

## Superintendent Rick Schmitt's Monthly Update

**July 10, 2014**

*Superintendent Schmitt plans to update the greater San Dieguito Union High School District community through our local media with a monthly update. Topics covered will include curriculum, facilities, budget, safety, and other specific and special interest topics. Today's update focuses on facilities, specifically related to enrollment at our high schools.*

The San Dieguito Union High School District (SDUHSD) is proud to offer our students and families the choice of four unique and amazing high schools. Each year we strive to ensure that every student is able to attend his or her first choice in high schools, and we've been highly successful in this effort over many years. Recently, community members have asked the district to review current high school enrollment practices in response to concerns that some students who live nearby our two non-boundary schools (San Dieguito High School Academy & Canyon Crest Academy) were not admitted through the lottery process.

As you may know, two of our district high schools are boundary schools (La Costa Canyon HS [LCC] in the north and Torrey Pines HS [TPHS] in the south) and two of our high schools are non-boundary schools (San Dieguito HS Academy [SDHSA] & Canyon Crest Academy [CCA]) which are open to all students in the district on an equal basis regardless of where a student may live within our district.

Each year high school students declare which high school they want to attend the following school year. While all students are guaranteed enrollment at their boundary schools as determined by their residence, they may still apply to attend any of our four outstanding comprehensive high schools. As long as there is space available, all students who apply are admitted to their first choice school. If demand for enrollment exceeds capacity at a particular school, students are admitted through a random lottery as required by California law. We are proud that under this High School Selection system over 98% of incoming 9th graders were admitted to their first choice school over the last eight years.

SDUHSD's practice of allowing families choice in selecting their high school has been popular over the years. We also recognize that our community has grown and changed since we adopted our school choice practices and the demand for attendance at our two academy schools has increased over time, so a thoughtful review of our enrollment practices is appropriate at this time. As a result, we will engage with the larger SDUHSD community to inform residents about high school enrollment options and to seek input on how we should proceed with high school enrollment in the future.

To accomplish this review in a timely and constructive fashion while also ensuring input from all current and future stakeholders, we have decided to establish a district-wide task force which will include parent and student representatives from across the district, along with teachers and Board members. The Task Force will:

- Examine enrollment capacity and demand at our schools
- Review short and long-term demographic and enrollment projections
- Explore short, intermediate, and long-term solutions to match demand and available space at our high schools
- Educate our community on the issues
- Discuss current high school enrollment processes

- Seek additional input from the community
- Make recommendations to the Board regarding high school enrollment policies

Parent and student participation on the task force will be solicited via an email to all SDUHSD families and a subsequent application process.

For the last year SDUHSD has examined a variety of potential program modification options at LCC and TPHS which have the potential to draw enrollment to these boundary schools. These options include bell schedule revisions, increased academic and elective offerings, along with flexible scheduling choices. We will continue to examine these and other options for possible implementation in the 2015-16 school year with the knowledge that increased enrollment demand at LCC and TPHS will result in corresponding decreased enrollment demand at SDHSA and CCA.

Our district's goal has always been, and will remain, to allow each student to attend his or her first choice in high schools. We've been very successful in achieving this goal since establishing SDHSA as a non-boundary school in 1996 and CCA in 2004. The issues related to enrollment practices, boundaries, and choice in schools can be complex. Any constructive solution will require a clear understanding of the issues and input from all members of our educational community. Any changes to district enrollment practices will impact each of our current and future students and revising high school enrollment boundary options will be a long-term process, as the impact on elementary and middle school boundaries remain unclear and are complicated. Making hasty changes to a popular school choice program without full consideration of implications and input from parents, students, and staff would certainly be unwise.

Our district has a history of successfully managing both our facility and enrollment needs. SDHSA's enrollment has grown from 976 in 1996 to a current enrollment of 1,600 and CCA has grown from an enrollment of 1,200 in 2008 to a current enrollment of 1,900. None of this would have been possible without parental support for our schools and the Proposition AA facilities bond which our community recently approved. Proposition AA has allowed our district to incrementally increase enrollment at SDHSA and CCA and also includes plans for long-term capacity solutions with new buildings scheduled at each school.

With this strong foundation in place, along with our ongoing commitment to listen and respond to community input, we will arrive at appropriate short, intermediate, and long-term solutions to best meet the academic and social needs of students. I will keep our greater SDUHSD community updated as we look for enrollment balance at all four of our incredible comprehensive high schools. Updates will be available via our [SDUHSD website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts. We look forward to working with parents, students and staff in this endeavor.

*You can follow Superintendent Schmitt on [Facebook](#), <https://www.facebook.com/sduhsd>, and [Twitter](#), [https://twitter.com/SDUHSD\\_Supt](https://twitter.com/SDUHSD_Supt).*