

July 3rd Edition – The Alpine Sun
The Grossmont Solution Report
With Bill Weaver

This Grossmont Solution Report is to update you on the past June 12th GUHSD regular governing board meeting, as well as the Citizens Bond Oversight Committees' June 25th meeting. There were several items of importance on both of these meeting agendas regarding a 12th high school for Alpine.

The two most important agenda items were presentations concerning the recent GUHSD commissioned district demographics and student population projection study for the fall of 2008 thru 2021, and also the commissioned new bond feasibility survey results. The new bond feasibility study exceeded all our expectations, and indicated that if the governing board does vote to put another bond on the November election ballot it is almost certain to pass if the voting electorate is well educated about its' intended uses, and the improvements and projects that it would fund. The student population projection report was a bit disappointing, and we feel it is misleading in its portrayal of Alpines potential growth, and may be used to argue against an Alpine high school.

Because the new bond feasibility study was so positive (even in regard to funding a 12th new high school) and the student projection study was less positive, the scheduled July meetings of the GUHSD governing board should be attended by all residents of our area supporting the Grossmont Union District-wide facility modernizations, and supporting the construction of a 12th Alpine area high school, as Superintendent Collins has proposed in his new GUHSD strategic plan.

The student population projection study goes through the year 2021. The study author admitted that the June 12th presented report was preliminary, and said that the final report would be more comprehensive. The final version will be completed and discussed at the July 10th GUHSD governing board meeting. Superintended Collins has called for this July 10th meeting to be a governing board workshop. It will prepare the board for a special meeting to be held on July 31st, at which time the governing board will vote on whether there WILL, or WILL NOT be a follow up bond to finish Prop H and go beyond Prop H. The new bond is to encompass repair and renovations beyond Prop H, including fully modernizing all GUHSD facilities and classrooms.

The demographics study in its' June 12th preliminary form, could be used as a loophole to argue against building the 12th new Alpine area high school campus called for in Prop H. It does appear that Superintendent Collins truly believes that Alpine has been underserved over the past years and believes that kids should not be driving so far to school through windy mountains and hilly roads, and will push for an Alpine and Blossom Valley area high school and believes that it is warranted, regardless of the demographics. He knows that he needs the new bond to do this and repair and renovate the existing GUHSD High Schools as they deserve to be. The July 31 vote is a finish the Prop H job as it should, or not -- leaving the entire district in a half-modernized state of continued ill-repair.

It goes without saying, "Superintendent Collins has it right"... A new bond is needed... it should be sized so as to complete all of Prop H, and should go further to modernize all the classrooms and GUHSD facilities left not modernized by Prop H, and to provide an ongoing source of maintenance funds, as Prop H also stipulated but did not fund. The preliminary June 12th student projection study, and Superintendent Collins, indicates that a high school of 800 students could be planned on for the Alpine area as a start, and thereafter grow it as needed, however the GUHSD governing board will likely debate this Prop H promise. The property tax that you will pay for a new bond will be a lot less than the cost of gasoline and your loss of valuable time spent commuting down the hill... not to mention safety and other issues you should consider. Alpine must fight for our kids... attend the July 10th and 31st meetings and make your presence convey your concern.

The added tax for a new bond (as proposed by GUHSD Superintendent Collins) will modernize GUHSD far beyond Prop H's intended scope, and will provide the funds to build our 12th high school. This tax will average about \$150 annually (per typical household) increasing what we now pay. The average round trip cost to get your kids to Steele Canyon or Granite Hills high schools is \$6 to \$8 per trip... this could be well over \$1000 per year. Also to be considered for you who do not have kids; a local high school would increase every property owners' home values by many thousands of dollars, far more than the cost of the annual bond tax, as attested to by realtors and property valuation professionals. A new education facilities bond for GUHSD would be value added for each of us, and benefit us far beyond the cost of the addition of a small tax amount. There is no good economic reason to not favor, approve and to advocate for a new bond to modernize the GUHSD, and also build the new 12th local area high school.

At the June 25th Citizens Bond Oversight Committee meeting a question to Scott Patterson, GUHSD Assistant Superintendent and its business manager, was posed by a CBOC member;

where do you - the GUHSD - go with this bond feasibility and student demographic information and what are your conclusions?

Assistant Superintendent Patterson indicated that Superintendent Collins plans to discuss both of these studies with the full GUHSD Board on July 10th, and will recommend that a new follow-on bond be placed on the November ballot. Then it was asked, “what about the 12th high school for Alpine?”

Patterson said that the Superintendent Collins will recommend that an 800 student high school be built for Alpine and that the Alpine HS will be a topic to be discussed in detail on July 10th. The new bond’s specific ballot language will be largely determined as a part of the July 10th Board meeting and new bond workshop. A vote on the new bond will take place on July 31st.

Prop H is estimated to be about \$140 Mil short on completing all that the Prop H initiative listed as original projects. The July 10th and 31st GUHSD meetings look to be very important. If you’ve never engaged, or for whatever reason have disengaged your activism or advocacy in this endeavor, now is the time to engage whole heartedly in this effort.

Our new 12th GUHSD high school’s future fate will be determined in the month of July at these two meetings. If a new bond gets approved by the GUHSD board, and a supermajority 4 of 5 governing board “yes” votes will be needed for this approval to happen, it will be placed on the November general election ballot. The new bond feasibility study indicates the bond will likely pass if approved and put before the voters in November, 2008. Our local high school could open in 2012, or before depending on unforeseen events, meaning today’s elementary 4th grade class could be the freshman class in our new local high school.
