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**QUESTIONNAIRE ON HIGH SCHOOL RECONFIGURATION**

Please respond to the following questions regarding a possible move of Catalina High students to Rincon High and UHS students to the Catalina High campus.

Responses due: **Monday, November 6, 2017**

School Name: University High School

Site Administrator: Amy Cislak

Site Council Member Name: Meg Tully

***Each site council should vote regarding the information they are providing to the Governing Board.***

Site Council Vote Date: Nov. 1st, 2017

YES, approved. Comment: Unanimous Approval

NO, not approved. Comment:

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| 1. What do you see as possible drawbacks for your school, students, and community? |
| Response:  Drawbacks for school:  • Regardless of the transition, schools need to follow an established series of events throughout the year in order to function properly. This makes planning for registration, summer programs, and even end of year checkout more difficult.  • The act of physically moving an entire campus to another site will be time consuming and labor intensive. It will require a thorough inventory of all furniture, technology, and supplies at each site. At this point it is unclear how many physical items will need to be moved between the two sites. There is also concern that the division of property and materials could be politicized and contentious if not handled appropriately by the district.  • There would be a need for renovations on the new site to accommodate current UHS programs and teaching practices. Any renovations would likely begin after the move; therefore, UHS would have to compromise the needs of some programs and practices in the short-term. There is also concern on how these renovations would be funded.  • The population increase, which can be seen as an advantage, will also have a negative impact on national measures of student success. Increased growth may affect the national ranking of UHS and, as school size increases, the school’s percentage ranking could drop.  Drawbacks for students:  • Uncertainty about the timeline of events is concerning for students. Should this plan be adopted, students might be worried about familiarizing themselves with a new campus, a new neighborhood, and ultimately a different school identity and culture. There are students at UHS who are comfortable with the current situation at Rincon and would prefer not to have any change.  • There are UHS students who enjoy the shared campus because it allows them to interact with their friends from Rincon on a daily basis. They would lose this opportunity if UHS gains its own independent site.  • The proposed move creates uncertainty for students about the inevitable change to school culture on the new campus. School culture includes academics, fine arts, and athletics, as well as relationships between students and attitudes towards themselves. At this time the form of these changes and the consequences of them are unclear.  Drawbacks for community:  • Parents and community members are also concerned about the uncertainty surrounding the move. This is especially problematic for the parents of incoming freshmen, as the potential relocation of UHS might affect their decision whether or not to enroll their child in the school.  • There are some UHS parents who enjoy the shared campus and do not want change.  o Parents may have students attending both UHS and Rincon, and the possible relocation would make transportation more difficult for these families.  o There is concern about how this change could negatively affect the RUHS Marching Band --one of the most successful and well known programs on campus -- and the RUMBA booster program associated with it.  • There is a perception within the wider community that UHS does not deserve its own campus, regardless of the school’s enrollment growth, academic success and increased diversity. For some people, this includes the belief that UHS should not exist at all.  • Transportation will need to be provided to UHS students to the new campus site, as they will no longer be able to utilize the existing Rincon bus routes.  o Related to this, eastside families would have a longer commute (5-10 mins) to the new site. |
| 1. What do you see as possible benefits for your school, students, and community? |
| Response:  Benefits for school:  • Increased enrollment is a benefit for the school and the district as we will be able to recruit students at an independent site. UHS student enrollment has steadily increased since the enrollment cap was lifted in 2011, and we believe that this trend will not only continue but also increase until UHS is able to fill the Catalina campus to full capacity.  • An independent site will allow UHS to create their own identity and encourage connections to the school as we will be able to develop our own fight song, traditions, expanded PBIS practices, school spirit, independent practices, athletic teams, band, etc.  • UHS would have the space to develop and implement programs to better support our own students. An independent site would increase our ability to react to students’ needs as they arise throughout the year.  • UHS decision making can be made independently from another high school including a unique bell schedule, testing schedule, assemblies, conference periods, PBIS practices, culture and climate efforts, and more.  • UHS will be able to schedule events on campus and reserve areas to best suit their students' needs without conflicting with another high school or asking permission from another school administration  • Shared employees on the RUHS site including the librarian, nurse, finance manager, and athletic director experience inequitable workloads. The relocation of UHS would allow these positions to focus on serving the needs on one school and create more appropriate employment conditions and expectations for these staff members.  • Having an independent UHS site would provide a solution to the issue of the graduation ceremony having outgrown Centennial Hall.  Benefits for students:  • UHS staff will be able to identify and implement best practices for its unique community to better serve the needs of its stakeholders – especially students. Examples of this include but are not limited to a Freshmen House program, athletic recruitment, and advisory and conference times built into the school day.  • UHS students would be able to embrace and celebrate the identity of their school. This would lead to an increase in school spirit, student-centered events, and participation in traditional high school events.  • Currently UHS has no control over their master calendar and facilities. With an independent site UHS will would have increased flexibility to host events such as minority symposiums, district events, student leadership conferences, college visits and programs, student club conventions, and middle school connections. These events would allow and encourage our students to demonstrate their leadership ability and engage more fully with the community.  • A non-overenrolled school setting would allow for more students to park legally at the school site.  Benefits for community:  • UHS will be able to recruit and support all students who are offered admission and will have facilities to accommodate growth. This would also allow UHS to implement additional recruitment and retention efforts specifically targeting African American and Mexican American students.  • Increased student enrollment at UHS will also increase district funding, and support the districts’ overall goals of retaining students and establishing financial stability and growth.  • UHS will be able to expand and include offerings and programs regarding what is best for UHS students, without having to receive permission from a separate high school  • Donors will have more buy-in to an independent site, helping UHS serve its stakeholders more effectively and taking some financial burden off the district as well.  • By supporting this potential relocation, the community would see that TUSD values the hard work taking place at UHS. |
| 1. If the governing board approves this move, what conditions do you see as necessary in order to have a successful transition for your school, students, and community? |
| Response:  Conditions for successfully transitioning the school:  • We will need to know a timeline including dates for how the school will physically move, make repairs, organize, rebrand and create a new campus culture on the new site.  • All affected sites would need to complete a comprehensive inventory of supplies/furniture. The district would need to be involved in deciding what property is relocated.  • We need an opportunity to visit and evaluate the Catalina campus in order to determine how UHS can implement current programs and teaching practices.  • We will need to relocate some programs currently housed at Catalina to other available TUSD sites.  • We will need to renovate existing locations (such as the airplane hangar) in order to accommodate UHS fine art programs.  • To most effectively run admissions, we will need to move Accountability and Research into the Catalina spaces that will be vacated by the program relocation.  • Current UHS administration, faculty, and staff must also be transferred to the new site.  • We need to hire the staff we currently lack, as well as part-time and full-time positions that are currently shared between Rincon and UHS.  • We need to continue to get training for staff regarding our growing population and to be intentional about continuing our practices that are already positively occurring, either naturally or by happenstance.  • All UHS transportable property and resources that were purchased by the Foundation or donated specifically to UHS need to move with the school (ex: Gabe Zimmerman bench, Alumni bricks, computers).  Conditions for successfully transitioning the students:  • We need to follow through on offering the courses students select in January to maintain as much stability and continuity in our curriculum.  • We need to run an effective summer bridge program (Boost) for our future 9th graders and Bounce for our future 10th graders, preferably at the new site.  • We need to listen, explore, develop, and offer the unique courses, bell schedules, and traditions that the students will help create.  • We need to support the effects of the transition on students to an independent site. This would include close communication with students to address questions and concerns they may have and encourage their participation in the development of new and sustained traditions.  • We need to have enough textbooks, technology, and other educational materials available on day one for students to be successful.  • We need a timeline for the division of athletic and fine arts equipment, as well as any other shared resources between Rincon and UHS. This timeline also needs to include how and when these equipment and resources will be implemented at the new UHS site.  Conditions for successfully transitioning the community:  • We will need to be informed regarding a timeline including dates for how the school will physically move, make repairs, organize, rebrand and create a new campus.  • Families will need time to be part of the decision making in regards to creating new traditions and sustaining new ones on the campus. Frequent communication with all stakeholders is a critical component for a successful transition.  • The successful separation of shared activities, classes, and resources could be challenging. Even though UHS and Rincon largely function as two separate schools, there are some areas of overlap that will need to be addressed.  o Dissolving or dividing Booster clubs for athletics or fine arts (such as RUMBA) that are shared between the schools.  o Dissolving or dividing sports equipment, uniforms, instruments, and other materials that are utilized by the shared fine arts and athletic programs.  o Separating the funds of club accounts that have students from both schools (such as JSA).  o Separating the materials in the RUHS library, and determining how the CHS library will be incorporated into the relocation. |
| 1. Is there any other information you would like to share or other needed information that you would find helpful? |
| Response:  1. Benefits to TUSD  Any decision regarding the reconfiguration of high schools is difficult, as it affects such a large number of current students and community members. However, the decision to relocate UHS to Catalina and combine Catalina with Rincon will have beneficial long-term effects on student enrollment and the financial stability of TUSD. UHS has a proven track record of attracting students from outside the district and retaining students within TUSD boundaries who did not attend a TUSD middle school. The issues of increased student enrollment and financial stability are especially relevant given the recent announcement of a $4.5 million budget shortfall for the 2017-2018 school year.  In addition, this reconfiguration would create a thriving and robust midtown high school on the current Rincon campus. This high school would be able to offer a full array of athletic and fine art programs, student clubs and programs, and increased electives and ALE opportunities for students at that school. Current Catalina students and faculty are faced with the loss of programs and classes on a yearly basis, which creates an atmosphere of uncertainty and instability and ultimately contributes to declining enrollment and poor academic performance, furthering aggravating district wide problems.  This is a decision that will support the long-term financial and academic success of the district, which can be difficult to understand when faced with arguments that address short-term concerns. Should this plan move forward, there will be disruption and an emotional impact on all three school communities and some cost that will need to be absorbed by the district. However, as elected officials, the TUSD Governing Board is responsible for making choices that will benefit the long-term health and success of district.  2. Responses to Alternate Proposals  We recognize that the TUSD Governing Board will be presented with other options for consideration regarding the relocation of UHS. We wanted to provide counterarguments to these anticipated proposals.  a. Move Rincon to Catalina  i. With the most recent letter grades issued to TUSD schools, Rincon is currently ranked as a C school, whereas the neighboring schools of Catalina and Palo Verde are ranked as D schools. When deciding on school closures in the past, the TUSD Board has refused to consolidate students onto sites with a record of lower academic performance.  ii. The Rincon student population currently is between 1000-1100, and combined with Catalina (700-800) would create the same issue of overcapacity at Catalina that currently exists on the Rincon/UHS campus.  iii. TUSD would likely see the same resistance from the Rincon population.  b. Move UHS to Santa Rita  i. Rincon would not be able to sustain successful athletic and fine art programs on their own. If UHS were moved to Santa Rita and no other student population was transferred in to replace the loss of the UHS students, then Rincon would become an under-enrolled high school and potentially experience similar issues to those that we are seeing at Catalina.  ii. UHS attracts student from all over Pima County, and therefore a central location in Tucson is critical for maintaining the school’s success and identity. Santa Rita is located in the southeast corner of Tucson, and would therefore aggravate transportation issues from our students who travel from the west and southwest sides of the city.  c. Dissolve or Split UHS  i. UHS is a school, not a program, and has existed for 41 years. It has survived throughout the Fisher-Mendoza lawsuit, where its existence and admissions process have been validated by the USP.  ii. Dissolving UHS would cause the district to potentially lose additional students who choose specifically to enter or re-enter the district to attend this particular school.  iii. Splitting or duplicating UHS would be detrimental to the school’s success and identity. A critical mass is necessary to offer the electives that UHS currently provides its students. This would include the ability to offer AP courses on a yearly basis. The culture of UHS would be lost if the school were split between two different sites and relegated to the status of an “honors program”.  iv. UHS has a proven track record of success, increased enrollment, and increased integration that should be rewarded, not punished.  d. Move UHS to a Closed Elementary or Middle School  i. With a student population around 1150, UHS is the fifth largest high school in TUSD. The student population could not be accommodated at an elementary or middle school site without considerable and expensive renovations on that site.  ii. UHS prides itself on offering students the comprehensive high school experience with a full range of athletics and fine arts. Elementary and middle school sites do not have the facilities necessary to serve a high school population and programs. This would include science labs, competition level sports fields, gymnasiums, and fine arts facilities.  e. Maintain the Status-Quo  i. The current RUHS shared campus is at 113% capacity, and neither school has room to grow. Maintaining the status quo would not allow for increased student enrollment and retention at these popular schools.  ii. The status-quo does not help to address larger problems that the district is currently facing, including declining enrollment, inefficient use of district facilities, and financial instability.  3. Questions to Consider if No Action is Taken  a. How will UHS and Rincon restore and improve their professional relationship?  b. How will UHS continue to grow and provide equitable education to the students who want and deserve it?  c. Will a financial investment be made to expand the facility to accommodate both Rincon and University High Schools?  d. How do we remove the current barriers that exist on a shared campus when attempting to do what is best for the current and future UHS students?  e. How will the district address the perception that UHS students do not deserve the same resources and services as other high schools? This is an issue of equity.  4. UHS Mission Statement  UHS is a special function high school which serves students who are academically focused and intellectually gifted and provides curriculum and social support not offered in the comprehensive high school.  Originally adopted by the TUSD Governing Board April 1987. |

Please feel free to upload any additional information or comments. We appreciate your time and thank you for your input.