



**LOS ALTOS
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

brighter minds make
a world of difference

BUSINESS SERVICES

201 Covington Road
Los Altos, CA 94024
Phone: 650-947-1164
Fax: 650-947-0118

September 22, 2010

Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury
Superior Court Building
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Re: Los Altos School District

Enclosed is documentation you requested in your June 24 letter regarding **Achieving School District Efficiency Through Consolidation**.

If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (650) 947-1164.

Sincerely,

Randall A. Kenyon
Assistant Superintendent, Business Services

FILED

SEP 28 2010

DAVID H. YAMASAKI
Chief Executive Officer/Clerk
Superior Court of CA County of Santa Clara
BY D. ALDYCKI

Achieving School District Efficiency Through Consolidation

Finding 1

Education and financial benefits can be achieved by consolidation and unification of certain county school districts.

LASD Response

The district disagrees with the finding.

Recommendation 1d

The Board of Trustees should unify Los Altos School District and Mountain View-Whisman School District with Mountain View-Los Altos High School District.

LASD Response

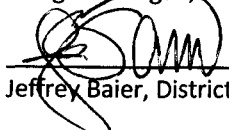
The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, for the following reasons.

- **Financial:** The Grand Jury projects a savings of seven (7) percent. We believe that this level of savings could not be achieved; in fact, we think consolidation would end up costing more rather than saving money. Current law requires that salary schedules for the districts consolidating be raised to one uniform level—the level of the highest current schedule. In this case, the two elementary district salary schedules would increase to the level of the high school district. The estimated cost of doing this for just the teachers of Los Altos School District is over \$6 million—far greater than the savings shown in the Grand Jury report. The law stipulates a revenue limit funding add-on to cover the increased salary costs, but since all three districts are basic aid districts we would not garner any additional state funds to cover the cost of the increased salaries.
- **Community Support:** We believe that consolidation is more likely to harm the education of our students rather than benefit them. As a result of substantial financial support from our community, our students benefit from smaller schools, smaller class sizes and a more enriched program than found in most districts in our county. A larger school community is less likely to provide the same level of financial support as a smaller, more local one.
- **Local Control:** We believe that local control is the best avenue for creating a strong bond between the community and its schools. Our award-winning schools result from the strong ties our community has with our schools. Consolidating the three districts results in a larger community, which potentially weakens the ties between the schools and the community they serve. The effectiveness of our district is enhanced because district leadership reflects the ideas and values of the local community. Local control allows for more direct communication between community members and district and school leaders, which is the hallmark of a well-functioning system.
- **Articulation:** Our faculty already meets regularly with the Mountain View-Los Altos High School District faculty to ensure continuity of program between the two entities. The results of this articulation are evidenced through our students' effective transition into high school and outstanding performance at the high schools. The same type of work would still be required under a unified district. No benefit or cost savings would be realized.
- **Summary:** Consolidation of school districts is a matter for the local communities and the local school boards to determine. Our analysis indicates that consolidation will actually result in an increase in costs and no indication that matriculation for our students will be improved and thus does not appear to be beneficial to the children of our district.

Responses prepared by the administration and governing board of Los Altos School District.



Margot Harrigan, Board President



Jeffrey Baier, District Superintendent

09.21.10

(Date)