

Los Gatos-Saratoga High School District
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GOVERNING BOARD

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August 6, 2010

FILED

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

Members of the 2009-2010 Civil Grand Jury
Santa Clara County Superior Court
191 North First Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Members of the Grand Jury:

Please find the district responses to the Grand Jury's Final Report, **Achieving School District Efficiency Through Consolidation**. These responses are filed with the Office of the Honorable Jamie Jacobs-May, Presiding Judge, Santa Clara County Superior Court on behalf of the Governing Board for the Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District.

**Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District
Responses to Findings and Recommendations of the
Grand Jury's Final Report**

Response to Finding 1

The Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District disagrees with Finding 1, that education **and** financial benefits can be achieved by consolidation and unification of identified school districts.

Recommendation 1b: That Lakeside Joint School District, Loma Prieta Joint School District, Los Gatos Union School District and Saratoga Union School District should be unified with the Los Gatos – Saratoga Joint Union High School District.

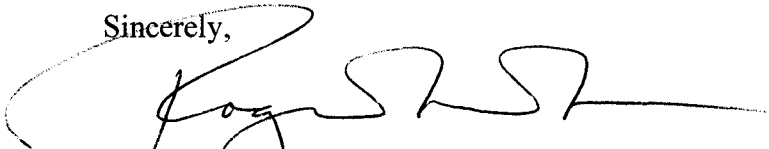
- The Grand Jury Findings project a savings of seven percent. We disagree that this level of savings could be achieved.
- We agree, at first blush, it would appear that some financial savings could be achieved through “efficiencies of scale” and consolidation of some positions. However, these savings would be marginal and largely offset by the subsequent need to add administrative layers need to differentiate support for elementary and high school student and community needs.

We also challenge the purported “Education Benefits,” noted in the Grand Jury findings:

- We believe that any financial savings would come at the expense of the quality of education provided students. The quality of education is a reflection of a district’s ability to provide differentiated, targeted curriculum, instructional strategies, and school/district cultures.
- Communication and Articulation - We already have effective articulation among our five school districts. Communication, within and across districts and grade levels, is a priority for our superintendents, principals and staff.
- Local Control - We believe that the effectiveness of a school district is enhanced when the political and executive leadership reflects the values of its local community. Local control of a school district allows parents and stakeholders to provide input and feedback to school boards and superintendents. Political advocacy and community input works better in a smaller setting.
- Efficiency vs. Effectiveness – Efficiency is an important aspect of running a school district, but the efficiency of a school district is not the only measuring stick for a district. Our parents judge us on the quality of our program and the sense of community identity created by our high schools in the town of Los Gatos and the city of Saratoga. Our effectiveness as a school district is enhanced by the close relationships we enjoy between our high schools and our local communities and public agencies.

In conclusion, we believe that a decision to consolidate school districts is a matter for each school board and their local communities to initiate and determine. We therefore respond with (#4): The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, for the reasons listed above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger M. Mason". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "M".

Mr. Roger M. Mason, Esq.
President - Board of Trustees
Los Gatos – Saratoga Joint Union High School District