



## School Closure Questions and Answers December, 2008

**Q1:** The enrollment projection shows that the elementary school population is beginning a slow increase. So why do we have to close elementary schools?

**A:** While the long term projections show a small increase in elementary school population, we have too many schools for the number of students in the district. Our student enrollment peaked in 2001-02 and has since declined by more than 4,800 students. When housing prices spiked, some families moved to find less costly housing. The birth rate has also declined in WCCUSD—we have 2,000 fewer children in the 0-to-5 age bracket in WCCUSD than we did five years ago. The trends of high housing costs and lower birth rates also hold true for much of California: more than half the districts in the state are struggling with lower student enrollments.

The problem for WCCUSD is that we already had small schools even when we had nearly 5,000 more students. Now we have 24 elementary schools that have fewer than 450 students with eight of those enrolling fewer than 350. As the chart below shows, when we compare our average school size to other districts, WCCUSD schools are smaller.

**Average School Enrollments**

District	Elementary	Middle	High
West Contra Costa	429	686	1,298
Mt. Diablo	534	812	1,737
San Jose	551	1,115	1,402
Fremont	602	932	1,944
Long Beach	716	1,114	4,232



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Elementary Year 1   Elementary Year 2   Secondary Year 1   Secondary Year 2

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housing. This has contributed to the enrollment decline in school districts throughout the Bay Area. Enrollment decline is not limited to California. Districts throughout the United States, particularly in urban areas, are experiencing enrollment declines and are closing schools.

**Q11:** What cost savings measures has the district undertaken? How much money has been saved over the last three years?

**A:** In 2005-06 the district cut 18.5 positions and reduced other costs for a savings of \$2.0 million. There were no reductions made in 2006-07, and in 2007-08 the district eliminated 15 positions and cut costs to save \$2.6 million. Thus the total reductions in

traditionally underserved, disabled and English-only students whose standardized and local scores warrant reform of current programs)

Back in the early 1990's WCCUSD assigned principals to cover two schools. We found out in a hurry that approach just didn't work. We need to have principals in our schools and we need some central administrators to provide leadership and coordination in our district.

**Q16:** What happens to special education programs and services when schools close?

**A:** Special education services such as sp