

From: **Sandra Huezo** <noreply@guhsd.net>
Date: Thu, Mar 6, 2025, 4:30 PM
Subject: Understanding the District's Recommendations
To: <smacceca@guhsd.net>

Colleagues,

Last Thursday, the Governing Board convened a Special Meeting and approved recommendations to address the District's long-term budget challenges. Unfortunately, disruptions during the meeting prevented us from fully explaining the rationale behind these decisions. I'd like to take this opportunity to share the key information we intended to present, along with the thoughtful process behind these difficult recommendations.

It's important to reiterate some key points:

- **Budget Timeline:** The state requires school districts to submit budgets by June 30, even though the state's budget is not finalized until late June. With the majority of our funding coming from the state, we are forced to build our budget based on uncertain information.
- **March 15 Notification Deadline:** State law mandates that we notify full-time employees by March 15 if their positions may be eliminated, with final notices required by May 15. This timeline prompted the Special Board meeting last Thursday and necessitates notifying employees who may face position eliminations.
- **Long-Term Structural Issues:** GUHSD is projecting structural deficits into the future, and our enrollment is declining. This is not a problem limited to just one year.
- **Ongoing State Budget Deficits:** The California Legislative Analyst's Office is warning of growing state budget deficits in the coming years.
- **Staffing Imbalance:** Despite a decline in enrollment, the District currently employs over 200 more full-time equivalent positions than a decade ago. While we are not cutting 200 positions this year, we must address this imbalance to ensure long-term financial stability.

These challenges require us to take a responsible, long-term approach, with students at the center of our decisions. Our recommendations are not solely focused on balancing the 2025-26 budget; they aim to ensure we can continue to serve all of our students, both next year and in the years ahead. To fully understand the District's position, keeping the focus on 2025-26 alone is counterproductive.

Across the state, school districts, including those in Oakland, San Francisco, Pasadena, and Santa Ana, are grappling with similar challenges and considering difficult reductions. Closer to home, Poway Unified School District has also announced potential staffing cuts as part of their efforts to align staff levels with student enrollment.

RESERVES VS. ENDING FUND BALANCE

Our ending fund balance has been a topic of much discussion among our teachers' union and members of the community. However, the ending fund balance has often been confused with reserves, which are not the same. On March 11, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, Pearl Iizuka, will present a detailed breakdown of our financial position, including the composition of our

reserves. While reserves can be used for one-time emergencies, relying on them to cover ongoing personnel costs is not sustainable. Without addressing the underlying structural issues, we will continue facing the same challenges year after year, with fewer options.

OUR REVIEW

We conducted a comprehensive review of services, programs, and staffing allocations, with a focus on efficiency and minimizing disruption to our students' direct instructional experience. This approach is a common response to budget shortfalls across districts. If finalized by the Board in May, the recommendations stemming from this review would impact all employee groups. Key areas of focus included:

Staffing Allocations

Staffing allocations are determined by student enrollment numbers and course selections, which drive the master schedule and the number of teachers needed to cover all available sections. Projections for teacher staffing in the upcoming 2025-26 school year show that we currently employ more teachers than the number of available assignments.

Assistant Principals

Currently, there are 38 Assistant Principals across the District. Last year, the Board approved an additional Assistant Principal at each comprehensive high school. While those additions may have been necessary at the time, a comparison with other districts in the County reveals that our high schools have more Assistant Principals than similarly sized high schools.

Librarians

We are reimagining how our libraries operate to better serve our students. With the growing reliance on digital resources, evolving student needs, and our budget constraints, we must explore alternative staffing and utilization models for our libraries. Not all school libraries are staffed by credentialed teachers, and our nine current librarians' salaries, benefits, and additional compensation opportunities cost the District over \$1.735 million. Our goal is to keep our libraries open, but this requires us to carefully evaluate how we allocate resources and reimagine the services we provide to our students.

To clarify some misconceptions about librarians:

- If the Board approves the reduction of Library Media Specialist positions in May, those currently in the role will be offered a teaching assignment for the upcoming school year.
- We acknowledge that our librarians are excellent, caring listeners, just like all classroom teachers. However, it is important to note that librarians are not credentialed for the purpose of providing mental health support for students beyond referring them to our credentialed counselors.

REACH Academy

REACH currently serves 22 students, with an average daily attendance of 11, at an annual cost exceeding \$2 million. Our review demonstrated that these students can be served by alternative programs within the District.

Child Development Center

The Child Development Center (CDC) was initially established to support teen parents, allowing them to stay in school and graduate. Over time, however, the number of teen parents utilizing the program has decreased. Any remaining spots have been made available to children of GUHSD staff members.

As a result, children of our employees now occupy nearly all available spots. As of January 2025, 23 children are enrolled, with only 3 from teen parents and 20 from GUHSD staff. The program is staffed by 6 CDC Assistants and 1 CDC Supervisor. Unfortunately, the CDC has been operating at a significant annual deficit of more than \$200,000, with future projections indicating that these shortfalls will continue. While past efforts, such as a proposed tuition increase plan, aimed to help offset these costs, the District is no longer in a position to sustain the CDC due to the broader financial challenges we are facing, despite the value it provides as a benefit to our employees.

Modification Period Mild-Moderate Teachers

The Learning Recovery Emergency Block Grant funds for this program will expire at the conclusion of this school year. As a result, 11 special education teachers will need to be reassigned.

School Psychologists

The Special Education Department is exploring a more streamlined approach to delivering services to students, aiming to improve efficiency while maintaining quality support.

Transportation Department

The Transportation Department has determined that two positions within that Department are no longer needed.

MOVING FORWARD

The Board-approved certificated staff resolution can be found [here](#), and the classified resolution is available [here](#). The Board will take final action in May, once District staff has completed its assessment. While staffing notifications must be issued by May 15, we are committed to making adjustments as necessary in response to evolving circumstances. Changes in student enrollment, the Governor's May Revise, site master schedules, and potential staff separations could all impact the final decisions.

I understand that not everyone agrees with these recommendations. However, we are making these decisions with the long-term best interests of our students and families in mind. My hope is that we can agree on at least that. This is a very challenging time, and none of these decisions are being made lightly.

Thank you for your continued dedication to our students and families during this difficult period.

Sincerely,

Sandra Huevo

Acting Superintendent [Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)