

School Consolidations

Engagement IS the Message

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Problem/Opportunity

- Lack of enrollment, some schools at less than 60% capacity
- State budget crisis and cuts in education -20% cuts each year from 2008-2011
- Difficult to continue to offer quality educational programs
- Recent unification of four districts created unique opportunity to realign schools and programs to better meet community needs

Research Methods

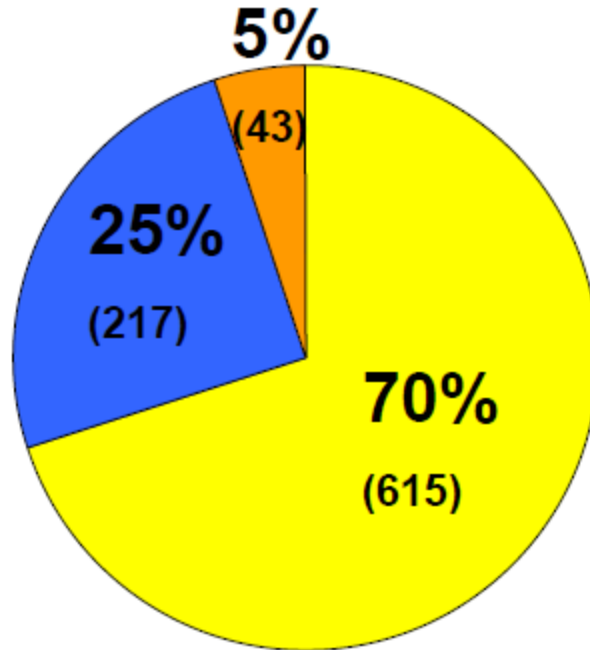
	Primary	Secondary	Qual	Quant	Formal	Informal	Formative	Evaluative
School Visit FF	✓		✓			✓	✓	
CBEDS Review		✓		✓	✓		✓	
CBO Fact Finding			✓			✓	✓	
<u>Transfer Surveys</u>	✓				✓			✓
Dept. Discovery	✓		✓			✓	✓	
Historical Review		✓				✓	✓	
<u>Advisory Panel</u>	✓		✓			✓	✓	
<u>Initial Forums</u>	✓		✓			✓	✓	
Phone Survey	✓			✓	✓			✓
Revised Forums	✓		✓			✓	✓	

Spotlight: preK-8 Survey

- Needed to verify community input at initial forums
- Conducted January 25-26 with all preK-8 families, including junior high and charters in all areas in English, Spanish, Russian, and Hmong
- Census survey –all were given opportunity to participate. Some were not home, not interested, technical challenges
- 15,000 possible respondents and 3,000 responded to create a 20% sample size
 - To achieve a 95% confidence level of the results, the suggested sample size is 340
- Message about the budget and process and one question in one automated call.

North Highlands Neighborhood Results

How do you feel about the idea in general to expand elementary schools to 8th grade instead of attending a junior high school?



■ Like the idea and want to see it happen

■ Not sure, want to learn more

■ Don't like the idea and don't want to see it happen

Sample includes all pre-k through 8th families



Key Audiences & Objectives

- Families
 - Most significantly impacted by school consolidations
 - Valuable insight and ideas for improving the process and quality of the decisions
- Employees
 - Also significantly impacted by school consolidations
 - Valuable insight and ideas for improving the process and quality of the decisions
 - Key information sources for families – opinion leaders
- School Board Members
 - Legally responsible for school consolidation decisions
 - Valuable insight and ideas for improving the process and quality of the decisions

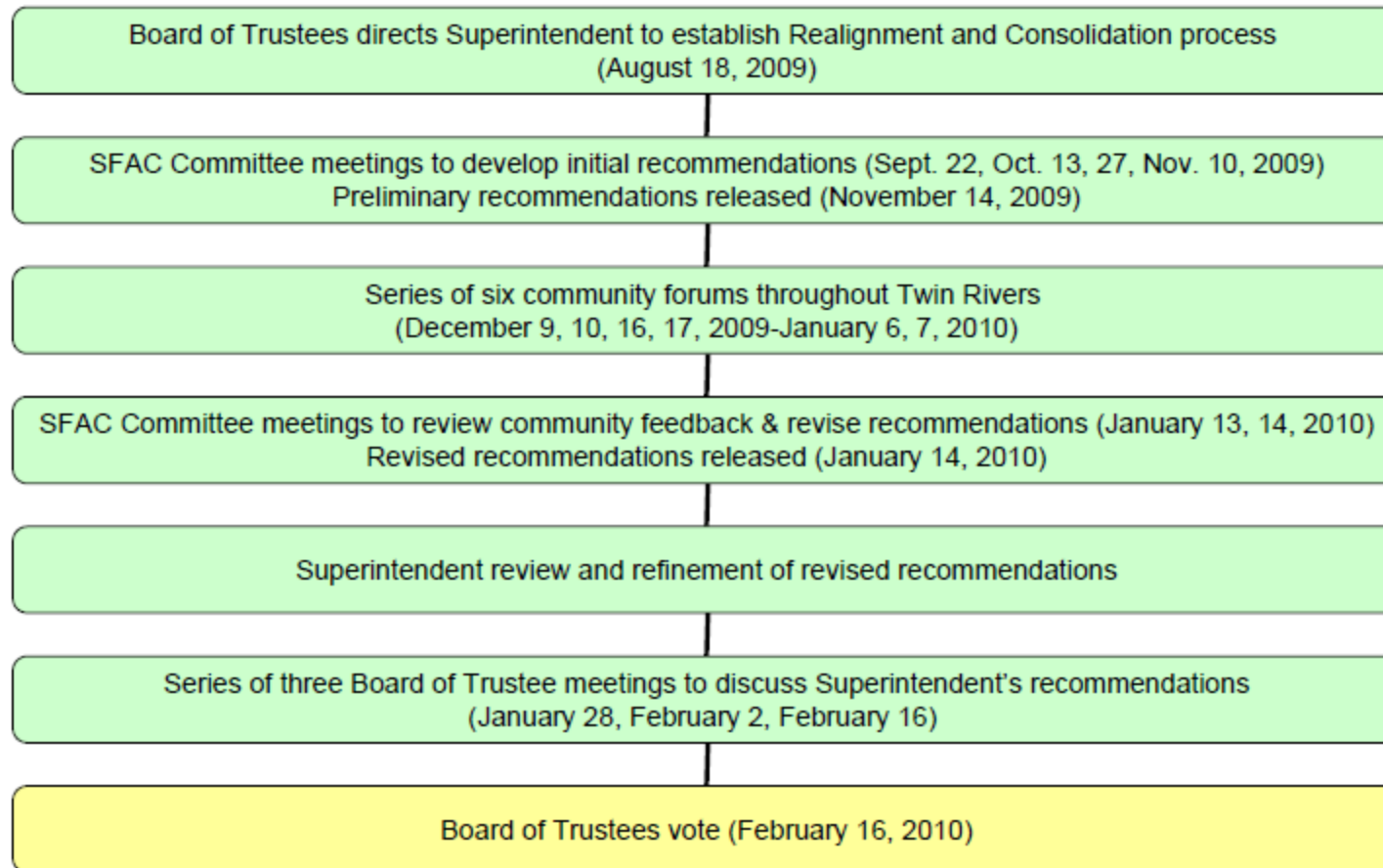
Key Messages (Various Points)

- The school budget situation has been devastating and the easy cuts have been made
- Consolidating schools will enable sites to have more programs, resources, and staff
- Decisions will be made fairly through a process that involves all community members
- We have listened to community feedback and revised recommendations to reflect input
- Families will have more options and higher quality programs going forward

School Closures and Diffusion Theory

- People do NOT like change
- Needed audiences to understand the need for change through their personal contacts and a variety of mass communication channels.
 - “The adoption of innovation depends on some combination of well-established interpersonal ties and habitual exposure to mass communication” – Ryan and Gross
- Had to prove relative advantage
 - Degree to which school consolidation is perceived as better than budget crisis or more cuts to staff, programs
- Dealing with audiences along the attitude/behavior change continuum

Project Timeline



Strategies & Tactics - Families

- Ensure families receive information about the process from a variety of sources
 - Letters describing process and initial recommendations, inviting to forums.
 - Principals incorporate information into regular automated calls home
 - News section of secondary school web sites that links to Facilities Advisory Page
 - Fliers listing recommendations and all board meetings and SFAC input email address
 - Formal and informal discussions with employees

Strategies & Tactics - Families

- Bring people together in person as a region and as individual school communities
 - Series of six regional community forums: two in each of the three recommendation areas for North Highlands/Foothill Farms, Del Paso/North Sacramento, and Rio Linda/Natomas
 - 3 for initial recommendations & 3 for revised recommendations
 - School site leaders wanting additional opportunities to engage with their school community hold additional site level community forums as needed

Strategies & Tactics - Families

- Provide opportunity for remote input for those who cannot make it to meetings
 - Email addresses (sfac@twinriversusd.org) and (yourthoughts@twinriversusd.org) created to provide an additional convenient opportunity to provide feedback. Addresses listed in SFAC communications.
 - Received emails are listed in the comments section of the Facilities Advisory pages
 - Phone survey of preK-8th grade families in the areas where the significant program change to kindergarten through 8th grade schools were recommended by the community (FF/NH, DP/NS, RL/N) to ensure that the qualitative feedback received at the forums represents the general population

Evaluation

Objectives

Increase family awareness of the budget crisis and school consolidation engagement opportunities to 90 percent

Collect feedback from at least 10% of the affected TRUSD families

Increase employee awareness of the budget crisis and school consolidation engagement opportunities to 90 percent

Majority vote on a set of actionable consolidation recommendations

Results/Indicators

Unable to measure absolute awareness without formal polling, however output measures indicate a minimum of 7 independent impressions through multiple methods (Phone, web, flier x3, letter, email)

3,500 comments via forum comments, email comments, and phone survey votes, approximately 18% of the potential audience of 19,000 households

Unable to measure absolute awareness without formal polling, however output measures indicate a minimum of 4 independent impressions through multiple methods (Staff meetings, email, fliers posted at sites, association notifications)

5-2 Approval of the consolidation plan on 2/16/10, enrollment growth and savings the following two years

Continuing Engagement

- Relaxed Open Enrollment Process
- Ongoing board reports on progress
- Facilities newsletter listing facility improvements
- Transition teacher/parent conference information on new choices

Questions?