

Consolidation Update, May 16, 2025



Dear MUSD Community,

As you know, we have been looking at consolidation of school sites over the last few months. During that time, many families/caregivers and staff have provided input, ideas, concerns, and feedback on plans. It has been a truly unparalleled level of involvement from all of you and we are grateful for it. While it hasn't been the most cheerful of topics, our school community has shown up as thoughtful problem-solvers. We have been able to look at a wide variety of possible configurations and really dig deep into what works best with our existing sites, our future enrollment, and our educational programs.

The board made the decision to consolidate our TK-8 classrooms to two school sites at the April 16, 2025 board meeting and asked for additional input from staff and community during April and May. We were very happy to have 192 responses on the most recent survey, all with clear reasons and feelings about their preferred configuration.

At the May 14 board meeting, our Board of Trustees voted and directed Superintendent Giannini Previde to create a TK-3 school on the Dow's Prairie site starting in Fall 2025 and to create a 4-8 school on the Central Avenue site starting in Fall 2026.

It is important to explain that decision and the way the input from so many was interpreted and used. The board spent a lot of time not only looking at which configuration folks chose, but more importantly their reasons. The input fell into a few patterns:

- Folks interested in 4th grade at Dow's Prairie largely cited a feeling that this configuration would keep kids younger longer as well as concerns about 4th graders on the same site as 8th graders. Many also cited their connection to Dow's Prairie and not wanting their kids to leave.
- Folks interested in 4th grade at the Central Avenue site largely referenced academic, developmental, and logistical benefits, as well as an eye to future planning and balanced school site enrollment.
- We also heard both in email form and at the May 14 meeting from many of our 3rd-5th grade staff. The input they provided was unanimous: keep 4th and 5th grade together. They spoke at length about the developmental differences between 3rd and 4th graders versus the developmental similarities of 4th and 5th graders. They talked about the curriculum alignment of 4th and 5th grade and each teacher who spoke encouraged the board to consider the educational benefits of keeping 4th and 5th grade together as a perfect pair for a "school within a school" at the Central Avenue site.

Now what happens? In short, we get to work.

The input from families/caregivers and staff has given us a clear direction. We will create a checklist of dreams, concerns, fears, and irritations to address with our plans. Then, our staff will work to develop schedules and school site maps that address all of that input.

We need your help. Nearly 50 parents/caregivers signed up to be part of the steering committee to reimagine our schools. We will meet a number of times next fall to review draft plans from our teachers and administrators to make sure we are on the right track. The back and forth between expert staff and our parents/caregivers will allow us to review those checklists multiple times to ensure we are addressing the needs of our students, families, and staff. The goal is to have a solid plan in place for board/public review by the December 2025 board meeting. This will give us the Spring of 2026 to put it all into action and be prepared to welcome our new students to the Central Avenue site in August of 2026.

We will be reaching out to each person who shared an interest in being part of this steering committee, but if you didn't sign up and you are interested, please reach out to Ms. Julie at jgiannini@mckusd.org. The steering committee will meet throughout the fall starting in September. It is our intention to keep meeting even after we implement our plans for 2026-2027, to check in and make sure things are working as they should and to change as needed to meet the needs and input of our community.

Please let us know what your questions are; we are open to feedback and are ready to keep working to make our schools better everyday.

Sincerely,

Ms. Julie

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