prior to final boundary decisions? How can parents choose schools when decisions about Principals, Teachers, and Programs have yet to be made?

- Parents can apply to any school, year-round through open enrollment process and their child will be placed in the preferred school if space is available. Parents should apply to any school they may be interested in and if the situation changes they can withdraw the application at any time.

January 22, 2013 Menlo Park

Comment. TUSD should bring Open Enrollment Staff to the closing schools.

Q. When will parents and students be able to tour the new school and speak with the Principal, staff and students?

- This can be done at any time. Please call the school to schedule.

Q. Please clarify student enrollment choices in the Greasewood area.

- Done at the meeting.

January 23, 2013, Howenstine

Q. How much have Howenstine enrollment numbers fluctuated over the last 5 years?

- Prior to closure for poor academic performance, the enrollment fluctuated between 250-270 students. Since the school reopened, student population has been between 140 and 150.

January 24, 2013, Corbett

Q. Will students from the closed schools go to Dietz?

- Dietz isn't big enough to be a neighborhood K-8 school for the whole Carson Area. Students outside the Dietz Area who wish to attend Dietz may seek attendance through open enrollment.

Q. How many students will TUSD loose to Charter Schools?

- Carson Middle School will probably loose the most students; 20-25 are estimated.

Q. Does TUSD anticipate growth to extent that closed schools will have to be reopened?

- Current growth projections for the Tucson Metropolitan region do not indicate growth to the extent to warrant opening schools, with the exception of Lyons Elementary School and Hohokam Middle which are in areas where future housing developments are probable after ten years.

Q. What will go into the vacant schools?

- There are no decisions in this regard yet, so TUSD's first priority will be to secure the schools. Under the current zoning, only uses such as low-density residential, charter schools, churches, or community centers are allowed; all other uses would require zoning changes.

Q. If parents have already open enrolled their child (ren) at an existing school that is closing do they have to reapply for open enrollment?

- No, not if that student will be going to the receiving school(s).

Q. Ford Elementary School is already so crowded, parking lots, halls, commons spaces, how can more students be added to that school?

- We have worked with the principal to develop an approach so they can accept all of the new students. We will also be making some improvements to the school.

Q. Will students previously grandfathered into Ford still be able to attend that school if new students are moved to Ford from the closed schools? What is the 3-year grandfather policy for students who go to Ford Elementary?

- If students are attending Ford now, they may continue in that school until they graduate (no 3-year limit).

PROGRAMS/ IEPs

General

Q. Will special needs programs be available at the new school?

- Self Contained Special Education Programs will be moved at as a unit to the new schools; other Exceptional Education students will go to the home school or the closest school with a program to meet their needs.

Q. What will happen to students with an IEP? Will there be a delay in the teaching program?

Will there be teachers at the new school who will know how to implement the IEPs?

- A student's IEP must be followed wherever the student attends school.
- If attending a new school, discuss your child's IEP with the new school Principal.

Q. Why can't GATE curriculum be expanded in some form to benefit all students? The district must raise expectations. Will GATE staff still be kept in place? We don't want to lose GATE.

- TUSD has a form of GATE programs in all schools. By consolidating schools there is a greater opportunity for pull-out GATE programs to increase the teacher time at each school.

January 22, 2013 Menlo Park

Q. When will parents know what schools will have what programs? (PACE, GATE, etc.)?

- That information will be available in March.

January 23, 2013, Howenstine

Comment. Howenstine provides appropriate programming, small and safe setting, integration and mainstreaming with general population students in a calmer setting.

Q. Howenstine's small school environment is good for students with IEPs. What other TUSD environment is there for students who are easily overwhelmed?

- All comprehensive high schools are set up to meet the needs of students with IEPs.
- TUSD is evaluating options for students who need a smaller high school environment.

K-8 SCHOOLS/ K-12 Schools

General

Q. How did TUSD decide to configure the schools?

- It made the most sense to minimize transitions at the elementary school level by creating K-8s whenever possible. Students in K-8s perform better and retain students in the 5th-to-6th transition.

Q. Will boundaries change again when K-8 schools are created?

- Probably not. But the Boundary Committee will determine the proposed boundaries and the TUSD Board and ultimately the court will approve the final boundaries.

January 22, 2013 Menlo Park

Q. Why can't Menlo Park be converted to a K-8 School?

- Menlo Park is too small to be a K-8 program—its capacity is only 375 (525 with portables) and a K-8 should be able to hold at least 450 students without portables; preferably over 620 students.

Q. Why can't the 6, 7 and 8 grade students at Maxwell remain at Maxwell K-8 school? Moving them for one year could harm their academic and social progress.

- Forming a K-8 school by building one grade at a time allows the school to develop programs and hire teachers that are certified for, and interested in, that program.

January 23, 2013, Howenstine

Q. Can Howenstine be converted to a K-12 school so that it can receive more students?

- Even if Howenstine was filled to capacity it would not break even financially because it would not have enough students to cost-effectively offer the range of services that the students need.

DISPOSITION

General

Q. How much will it cost TUSD to ready closed buildings for sale or lease?

- If there is an acceptable sale or lease agreement prior to closing, TUSD will not have to secure the school and will therefore not have costs due to improvements. Otherwise, the cost is about \$50,000 to secure a school.

Q. Will school grounds be open to the public after closure of the building?

- Yes. TUSD would like to have the community use the grounds so that they are not left vacant.

Q. What happened to the Ft. Lowell school site when it was closed?

- The lessee was not maintaining the building and grounds properly. TUSD terminated the lease and has cleaned up the site and better secured the building.

Q. Where can information be found regarding the status of closed school sites?

- Please link to <http://www.tusd1.org/contents/distinfo/schoolclosures.asp> or contact TUSD Planning Services at 225-4949.

January 30, 2013, Carson

Q. Reynolds School was previously closed, now Carson. Will I have to worry about gang activity and vandalism from two closed school sites in my neighborhood?

- TUSD is developing better system to secure the closed buildings to avoid the vandalism that has occurred in the past. Buildings will be secured quickly after closure, copper wire and other valuable materials will be immediately stripped from the building. The grounds will remain open for public use which will help to monitor the property.

Q. Are police trainings being conducted at Reynolds?

- Yes. The City of Tucson Police Department has an agreement with TUSD to use Reynolds as a training site. TUSD allowed this use because of the benefit of having additional police presence in the area.

COMPETITION

General

Q. Why should I keep my children in TUSD?

- Schools were consolidating to improve services to students.
- Visit the TUSD schools; look at the performance and the services they provide compared to your other options.

Q. What are you doing to sell parents on the benefits of keeping their children in TUSD?

- The best way to improve public perception is to show that TUSD student academic achievement record has and continues to improve. Closing schools allows TUSD to continue to move funds to support student achievement in spite of the budget deficit. In the last two years the number of D schools has been cut in half and we've increased the number of B schools.

Comment. We like Public Schools because we understand that charter schools cannot often provide the special programs and services our children need such as IEPs. In fact some Charter Schools would not even accept our children if they have special needs.

Q. When will TUSD realize that students come first? In this round of closings, they seem to realize that children come first.

- Everyone working on the School Master plan is working hard to minimize the reduction of resource that support the classroom and student achievement. Closing Schools is difficult, but if school closures had not been considered other harsh measures would have been put on the table such as increasing class sizes and reducing or eliminating programs.

Q. If you have limited resources at least give everyone more options, more choices?

- TUSD is trying to do just that. This is why K-8s, with K-5 and 6-8 options, are being considered.

January 22, 2013 Menlo Park

Q. Why should I keep my child in TUSD?

- We are combining Brichta and Menlo Park together in a new facility that will provide a fuller range of services to students. The two schools together should be a B school.

January 24, 2013, Corbett

Q. Every 3 years some school closes; first the elementary school, now the middle school. Is my high school next?

- We are looking at ways to keep Santa Rita High School open, such as leasing space to other scholastic and training programs.

January 30, 2013, Carson

Q. My child has had to move to a different school, every four or five year? Will these school closures continue to occur?

- Periodically TUSD will need to evaluate schools to determine if they are drawing resources from other schools and if closures are an option to improve services.

Comment. It doesn't seem to matter is parents keep students in TUSD.

- Secrist Principal assured parents that she wanted their children and that the teachers and students in her school were looking for to having them attend, as more children would ultimately create a better learning environment.

Comment: Parent stated that she had heard Secrist was a good school from her daughter's friends and girl scout troupe. She will stay in TUSD.

TUSD SCHOOL CONSOLIDATIONS: BUDGET SAVINGS**General**

Q. Will TUSD really save money when closing schools if they have to increase transportation costs to transport students from the closed schools to the new schools and they have to maintain the closed schools? Wouldn't TUSD save on transportation spending if most students could walk to their schools?

- The increased cost of transportation, moving, securing and maintaining were included in the estimated savings of the closure. Even considering these costs TUSD will save \$4.2 million the first year and over \$5 million annually after that.
- Post closure costs should be dramatically reduced in this round of closures due to the method of securing the buildings including removal of copper wiring, hardware and doors, and shutting off all heating and cooling.

Q. Will the pending lawsuit against the Arizona State Legislature regarding adequate funding for Arizona Schools generate more dollars for TUSD?

- It has been estimated by the Finance Officer that this will generate less than \$500,000.

Q. Is there information available about TUSD program cuts and staff reductions needed to close the \$17 million deficit?

- Some decisions were made at the January 29 Board meeting. Specifics are available at <http://www.tusd1.org/contents/govboard/gbpacket01-29-13.html> for item #7.

Q. Should parents contact the TUSD governing board to prevent school closures?

- Although subject to court approval, the decision on closures has been made by the Board. You should contact the Board regarding the boundaries and transition.

Q. Are other urban schools in the Tucson Metropolitan area facing the same budget issues?

- Not to the same extent—they have experienced the same reductions in State funding but many of them have overrides to increase their funding.

Q. With Arizona already at the bottom in the country in funding levels per child, how can TUSD provide high quality education to students in light of its own funding issues?

- Although this is not an easy problem to solve this is exactly the question posed in the development of the School Master Plan. That Plan addressed the goal of improved student achievement through a wide variety of options. (Please see <http://www.tusd1.org/contents/distinfo/masterplan/index.asp> for more information.)

Q. Do the 13,000 extra seats include the 2,500 seats from the 2009 school closures?

- No, that is TUSD's current excess capacity.

Q. What programs and services will TUSD outsource?

- Many of the services in Operations (Transportation, Grounds, Custodial, etc.) have been discussed. Specifics are available at <http://www.tusd1.org/contents/govboard/gbpacket01-29-13.html> for item #7.

Q. If TUSD is facing a \$17 million deficit, why did the approve \$.5 million to improve schools?

- The deficit is in the Maintenance and Operation (M&O) budget. The school improvement funds are from voter approved bonds. These dollars can only be used for the purposes approved by the voters for building, grounds and classroom improvements. Bond funding can not be used to reduce the \$17 million deficit.

Q. Will 1010, TUSD Central Administration, also be reduced?

- Yes, by 5% to 11%.

Q. Is TUSD renting or leasing property for school functions?

- No. Except for a parking lot at Carillo School, TUSD eliminated all rental and leased properties for an annual cost savings of \$600,000.

Q. Is there a timeline to report the results of staff reduction and outsourcing decisions?

- All the reductions will be part of the adopted budget and must be made public by June 2013. Information will be available to the public as it is developed and presented to the Governing Board.

January 23, 2013, Howenstine

Q. What did the Board consider in determining school closures? Was it the needs of students or was it just savings? It should be understood that the academic achievement at Howenstine will be different than that of the general TUSD school population.

- The TUSD governing board considered at least 11 factors, which included student academic achievement, and financial issues.

Q. Why didn't TUSD close a larger school and move some of those students to Howenstine?

- Even if Howenstine was filled to capacity it still wouldn't be financially sustainable. Resources would still have to be taken from other TUSD schools to support Howenstine.

Q. If Howenstine students are moved to Project More would they still be TUSD students?

- Yes.

Q. What happens to students who need a smaller school?

- The TUSD board did ask staff to consider ways of keeping the Howenstine Student body together in another setting and/or providing a small-school environment. TUSD is developing a plan to meet that direction.

Comment. Project More students are not a good fit with Howenstine students, as they are not stable and may pose a safety threat to and be a bad influence on the Howenstine students.

Comment. The Project More neighborhood and environs are not safe.

Comment. You cannot put Howenstine students who have ADHD, Autish, Azberger's etc into a large school.

Comment. Howenstine's Principal is opposed to the school's closure for the following reasons:

- 100% of the students have chosen to be at Howenstine because they were not successful in the larger TUSD school population.
- Every student at Howenstine can receive the special Federal and State services that they need.
- Howenstine would be able to keep its same character with 400 students.

January 30, 2013, Carson

Q. Why was Carson chosen instead of Secrist for closing? (Carson has more students. Secrist is really 9 miles travel distance from Secrist, not 4 map miles.)

- Many factors were considered, school size, academic performance, etc.

Comment: If Santa Rita closes will more students leave TUSD?

CLASS SIZE/STAFFING

General

Q. How do you guarantee that class size will only increase by one student per class?

- Class size is determined by a student/teacher ratio formula and class caps are incorporated into binding labor contracts. The savings from school closures help to provide savings that reduce the need for class-size increases.

Q. How many students will be in a class in the new school? What is the appropriate class size for learning for students?

- The new staffing formulas are: 24 kinder, 24 first, 29 second, 29 third, 30 fourth and fifth, 32 sixth to eighth, and 33 ninth through twelfth. Class sizes have not and will not increase due to closures—closures have helped to reduce the deficit.

Q. Will the teachers follow the students?

- Self-contained Exceptional Education teacher will; most others will be able to choose the school they want to attend. They may decide to move with their students.

Q. Will there be enough monitors in the new school to keep students safe?

- Yes, monitors are allocated to each school based, in part, on the number of students.

Q. How much staff will TUSD reduce to balance the budget and how will those reductions impact students?

- We need to reduce staff overall by over 5%. The second part of the question can only be answered after the specific reductions are identified.

January 30, 2013, Carson

Q. How much will be spent improving Secrist to accept Carson students?

- Secrist will not need to build any additional classrooms to accommodate Carson students. We are identifying other improvements to support the transition and expect that the costs will be approximately \$100,000.

SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

January 30, 2013, Carson

Comment: The Corbett closure map does not show where Kellond School is located.

SCHOOL SAFETY

January 30, 2013, Carson

Q. What is TUSD doing about school safety?

- TUSD is currently assessing every school to determine the appropriate and most expedient methods to lock down schools in emergency situations. We are also making improvements at each school to control access. Programs have been developed so that students and parents participate in making our schools safe by swiftly reporting suspicious activity.
-

TRANSITION EFFORTS

General

Q. What will TUSD do regarding transitioning students and families to the new schools?

- The TUSD Transition Team is developing a program to support all schools. Human Resources and Transition Project Managers have already visited most of the schools to address staff questions and the facility improvements that are needed to support the receiving schools.

Q. Can you track students who have left TUSD and gone to other School Districts, such as Vail?

- When students withdraw from TUSD they may indicate the reasons for withdrawal but this data has not been consistently provided. Regardless, we do know that we enroll about 70% of the areas school-age population; the remaining 30% go to charter schools, private schools, other school districts, or they are home-schooled or have dropped out of school.

January 30, 2013, Carson

Q. Has TUSD considered the impact of multiple school closures on communities?

- We do understand that the Southeast Area has been affected by recent closures. The reason for this is that the Southeast Tucson Metropolitan area has aging families, fewer k-12 students, and a high concentration of charter schools resulting in 4,000 empty TUSD classroom seats, nearly one third of TUSD's 13,000 empty seats, even after the closure of Reynolds.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Q. Will TUSD consider solar panels to save money?

- Yes. Currently 14 TUSD schools have solar panels. Every High School roof top will be assessed for the installation of solar panels. Other Energy Conservation measures are also being taken, such as the retrofitting of energy efficient lights.

DESEG/USP Considerations

January 23, 2013, Howenstine

Comment: Public Boundary Meetings presentations should not indicate that the court will rubber-stamp the 11 school closures. Mendoza and Fisher plaintiffs have filed suit in opposition to the closures. The Mendoza plaintiffs are strongly opposed to the

closing of Howenstine as it is an integrated school, ethnically balanced, presenting an integrated environment for Special Education and General Education students. There is no other school in TUSD that does this. Moreover, there is no way to create that special environment in other TUSD schools. If Howenstine closes, Special Education students will be moved to a more restricted environment.

Q. Why isn't Howenstine being supplemented with Deseg dollars?

- The Howenstine magnet program was not initiated to support desegregation of the district—Howenstine is not a “deseg school”.