



# DIRECTLY SPEAKING

SUPERINTENDENT DUBOST'S COMMUNITY UPDATE

Volume 1

Issue #4

April 30, 2021

Published Fridays following each Board meeting.

Curt Dubost  
Superintendent  
[cdubost@pasoschools.org](mailto:cdubost@pasoschools.org)

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### GEORGIA BROWN – THE REAL FACTS

Much of the public comment at Tuesday night's meeting was based



on misinformation which I hope to correct here. Many speakers apparently believe Georgia Brown Elementary School is going to be closed and the dual immersion program will cease to exist. The dual immersion program is NOT under consideration for closure in any scenario whatsoever. **Dual immersion will continue with the full support of the district.** No decision has been made regarding Georgia Brown.

The misperception about school closure is likely tied to confusion from the [7/11 Committee's Report](#). Based on the Committee's study of all district facilities, and in light of the fiscal challenges the district has faced over the last several years, they recommended two vacant properties (Montebello and Phillips) be declared surplus so they can be sold. They also recommended the Board close an elementary school, which would save approximately \$700,000 per year in "overhead" costs such as utilities, insurance and administrative/support staff apart from the classroom teachers. (If a school were to close, classroom teachers would be transferred to other campuses to serve the students, so class sizes would not increase.) The 7/11 Committee's role is merely advisory to the Board of Trustees. The Board has yet to discuss formally the recommendations, and has taken no action regarding them other than to receive the report and approve the process to study the recommendations over the next nine months.

Do know, despite new-construction residential development approved to the East, that district enrollment projections in the future remain flat, at

best, due to the high cost of housing. We also need to remember a new public charter school serving grades TK-8 is under construction on Niblick Road with an anticipated capacity of over 500 students.

What the Board has authorized is the formation of a **Grade-Span Configuration Committee** to explore the best instructional grade models in which our K-8 students can learn and thrive. Erin Haley, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, is leading this group of parents, teachers, administrators, and community members. They are currently meeting and will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees on June 22. Following this committee's work, the basic question is whether 6<sup>th</sup> grade is better served in an elementary or a secondary school configuration. The Board is expected to authorize a second committee to explore **school boundary options**. This committee will be led by Brad Pawlowski, Asst. Supt./Business Services, and will explore how the various grade configurations can best be housed throughout the district along with the possibility of adjusting attendance boundaries to balance enrollment. **Any decision on actually changing grade configurations and attendance boundaries will of course be left to the Board.**

There is much work to be done by both these committees, and we hope all of our community can help in communicating accurate information. It is important not to jump to conclusions before the committees' reports are presented and the Board begins its deliberations. All questions asked and issues raised will be thoroughly researched and addressed prior to any formal vote.





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### SPANISH TRANSLATION & PUBLIC COMMENT AT BOARD MEETINGS

Recently the Board added a translator at all school board meetings to perform simultaneous translation; that is, Spanish speakers can log in through Zoom to hear everything spoken during the Board meetings translated into Spanish in real time. Thus far, we have not seen large numbers of parents logging into this option, and we hope to see more people take advantage of this service as word spreads.

That being said, this new format also means that community members making public comment no longer need to make their presentation in Spanish for that audience as the translator will handle that. We ask that all speakers address the Board in English so the Board can understand their comments. Any caller who is unable to speak English sufficiently may still speak in Spanish, and a translator will follow-up in English for the Board's understanding. Adhering to this procedure will help meetings proceed smoothly and allow the best use of time for public comment.

The majority of the Board did direct, at the end of Tuesday's meeting, that persons calling in or speaking in person may speak in Spanish or another language if they choose; but for the practical reasons listed we ask that this be done only as necessary to communicate; not to make a political statement.

### PRESENTATIONS TO THE BOARD



PRHS Principal Anthony Overton and student Sarah Krumme updated the Board on [achievements and activities at the high school](#). Students will be able to enjoy Prom this year on May 1 at the Estrella Warbirds Museum. "City of Stars" is the theme and will make for a memorable evening for students. Attendance is limited and all attendees will need to have received a negative COVID test or proof of vaccination. The resurgence of athletic competitions was eagerly received by 535 students competing in all sports; and 145 students participated in theatre, dance, choir, and band. SkillsUSA is a state and national competition for vocational-technical students, and Bearcats scored 7 Gold, 7 Silver, and 4 Bronze medals in various fields. Gold medalists will be able to go on to national-level competition. PRHS Bearcats ran a very successful blood drive on April 26. Seniors will celebrate their accomplishments with a drive-through on June 7 in preparation for live graduation ceremonies on June 11 and 12 (3 separate ceremonies to manage social distancing needs).

### SIPE

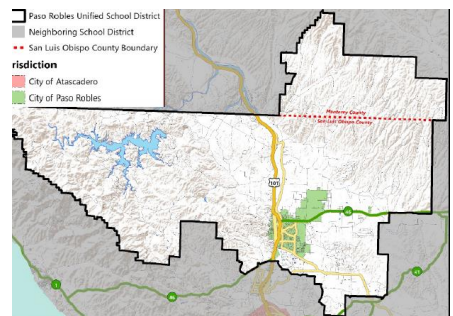
The Schools Insurance Program for Employees (SIPE) is our JPA for workers compensation insurance, and the Board heard from the executive director on the [program, claims rates, and how those impact insurance premiums](#).



John Hamon, who served on the Measure M Citizens' Oversight Committee, provided their [annual report](#) to the Board on the status of projects and financial aspects of the Measure M bond.

### CHANGING HOW TRUSTEES ARE ELECTED

One large topic on the agenda was presented as six separate items regarding the California Voting Rights Act. This legislation requires government agencies to re-form their representative voting areas (for school board trustees, city council members, etc.) and establish a "by-trustee" voting system. Currently, [Paso Robles \(like most school districts\) elects trustees "at large" meaning all the voters select candidates who reside within the district boundaries](#). A "by-trustee" system will require new maps to be drawn dividing the district into seven separate trustee areas. Each trustee candidate would have to reside within a specific area and only voters in those areas would vote on those candidates.



The Board had previously determined to begin this change using 2020 census data when it adopted [Resolution No. 19-15](#) on February 26, 2019, but the COVID pandemic seriously delayed the census data. To avoid further delay that could





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put the district in legal jeopardy of non-compliance, the Board voted to proceed using the 2010 census data, and update maps prior to the 2022 election once the 2020 census data has been released.



The first item on that list was a discussion of the possibility of reducing PRJUSD trustees from seven to five. Board Clerk Bausch rightfully suggested the reduction needed to be decided before the redistricting process begins so that maps could be drawn accurately. The majority of the Board decided no change will be made; we will draw maps to reflect seven (not five) trustee areas.

The remaining items included adoption of two resolutions ([No. 21-22](#) which reaffirms the 2019 resolution but changes it to use the 2010 census data and [No. 21-23](#) to seek a waiver from the Dept of Education on holding an election on the change to by-trustee areas). Larry Ferchaw of Cooperative Strategies and attorney Devon Lincoln explained the process.

Two public hearings were also a part of this series of agenda items – one regarding the trustee areas and another regarding the proposed waiver request. Additional hearings will be scheduled as the process moves forward, but the Board felt strongly that these should be scheduled near the beginning of the agenda and again directed staff to take steps to disseminate information about the hearings more broadly. Although we advertised in the Paso Robles Press and posted it at all schools, in addition to the board agenda announcement, in the future we will find additional ways to get the word out to encourage the public to attend these hearings which are listed at the end of this report. Please watch for notices.



### Return to School



Concerns continue to be expressed about return to school, especially in August for next year. **It is our expectation that school will open next year fully in person.** We also know concerns remain about mask enforcement and mandatory vaccinations of staff and students. We await anticipated legislation on these issues.



As PRJUSD works to design a by-trustee voting system to comply with the California Voting Rights Act, your voice is important to the deliberations. Please Join us for public hearings on this important project. All will be scheduled at regular Board meetings, near the beginning of the agenda:

April 27, 2021	First Pre-Map Public Hearing General Waiver Request
May 11, 2021	2 <sup>ND</sup> Pre-Map Public Hearing
May 25, 2021	1 <sup>st</sup> Hearing on Trustee Area Scenarios
June 8, 2021	2 <sup>nd</sup> Hearing on Trustee Area Scenarios
June 22, 2021	3 <sup>rd</sup> Hearing on Trustee Scenarios; Board Selection of Map
July 2021 (TBD)	Hearing by County Committee on School District Organization

Your PRJUSD Board of Trustees:

- [Chris Arend](#), Board President
- [Chris Bausch](#), Board Clerk
- [Dorian Baker](#), Trustee
- [Lance Gannon](#), Trustee
- [Tim Gearhart](#), Trustee
- [Jim Reed](#), Trustee
- [Nathan Williams](#), Trustee

