



COLLECTIVE UNIFICATION NEWSLETTER

This Unification Newsletter is a joint effort of the Monterey County Office of Education (MCOE), Greenfield Union School District, King City Union School District, and South Monterey County Joint Union High School District. It is intended to provide clear and timely updates as district and county leadership continue the state-directed planning process for a potential dual unification.

On March 2, 2026, district and county leaders, along with their legal counsel, met to continue discussions that could result in the creation of a Greenfield Unified School District and a King City Unified School District. The meeting focused on governance questions and a review of the draft feasibility study.

By way of background, the State Board of Education directed the Monterey County Committee on School District Organization to develop formal recommendations for this potential reorganization. These recommendations are due to the State Board by approximately May 1, 2026 for their July Board Meeting.

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

MCOE Legal Counsel provided an updated timeline and noted that we are still awaiting one remaining "opt-out" resolution from the Bitterwater-Tully School District.

Key Questions Addressed

Several important governance and fiscal questions were clarified during the meeting:

Interim Funding: If approved, newly unified districts could access short-term funding through the Public School District Organization Revolving Fund (Education Code 41360). Funds may be used for start-up costs such as office expenses, elections, and necessary salaries. The loan must be repaid within two fiscal years.

Employee Protections: Certificated staff retain their classification; If layoffs are required, they must occur in order of seniority and based on district needs; Attrition over the course of the years could take place to assist.

AB 218 Liability

Reorganization does not eliminate potential liability related to childhood sexual assault claims. There is currently no case law addressing how courts would assign responsibility following unification.

Student Body Funds

Any division of student body funds cannot exceed the ratio of students leaving compared to total enrollment.

Feasibility Study Updates

Consultant Christy White reviewed revisions to the draft study.

Structure of the Proposal

The report will clearly state that South Monterey County Joint Union High School, Greenfield Union Elementary, and King City Union Elementary would be dissolved and that two entirely new unified districts would be created. This is not one district absorbing another. It is the closure of three districts and the formation of two new ones. Assets, liabilities, and obligations would be divided equitably.

Governance

All three current boards would sunset. Two newly elected boards would govern the new districts. The transition allows for intentional design of governance, systems, and district culture.

Dispute Resolution

If disagreements arise, Education Code allows for binding arbitration.

Facilities and Property

The report will clarify how property will be divided, including:

- Whether facilities are owned or leased
- The relative value and condition of sites

The new alternative education facility opened in Fall 2025 at Greenfield High School will be reflected in the study. Facilities transfer with territory, but new districts must obtain state approval to operate programs.

State Loan

SMCJUHSD has stated its intent to fully repay its remaining state loan prior to unification. The report will reflect updated financial information and ensure consistency in payoff dates.

Measures H & I Bonds

The study will clarify whether bond tax rates may need adjustment and whether additional legal analysis is required. The goal is to ensure fairness and transparency.

NEXT STEPS

The next Unification Planning Meeting will be held on Monday, May 9th at 3:30 p.m. MCOE Counsel Marguerite Leoni will provide a recap of all tentative decisions made which will be included in the report provided to the County Committee for its March 18th meeting.

The County Committee will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, March 18 at 8 a.m. to adopt tentative plans and their recommendation.

The County Committee will hold two Public Hearings on the evening of Monday, May 23 to gather public input. The first meeting will be held in Greenfield at 5 p.m. at Vista Verde Middle School and the second meeting in King City at 7 p.m. at ???