

Equity Impact Analysis: September 2026



Target Campuses: San Jose Middle School, Hamilton 6th-8th Grade Program, and District-Wide

Equity Impact Analysis: Novato Unified School District(NUSD)

This analysis is intended to provide a review of the potential impacts to students if the 6th-8th grade program from Hamilton is moved and consolidated at the San Jose Middle School campus. The goal is to organize the information currently available, identify potential burdens and benefits, document mitigation measures, and highlight areas requiring completion before implementation. It is not intended to characterize every identified consideration as a legal requirement.

The framework calls for consideration of these areas:

- Educational Rationale
- Demographics Audit and Analysis
- English Learners & Student Support Verification
- Logistics & Facilities Assessment
- Community Participation and Responsiveness
- Attendance Patterns, Reassignment, and Specialized Placements
- Future Use of the Hamilton Site and Neighborhood Effects
- Operating Costs, Savings, and Transition Costs
- Transition Activities
- Alternative Options Considered
- Implementation Commitments and Verification

This report is summarized with mitigation recommendations. Novato Unified School District is not subject to the formal equity impact analysis requirements of California Education Code section 41329 because it is not a district in financial distress as defined by that statute. Nevertheless, the District is using section 41329 and the California Department of Education's Best Practices Guide for Potential School Closure/Consolidation as an organizing framework.

This Equity Impact Review evaluates the proposed transition of the Hamilton grades 6-8 program to San Jose Middle School. Novato Unified School District is preparing this review voluntarily in response to community questions and to provide the Board and public with a transparent record of the educational, demographic, programmatic, facilities, transportation, fiscal, and community considerations associated with the proposed transition.

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1. Educational Rationale Analysis

Scope: Document specific educational, programmatic, and extracurricular changes from Hamilton 6-8 to San Jose Middle School.

Program Area	San Jose Middle Offerings	6–8 Baseline Comparison	Net Gain (+/-)
Elective Courses	Drama, Art, Spanish, Spanish Language Arts (DLI), Career Technical Education Exploratory Wheel (Paxton Patterson), Band (Jazz, Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced), Leadership, Choir, AVID	Beginning Band, Advanced Band, STEM, Paxton Patterson, Yearbook/100 Cameras, AVID	There are more elective offerings at San Jose than at Hamilton. This is a gain in opportunity for Hamilton students.
RISE Foundation	Currently no Chess program or mentor program	RISE offers additional opportunities for Hamilton students through the Chess Club, mentors and athletics.	The RISE foundation has indicated their interest in expanding its programs to San Jose. These programs will focus on Chess and athletics.
Athletic Programs	Marin Middle School Athletics League (MMAL): Flag football, Volleyball, Cross Country, Basketball, Track and Field, Soccer Intramurals: Basketball, Soccer, Volleyball Coaching is Volunteer based, there is no paid staffing except for part time Athletic Director	Volleyball, Cross Country, Basketball, Soccer RISE Partnership helping to manage coaches Coaches are paid through RISE	Hamilton currently has a more stable athletic management and coaching support with the RISE collaboration SJMS is still developing its athletics support systems. Stipend-based athletic coordinator. If RISE were to expand to San Jose, the current athletic director could help provide those needed systems. Either way, students will continue to have

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Program Area	San Jose Middle Offerings	6–8 Baseline Comparison	Net Gain (+/-)
	duties		access to extracurricular athletics.
Counseling & Mental Health	Two full-time counselors, wellness hub and private counseling office (focuses: wellness, academic support and planning, college and career readiness) North Marin Community Services Clinician Mental health counseling support for students with services listed in their IEPs	North Marin Community Services Clinician Mental health counseling support for students with services listed in their IEPs Part time Wellness Hub Specialist (Associate MFT) - clinical support Part time Certified Wellness Coach	San Jose Middle School's counseling program offers broader support and education. With an increase in student contacts, there will be a slightly diminished capacity for counseling staff at San Jose. For Hamilton students, this will be an increase in services as they prepare for high school options. Wellness and Mental Health Counseling supports are similar at both sites though in varying types of positions.
Specialized Academic Programs	Compacted Math (7/8) Algebra AVID Dual Language Pathway Paxton Patterson	AVID Paxton Patterson Algebra (offered through Novato High) Compacted math (7/8)	SJMS offers the additional Specialized Academic Program of the Dual Language pathway. There are no language courses offered at Hamilton currently therefore there will be more access to Spanish language learning at San Jose for Hamilton students.
YMCA	Yes, currently has YMCA after school only	YMCA is a provider for before school and after school. Students also attend after school programming at Community Action Marin which is adjacent to the Hamilton campus.	SJMS will work with YMCA with the transition and classroom space needs. The space allocated to after school programming might need to be a shared space. Afterschool care will continue to be provided regardless of the campus. Students eligible for services and returning to the Hamilton campus after school should be considered for continued access to

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Program Area	San Jose Middle Offerings	6–8 Baseline Comparison	Net Gain (+/-)
			Community Action Marin campus.

2. Demographics Audit & Comparative Analysis

Scope: Audit and comparative evaluation across Hamilton 6–8, San Jose Middle School, and District-wide datasets to evaluate demographic distribution and equity. These are current year (2026-27) numbers and percentages as of September 15, 2026.

Demographic Metric	Hamilton 6–8	San Jose Middle	Combined	District-Wide Baseline	Variance / Equity Impact Analysis
Total Student Enrollment	155	579	Combined Metric: <u>734 total students</u> <u>(San Jose expands by ~27%).</u>	6914	Impact on Hamilton: Students shift from an intimate environment (~155 peers) to a campus nearly five times larger. Risk of displacement stress and feeling anonymous without dedicated transition support. Impact on San Jose: Minimal cultural disruption due to scale, but requires operational expansion in master scheduling, facility space, and counselor-to-student ratios.
English Learners (EL %)	34.8% / 54	17% / 101	Combined Metric: 21.1% (155 students).	17% / 1171	Impact on Hamilton: Concentration drops from double the district baseline to 21.1%. Students gain access to broader general education electives, but could risk diluted ELD support if program is not adjusted at San Jose. Impact on San Jose: EL population increases by 4.1 percentage points. Requires scaling English Language Development (ELD) resources and language-access communication for families.

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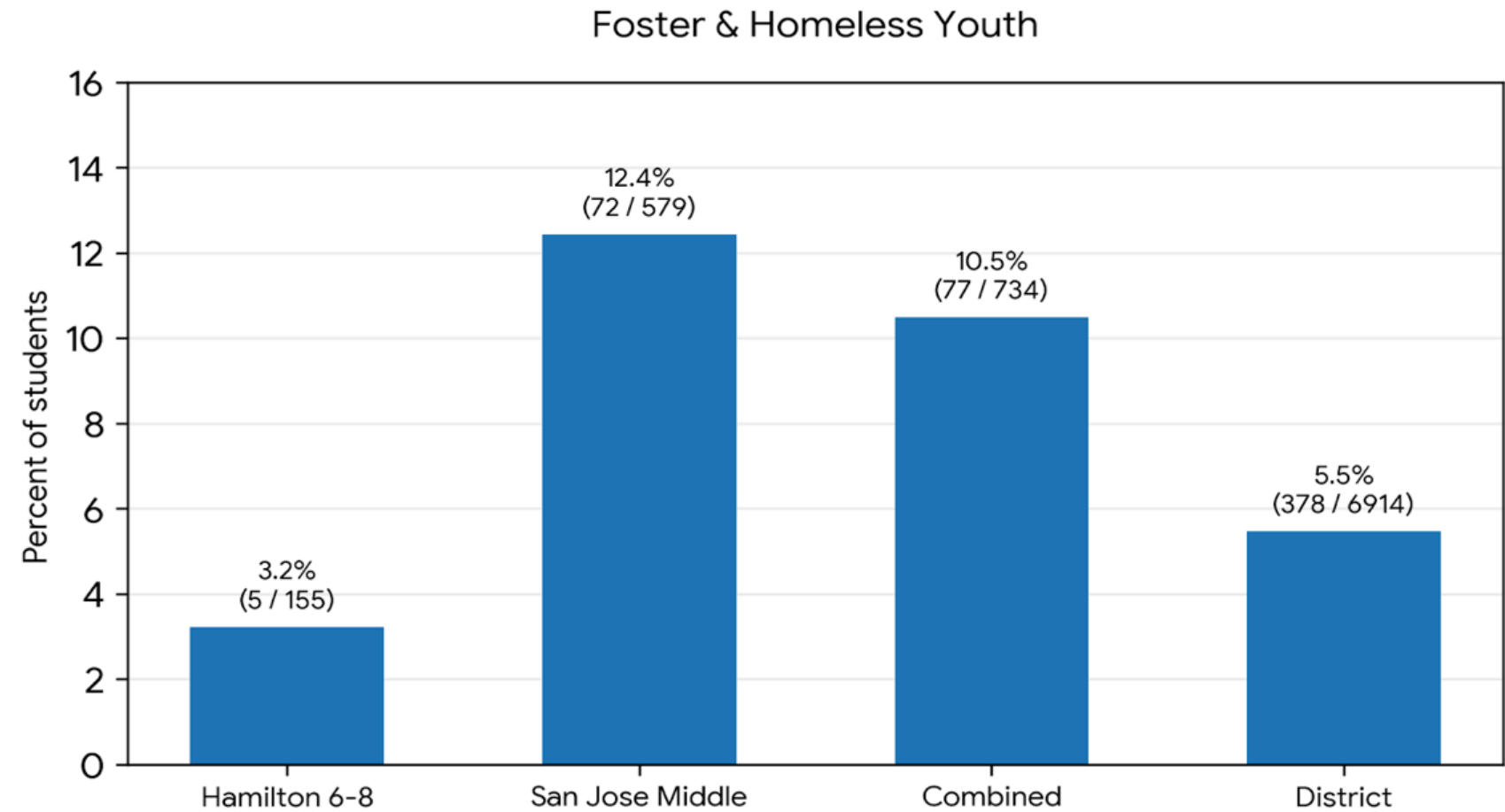
Demographic Metric	Hamilton 6–8	San Jose Middle	Combined	District-Wide Baseline	Variance / Equity Impact Analysis
Socio-economic Status (FRPM %)	89.0% / 138 students	60% / 348 students	Combined Metric: 66.2% 486 students	53% / 3645 students	Impact on Hamilton: Hamilton serves a substantially higher proportion of students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals (89%) than San Jose Middle (60%) and the district overall (53%). The transition should preserve access to academic, counseling, family-engagement, after-school, and other supports used by socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Impact on San Jose: The combined population would be approximately 66.2% FRPM, increasing the concentration of students who may rely on school-based supports. Staffing, family engagement, and access to programs should be reviewed to ensure services scale with enrollment.
Students with IEPs (%)	11.0% / 17 students	15% / 86 students	Combined Metric: 14.0% (103 students).	13% / 891 students	Impact on Hamilton: 17 students move to a school with broader specialized programs and peer groups, provided individual accommodations follow seamlessly. Impact on San Jose: Keeps special education proportions stable (~14%), requiring only routine caseload integration for existing staff.
Foster & Homeless Youth (%)	3% / 5 students	12% / 72 students	Combined Metric: 10.5% (77 students).	5% / 378 students	Impact on Hamilton: 5 students risk losing personalized oversight unless similar services are also offered at San Jose. Impact on San Jose: Concentration eases slightly from 12.4% to 10.5%, though campus remains a primary hub requiring services.

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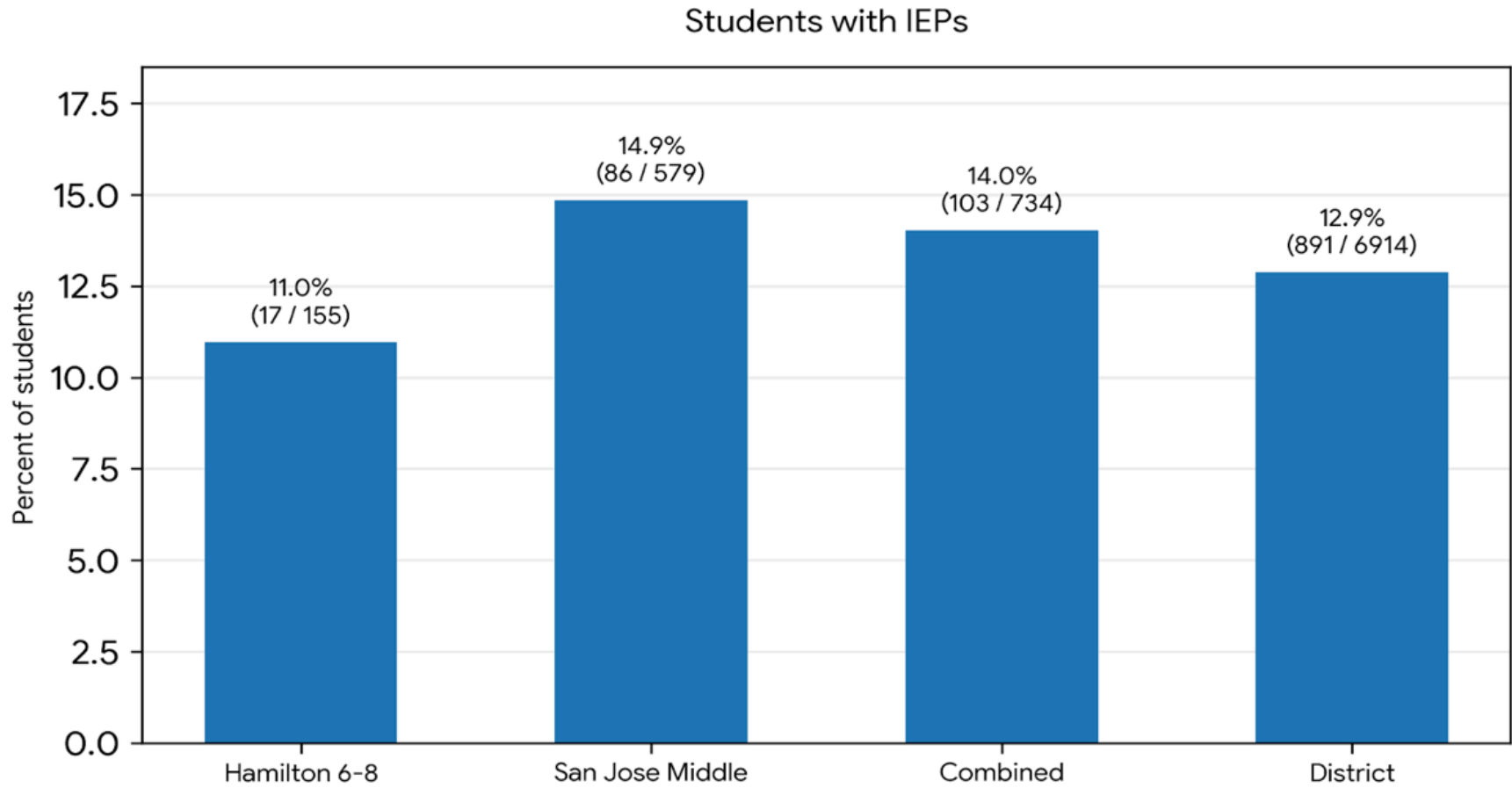
Demographic Metric	Hamilton 6–8	San Jose Middle	Combined	District-Wide Baseline	Variance / Equity Impact Analysis
Racial / Ethnic Breakdown	Hispanic 82.6%/128 White 7.1%/11 Black/Afr. Amer. 3.9%/6 Multiple Races 1.9%/3 Asian 1.3%/2	Hispanic 53.2%/308 White 29.9%/173 Multiple Races 8.8%/51 Asian 4.3%/25 Black/Afr. Amer. 2.3%/13	59.4% Hispanic 25.1% White 7.4% Two+ Races 3.7% Asian 2.6% Black	Hispanic 45.0%/3113 White 38.5%/2659 Asian 3.8%/264 Multiple Races 8.9%/616 Black/Afr. Amer. 2.0%/137	Impact on Hamilton: Requires safeguards against academic tracking into lower-level courses to ensure true integration. Impact on San Jose: Increases Hispanic representation by 6.2 percentage points, reinforcing the need for culturally responsive pedagogy and inclusive school climate initiatives.

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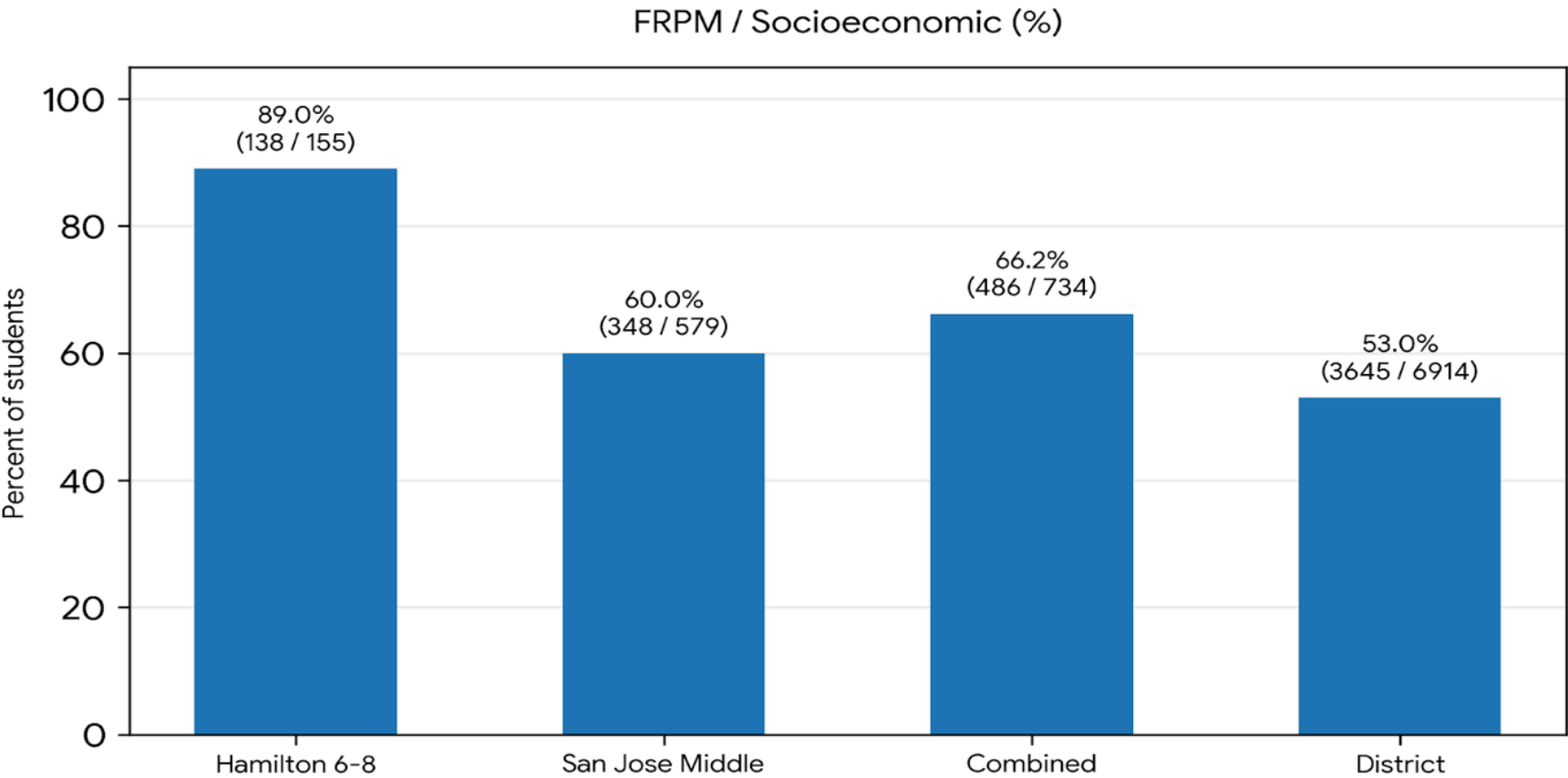
Demographic Data Graphs



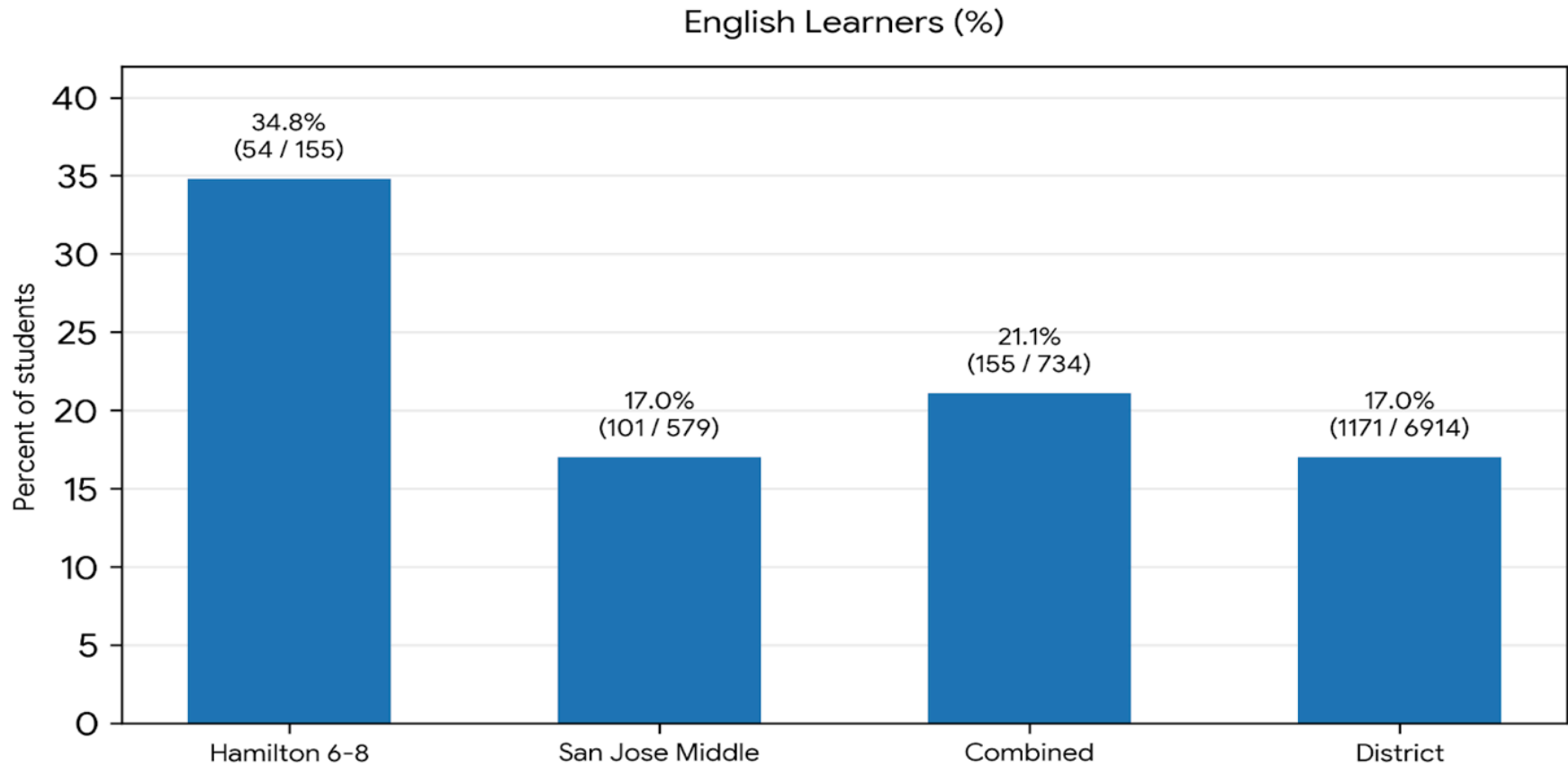
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Note: Combined percentages are calculated from the student counts shown in the demographic table. The FRPM combined figure has been corrected to 66.2% (486 of 734 students). Data source and school year should be added to the final report for each metric.

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3. English Learners & Student Support Verification

Scope: Verify staffing capacity, support structures, and service continuity for English Learners (EL) and Special Education students at San Jose Middle School. FTE= Full Time Equivalent- this represents part-time and/or full-time staffing

Support Category	Current / Projected Staffing (FTE)	Service Model & Continuity Plan	Verification Findings & Gaps
Designated English Language Development (ELD) Instruction	SJMS has .6 FTE (3 sections)	Hamilton has one ELD elective 6th period (one class all grades)	With an increase in the population of English Learners (approximately 50 students), San Jose will need two additional sections of designated English Language Development (ELD) instruction.
Integrated ELD Support	All staff provide integrated ELD support	GLAD trained instruction for all teachers	With an increase in the population of English Learners (approximately 50 students), San Jose staff will need continued professional development for how to best support language learners in the classroom.
Bilingual & Translation Services	1 Community Liaison Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) 0.4 FTE EL Specialist to support students. Push in and pull out progress monitoring.	1 Community Liaison 1 EL para educator for newcomer middle school	There are currently fewer bilingual staff at SJMS than at Hamilton. With an increase in population, the TOSA section FTE allotment for EL Specialist will need to increase to support students.

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Support Category	Current / Projected Staffing (FTE)	Service Model & Continuity Plan	Verification Findings & Gaps
Family Engagement Supports	1 Community Liaison	English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC) Cafecito (Weekly opportunity for families to meet with the Community Liaison) Dual Language Pathway 6-8 There are various celebrations throughout the school year celebrating the diverse community at SJMS.	SJMS will continue to offer opportunities for community engagement. With the increase in population of EL students, there will need to be consideration of increasing FTE or funding for community building events.
IEP & 504 Service Continuity	San Jose Current Staffing: SDC: 2.0 FTE RSP: 2.2 FTE Average Caseload 27/1.0 FTE	Hamilton current Special Education Staffing allotment is 0.4 FTE for middle school. That would be shifted to San Jose depending on student needs and caseloads. All 504 Services and Plans would follow students over to San Jose.	Hamilton does not currently have an NUSD Special Day Class. Hamilton does have 1 middle school MCOE SDC classroom. A classroom will be planned for the MCOE SDC classroom. San Jose Middle School's NUSD SDC classes will need to be considered in the overall planning of special education services. San Jose's Resource Specialist staffing is close to caseload limits. If the part-time staffing allocation from Hamilton is transitioned over to San Jose, it might be an easier position to fill.

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4. Logistics & Facilities Assessment

Scope: Evaluate commute times, traffic safety, transportation options, and physical campus capacity to ensure no disproportionate burden falls on Hamilton families.

Assessment Domain	Evaluation Criteria / Metrics	San Jose Middle Findings	Hamilton Family Burden & Mitigation
Commute Times & Distance	Average transit duration, peak travel times, geographic radius delta	Transit duration - 15 to 25 minutes, General commute 20 to 40 minutes based on route options (Hamilton area to San Jose Middle via Nave Dr to Alameda Del Prado is against traffic)	Roughly 100 of the 150 students are approximately 2 to 3 miles further from school
Traffic Safety & Safe Routes	Pedestrian crossings, bicycle infrastructure, pickup/dropoff zones	Transit routes provide loading zones and drop off adjacent to school grounds. City has sufficient bike routes for Ride/Walk/Bike options	Complete a documented safe-routes review before implementation, including pedestrian crossings, bicycle routes, transit stops, and pickup/drop-off conditions. Coordinate with the City and transportation providers as appropriate; identify any needed crossing-guard, supervision, signage, or traffic-flow measures; and communicate recommended routes to families in multiple languages.
Busing & District Transportation	Bus route availability, capacity, pickup locations, eligibility criteria	Two Transit route options to and from Hamilton area to San Jose middle: 50-80 capacity - Primary - Route 57 (Direct route with 3-4 Hamilton area pickups) - Secondary - Route 49 (requires walking) - Supplemental route 654 with smart train to Hamilton theatre (smart train free for students)	Confirm public-transit capacity, schedules, student fares, and eligibility for free or reduced fares; identify the students for whom public transit is not a workable option; and determine whether supplemental District transportation is feasible after special education transportation obligations are met. Provide families with route maps, pickup locations, travel-time expectations, and a process for transportation-related concerns before the transition.

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Assessment Domain	Evaluation Criteria / Metrics	San Jose Middle Findings	Hamilton Family Burden & Mitigation
Campus & Classroom Capacity	Classroom utilization, max capacity vs projected enrollment, cafeteria/gym size	The SJMS Gym/Multi does not have the capacity to fit the entire student population with the projected increase in enrollment. Events will have to be split into two time periods and offered twice. There is enough classroom space to accommodate the increase in student population, however some Academic Support classes may need to be combined and the MCOE SDC class will either need to move to a new room on campus or move to a different campus. New space sharing agreements for the YMCA will need to be developed. Additional lunch tables and a shade structure would need to be considered.	Complete a room-by-room space allocation plan before implementation. Develop schedules that divide large events into grade-level or smaller-group sessions. Identify outdoor or alternative spaces for appropriate activities and evaluate whether facility modifications could improve long-term capacity. Review lunch schedules, seating capacity, supervision, and food-service flow. Add lunch tables and evaluate installation of an additional shade structure before or during the transition. Develop revised space-sharing agreements with the YMCA well in advance of implementation, identifying dedicated spaces, schedules, storage, and access expectations.

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5. Community Participation and Responsiveness

The following forms of communication have occurred with parents and staff during this process.

8/19/26	Teachers and Staff were notified in person that a transition was being considered; parents were notified by email. A survey was provided to both San Jose and Hamilton staff and community.
8/26/26	First community meeting was scheduled; presentation was prepared based on the survey concerns. Although the meeting did not proceed as planned, staff remained to listen to parents' concerns. Staff decided to move proposed Board Decision from the September 15 Board meeting to the October 6 Board Meeting.
9/2/26	Second community meeting was held during the already schedule One Hamilton meeting; the original information was provided along with updated information based on requests from the community
9/16/26	District staff met with middle school teachers to answer questions and concerns.
9/18/26	Third community meeting was held on Zoom. The information provided was based on parent input and questions.
9/16/25 9/25/26	Staff listening sessions were held and responses to their questions were distributed on September 28
9/30/26	Fourth community meeting is planned to review the results of the Equity Impact Analysis

During this period of time, a Frequently Asked Questions document was developed and distributed to staff and families. Hamilton community members provided public comment at the September 15 Board meeting.

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6. Attendance Patterns, Reassignment, and Specialized Placements

The final implementation plan should clarify whether all Hamilton students in grades 6-8 will be assigned to San Jose Middle School or whether those students residing in the Sinaloa boundaries will have a choice to attend Sinaloa. Lu Sutton will be considered for a boundary change in order to balance the enrollment vs. capacity at the two comprehensive middle schools. Currently Lu Sutton fifth graders going into sixth grade have boundary restrictions for both Sinaloa and San Jose. Transfer requests to either Sinaloa or San Jose will have sibling considerations as a top priority. The Marin County Office of Education specialized classrooms will need to timely consideration. These details should be communicated before enrollment and transition activities begin.

7. Future Use of the Hamilton Site

The proposed action concerns the grades 6-8 program rather than closure of the Hamilton campus. District staff recommend the transition of the Early Intervention program, currently housed as a stand-alone program on the Hamilton parcels property near the public library, to the vacated space at Hamilton School. This program will be best served on a larger campus with more reliable services and support. Furthermore, the analysis recommends that a staff and parent task force be developed to establish the vision and mission for the TK-5 campus and how to increase enrollment again at this site.

8. Operating Costs, Savings, and Transition Costs

Maintaining the current TK–8 configuration at Hamilton School presents growing fiscal and operational challenges that directly limit educational opportunities for middle-school students. Demographic analysis reveals a critical trajectory: total enrollment of 596 students in 2017–18 is projected to fall to 373 by 2029–30—a 37.4% reduction representing 223 fewer students. While this figure includes future projections rather than fully realized losses, it signals a structural shift. Within the 6th through 8th-grade cohorts, enrollment averages approximately 51 students per grade, remaining 27% below the district’s planning benchmark of 70 students per grade required for comprehensive program parity. Across the middle-school grades, this totals 153 students compared to the 210-student benchmark. Simultaneously, shrinking elementary cohorts—projected to reach approximately 30 students per grade in grades 1–5 by 2029–30—weakens the feeder pipeline and diminish the campus’s capacity to distribute shared operating expenses.

The core fiscal strain arises from a fundamental mismatch between declining student enrollment and fixed staffing requirements. Because teaching assignments, planning periods, subject certifications, and supervision must be maintained in whole-class increments, staffing cannot decrease proportionally with individual student departures. As cohorts shrink, the per-student cost of maintaining broad course offerings rises significantly. To sustain the current model, the district must either continuously inject higher per-pupil subsidies or accept restricted electives, complex scheduling, and limited intervention resources. Consolidating the 6th–8th grade program into San Jose Middle School resolves this structural inefficiency by leveraging a larger master schedule, shared facility infrastructure, and broader support systems to preserve educational breadth at a sustainable cost.

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To establish a clear financial picture, the budget adjustments associated with consolidation are categorized across three distinct mechanisms: permanent ongoing savings, budget-neutral reallocations, and non-recurring transition expenditures.

The primary driver of permanent, ongoing savings is the optimization of instructional staffing. Consolidating student populations allows the district to reduce required core teaching positions from 8.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff across the middle-school program down to 5.0 FTE at the combined site. Elimination of the middle-school grade levels also eliminates a middle-school assistant principal position from Hamilton. This structural reduction yields immediate and compounding year-over-year savings in salaries, health benefits, and administrative overhead of over \$600,000. Additionally, integrating NUSD's Early Intervention (EI) program into Hamilton's campus captures operational efficiencies, lowers facility rental costs, and lowers per-student management costs for a total of \$100,000 a year in savings.

In contrast, certain operational adjustments represent budget-neutral reallocations rather than net savings or new costs. Expanding designated English Language Development (ELD) course sections at San Jose Middle School does not increase the operating baseline; these additional classes are fully offset by eliminating the corresponding 6th–8th grade ELD sections at Hamilton, effectively transferring existing budget lines alongside the student population. Furthermore, because Hamilton will remain open as a TK–5 campus, administrative, custodial, maintenance, and utility expenses at Hamilton will not disappear and cannot be counted as savings. Similarly, staff members transferred to the receiving campus remain a district expense rather than eliminated overhead.

Executing the consolidation requires non-recurring transition expenditures strictly limited to the implementation phase. These temporary outlays encompass joint administrative planning, master scheduling, curriculum alignment, physical relocation of instructional materials and technology, multilingual family orientations, and student transition visits. The district's Equity Impact Review also identifies initial one-time capital and setup needs at the receiving site, including lunch tables, specialized classroom configurations, and dedicated after-school space. Because these moving and preparation expenses are temporary, non-recurring investments, they will not impact future operating baselines once integration is complete. Any construction or asset acquisitions will be from facilities funds and will not impact the general fund or increase the deficit.

From an equity perspective, the fiscal challenge stems entirely from scale and cost structure, not from the characteristics or needs of the students. Realizing the full benefits of consolidation requires accounting for essential ongoing access supports, including transportation assistance, expanded counseling, bilingual family engagement, and coordinated extracurricular programming. The final financial determination relies on a verified staffing and expenditure comparison confirming that permanent structural savings comfortably exceed initial transition outlays and ongoing student support investments.

9. Transition Activities

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Activity Type	Target Audience	Description & Key Objectives	Timeline & Responsibility
Student Shadow Days	Incoming Hamilton Students	Campus tours, shadow current middle schoolers, elective showcases, collaboration with SJMS leadership class.	Target Dates: 11/2026 - 4/2027 Site Administrators
Parent & Family Orientations	Hamilton Families	Tours, collaborative PTA/ELAC meetings, Cafecitos, Q&A sessions, transportation briefs. All of these opportunities will involve translation/support for our multilingual learner families.	Target Dates: 11/2026 - 4/2027 Site Administrators
Staff Collaboration Days	Hamilton & San Jose Staff	Joint Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and Instructional Leadership Team (ILT) meetings (with a focus on scope and sequence, culture and community, data and interventions), and student transition sessions.	Target Dates: 11/2026 - 4/2027 Site Administrators

10. Alternative Options Considered

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Alternative Option Evaluated	Description & Model	Rationale for Not Selecting	Impact Evaluation Summary
Option A: Continue 6-8 program as is	Maintain the current Hamilton 6–8 program, staffing model, course offerings, and campus configuration for the 2027–28 school year.	This option would not address the underlying challenges created by declining enrollment and the small size of the middle school program. Maintaining the existing staffing and program structure would require the District to continue supporting a comparatively high-cost model while serving a declining number of students. It would also limit the District’s ability to achieve the ongoing expenditure reductions needed to maintain fiscal stability.	Educational: Preserves continuity for current families and students but does not resolve limitations associated with operating a small middle school program, including scheduling and breadth of course offerings. Fiscal: Produces no ongoing savings. Operational: Maintains the current structure without addressing long-term enrollment and staffing sustainability.
Option B: Continue 6-8 program with fewer teachers	Maintain grades 6–8 at Hamilton but reduce the number of certificated staff assigned to the program to lower operating costs. Teachers would likely be required to teach across additional grade levels, subjects, or course preparations.	Although this model could generate some savings, the reduced staffing level would significantly constrain the ability to offer a comprehensive middle school experience. A smaller staff would make scheduling more difficult and could reduce electives, intervention opportunities, advanced coursework, teacher collaboration, and flexibility to respond to student needs. The savings would also be less than those achieved by consolidating the program at San Jose Middle School.	Educational: Greater likelihood of reduced course choices, fewer electives and interventions, and increased teacher preparations. Fiscal: Provides partial savings but does not fully address the cost of maintaining a separate 6–8 program. Operational: Creates a less flexible staffing and scheduling model that becomes increasingly difficult to sustain as enrollment declines.
Option C: Hamilton has a 6th grade program then	Rather than moving all grades at one time, transition the program	A phased approach could reduce the immediate disruption for current students but would require the District to operate two	Educational: Provides continuity for some current students but may result in very small cohorts and increasingly

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Alternative Option Evaluated	Description & Model	Rationale for Not Selecting	Impact Evaluation Summary
7th-8th moves to SJMS	to San Jose Middle School over multiple years—for example, moving incoming sixth graders first while allowing current seventh- and eighth-grade students to remain at Hamilton until promotion.	middle school programs simultaneously during the transition. This would delay the full fiscal and operational benefits of consolidation and could result in increasingly small grade-level cohorts at Hamilton, making staffing, scheduling, and access to courses more difficult each year.	limited programming at Hamilton during the transition. Fiscal: Delays full ongoing savings and may require duplicative staffing or services across two campuses. Operational: Extends the transition period and creates additional scheduling, staffing, transportation, and communication complexity.

11. Implementation Commitments and Verification

Where feasible, mitigation measures should be converted from considerations into implementation commitments. The final implementation plan would identify the measure, responsible department or position, target completion date, and evidence of completion. Priority commitments include additional designated ELD sections; appropriate EL Specialist/bilingual capacity; professional development for multilingual learner support; continuity of IEP/504, counseling, wellness, and family-engagement services; resolution of the MCOE SDC classroom location; room allocation and YMCA space-sharing; lunch seating/shade and large-event scheduling; and completion of transportation and safe-routes planning. The plan should also include the RISE programs expanding to San Jose Middle School.

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Equity Impact Analysis Summary: Hamilton 6th-8th Grade Program Transition to San Jose Middle School

The Equity Impact Analysis reviewed the proposed transition of Hamilton students in grades 6–8 to San Jose Middle School (SJMS) across educational opportunities, student demographics, English Learner and special education services, facilities and logistics, transition supports, and alternative options. The analysis identifies both potential benefits and areas requiring mitigation. Hamilton students would move from a smaller TK–8 setting to a comprehensive middle school with a broader range of electives, specialized academic programs, counseling services, and extracurricular opportunities. SJMS currently offers additional electives and a Dual Language pathway, while Hamilton's partnership with the RISE Foundation provides strengths in athletics, mentoring, and student activities that could potentially be extended to SJMS.

The demographic analysis identifies equity considerations associated with moving approximately 155 Hamilton students to SJMS, increasing the SJMS student population from 579 to approximately 734 students. Hamilton serves proportionally higher concentrations of English Learners and students qualifying for free or reduced-price meals than SJMS and the district overall. The analysis therefore identifies the need to ensure that the transition does not diminish access to language development, family engagement, academic support, or other services currently available to Hamilton students. It also recognizes that students will be transitioning from a substantially smaller school environment and may require intentional supports to maintain a sense of belonging and connection.

Particular attention will be necessary for English Learner services. The analysis anticipates approximately 50 additional English Learners at SJMS and identifies the need for at least two additional sections of designated ELD. It also recommends ongoing professional development for staff supporting multilingual learners and consideration of increased EL Specialist capacity because SJMS currently has fewer bilingual staff than Hamilton. Family engagement and language-access supports, including the Community Liaison, ELAC, Cafecitos, translation, and culturally responsive community-building opportunities, should continue and be scaled as necessary.

Special education services will also require deliberate transition planning. Hamilton's current 0.4 FTE middle-school special education allocation is anticipated to shift to SJMS based on caseload needs. The Marin County Office of Education Special Day classes and district Special Day classes currently located at Hamilton and at San Jose will require further consideration.

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Summary of Considerations and Mitigations

Facility capacity at SJMS is generally sufficient to accommodate the additional students in classrooms, but the analysis identifies several operational constraints. The gym/multi-purpose facility will not accommodate the entire projected student population simultaneously, requiring some assemblies and events to occur in smaller groups. Academic Support classes may need to be combined; space arrangements for the MCOE SDC classroom must be resolved; and new YMCA space-sharing agreements will be necessary. Additional lunch tables and a shade structure should also be considered. Recommended mitigation includes completing a room-by-room allocation plan, reviewing lunch schedules and food-service flow, establishing YMCA agreements before implementation, and developing alternative schedules and locations for large-group activities.

Student and family transition supports are an important component of mitigating the change in school environment. The proposed transition plan includes student shadow days, campus tours, elective showcases, collaboration with SJMS student leadership, parent orientations, PTA/ELAC meetings, Cafecitos, Q&A sessions, transportation information, and multilingual family support. Joint Hamilton/SJMS staff collaboration is also planned around curriculum, school culture, student data, interventions, and individual student transitions. These activities are scheduled primarily between November 2026 and April 2027.

The analysis also considered alternatives to a full transition, including maintaining the existing Hamilton 6–8 program, operating the program with fewer teachers, and phasing the transition over multiple years. Maintaining the existing program would provide continuity but would not address declining enrollment, program limitations, or ongoing costs. Reducing staffing could provide partial savings but would likely constrain electives, interventions, scheduling, and teacher collaboration. A phased transition could reduce immediate disruption for some students but would require operating increasingly small middle-school cohorts at Hamilton while maintaining programs across two campuses, delaying savings and adding staffing, scheduling, transportation, and communication complexity.

Overall, the analysis identifies specific burdens associated with the transition but also identifies corresponding mitigation measures and potential educational opportunities. Key implementation considerations include sufficient ELD and bilingual support; continuity of IEP, counseling, wellness, and family-engagement services; appropriate classroom and specialized-program space; lunch and large-event capacity; transportation and safe access once those assessments are completed; and intentional transition activities that preserve student belonging and family connection. Continued monitoring of these areas before and after implementation would allow the District to determine whether identified mitigations are functioning as intended and whether additional supports are necessary.

Framework reference: California Department of Education, Best Practices Guide for Potential School Closure (2024, reviewed Aug. 25, 2026), including Education Code section 41329 criteria.