

Ocean View School District

MEMORANDUM

September 27, 2023

To: Members of the Superintendent's Schools Task Force

From: Dr. Joseph M. Farley

Re: Results of Questionnaire Completed by Members of the Task Force

As you know, I have facilitated a task force to engage parents, community representatives, and certificated, classified, and management staff members in deliberations on declining student enrollment and school sizes in the Ocean View School District.

The task force has met nine times since April and has three more scheduled meetings. While the task force originally had 34 members, a core of approximately 26 representatives attended all meetings of the group, or most of them. Meeting protocols and norms were reviewed and reinforced at all meetings of the group. This practice contributed to the collaboration of participants and reduced resentment or hostility when participants disagreed about the important topic of school consolidation and/or school closures.

The task force received extensive information on national, state, and local trends in school enrollment, birthrates, housing patterns, and school sizes. It also received information on the relationship between enrollment and school budgeting. Reflecting on the tenor of the meetings from their very beginning, it was impressive how diligent the representative group was in its deliberations and discussions. There were occasional disagreements, and a few negative perceptions about the overall purpose of the task force, but its members took their advisory role seriously and were anxious to learn more about the sensitive and important topic of school consolidation in your District.

Participants present at the September 13, 2023, meeting of the task force were asked to complete a questionnaire to share their thoughts on the District's possible consolidation of schools. Twenty-three members completed the questionnaire and nine who were unable to attend that session and will complete it at the task force meeting of September 28, 2023.

Early in this process, a few critics were concerned that District management was somehow manipulative of the task force's deliberations and decision making. This led to the decision to exclude members of the group who serve on the Superintendent's cabinet from participation in the survey. However, having served as facilitator of this group since the task force's inception, I am obliged to share how impressed I am with the input that was provided through the questionnaire and the commentary of the respondents to the survey. The lengthy report of survey results reflects the significant learning that the task force experienced and accurately reflects the entire group's beliefs, preferences, and suggestions about the extremely sensitive topic of school consolidation and/or closures in the Ocean View School District. Because of the extensive data

the task force received, Trustees are receiving the input of a well-informed advisory group that was asked to give input for the Board's future deliberation on the issue of declining enrollment and school sizes in your District.

The task force will receive additional information in its upcoming meetings, some in response to specific questions asked at the last meeting. The group will also determine if, and how, it would like to convey its subsequent deliberations to Trustees in a way that reflects the varied input of all task force participants. As a result, additional information may be forthcoming from the task force members once they fully review the report on the questionnaire findings.

Please know that the comments provided in the questionnaire results report were transcribed carefully to fully represent what each respondent wrote. When you see long paragraphs of information, it is because the comments are formatted so one respondent's comments are provided in their entirety in one paragraph. If an explanatory statement had to be added to a comment to fully explain it, that information is in parenthesis. The statements were also automatically corrected by Word's spelling and grammar checking program, which resulted in minor revisions to some of the original writing. Should anyone be interested in viewing the original versions of the comments, they are available for inspection.

You will detect themes in the attached questionnaire results that may influence the Board's decision making moving forward on a topic of vital importance to the Ocean View School District.