REPORT ON OPTION TO BALANCE
ELEMENTARY ENROLLMENT WITH CAPACITY

Elementary Capacity Task Force
December 12, 2007

PURPOSE

The purpose of this workshop is to present the options explored to date by the Elementary Capacity Task Force along with a preliminary evaluation of those options. Each option explored is evaluated for its impact to facilities, finances, and program (i.e., staff and students). The purpose of this workshop is neither to present recommendations nor to present a preliminary, intermediate, or final set of options.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is a mismatch between elementary enrollment forecasts and school capacity.

Forecasts show district-wide elementary enrollment will stabilize over the next five (5) years. However, two school areas – Ruby Bridges and Edison/Otis – are expected to increase in enrollment over the next five (5) years, while their facilities are currently close to or at capacity. The rest of the island is expected to decline in enrollment.

Table I: Forecasted Elementary Capacity Surplus/Deficit

School	Current Residents			Forecasted Residents (5 Years)		
	Residents	Capacity	Capacity Surplus/ (Deficit)	Residents	Capacity	Capacity Surplus/ (Deficit)
Bay Farm	466	514	48	469	514	45
Earhart	539	574	35	535	574	39
Edison	401	376	(25)	474	376	(98)
Franklin	316	287	(29)	329	287	(42)
Haight	457	425	(32)	439	425	(14)
Lum	436	494	58	468	494	26
Otis	434	396	(38)	459	396	(63)
Paden	270	356	86	292	356	64
Ruby Bridges	447	505	58	560	505	(55)
Washington	323	356	33	299	356	57
Total	**4,089**	**4,283**	**194**	**4,324**	**4,283**	**(41)**
Inter-District	149	0	(149)	149	0	(149)
Grand Total	**4,238**	**4,283**	**45**	**4,473**	**4,283**	**(190)**

OPTIONS EXPLORED

The Elementary Capacity Task Force is charged with developing options to balance school enrollment with facility capacity at both over- and under-enrolled schools. There are four categories of solutions to resolve the enrollment-capacity mismatch:

- **Increase Capacity** at over-enrolled schools to provide space for growth

- **Divert Overflow Students** to under-enrolled schools

- **Create Magnet Programs** to entice overflow students to under-enrolled schools

- **Change Attendance Boundaries** to match enrollment with capacity

Increase Capacity

There are multiple methods available to increase a school site's capacity, and they are based on one of two strategies – (1) changing the use **of existing** classrooms or (2) adding **new** classrooms. The Task Force is exploring the four options described below.

1. **Use Existing Classrooms to Increase Capacity – Convert Miscellaneous Rooms**

   The Task Force is exploring whether to convert miscellaneous rooms to regular education classrooms. The ten elementary schools in the AUSD offer a total of 246 classrooms. Of these classrooms:

   - 78% are used for regular education (193 classrooms)

   - 6% are used for special education (14 classrooms)

   - 16% are used for miscellaneous purposes (39 classrooms).

   Classrooms used for regular and special education create capacity, as they are loaded with 13, 20, or 29 students. Classrooms used for miscellaneous purposes do not create capacity, as they are loaded with 0 students. Increasing the number of classrooms used for regular education or special education purposes will increase a school's capacity.

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In order to increase the number of existing classrooms used for regular education, miscellaneous rooms must be replaced with regular education rooms. Miscellaneous rooms by school are listed below. The rooms listed as "other" are used for a range of purposes including after-school programs for students and administrative purposes, and Title I and English Language Learner (ELL) pull-out services.

Table II : Miscellaneous Rooms

School	Computer Lab	Daycare	Resource Specialist Program	Music	Science	Other	Total
			Pull-Out/After School				
Bay Farm	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
Earhart	1	1	0	1	1	0	4
Edison	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Franklin	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Haight	0	1	0	0	0	6	7
Lum	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Otis	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
Paden	1	1	1	0	0	1	4
Ruby Bridges	1	2	0	0	0	1	4
Washington	0	2	1	0	0	5	8
Total	6	11	3	3	1	15	39

On the one hand, these rooms are used for purposes that add value to the schools' operations and/or programs. Accordingly, schools will likely experience a loss when a miscellaneous room is replaced with a regular education room. On the other hand, this value was created because schools make good use of space available and in most cases space was available because schools are under-enrolled. Classrooms should serve as classrooms. To find a balance between these points, the Task Force considered the three functions of the miscellaneous classrooms: computer labs, day care, and pull-out/after-school services and developed the following guidelines and rationale.

Chart I: Guidelines to Convert Miscellaneous Rooms to Regular Education Classrooms

Computer Labs	Do not convert. Computer labs are a crucial learning tool necessary to reach excellence and equity. Computers contribute to student achievement and the use of technology is expected to increase over time.
Day Care	Convert a day care classroom to regular education classroom if an alternative offsite and adjacent solution is available. Alternatives must be viable solutions (i.e., licensing/compliance requirements must be met). Maintain AUSD's commitment to provide for day care at each elementary school site.
Pull-Out/ After-School	Convert a classroom to regular education classroom if viable space is available.

Next steps for the Task Force include seeking alternative offsite and adjacent solutions for day care. Alternative solutions may include day care portables; portables used for day care are not required to comply with Department of the State Architect (DSA) requirements. Accordingly, they are less costly that classroom portables. However, future use of such portables would be limited to day care; these portables could not be used as classrooms. In addition, the Task Force will work with principals and program directors to determine whether space for the various pull-out/after-school functions is necessary, and if so, identify viable space to house those functions. As noted earlier, in most cases space is used for these purposes because it is available, not because the service requires a classroom.

Please note, this option will likely be explored in conjunction with other options. While this option would increase capacity at sites that are under-enrolled, the students needed to fill that capacity would be provided by implementing another option (e.g., changing boundaries).

2. **Use Existing Classrooms to Increase Capacity – Relocate Special Day Classrooms**

The Task Force explored whether special day classrooms (SDC) could be relocated to equivalent or better locations. The offer of an SDC placement is made through an

Individualized Education Program (IEP), and the offer in California is a unique combination of program and location (i.e., specific school site). To move an SDC, an IEP meeting for every student in that classroom must be held to request parent permission to a change of placement. Relocating SDCs must be considered in light of the goals we have for our special education students. Goals of the AUSD include spreading SDCs across our schools and creating programs in which students can flow from one age/grade level to the next. Our practice is not to move an SDC unless student needs would be better served at another school; relocating SDCs to resolve a space issue is insufficient. The Director of Special Education recommends all Special Day Classrooms remain in their current locations.

Table III: Special Day Classrooms by School

School	Rooms	Students	Program
Bay Farm	1	13	Mild to Moderate 3-5
Earhart	3	23	Mild to Moderate K-2; Aspergers K-5; Intensive Autism K-2
Edison	1	7	Moderate to Severe 3-5
Franklin	0	0	n/a
Haight	1	8	Supported Inclusion for Autism K-5
Lum	1	14	Mild to Moderate 3-5
Otis	1	7	Intensive Autism 3-5
Paden	2	22	Mild to Moderate K-2; Mild to Moderate 3-5
Ruby Bridges	2	24	Moderate to Severe K-2; Mild to Moderate 3-5
Washington	2	16	Mild to Moderate K-2; Counseling Enriched K-2
Total	**14**	**134**	

3. **Use Existing Classrooms to Increase Capacity – Eliminate Class Size Reduction (CSR)**

The Task Force explored whether to eliminate the class size reduction (CSR) program in kindergarten through third grade. The CSR program requires a 20:1 student to teacher ratio in contrast to the 29:1 ratio used prior to CSR. Consequently, the AUSD reduced its capacity by about one-third when we adopted CSR. As the following two tables show, eliminating CSR would eliminate the capacity deficit expected in the next five years on the eastern and western ends of the island.

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Table III: Impact of Class Size Reduction on Capacity

	With CSR	Without CSR
K-3 Classrooms	146	146
Classroom Load	20	29
Capacity	2,920	4,234

Gain in Capacity by Eliminating CSR	1,314
% Gain in Capacity by Eliminating CSR	45%

Per current law CSR can be reduced and/or eliminated **by school and by grade level** in a specified order. Districts are not required to eliminate an entire grade level unless they plan to proceed to the next grade level. By school, either kindergarten and/or third grade are first reduced/eliminated. Next second grade is reduced/eliminated; second grade can be reduced/eliminated only once all of kindergarten and third grade is eliminated. Finally, first grade is reduced/eliminated; first grade can be reduced/eliminated only once all of second grade is eliminated. Table IV shows how the capacity of each elementary school is increased by eliminating CSR in multiple steps – i.e., eliminating CSR in third grade, then kindergarten, then second grade, and finally first grade.

CSR is the standard in California with 99% of eligible districts participating. The state provides funding for CSR as an incentive to districts, but these dollars do not fully fund the cost of the program. CSR encroaches on our unrestricted general fund by approximately $90K per grade level per year. While the costs of CSR can be quantified, the effect of CSR on student achievement is debated. Despite the debate, the Alameda community has shown its support for the program with a parcel tax which pays for the encroachment. The parcel tax will expire in 2012.

Next steps for the Task Force include working with Education Services to assess the impact to curriculum by grade.

Table IV: Impact of Eliminating Class Size Reduction

		Availability of CSR							
		K-2 (not 3)		1-2 (not K, 3)		1 (not K, 2, 3)		No Grades	
School	Forecasted Residents (5 Years)	Capacity	Capacity Surplus/ (Deficit)	Capacity	Capacity Surplus/ (Deficit)	Capacity	Capacity Surplus/ (Deficit)	Capacity	Capacity Surplus/ (Deficit)
Bay Farm	469	550	81	586	117	631	162	667	198
Earhart	535	619	84	664	129	709	174	754	219
Edison	474	403	(71)	439	(35)	466	(8)	493	19
Franklin	329	305	(24)	323	(6)	350	21	377	48
Haight	439	461	22	488	49	524	85	551	112
Lum	468	530	62	566	98	602	134	638	170
Otis	459	423	(36)	459	0	486	27	522	63
Paden	292	383	91	410	118	437	145	464	172
Ruby Bridges	560	541	(19)	595	35	631	71	667	107
Washington	299	383	84	410	111	437	138	464	165
Total	4,324	4,598	274	4,940	616	5,273	949	5,597	1,273
Inter-District	149	0	(149)	0	(149)	0	(149)	0	(149)
Grand Total	4,473	4,598	125	4,940	467	5,273	800	5,597	1,124

4. Add New Classrooms to Increase Capacity – Build Up

The Task Force is exploring whether to add classrooms with a portable modular, permanent modular, and new construction. The maximum number of classrooms that may be added, as well as their location have been determined by the Director of Maintenance, Operations, and Facilities. Next steps include working with principals to determine the maximum number of portables that may be tolerated given impact to facility space and enrollment and developing cost estimates.

Divert Overflow Students

The Task Force explored whether to address the shortfall in capacity by diverting students in the over-enrolled schools to the under-enrolled schools. On average, we divert 90-100 elementary students per year. This option would significantly increase the number of students diverted from their neighborhood schools. Such an increase is inconsistent with the intention of our enrollment

policy (AR 5116.1), which is to divert a very limited number of students to avoid the cost of opening a new classroom in a neighborhood school when seats are available in an existing classroom in a nearby school. The intention is not to move entire classrooms from one school to another. While this option would allow the AUSD to maximize facility use (i.e., by allowing the AUSD to make classrooms of 20 and 29 as needed by site regardless of the number of students that flow through that site's doors), it may also increase truancy as a result of the increased distance between home and school. This option may disproportionately impact students with fewer resources, as they tend to be the last enrolled, and thus, would be the first diverted.

Create Magnet Programs

The Task Force is not currently exploring magnet programs as an option. AUSD has sound elementary school curriculum and instructional programs that implement differentiated California standards-based instruction at each grade level that provides the foundational and extending skills to meet the needs of all student levels. A district-wide coherent program is essential in order to have consistent high quality instruction that is funded and supported. In addition, the following focused work is in place for all learners:

- Standards-based education (state adopted curriculum, variety of instructional strategies, and intervention or extension of learning)

- All schools will be implementing Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) instructional strategies primarily for English learners, but good strategies for all learners; this is similar to the secondary SIM initiative

- Teachers work in grade level teams to identify strengths and areas of need in their instructional planning

- All schools have Caring Schools Communities to promote positive school climate and problem solving skills

- All schools provide music, physical education, and media center/technology standards-based instruction

o 2008-09 will offer Visual Arts to 4th and 5th graders

o Daycare and/or after school programs

While placing a magnet program in one or more elementary sites might sound enticing to families, there are reasons to move more slowly and develop the big picture pathway K-12.

Reasons not to develop this idea at this time include:

- Specialized programs need differentiated funding, special staffing, i.e., dual immersion programs would need quality bilingual certificated teachers, very hard to find arena

- Challenges for the District to fully support one or two individualized program: time, money, staffing

- One focus area for the Secondary Educational Options Task Force is looking at secondary specialized programs; if implemented, then would review elementary pathway so that there is a clear pathway throughout, rather than one kind of program here or there

- Diversion from the fundamental standards-based programs; fragmentation occurs

- Historically, these programs are difficult to sustain long term

- Deep research would need to happen to determine the best kind of program for the neighborhood school

Change Attendance Boundaries

1. Maximize School Size Efficiency

The Task Force is researching the break-even point for operating elementary schools. The break-even point is the enrollment range at which revenues begin to exceed expenditures. At this point, we expect that economies of scale will provide for sufficient teachers at each grade for collaboration, a full Resource Specialist Program (RSP), and a full music, physical education, and media center programs (instead of itinerant staff).

The Task Force plans to explore and combine options to reach the break-even point in our elementary schools. As this option is explored, the Task Force will likely consider reducing the number of elementary schools. For example, if the enrollment range for the break-even point is determined to be 500-600, then the number of elementary schools might be reduced by one or two sites. As another example, the capacity of some elementary schools might be increased with new classrooms to reach the break-even enrollment range.

The Task Force identified the following factors to consider in drawing boundaries:

- Distance and conditions students must travel

- Impact to closing the achievement gap

- Impact to composition of school sites (e.g., socio-economic status)

- Grandfathering old students (e.g., new boundaries apply to new K students; sibling of new K students can opt to join new K students)

2. Adjust Number Inter-District Transfer (ITD) Students

The Task Force has explored adjusting the number of students accepted as inter-district transfer students. The current level of IDTs is 149 and can be adjusted upward, downward, or maintained at this level depending on the options which are ultimately recommended to and approved by the Board of Education.

3. Eliminate Choice

The Task Force has explored eliminating the school choice currently offered to elementary students who reside on attendance zone boundary lines. Under current practice, students who live on the boundary line between two schools can choose to attend either school. For example, students living on Central Avenue can choose to attend either Edison or Otis Elementary Schools. This practice is unique to Alameda, and adds complexity to enrollment and staffing projections. The single exception to school choice at the elementary level is

Pacific Avenue west of Webster Avenue; students residing on this attendance boundary (i.e., both sides of the street) attend Paden Elementary School. A more common approach used by school districts is to draw the boundary line down the center of the dividing street. Eliminating choice may detract from the neighborhood school ideal, and it may also reduce uncertainty/variability in projections.

NEXT STEPS

The Task Force is exploring options, and will continue to develop them. The Task Force will present an evaluation of the options developed to the Superintendent in January. The Superintendent will make her recommendations to the Board of Education in February.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

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