

Board of Trustees,

The Board's basic responsibilities include adopting a fiscally responsible budget based on the District's vision and goals and regularly monitoring the fiscal health of the District. The Board is authorized to establish and finance any program or activity that is not in conflict with, inconsistent with, or preempted by law. (Ed. Code, § 35160.) The Legislature has found that school districts have diverse needs unique to their individual communities and that districts should have the flexibility to create their own unique solutions. (Ed. Code, § 35160.1.) Inherent in this authority is the ability to close a school when circumstances of declining enrollment and economic necessity demand it. As set forth below, to close a school, the District must: (1) seek community input, (2) consider potential environmental impacts, and (3) notify the California Department of Education ("CDE") of the closure.

The Education Code provides very limited guidance on the school closure process. However, the first step in permanently closing a school is to seek community input. The Education Code does not prescribe a specific process for such community involvement. To ensure community involvement, the board of trustees, on April 28, 2020, chose to utilize the process for evaluation of surplus property set forth in Education Code section 17387, *et seq.*, which requires the Board to appoint an advisory committee ("7-11 Committee") to evaluate and advise the Board on this matter. The advantage to this approach is that it forecloses any argument that the District is not receiving adequate community input. Also, if the District follows this approach, it can utilize the same Committee for the school closure process and any subsequent sale or lease of property.

On April 28, 2020, the Board of Trustees authorized staff to advertise for community members to join this committee. The application period was between April 29, 2020 and May 19, 2020. During the advertising period staff receive 19 applications. At two subsequent Board meetings (May 26 and August 11, 2020), Trustees approved the 11 members of the committee. (Attached is the advertisement and application.) Additionally, all meetings were conducted via Zoom Conferencing, due to in-person meeting limitations imposed by California's Blueprint for a Safer Economy.

The 7-11 Committee must be appointed by the Board, and must consist of between seven and eleven members who are representatives of each of the following (Ed. Code, § 17388-17389):

- The ethnic, age group, and socioeconomic composition of the District.
- The business community, such as store owners, managers, or supervisors.
- Landowners or renters, with preference to be given to representatives of neighborhood associations.
- Teachers.
- Administrators.
- Parents of students.
- Persons with expertise in environmental impact, legal contracts, building codes, and land use planning, including, but not limited to, knowledge of the zoning and other land use restrictions of the cities and counties in which surplus space and real property is located.

January 26, 2021

At the conclusion of its work, the Committee is required to provide the district governing board a report with a recommendation. The Board, taking into consideration the 7-11 Committee's recommendations, which are advisory and nonbinding, determines whether it will declare some or all of the properties surplus and announce its intent to sell or lease the properties in question.

Prior to the Board of Trustees making a final determination, staff recommends additional fact-finding. This should be done through multiple community meetings and public hearings. This will include:

- Review of the district's Facility Masterplan and how a potential school closure could affect or reinforce that plan,
- Considering options such as grade span reconfiguration, including reorganization of elementary schools from TK-6 grade and/or the addition of a TK-8 school,
- Operating costs of a school,
- Capacity of schools to accommodate excess students,
- Special program facilities,
- Ethnicity balance,
- Transportation,
- Neighborhoods,
- Environmental factors.

To ensure appropriate representation on future committees, it is recommended that additional efforts be made to advertise and solicit participation from a broad range of community members, including language interpretation.

In alignment with the recommendation of additional fact-finding, some committee members have provided the following input for the Board of Trustees to consider. Please see comments from:

- Rita Koski
- Jessica Shaffer
- Emily Reneau
- Kim Gaspar
- Amy Oberg
- Moria McNellis

In conclusion, the intent of this separate letter is to ensure the comments and concerns from committee members are expressed to the Board of Trustees.

Respectfully submitted,



Brad Pawlowski  
Assistant Superintendent, Business Services



Dear PRJUSD Community,

Over the past year, the Paso Robles Joint Unified School District Board of Trustees, district leadership team and staff have undergone a detailed and holistic review of the district's budget in order to assess and remedy our current financial challenges as we face dramatic declining enrollment and subsequent declining revenues. This important work aligns with our district *Goal #3: Support Systems for Student Success and Student Achievement*, which is done by having stable and predictable funding. Our long-term financial stability is essential so that we are capable of delivering on our educational promise to PRJUSD students.

In PRJUSD, similar to all districts in California, one of our major asset categories is real property which includes land and school facilities. It is our fiduciary responsibility to maximize these assets, ensuring they are utilized efficiently and effectively so we can continue to provide exceptional learning opportunities for all students. Given our current budget shortfall, we have reviewed and analyzed our assets to determine if opportunities exist to maximize their usage given our current financial situation. After reviewing financial and enrollment data, it is clear that we need to examine the possibility of closing and/or consolidating an elementary campus, as we aim to reduce annual operational costs. We have facilitated preliminary, open discussions in the community around this topic, and it is time to prioritize this work, and form a committee to delve deeper into this issue. This committee will work collaboratively and proactively to understand the overall impact of small schools on the district's budget and examine potential solutions.

We are looking for thoughtful, capable and committed community members to serve on what is referred to as a "7-11 Committee". We expect the committee to be in place by June 1, 2020 and to complete its work by December 1, 2020. This committee will make a formal recommendation to the Board of Trustees around school closures/consolidations and possible uses for the property if any schools are closed. Additionally, this committee will review a list of unused properties owned by the district and make formal recommendations for their use in the future. We are committed to both inclusion and transparency in this process and to that end, the committee's proceedings and deliberations will be open to the public and all minutes and recordings will be published on our district website. If you are interested in serving on this committee to examine this important issue, please review and complete the attached application by May 19, 2020.



Under California law (Education Code sec. 17389), the Committee must have at least seven (7) members and no more than eleven (11) members and contain persons who can be representative of each of the following:

- a. The ethnic, age group and socioeconomic composition of the district;
- b. The business community, such as store owners, managers, or supervisors;
- c. Landowners or renters, with preference to be given to representatives of neighborhood associations;
- d. Teachers;
- e. Administrators;
- f. Parents of students;
- g. Persons with expertise in environmental impact, legal contracts, building codes, and land use planning, including, but not limited to, knowledge of the zoning and other land use restrictions of the cities or cities and counties in which surplus space and real property is located.

California law also designates the specific duties of a 7-11 Committee (Education Code § 17390) as follows:

- a. Review the projected school enrollment and other data as provided by the district to determine the amount of surplus space and real property;
- b. Establish a priority list of use of surplus space and real property that will be acceptable to the community;
- c. Cause to have circulated throughout the attendance area a priority list of surplus space and real property and provide for hearings of community input to the Committee on acceptable uses of space and real property, including the sale or lease of surplus real property for child care development purposes pursuant to Education Code § 17458;
- d. Make a final determination of limits of tolerance of use of space and real property;
- e. Forward to the Board of Trustees a report recommending uses of surplus space and real property.

Again, we expect the Committee to be in place by June 1, 2020 and to complete its work by December 1, 2020. Members of the Committee serve only on a voluntary basis. Below is our anticipated tentative committee timeline. All committee meetings will be from 5:30pm - 7:30 pm at 800 Niblick Road, Board Room:

May 19: Application submittal deadline

May 21: Selected committee member notification for Board of Education approval on  
May 26.



- May 26: Regular Board of Education meeting for committee approval
- June 15: First meeting of the 7-11 District Advisory Committee (organizational meeting)
- July 20: Second meeting of the 7-11 District Advisory Committee
- August 24: Third meeting of the 7-11 District Advisory Committee
- September 21: Final meeting of the 7-11 District Advisory Committee
- October 27: Draft report presented to the Board of Education for review and comment
- November 10: Final report presented to the Board of Education

If you would like to be considered to serve on the PRJUSD 7-11 Committee, please complete the attached application and return it to the Office of the Chief Business Official, Attn: Monica Silva, located at 800 Niblick Road, Paso Robles, CA 93446.

The deadline to apply is **4:30pm on Tuesday, May 19, 2020**. Any questions regarding the 7-11 committee application and/or process should be emailed to [bpawlowski@pasoschools.org](mailto:bpawlowski@pasoschools.org) or you can call the Office of the Chief Business Official at (805) 769-1000.

As the Chief Business Official, I am continually impressed by the passion and dedication I see every day in our PRJUSD community and I ask for both your engagement and participation as we embark on this challenging work ahead. Through open conversations grounded in a commitment to our district's vision and goals, we are confident our students will continue to thrive socially, emotionally and academically as we navigate these complex issues.

Best Regards,

Brad Pawlowski

Chief Business Official



## CONFLICT OF INTEREST LAW: REAL PROPERTY

### DISCUSSION

There are two sets of laws that address conflict of interest issues in general and may apply to board appointed advisory committee members and their ownership of property in particular. The Government Code addresses conflicts of interest generally in Section 1090 et seq. The Political Reform Act, which can be found in Government Code (Section 87100 et seq.) and the California Code of Regulations (Title 2, Section 18700 et seq.) also addresses conflicts of interest and specifically discusses the issue of property ownership. This memo focuses on the Political Reform Act since it addresses the issue of property ownership specifically and we do not think the Section 1090 would be triggered here.

### Political Reform Act

The Political Reform Act is found in the Government Code (Section 87100 et seq.) and the California Code of Regulations (Title II, Section 18700 et seq.). In general, the Act prohibits any public official from participating in a governmental decision that may affect his or her financial interest. Specifically, the Act lays out a six-step analysis to determine if a conflict of interest exists in any given situation. Special instructions are given throughout this analysis when property ownership is at issue. Below, we discuss each step in the context of property ownership.

#### 1. Elements

- a. Public Official – As defined by Section 82048, public official includes any member of a state or local government agency, including members of advisory bodies.
- b. Influencing a Government Decision – In order for a conflict of interest to exist, the public official must be attempting to use his or her official position to influence a governmental decision. According to Section 18702.1(a), this occurs when “the official votes on a matter, obligates his agency to a course of action, or enters into any contractual agreement on behalf of his or her agency.” Any decision that relates to property will fall under this category.
- c. Economic Interest – In order to be considered a conflict of interest, the official in question must have an economic interest that may be financially affected by the decision. (Section 87103(b).) In terms of property ownership, the public official in question will have an economic interest if he or she has some type of interest in a piece of property that is worth at least two thousand dollars. (Section 87103.)
- d. Potential Effect on Economic Interest – Once it is established that the public official has a financial interest, it must be shown that the economic interest will be or possibly could be affected by the decision. According to Section 18704.2(a)(1),



this step is satisfied if the member's property is within 500 feet of the boundary of the government's property.

- e. **Material Effect** – The effect on the public official's property must be material. According to Regulation 18705.2(a), any "reasonably foreseeable" effect on the member's property is presumed to be material. If the public official can argue that the effect was not reasonably foreseeable, this presumption may be rebutted. The Regulation specifically states that a decision is not material if it does not foresee effect any of the following:
    - 1) the termination date of the lease,
    - 2) the amount of rent paid related to the property,
    - 3) the value of the right to sublease the property,
    - 4) the allowed use or actual use of the property, or
    - 5) the use or enjoyment of the property.
  - f. **Reasonably Foreseeable Effect** – At the time the government decision was made, the financial effect on the member's property must be reasonably foreseeable. This standard depends on the facts of the case. However, according to relevant decisions, an effect is always considered reasonably foreseeable if the government's decision will alter the use or value of the property in any manner.
2. **Consequences** – Once it is determined the public official fits all the elements and has a conflict of interest, he or she must follow the following steps as outlined in Section 87105.
- a. **Public Identification** – First, the member must make the conflict of interest known to the public. The code requires the public identification to be "in detail sufficient to be understood by the public" but it specifically states that "disclosure of the exact street address of a residence is not required." (Section 87105.)
  - b. **Recuse** – The member must then recuse himself from discussing and voting on the manner.
  - c. **Absence** – The member must leave the room during the vote as well as during any discussion of the matter and any disposition of the matter. The section allows the member to speak about the issue during the time that the general public is allowed to speak on the issue.

### **Government Code Section 1090**

The Government Code Section 1090, et. seq. also deals with conflicts of interest. This section is boarder than the Political Reform Act but it does not specifically address the property ownership issue. It states that public officials cannot hold a financial interest in any contract made by them in their official capacity. As this advisory committee will not be contracting in their official capacity, we believe Section 1090 would not apply.



Relevant Case Law – Conflict of interest issues concerning real property owned by a public official was addressed by the California appellate court in *Downey Cares v. Downey Community Development Commission* (1987) 196 Cal.App.3d 983. In *Downey Cares*, the court considered whether the material financial effect on the value of a councilmember's real property and real estate business of amendment of a redevelopment plan was reasonably foreseeable. The councilmember owned real property in both the old and amended redevelopment project areas and his real estate business was located in the amended area. The trial court based its decision in part on the fact that while amendment of the plan did not spend money on specific projects, it began the process of setting aside revenues for improvements in the plan area. The trial court also found that it had a reasonably foreseeable effect on the councilmember's income as a realtor because such income is based on percentage of property value sold and it was reasonably foreseeable that the amendment to the plan area would increase property values. (*Downey Cares*, supra, at 989-90.)

The councilmember argued that the conflict laws did not bar his participation in the action to amend the plan because the amendment of the plan did not specify or authorize any particular projects so it could not have a reasonably foreseeable financial effect on any specific property, including the councilmember's. The councilmember conceded that he might be barred from future votes on implementation of the redevelopment plan, but argued that he was not barred from voting on the amendment of the plan. (*Id.* at 990.)

The Court of Appeal rejected the councilmember's argument as too narrow an interpretation of the PRA. (*Ibid.*) According to the Court:

In determining the reasonably foreseeable effects of the adoption of the redevelopment plan, the court may justifiably consider that the very purpose of redevelopment is to improve the property conditions in the redevelopment area. [Citation and footnote omitted.] The fact that it might be possible to conceive of specific redevelopment projects which might fail to affect [the councilmember's] property and business does not show the trial court's decision was wrong. The test is whether it was reasonably foreseeable that the adoption of the plan would have a material financial effect on [the councilmember's] property and business, and we find the trial court's decision supported by reasonable inferences and the record.

\*\*\* Footnote 4: Drawing reasonable inferences that redevelopment will foreseeably increase property values and realtor income, while taking care to decide each case on its individual circumstances, is a reasonable accommodation of conflicting considerations. Such interpretation does not paralyze redevelopment agencies from taking the first steps toward redevelopment. Government Code section 87101 provides: ••section87100 does not prevent any public official from making or participating in the making of a



governmental decision to the extent his participation is legally required for the action or decision to be made. The fact that an official's vote is needed to break a tie does not make his participation legally required for purposes of this section." This section represents a compromise which permits government agencies to act but minimizes conflicts of interest, reflecting a policy that the actions of a closely divided council or commission should not be determined by a member who is financially interested in the decision. (Downey Cares, supra, at 991.)

### **Conclusion**

If an advisory committee member owns a piece of property that may be financially affected by an act of the committee, the Political Reform Act may require that the committee takes steps to ensure its decisions are not influenced by the advisory committee member in question.



**PASO ROBLES JOINT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**7-11 Advisory Committee**

**Member Application Form**

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Address: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Email: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Parent of a student attending PRJUSD?  Yes  No

7. Category under which you are eligible to apply (check all categories that apply)

Business community member, such as store owner, manager or supervisor. Name of business organization you are active in:

\_\_\_\_\_

Landowner or renter, with preference given to representatives of neighborhood associations.

Name of neighborhood association, if any, you are active in:

\_\_\_\_\_

Teacher  Administrator

Work Site: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent /guardian of at least one child currently enrolled in a school in the district.

Name of your child(ren) and school(s) he/she is enrolled in:

\_\_\_\_\_

Person with expertise in environmental impact, legal contracts, building codes and land use planning, including, but not limited to, knowledge of the zoning and other land use restrictions of the cities or cities and counties in which surplus space and real property is located.





Describe your area of expertise: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Please indicate below why you are interested in serving on the Paso Robles Joint Unified School District 7-11 Advisory Committee. Attach additional page if needed.

9. Please indicate the experience you have attending and participating in virtual meetings such as Zoom, Google Meet, WebEx, etc.

**Application Process**

**Completed applications must be received at the address below by no later than 4:30pm on Tuesday, May 19, 2020.**

Mail or Deliver to: PRJUSD 7-11 Advisory Committee  
c/o Monica Silva, Administrative Assistant CBO  
Paso Robles Joint Unified School District  
800 Niblick Road  
Paso Robles, CA 93446

If you are recommended to serve on this committee you will be notified no later than May 21, 2020, with the first meeting scheduled to occur on Monday, June 15, 2020 from 5:30pm - 7:30pm. All meetings will take place at 800 Niblick Road, Board Room.



## Recommendations for the 7-11 Committee Report to PRJUSD District Leadership and Trustees

The California Department of Education (CDE) provides districts with helpful guidelines in its **“Closing a School Best Practices Guide”** and it’s from the tenets found in this document, specifically Chapters 1 and 2, that I draw my own recommendations to the 7-11 Committee Members, the PRJUSD School Board Trustees, District Staff and members of any future committees tasked with finding a new home for Georgia Brown Elementary, drawing school boundaries, determining the fate of Glen Speck Elementary and considering changes to any other programs and schools in the district resulting from the closure and subsequent action to surplus the current 36th Street Georgia Brown Elementary School campus.

The introduction to the CDE Best Practices Guide reads as follows:

***The decision to close a school is anguishing. It profoundly affects parents, neighborhoods, communities, district personnel, and, of course, students. It affects relationships, routines and cherished territorialities. In short, it alters not only district operations but also lives.***

Although technically the 7-11 Committee in its last meeting voted to close a campus and not a program, it still feels like closing a school. The decision to close the Georgia Brown campus, because of the school’s unique program may very well result in the closing of a second “school” (program) and the subsequent redistribution of those students. In regard to CDE school closure guidelines, district leadership was thoughtful in pursuing and presenting data regarding current and future student enrollment, current capacity at each elementary site, typical operating costs for an elementary site as well as identifying vacant property. Nonetheless, there were significant tasks outlined in the CDE’s guidelines that we did not pursue as a committee. **With these concerns weighing heavily on my mind, and with the recognition that the 7-11 Committee did not cover some of the CDE’s guidelines, my recommendations lean toward following the guidelines in areas that our committee *did not* gather data or thoroughly discuss.**

My recommendations include thoughtfully considering the following tasks before making *any* decision to close a campus or school is finalized:

- **Identify housing/transportation options** for attendees at current sites and students who will be displaced (see tasks in CDC Best Practices, Chapter 1) by the closing of the Georgia Brown campus and possibly Glen Speck as the only remaining neighborhood school on the west side of Paso Robles. Chapter 2 of the CDE’s Best Practices Guidelines implore any District Advisory Committee (DAC) such as the 7-11 Committee to insure “that there can be **safe walking routes for the displaced students to the new school.**” I believe our committee failed to do that in the meetings we have held up to the writing of this draft. It is imperative that any future deciding body do so.
- **Consider “the uniqueness of the educational program at each site.” (Chapter 1)** Because the majority of members in an 8 to 3 vote chose to close Georgia Brown, any

future committee as well as PRJUSD Trustees must consider that this school's highly unique program dictates that these students and staff remain together in order to accomplish the mission of the program. These students and staff cannot be redistributed as another elementary campus student body might. Therefore, movement of its program can either be very disruptive and, in my opinion, devastating to neighborhood children on the west side if not completed with extreme forethought and consideration. Furthermore, because at least half the student body is typically drawn from native Spanish speakers, it makes more sense that this school would remain on the west side of town.

- Fully **consider the “capacity of a school to accommodate excess students.”** There has been considerable discussion by district personnel, school board trustees during public school board meetings this past year as well as members of the 7-11 committee during public meetings and/or during the campus visitations “field trip” in regard to adding capacity to current buildings (e.g. second stories) or plopping modular classrooms on the 17th and Vine campus (originally slated to be Glen Speck) in order to accommodate a much larger elementary population (namely Georgia Brown students). My concern with such a move is that Glen Speck has just over 8 usable acres and has the smallest playground of any elementary school 7-11 Committee members visited in late October. The CDE asks 7-11 committees to choose receiving sites that can accommodate more students “*without* encroaching on playground/playfield space.” **It is not a good use of district Measure M funds to significantly alter the 17th street site to accommodate 200+ additional students when other school campuses can already accommodate Georgia Brown’s nearly 700 student population.**
- **Consider the existing ethnic balance at schools in the district.** According to CDE guidelines which we were tasked to consider but in this area did not, “closing a school and redistributing its students should change as little as possible the ethnic balance in schools throughout the district. Closing some schools will more adversely affect ethnic distribution than others” (see CDC Guidelines for DACs, Chapter 2).
- **Value the importance of neighborhood schools.** The CDC Guidelines state specifically that “**having a neighborhood school is a part of every parent’s sense of well being** (not to mention the savings associated with [families’] transportation costs). The availability of nearby schools to the ones chosen for closure can lessen the impact of displacement and loss of connection to the new school.” Because Georgia Brown fully operates as a magnet school, Glen Speck is the only true neighborhood school on the west side of Paso Robles. What kind of message would we as a district be sending to west side students and families who walk and drive past the 17th street campus daily on their way to the temporary site on 26th Street? Would it be “thanks, kids, for your resiliency these past 7 years transitioning between 7 principals, 4 guidance specialists, 5

psychologists, turnover of over 70 percent of the staff on top of two school moves (and now possibly a third), but, sorry, you can't attend this \$20 million dollar plus brand new campus?" This seems inevitable if the Georgia Brown dual immersion program moved to the 17th Street site as its unique student composition would prevent many if not most Glen Speck students from attending (i.e. they have not attended a dual immersion program since kindergarten or even first grade so would not be able to attend as second-through fifth graders). **It is one thing to articulate the value of a neighborhood school but another to stand behind these convictions with compassionate and just action. I strongly recommend that Glen Speck continue as a neighborhood school** on the west side for any displaced students from Georgia Brown, current students who call Glen Speck home, as well as future students who move to the more affordable apartments on the Spring Street corridor between 36th Street at the north end and subsidized housing just off 3rd at the southern end. **This would send a strong message that our district values EQUITY and ALL the students and families in its boundaries.**

Therefore, because of the CDC guidelines referenced above as well as other factors unique to PRJUSD, I recommend the following:

1. **Relocate the highly successful Georgia Brown Dual Immersion Program to the 24th street campus that Flamson Middle School currently occupies.** It is near the middle of the Spring Street corridor that draws west side neighborhood students who currently attend the school as well as future attendees (in particular, native Spanish speakers, siblings of current attendees and students of staff members). Furthermore, it is a large campus that can easily accommodate an elementary school of Georgia Brown's size.
2. **Georgia Brown grows to an expanded K-8 Dual Immersion Program** at the Flamson site that would not only entice students to remain in PRJUSD past grade 5, a great boon to the district's greatest draw for interdistrict transfers, but also improve the rigor and continuity for the dual immersion program overall. We can start planning thoughtfully now for this transition process to take place smoothly and with as little disruption as possible.
3. **Make the other 5 elementary campuses K-6 schools**, thereby mitigating academic loss incurred with the transition between 5th and 6th grades (a discussion our district leadership has already initiated with Trustees this past year). As seen from capacity data presented to the 7-11 Committee on numerous occasions, each remaining elementary site has capacity to comfortably absorb its 6th graders.
4. **Provide transportation to displaced students by creating a bus run between Lewis and what is currently Flamson** to accommodate students on the west side who are not dual immersion school attendees and would need to attend Daniel Day Lewis Middle School.

5. **Make a concerted effort to reach out to parents of English Learners** not only on the west side but all over the district to inform them of the 7-11 Committee vote this past meeting and to recruit parents to join future committees deciding the future of not only Georgia Brown but all the sites. Decisions of this magnitude and the processes to reach them **MUST** include all stakeholders and I fear this important population has been left out of the discussion thus far in large part to meeting restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. No future committee should hold a single meeting without representation of our district's English Learner families.

In closing, I thank district leadership, district staff, committee leadership and participants for the considerable time invested already in this process. Thank you for thoughtfully reviewing and considering these recommendations when planning for the campus closure, transition of students, staff and families to new sites and holding public hearings to discuss said transitions.

While I have many recommendations and plead for the Board's consideration in the following areas, I would like to begin by taking a moment to explain why I wanted to be involved with this committee. I applied to be a part of this group in order to be a voice for our students and parents who don't typically speak up. As you review the recommendations in this report and are tasked to make many difficult decisions, please remember that the voices you hear from do not always represent all the students you need to protect. Some of those that will be the most affected by these upcoming decisions, are the students and families that will be quiet, scared to speak at meetings, and busy with trying to survive the daily struggles of life. Please remember that it is the Board's job to consider the needs of every student. Equity is essential. Some students' needs are more or different...not all students can be easily represented by numbers on a page. Data is important, but it is not everything.

As a committee, we were asked to use the California Department of Education's (CDE's) "Closing a School Best Practices Guide" as a model for areas to consider. I implore you to closely review this guide prior to making a decision. Throughout the guide are references to several considerations that cannot easily be represented in numbers. These areas include, but are not limited to, neighborhoods, transportation, and ethnic balance. While the data in this report includes the numbers for projected declining enrollment, campus capacity, and operating costs, it does not include these other essential components that are harder to quantify.

The committee was presented with many data points that focused on guiding the members through the process of understanding the operating and upgraded facilities costs associated with each campus. However, these numbers did not include the "cost" of closing a school in regard to the impact on our children in the area of their social emotional well-being. There are several studies that have been conducted on the impact of change on a child's education, achievement, and mental health. As we have all experienced recently with the emergency school closures and distance learning, the social emotional health of our students has been greatly impacted by limited social connections and the sense of community and love that is felt from attending school. Caring relationships are at the heart of a school community. The closure of a school is not just the loss of a campus, but the loss of the caring adults, friendships with peers, and overall sense of belonging a student feels with their elementary school. Some argue that students are adaptive and will build new relationships. I argue they shouldn't have to experience the trauma that comes with the feelings of loneliness, abandonment, separation, insecurity, and fear associated with changing schools...especially from a school that may be the one place they feel safe and loved.

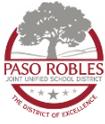
The recommendation of the committee included the vote to close the physical school campus of Georgia Brown. I have closely examined the data presented and agree that the dual immersion program offered at Georgia Brown as essentially outgrown the physical campus. This program brings in students from other districts and offers a unique opportunity for students. The data in this report clearly leads us to the conclusion that Georgia Brown requires a campus that can expand with the demand of the program. My fears do not lie with the elimination of this wonderful program, because I do not believe the district will eliminate a profitable school with a

vocal backing. I instead fear the true victims in the decision the Board has been asked to make, are the current students at the school that is the future site of Georgia Brown.

There are several ways this situation has been described. The students and school at one of our current sites will be “distributed,” “re-boundaried,” “consolidated,” but ultimately this yet to be named school will be closed...eliminated...and the students will be moved. The impact of this decision cannot be put into a data point. If the board chooses to move forward with the closing of the Georgia Brown campus and the elimination of an additional school, I beg you to consider the impacts of the following:

- 1) Closing a neighborhood school-
  - a) Consider how many students are within walking distance to the closing school and if there is another comparable school within walking distance; considering the district has recently been forced to eliminate bussing
  - b) How many times have the students at the considered campus had their education disrupted by a district prompted move? For example, Bauer Speck currently remains on an unfinished temporary campus with the promise of returning to a new site. Is it fair, equitable, or ethical to now reassign these students and staff to schools throughout the district?
  - c) How does the population of the school impact the decision to close it (i.e. socio-economic status, ethnic make-up, academic performance, parent involvement)?
- 2) Focus on more than physical capacity-
  - a) Consider the impact of specialized student supports (i.e. academic interventions, Special Education, students with a 504, English Language Learners, GATE, social emotional needs) that are distributed to other schools. These programs are currently struggling to meet the immense needs on campus without the impact of this redistribution of an entire site.
- 3) Creative thinking to best meet the needs of all students-
  - a) Consider keeping a neighborhood school (not just a magnet/dual immersion) on the West side of town to serve the needs of all neighborhood students
  - b) How could adjusting our elementary schools to a K-6 model increase the use of facilities across all elementary sites?
    - i) Could Georgia Brown become a K-8 dual immersion school on the Flamson Campus; other elementary schools become TK/K-6; and Lewis be a regular 7-8 middle school?
  - c) Could Georgia Brown have more expansion opportunities on the Pifer campus, which has more physical space to enroll more students?
  - d) Is it possible to increase enrollment by having specific focuses or specialties on all elementary campuses (i.e. VAPA, technology)?

Serving on this committee has given me the opportunity to experience the necessary but frustrating process of decision making in regard to difficult large scale choices. I do not envy the difficult decisions the Board is faced with in the future. However, my biggest recommendation is to also consider the non-quantifiable impacts of closing a school and displacing children.



Brad Pawlowski &lt;bpawlowski@pasoschools.org&gt;

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**Re: Closing of School Considerations shared during 12/7 meeting**

1 message

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**Emily Reneau** <emilysloanereneau0@gmail.com>

Tue, Dec 29, 2020 at 10:24 AM

To: Monica Silva &lt;msilva@pasoschools.org&gt;, Brad Pawlowski &lt;bpawlowski@pasoschools.org&gt;

Hello Brad and Monica,

My apologies for the delay in replying with my comments. I hope you are having a happy and healthy holiday season.

First of all, thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve on the 7/11 committee. As you know, I was one of three who voted against closing Georgia Brown. After visiting each school site I began to question the reasoning for closing any school or if we had proper information in order to make a solid recommendation. Some information that would have been helpful is knowing what the gap is that needs to be filled and where are we currently on the budget. We were given a cost analysis of what the average cost is to run a school in the district. It would have been helpful to have a breakdown of every school and not just an average of what "a" school cost. What would the cost be to redirect students and repurpose another school site? Will we be ahead? If a school sits vacant for a few years, whose responsibility is it to maintain that site and what is that cost?

My questions above are based on the fiscal assignment we were tasked with taking any emotion or moral obligation out of the equation. To add that element in, as a member of the community, I would be remiss in not mentioning my concern for a building to sit vacant in an area of the town that is underserved and often forgotten. I would also like to point out that I believe the decision had already been made to close the school and that the committee was given the information to support the desired outcome.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve on the committee. Please let me know if you have any questions or need further comment from me.

Most sincerely,  
Emily Reneau

On Wed, Dec 9, 2020 at 4:39 PM Monica Silva &lt;msilva@pasoschools.org&gt; wrote:

Hello Committee members, following up with all of you, as requested, attached is the closing of school considerations sheet for the preparation of the report that Brad shared during Monday night's meeting. We hope to hear from all of you soon!

Have a warm cozy night everyone.

**MONICA SILVA****Confidential Administrative Assistant to the  
Asst. Supt. Business Services | Workers' Compensation Clerk**

Paso Robles Joint Unified School District

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## Comments from Kim Gaspar

The PRJUSD is in its 9th year of receiving funding for 3 ASES (After School Education and Safety) after school programs at Bauer Speck, Winifred Pifer and Virginia Peterson. Each site serves 84 students (a total of 252 students) and their families with free after school care until 6:00. Staff provide a supportive and caring environment with a snack, homework support and STEAM enrichment activities. If Bauer Speck Elementary is eliminated the grant funding is tied to that school's 14 digit county district school code and we could lose that funding. The Bauer Speck Elementary ASES after school program provides 84 of their families with much needed support. With limited to no transportation offered in the district there will be even more need to support families with free after school care. The current funding is \$133,169.40 per site. I have spoken to the CDE about the possibility of a closure and our hope would be that they would allow us to move this funding to one of the other three school sites. The school site would have to be over 50% free and reduced, right now the only school that qualifies is Georgia Brown. If boundaries were changed, one of the other two sites, Pat Butler and Kermit King could qualify but currently they do not. The CDE makes these decisions case by case as this is not a typical situation. The ASES free after school funding is in high demand and always has a waiting list. If we lose this funding new grants have become so limited we will not be in the running to receive this funding again.



Brad Pawlowski &lt;bpawlowski@pasoschools.org&gt;

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## 7-11 Personal Statement

1 message

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**Amy Oberg** <amyoberg@gmail.com>

Mon, Dec 14, 2020 at 3:29 PM

To: Monica Silva &lt;msilva@pasoschools.org&gt;, Brad Pawlowski &lt;bpawlowski@pasoschools.org&gt;

Dear Ms. Silva,

Here is my statement:

The decision to recommend closing a physical school site was based on detailed facts, hearing public and committee comments and weighing the long term effects between keeping a school open and closing a school. It is apparent for the benefit of all students, current and future the Georgia Brown school site close in order to ensure academic excellence. Please consider with the recommendation to close the Georgia Brown campus the dual immersion program continue, relocating to a campus which has the capacity to grow, potentially expanding into a K-8 dual immersion school.

Two considerations I'd like to convey should the board decide to close the Georgia Brown campus are maintaining a westside neighborhood school and prioritizing family student/teacher school requests for displaced students and teachers. With the students and families foremost in my mind, I strongly recommend the Glen Beck campus remain a neighborhood school, with priority given to westside students moving/enrolling at any grade level. i.e. Should the Glen Speck campus be a magnet school, it would be a school that would accept incoming neighborhood students at any grade level regardless of prior schooling. Students who are displaced due to new boundary lines, please honor to the greatest extent possible parent requests to keep friends together. Please honor site requests for teachers whom become displaced while keeping in mind strengths, areas of growths of grade level teams. Relationships are paramount. both for students and teachers.

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1 enrollment data (historical, current, and projected), inter and intra district transfers, growth areas, school site building conditions, capacity, Measure M projects and masterplan update by school site

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*"Live in the SUNSHINE, swim in the SEA, drink the wild AIR." -Ralph Waldo Emerson*

## **Additional Moria McNellis Comments for 7/11 Committee**

As a 7/11 committee we were charged with only making recommendations regarding the physical site, therefore we were limited in the scope of information we could review or the formal recommendations we could make. However, for many of us it felt unethical to not address so many issues and elements that are affected by that decision, despite it being declared outside of our purview. The recommendation which was made was heavily dependent on our current financial situation. Yet the programming decision, which you are all charged with, has more opportunities for creative thinking and further investigation on certain parameters which will drastically affect our students and staff. I ask that the board of trustees, the Paso Robles School district, and any future committees consider all of the following and collect more concrete data and information to make a decision based on the best outcome for all students (and staff). Many of the elements listed in the following text are influenced by the California Department of Education's Closing a School Best Practice Guide.

### **Resolution only pertains to the physical site:**

As a committee member I feel it is vital that those entrusted with this decision are cognizant that our recommendation is only in regards to the closure of a physical location. As a committee we were informed that we were unable to discuss or use programming as a means of making any decisions. This means that although the resolution recommends closing the Georgia Brown site, on 36th street, it does not mean that the Dual Immersion program should close, or relocate to any specific location. According to the CDE's Closing a School Best Practice Guide it is imperative to make specific inquiries about the "uniqueness of the educational program at each site" before proceeding with a closure. An exploration of the Dual Immersion program housed at Georgia Brown's current location would reveal that it cannot merge with any other school due to the program's mission, including staff certifications and format of schooling. Therefore, closing the physical site of this immersion program will lead to a detrimental closure or "consolidation" of one other school site, or possibly all other school sites. I feel it is important that the board and staff be as creative as possible in creating multiple possibilities and outcomes with lots of forethought and consideration of possible drawbacks before proceeding with the reorganization of programs and students.

### **Loss of Grant Funding for After School Programs (PRYSE/ASES)**

There is a great concern by many committee members for the loss of funding for the ASES program if the Bauer Speck school is no longer at the Spring Street location or is closed. The funding for this program is linked to the physical location of the school and the Title 1 percentages and numbers which are reliant on specific populations that currently attend that site. Unfortunately, ( or fortunately) most other schools don't have the appropriate numbers of these students to qualify for this program. For many students that child care and tutoring is crucial in supporting students with completing homework, providing a safe space after school, and ensuring that their children continue to reach their full potential. If the funding for this program is lost, the district does not currently have funding to replace this program. The students who are currently enrolled in ASES often don't have the means to provide these

supports or services without the funding from the grant. This is even more vital if students are displaced further from their homes and transportation becomes an obstacle. In the transition to hybrid learning at the current Bauer Speck site, the limitations of enrollment and time available in ASES prevented several students from attending in person learning. If students from this site are moved across town their need for this program will only amplify.

### **Can the Dual Immersion program be expanded by moving it to a K-8 model?**

The numbers presented regarding school of enrollment and school of residence depicted large numbers of inner and outer district transfers to the Dual Immersion program at Georgia Brown. This indicates that the program is marketable and has potential for ongoing growth in the future, something which could be financially beneficial to our district. Expanding the program to include 6th through 8th grade will strengthen the program and support students as they transition into the middle school expectations. It may also decrease some of the enrollment drop we see as students reach middle school ages. Furthermore, it would become the only dual immersion program that would serve 6th through 8th grade students in our county, increasing our pull for students outside of our current boundaries. In order to provide this school with the appropriate infrastructure it is imperative that the board of trustees, school district staff, and future committees consider which property has the most potential to support this continued growth.

The CDE's Best Practices Guide to School closure outlines that it is important to consider "the capacity of a school to accommodate excess students" which is imperative when the program being displaced has the largest population of our elementary sites. Many board members, members of the 7/11 committee, and district staff have publicly commented about moving the Georgia Brown's Dual Immersion program to the ongoing 17th street campus (previously known as Bauer Speck). Of course the site will be visually appealing when it is completed, as the newest campus with modern upgrades. Yet the site doesn't offer the usable space other locations do, nor does it provide room for expansion without eliminating more of the already shrunk playground space (which is a concern at the current location for the program). . Additionally, it would require an increase of Measure M funds to be siphoned from other projects in order to create these needed facilities. Although this is much less costly than the proposed renovations of the Georgia Brown school it still does not address the need to truly grow the program. However, the Flamson site has more usable space and has recently had lots of renovation that also make it visually appealing. The site could be restructured to fit the needs of a K-8 immersion program, is near the current site that brings in the necessary 50% native speaking population, and is visually appealing. I strongly believe that this option needs to be heavily explored by the board of trustees, district staff, and our public for the greater good of all students in PRJUSD.

### **Loss of neighborhood school and connectedness?**

The closure of the physical location of Georgia Brown would therefore lead to the reorganization of one or all other elementary schools. If the board moved forward with the proposed idea of placing the dual immersion program at the current site slated for Speck there would be no home school on the west side of campus. Any child whose family resides on the west side of town, but is uninterested in immersion program must then accommodate an across town transition.

Students who live within the same relative area could be sent to multiple schools, creating an issue for child care, transportation, and a feeling of connectedness.

### **How will transportation impact attendance?**

Some members of the committee were very worried about how students will get to and from whatever school students become assigned to. With the district's current issues with finding bus drivers and cutting transportation as means of addressing budget limitations; it is assumed that moving forward we would continue to not have district provided transportation to support the possible shift in students' "home school" location. If the dual immersion program becomes the only elementary school on the West side of town, students who are not currently enrolled in the school and are not previously educated in Spanish must then find means to get across town on their own. That means all students that currently or are currently expected to attend Bauer Speck Elementary would not be served on their side of town. If you are unfamiliar with those populations, many students that attend Bauer Speck currently walk (often with middle school siblings). Many families either don't have someone home to transport students (an issue with current hybrid learning), or don't have a vehicle to support the movement across town. That means children ages 4 (TK) to 11 (5th grade) may be responsible for navigating a safe route to their new school. Depending on how the boundaries were redrawn that may mean a student who lives in Oak Park may be tasked with walking to Kermit King, which does not lend itself to a safe route and would require substantial time. Even with the shift to hybrid learning many students at these sites are already struggling with getting to and from school. Many families have had to opt into Distance Learning not because of a lack of wanting to return, but due to lack of an option for getting their students to and from school without the support of district transportation or someone to support their walking at these new times. If and when we return to all in person learning, students who have limited means of transportation will struggle to get to school and attendance could be negatively impacted. When we typically count on students' attendance as a means of their performance or growth, as well as an element of how we are given funding, it seems to be a risk of this decision that was not thoroughly reviewed by this committee and needs to have extensive research into before any decision could be explored.

### **Impact of multiple school transitions for students:**

Throughout the pandemic the board of directors have voiced a reasonable concern for learning loss; however, this is also a concern with transition in schools. Research shows that each time students have a change in their learning consistency there can be a negative impact to their academic and social development. If we are to move forward as a district with the idea of closing the physical site of Georgia Brown and reorganizing all other students that means a significant population of our elementary students would be faced with an unexpected and nontypical transition or change to their current school environment. Students may be placed at a new physical site, may have limited access to staff they have relationships with, may lose a significant amount of existing peer relationships and/or may struggle with getting to their new school site. Bauer Speck students have already faced this risk as they moved into the temporary campus adjacent to Flamson. They were further impacted by the restrictions of that location despite ongoing efforts the district made to accommodate the school within this temporary

format. To ask that population (Bauer Speck students) to yet again carry the weight of a large transition to their school environment is concerning. This is only heightened by the idea that the school is a Title 1 school with many “at risk” individuals. This change on top of a year of distance learning, hybrid learning, and a pandemic is a huge risk. It would be imperative that research regarding learning loss for transitions and ways to minimize these impacts are thoroughly reviewed by the board of trustees and the district before moving forward exploring any ideas of closing a school and reorganizing student attendance boundaries.

**Greater representation of parents on future committees (transition, better marketing)**

Despite the committee's desire to do what is best for all students, there was a large population that was not represented thoroughly in the 7/11 process. Many of the students who would be drastically affected by this decision attend the two West side schools Bauer Speck Elementary and Georgia Brown Elementary, and both campuses have a significant Spanish Speaking population. There was no representation of these individuals, their thoughts, and their direct concerns within this committee. The information was not sent to those families in their native language nor was there a way for those families to understand the content being discussed unless they sought out their own interpreter. Many members of the committee brought forward concerns they have heard from those not represented; however, not giving them the appropriate means to be a part of the discussions means there will likely be issues or challenges that we were unable to fathom or address in our own conversations. As the board moves forward I recommend that there is an effort to include parents, allow access in families native language (Spanish), and make it a welcoming environment in which families can be a part of the solution with our district.

**Other:**

Throughout this report you have seen numbers and data to support certain ideas and claims. The numbers and finances were the heaviest weight for most of the committee members in making their decisions. However, there is something that cannot be measured in such numerical units, I will refer to those concepts as the human cost. In this decision the human cost is the possibility of negatively impacting a significant number of children from ages 4 to 11. It is taking away the school environments that sometimes are the only consistent relationships they have to rely upon. For some students, their schools give them the ability to return to a specific familiar staff member each day and find a comforting hug and acknowledgement that they exist and are loved. For some students, this is an intervention team that has worked with a student for years in creating a relationship and finally seeing progress either academically or socially. For some students, it is a safe place to be themselves among peers that they have developed comfort with over the past years.

Our district is in a horrible situation financially, which has inevitably led us to discuss this difficult decision. I acknowledge the challenge that you as a board of trustees must now face in moving forward and working to save the district before us. However, the students, the families, and the

staff are much more than numbers. I ask that you continue this discussion with further research, greater interest from the public, and an open mind to all ideas.