

SAN LUIS COASTAL UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

ISSUES OF CAPACITY AND PROGRAM AT
BISHOP'S PEAK/TEACH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Presented to the Board of Education for Discussion
January 15, 2013



Problem Statement

Since 2011, the neighborhood surrounding Bishop's Peak and Teach elementary schools has become popular among families with younger children. Kindergarten enrollment has increased significantly over the past two school years, creating problems of capacity. Magnifying this problem is the popular alternative school program, Teach Elementary, which shares the Bishop's Peak campus. Based on current enrollment projections, the campus will not have enough classrooms to accommodate any future growth without: a) adding additional portable classrooms, b) converting the computer/science/art labs into Bishop's Peak classrooms, or c) considering other measures discussed in this executive summary. Enrollment trends show steady increases throughout the current year. We anticipate another large kindergarten class next year at Bishop's Peak; however, spring registration will bear this data out more accurately.

The Bishop's Peak/Teach campus is our district's smallest elementary school site with the highest enrollment at 522. This includes 155 students currently attending Teach School. The surrounding neighborhood is severely impacted twice each day during drop-off and pick-up hours. In the current school year, the district implemented a lottery for Teach School enrollment in an effort to limit the impact of growth on the campus. Due to greater-than-expected kindergarten enrollment, the lottery system used for Teach School may not solve the emerging student growth trend in the Bishop's Peak community.

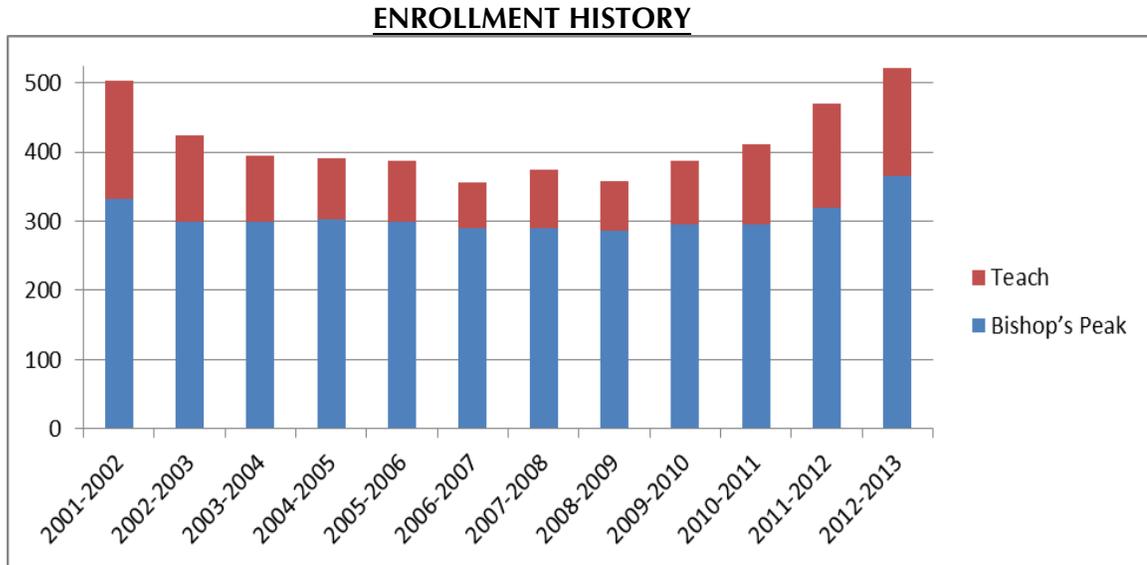
Causal Factors

- **Cal Poly Student Housing:** More on-campus dormitory housing has been developed, and students formerly renting in this school neighborhood are now living on campus.
- **Changing Neighborhoods:** More families with young children have moved into the homes formerly occupied by Cal Poly students.
- **Open Enrollment:** Managing district policy on open enrollment has become critical in order to ensure adequate space for neighborhood children. Bishop's Peak is a very popular elementary school for open enrollment requests – especially for families who intend to send their students to Teach School in the fourth grade.
- **Two "alternative" programs in close proximity; i.e., Pacheco and Teach:** Bishop's Peak is the only neighborhood school for the families who live in the established boundaries, while Pacheco and Teach schools are both lottery-based open enrollment schools accessed by all families in the San Luis Coastal district community. Because Pacheco is an open enrollment campus, the attendance area for Bishop's Peak is very large geographically, reaching to the District Office area and to Los Osos Valley Road.
- **Historical Programmatic Decisions:** Charles E. Teach School is a unique alternative education program serving 4-6 graders in San Luis Coastal – established in 1980 as an alternative for

accelerated and motivated learners. This was a response to the Gifted and Talented program (GATE) pull-out model that was popular during that period. It is also notable that the program is exclusive to grades 4-6 with no feeder program or transition after students leave sixth grade.

The Story Behind Teach School

- **1980:** A group of parents persuaded the Board of Trustees and superintendent to create an alternative to the site-based pull-out GATE program existing at the time. As a result, an "alternative program" began at the Grand Avenue campus ("old Pacheco") where three classes in grades 4-5-6 were established to accelerate and enrich the instruction of these students. Teachers volunteered for the positions, and students were screened on the basis of high academic performance.
- **1984:** The alternative program in SLCUSD was split to two sites, one at the old Pacheco campus and the other at Sunnyside Elementary School in order to serve the Los Osos and Morro Bay areas. Problems emerged among the K-6 school site staff and parents, and the alternative program staff and parents.
- **1986:** The Board of Trustees recombined the programs, again at the old Pacheco campus.
- **1987:** The "alternative program" moved to the Charles E. Teach School campus (current Pacheco Elementary campus) where it shared the site with the district's Educational Services Department.
- **1991:** The "alternative program" had grown to nine classrooms, three at each grade level – fourth, fifth, and sixth grades.
- **1992:** The name **Charles E. Teach School Alternative Program** was designated, and a specific school code was provided by the State of California.
- **1993:** Superintendent Edwin Denton created an Ad Hoc Committee to identify various community attitudes and viewpoints being expressed to members of the Board of Education and the administration about the Charles E. Teach School Alternative Program. These viewpoints ranged from demands to abolish the program to requests for its expansion.
- **1993:** Superintendent Denton made seven recommendations to the Board of Trustees – one of which was to change the official name to **Charles E. Teach School** - as the term "alternative program" created confusion and/or a sense of elitism among certain members in the community.
- **2001:** In the face of severe budget cuts necessitating the closure of some elementary schools, the Board of Trustees and Superintendent Steven Ladd elected to combine two schools onto one campus. Charles E. Teach School was moved to the Bishop's Peak campus where the two schools share the site to this day.
- **2004:** A Board study session was held to examine the Teach School program model and ask fundamental questions such as the value of homogeneous vs. heterogeneous classroom settings, meeting the needs of accelerated or motivated learners across the district, and educational research that supports the current model at Charles E. Teach School.
- **2013:** Capacity concerns arose on the shared campus of Bishop's Peak and Teach Schools as a result of young families moving into the Bishop's Peak neighborhood.



*The chart above represents enrollment at CBEDS. See data table at end of this report.

Process: Voice of Parents and Staff

During the fall of 2012, Principal Dan Block solicited ideas and concerns from the joint school community as well as neighbors of the dual-school campus. There were sufficient opportunities, both formally and informally, for Principal Block to gather feedback and seek creative solutions regarding the challenging dilemma facing Bishop's Peak and Teach Schools. (Please see attachment.)

Many letters have been written that reflect the compassion, intellect, and pride that exists in both school communities. This summary includes these letters for your review. There are many possibilities for the Board's consideration; however, each decision requires sacrifice and, potentially, loss.

Options for Board Consideration

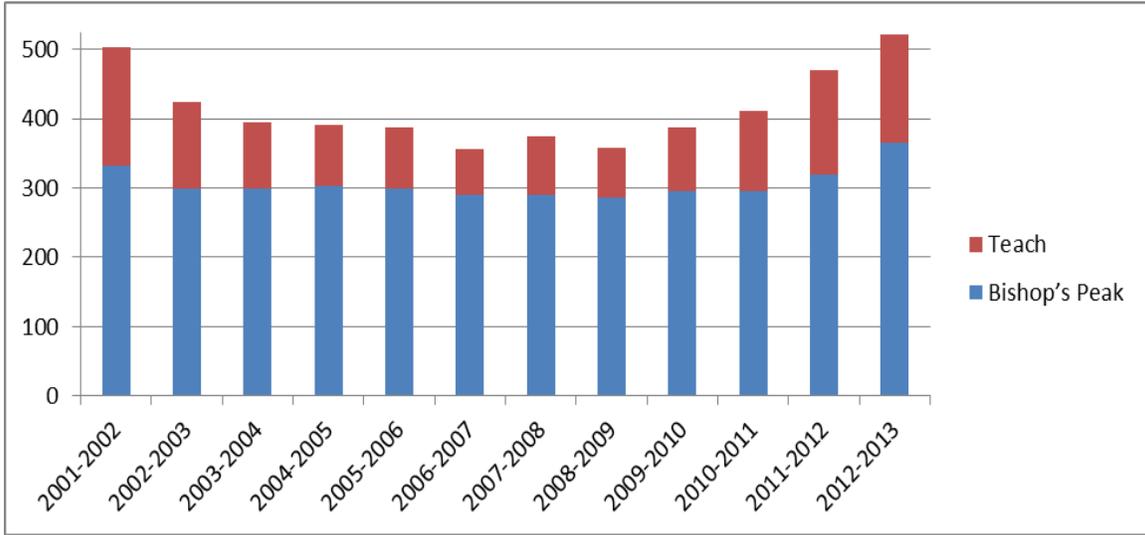
1. Make use of all possible site spaces by converting computer/science/art labs to classrooms.
Summary: *This is a short-term solution. The overall campus would feel this decision by reducing access to already limited space to engage in electives such as computers, art, and science. Currently, there are two labs, one for each school. This proposal would offer additional classroom space but would require creative adjustments by site staff and administration.*
2. Reconstitute Attendance Boundaries.
Summary: *Bishop's Peak boundaries are far-reaching. Any boundary decision would impact multiple schools and families and would require a much more involved process. Often, changing existing school boundaries has a ripple effect throughout the district and is only considered when absolutely necessary.*

3. Further restrict enrollment at Teach School through use of a lottery system.
Summary: *In the current school year, the district capped fourth grade Teach School enrollment at 50 students by way of a lottery system. It is certainly a possibility to limit next year's fourth grade enrollment to 30 students. Over the course of three years, this would limit the size of the Teach campus to 90 students and would free up needed classrooms for Bishop's Peak.*
4. Move Teach School to a currently "closed" site; i.e. Morro Elementary, Old Pacheco, Sunnyside Elementary, District Office property (former San Luis Junior High site); with possible reconstitution to a 6-8 STEAM model program, 5-8 alternative middle-level program, or 4-6 as is at new site.
Summary: *Early in the history of Charles E. Teach School there were "alternative program" classrooms at Sunnyside Elementary School in Los Osos and at the old Pacheco campus in San Luis Obispo. Over time, Teach School has ebbed and flowed in popularity with parents and has struggled to find its own home base. Any decision to move Teach School to another campus in our district should be viewed through a long-term lens – both programmatically and financially. Moving Teach School would involve a sizeable financial commitment. Consideration might be given to reconstituting Charles E. Teach to a different grade-level configuration that would better align with our district's future direction – especially in the area of STEM education. A more extensive cost and programmatic analysis would need to be conducted in order to fully understand the commitment.*
5. Phase-out Teach School.
(13-14: 5th and 6th grades only; 14-15: 6th grade only; 15-16: closing of Teach School)
Summary: *This would allow all currently enrolled Teach students to complete their experience in their current program. A phased-out approach could possibly be connected with Option #4 and include a phased-in approach to a new model. This would require a significant process and agreement as to what the "phased-in" program would involve.*
6. Bishop's Peak immediately "absorbs" Teach School into their current program model.
(13-14: closing of Teach School)
Summary: *This option would require high levels of cooperation among the Bishop's Peak and Teach School communities. It could bring out the best in our staff, students, and parent community. Bishop's Peak and Teach Schools are both high-performing and distinguished schools with APIs above 900. Bringing together students, staff, and parent communities who have so much in common could provide the opportunity for a new innovative model. Further exploration on this important topic is warranted.*

Possible Timelines, Discussions, and Decision Points:

- January 15: Board Meeting to discuss executive summary and consider options (no action)
February 5: Board Meeting to further discuss options and hear public comment
February 19: Board Meeting – possible action

BISHOP'S PEAK & TEACH ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS ENROLLMENT HISTORY



| CBEDS Enrollment | Bishop's Peak | Teach | Combined | Total K-6 District |
|------------------|---------------|-------|----------|--------------------|
| 2012-2013 | 365 | 156 | 521 | 3,880 |
| 2011-2012 | 320 | 151 | 471 | 3,770 |
| 2010-2011 | 296 | 115 | 411 | 3,661 |
| 2009-2010 | 295 | 93 | 388 | 3,584 |
| 2008-2009 | 287 | 71 | 358 | 3,409 |
| 2007-2008 | 290 | 84 | 374 | 3,374 |
| 2006-2007 | 290 | 66 | 356 | 3,392 |
| 2005-2006 | 300 | 88 | 388 | 3,495 |
| 2004-2005 | 303 | 89 | 392 | 3,551 |
| 2003-2004 | 299 | 95 | 394 | 3,716 |
| 2002-2003 | 300 | 124 | 424 | 3,813 |
| 2001-2002 | 333 | 171 | 504 | 4,099 |



Bishop's Peak / Teach School

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November 7, 2012

Current Problem: We currently have 522 students on campus, and the prediction is that Bishop's Peak will continue to rise in the years to come. Our enrollment rise was way beyond what we were expecting this past year. Both Bishop's Peak and Teach are outstanding schools that have rich traditions and are popular requests through the Open Enrollment process. Both schools have achieved remarkable student achievement, and our schools enjoy amazing support from parents and the community. This last Spring, both schools limited the number of students accepted through Open Enrollment. Currently, both BP and TE have waiting lists from this process.

Data Collected: For the past month I have been soliciting ideas and concerns from our joint school community and the neighbors of our school as well. I appreciated their willingness to participate in the process and for all the input I received. I want to thank my staff for participating in the as well. When I first met with them to start the year, they all stressed the importance of keeping this enrollment crisis from affecting the moral of the staff.

After hearing from parents, staff, and neighbors of Bishop's Peak/Teach many creative ideas have been brought up. The bulk of the letters express how happy they are with their school. Most of the neighbors I have heard from have expressed concern with our rising enrollment. A theme from the letters I received, and supported by many staff members at our site, suggests finding an alternate campus for Teach. This idea would allow both schools to thrive apart from one another. Although we have made the most of a shared campus, many believe that this would be an ideal solution.

Unfortunately, there are some considerations with this ideal solution: costs associated with opening another school site, available school sites, and uncertainty involved in such a big move. Ideas for school sites have included the old Pacheco, the old Junior High, Sunnyside, or Morro Elementary sites. There has been more support for a site within SLO. Ideas for this school have included topics such as STEM and/or expanding to junior high or keeping it relatively intact. When Teach was placed on the BP campus 11 years ago, it was because Teach's enrollment had dipped and it was determined that the Bishop's Peak campus could accommodate the two schools. Many have expressed concern that this proposed move would cause great uncertainty for Teach, and some concern that Bishop's Peak could possibly shrink again.

If no change of this magnitude were made, the following ideas have surfaced to deal with our size in the short term: Convert computer labs to classrooms (laptops provided for classrooms), stagger start/end times for BP and TE (bussing complications), change BP's boundaries – there is a section of our school boundary that is close to SI (this generally takes a while to take hold), continue to further limit Open Enrollments openings at our site. As these ideas were discussed in our school forums neighbors of our school are concerned with adding more students to this site.

*Attached are all the letters received. Most of the letters are from Teach families. As we went through this process the uncertainty at Teach has resulted in a lot of parent input and concern.

DAN BLOCK, Principal