

**Auburn Union School District**  
**Fiscal Recovery Implementation Planning Committee**  
**Report of Recommendation to the AUSD Board of Trustees**  
**January 6, 2023**

**Executive Summary**

After two prioritization exercises over the eight-month process, the Fiscal Recovery Implementation Planning (FRIP) Committee (“Committee”) is recommending two options for elementary school consolidation and one main recommendation for Alta Vista Community Charter school relocation. While the end result was not a full consensus, the Committee still had similar outcomes in both votes. In addition, a majority of the Committee did not find grade reconfigurations (i.e. move to Districtwide TK-8 model) feasible to implement for the 2023-24 school year. The final prioritization did end up with a close vote, and as such the Committee is ranking the recommendations in that order.

The FRIP ultimately recommends the Auburn Union School District Board of Trustees:

- Option #1: Auburn Elementary School to consolidate onto Rock Creek Elementary School campus (7 votes).
- Option #2: Rock Creek Elementary School to consolidate onto Auburn Elementary School campus (6 votes)

Further recommendations on this to the Board of Trustees would be to evaluate and explore a TK-8 option to support parent choice, be it part of the Alta Vista Community Charter School transition or a single site transition over multiple years.

- Relocation of Alta Vista Community Charter School to the Skyridge Elementary School campus.
  - The Committee would like to put forth a stipulation that the Board of Trustees explore a partnership with Bluedoor Community Center and a Non-Classroom based option.

**Background**

In December of 2021 Auburn Union School District (AUSD) certified as a Qualified budget and therefore need to make fiscal reductions in order to meet current and forecasted obligations over the following two years.

A Budget Committee was established with representation from each school site, all classifications of employees, and parent representatives in order to work through proposing budget reductions to the Board of Trustees. Subsequently, after review of the conditions of the Qualified budget, Placer County Office of Education (PCOE) required the District to approve by resolution specific budget cuts and adopt a Fiscal Recovery Plan.

Without these cuts in place, the District would be subject to a Negative budget certification and risk County oversight of all District business. As such, the recommendations from the Budget

Committee were included in a Fiscal Recovery Plan that was adopted by the Board of Trustees in March of 2022 with resolution to perform the reductions or be subject to a possible Negative budget.

With the adoption of the Fiscal Recovery Plan, a Fiscal Recovery Implementation Planning Committee (FRIP) was established with the task of making a recommendation to the Board of Trustees on the best implementation of the actions outlined in the Plan. Members of the original Budget Committee were invited, as well as more representatives from all school sites, and each Board of Trustee member also appointed a representative to serve on this Committee.

### **Committee Members**

While the FRIP Committee did start larger, some members have had to resign or have chosen to discontinue. Current remaining members are: Ashlie Helm, Trevor Rogas, Cindy Bell, Sara Liebert, David Peters, Rachel Radell, Alli Reagle, Kirstyn Dutro, Diana Wilson, Margie Bauman, Laurie Balsano-Wright, Amy Oddo, Tomas Evangelista, Josh Rugg, Michelle Buntt, and Katie Haskett

### **Process**

The Committee has met throughout 2022 and 2023, with emphasis on education of all aspects of what went into the Budget Committee's decision, and information on current statuses of fiscal, facility, and funding in order to have foundational knowledge of all elements that go into making decision on closing sites or altering grade configurations.

Each meeting was a public meeting, but it was established after trial and error that only the original Committee members who had taken part in prior educational meetings would participate in discussions and activities.

All attendees received both hard copy of agendas and handouts at the meeting, and had any presentations emailed to them after the meeting as well. When notes from each meeting were prepared, those were also forwarded out by email to each Committee member.

The following are the dates of the Committee meetings:

- April 20, 2022
- May 16, 2022
- August 25, 2022
- October 19, 2022
- November 16, 2022
- December 7, 2022
- January 5, 2023

Visits to the sites of EV Cain Middle School, Auburn Elementary School, and Rock Creek Elementary School were held on the following dates:

- November 7, 2022 – AE/RC
- November 8, 2022 - EVC
- November 10, 2022 - EVC

On the first meeting in April, a Secretary and a President of the Committee were selected by Committee members. Amy Oddo was selected as Secretary and took all notes from the meetings. Ashlie Helm was selected as President and served as Committee spokesperson.

### **Forming Recommendations**

While the Fiscal Recovery Plan gave the Committee their charge, to consolidate one elementary site and relocate Alta Vista Community Charter School program, which site was to be consolidated was more of the concern. And although the Budget Committee and Fiscal Recovery Plan was based on a TK-8 grade configuration Districtwide without a comprehensive middle school, soon all options were on the table for how to consolidate schools in a way that achieves fiscal solvency and sizes the available sites to better fit with current enrollment.

### **Prioritization – Round 1:**

At the August meeting, the Committee was asked to look at the options that had been suggested both through the Budget Committee originally, plus any other options brought forth to date within the FRIP, and make comments on them and list out pros and cons of each. Each option was listed on a piece of chart paper and hung throughout the meeting room.

In addition, during this time, a group of Committee members gathered and created another piece of chart paper titled “Other Options” in order to list options that they did not feel were represented or to add comments about other matters.

All of these comments and suggestions were transcribed from the chart papers, and during the October meeting each comment or notation was reviewed in a presentation and discussed as a group.

During the October meeting all the comments from August were reviewed and discussed. The FRIP Committee was now asked individually to rank options based on 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> favored option. Each Committee member was given different colored sticker dots, and asked to place them on provided chart papers with all discussed options listed. Blue was 1<sup>st</sup> choice, Green as 2<sup>nd</sup> choice, and Orange as 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The Committee worked in three groups, and while some groups prioritized as a group, another group did individual priorities, and yet another changed the activity a little to better match their

outlook. From these chart papers, it was apparent that a majority of the Committee members saw two options as the best choices.

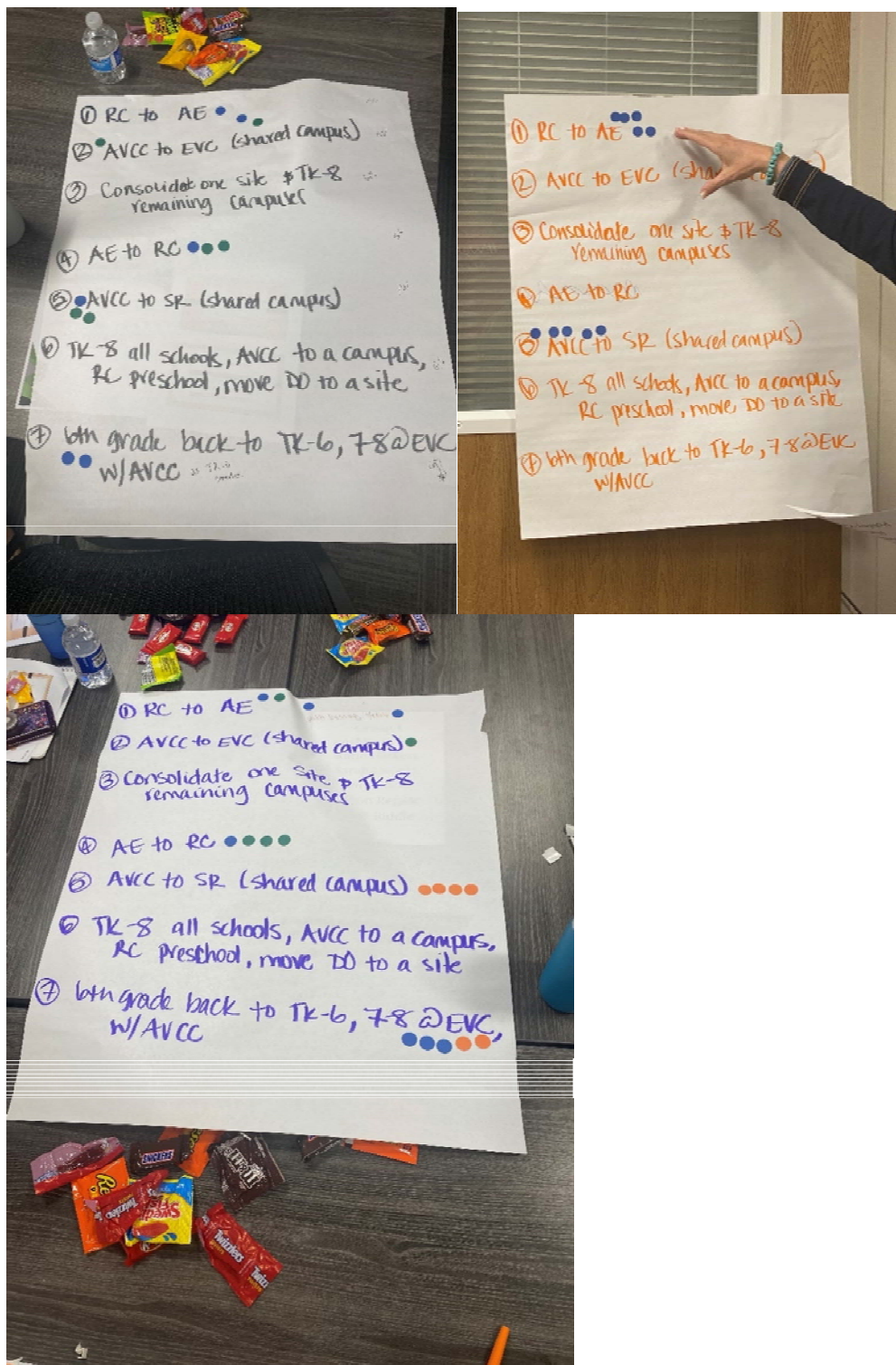
These two options were:

- Consolidating Rock Creek Elementary School onto the Auburn Elementary School campus and keeping the elementary program as TK-5<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Relocating Alta Vista Community Charter School onto the Skyridge Elementary School campus.

The prioritized options would keep EV Cain as a comprehensive middle school, eliminating the Districtwide TK-8 configuration put forth from the Budget Committee.

Each group was asked to report out to the Committee on the discussions that were had by the members on why they prioritized in the manner that they did, and some individuals also reported out on their own prioritization. This allowed the group as a whole to understand how participants worked through the process.

Photos of the prioritization project are below.



### Site Visits and Timeline Extension:

At the November 9, 2022 Board of Trustees meeting, a requested action item was brought to the Board from a portion of the Committee that were requesting certain pieces of information, site walks to be held, and an extension of timeline for meetings and forming final recommendations. The Board agreed with some modifications of the timeline, with a critical eye to key deadlines in early 2023. The FRIP Committee would now have two additional meetings; one in December and a final in January, with recommendations going to the Board of Trustees for their January 11, 2023 meeting.

Due to work schedules of FRIP Committee members, the site visits were scheduled for evening. Due to the large attendance and lack of confirmed attendance for a secondary November 14<sup>th</sup> site walk, only one November 7<sup>th</sup> walk of both Rock Creek Elementary and Auburn Elementary was held. Two different site walks of EV Cain were held to accommodate FRIP Committee member schedules.

### Prioritization Round 2:

During the December 7, 2022 Committee Meeting a priority focus and alignment exercise took place beginning with more pros/cons to each currently discussed option.



Options that had been brought to the FRIP Committee prior, or had been discussed in FRIP Committee meetings were up for votes as follows:

PROPOSED CONSOLIDATIONS FOR AUSD:

OPTION #1	Consolidate Auburn Elementary onto Rock Creek campus
OPTION #2	Consolidate Rock Creek onto Auburn Elementary campus
OPTION #3	District to TK-8th at all sites: EV Cain, Skyridge, and Auburn Elementary
OPTION #4	District to TK-8th at all sites: EV Cain, Skyridge, and Rock Creek
OPTION #5	Close EV Cain campus, all other sites to TK-8th grade
OPTION #6	Consolidate Auburn Elementary onto upper level of EV Cain campus, bottom level to remain all district 6-8th
OPTION #7	Transition to TK-6th grade at elementary sites: EV Cain 7-8th, Skyridge and Auburn Elementary TK-6th
OPTION #8	Transition to TK-6th grade at elementary sites: EV Cain 7-8th, Skyridge and Rock Creek TK-6th

PROPOSED CONSOLIDATIONS FOR AVCC:

OPTION #1	AVCC to share site with Skyridge
OPTION #2	AVCC to share upper campus area with EV Cain (if a coordinating option for AUSD makes this available)
OPTION #3	AVCC to occupy whichever campus is left vacant (must still allow AVCC to be fiscally solvent)

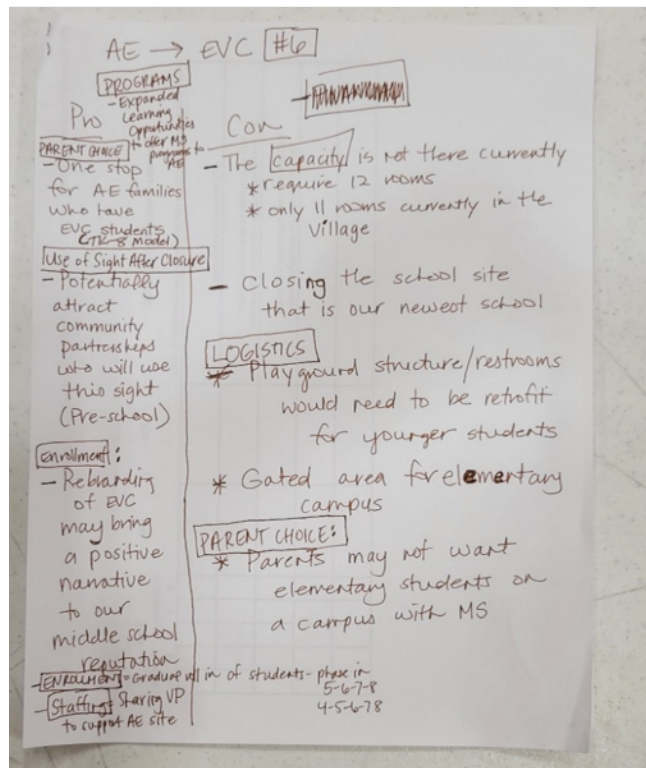
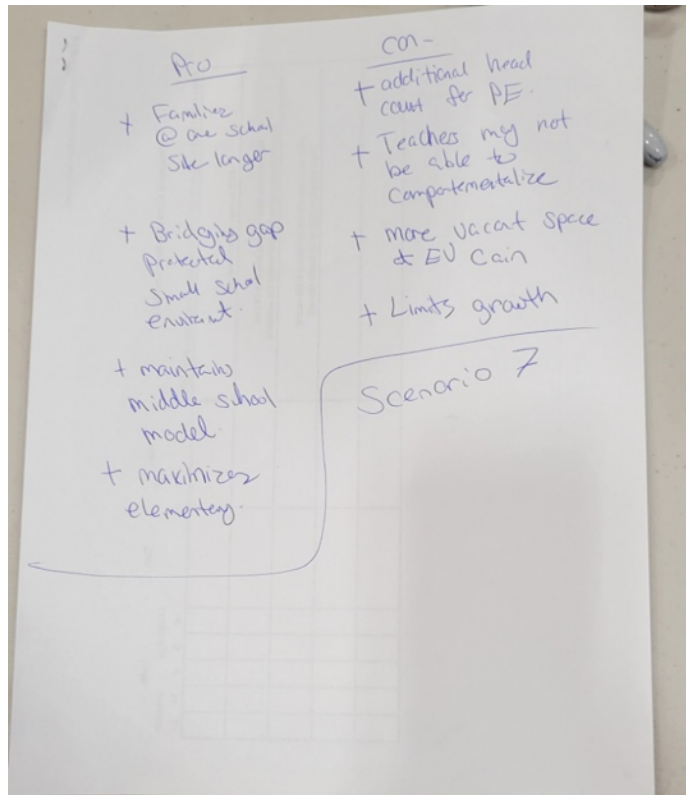
After the pros/cons were put into categories of priority by Committee members, the Committee as a whole began streamlining options for consolidation and reconfiguration. Options were broken out to two members working on more considerations for each of the proposed ideas. The categories of prioritization were:

- Timeline
- Equity
- Financial
- Staff Impact
- Parent Choice
- Building Conditions
- Location
- Middle School
- Site Logistics
- Transportation
- Enrollment
- Site Use after closure

While the moving of the Alta Vista Community Charter School was not discussed the first rounds of prioritization and elimination, it would be considered after the voting for AUSD sites specifically.

Photos of this exercise are below, as well as typed transcription provided by a Committee member of the writing in the photos:





⑤	Close E.V. Cain TK-8 all other sites
Financial: ~\$3,800,000 saved	Cons:
Equity: Very little to no impact • No melting pot of middle school students	
Staff impact: bsn, 7th, 8th teachers would be able to go to an elementary school	
Location: still have north & south schools con: no middle of Auburn school	
Middle School: <del>proposed</del> No middle school	
Site logistics: adding 170 kids to each <del>school</del> school. Need 6 classrooms each to accommodate additional students	
Parent choice: More choices +	
Used - District office Site for AVEL	

TK-8 all sites) EVC/RC/SR/Pro	#4	Con
carry all TK-8 Services would be (Hopefully Comparable) • Could potentially provide more services where they are needed.		Time line - more time consuming / difficult
Financial	Savings	
Site movement		Site - Movement (all locations) • Credentialing • Loss of Collaboration Boundary changes
North / Mid / South		
Location		
Mid Sch		MS - loss of Comprehensive Middle School site • less Parent choice
Less movement for kids with potential transportation issues.		
Site locations		loss of middle school equity between RC/SR & EVC
RC Kids Can walk & locations are spread		
Parent Choice		None here
Enrollment		
Building Condo	N/A	

#3 timeframe - lots of logistics moving schools

Equity - Closing walk routes.  
Losing single cred. kids.  
Losing staff  
Losing ~~electives~~ electives

Financial - on fiscal recovery plan.

Staff - losing single cred. teachers  
admin.

Middle School - No middle school

Site logistics - lots to coordinate.

Transportation - ~~need~~ need to get walkers from  
R.C. to new.

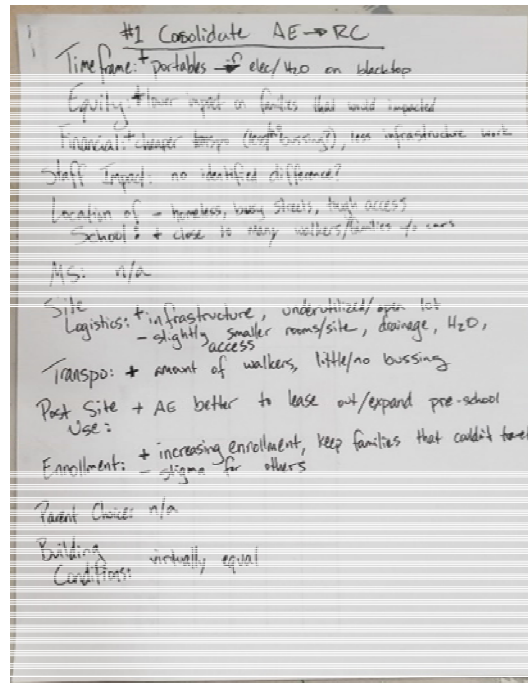
Post closure - What to do w/ R.C.

Enrollment - ?? Lose kids who want  
advanced?

Parent choice - Yes.

Pro	2.	Con
Building Condition (New)		Could lose enrollment (transport)
<del>Close</del> <del>Close</del>		No trans / mostly walking
Bigger Cafeteria with stage		Homeless encampment would prevent walk.
Retains middle school		Transportation (expensive)
North Middle South		Equity to vulnerable population and people without access to transportation
Financial		- Portable need more work
Location neighborhood		
Large		
#8 Trans.		
Pro		Con
- Retain Middle School		- Site Logistic to many kids at Elementary
- Support Vulnerable Pop		- <del>20-30</del> 20-30 Rock Condition & Location on major roads Traffic
- Reaches financial goals		
- North Middle South		
- Few Auburn el kids walk		
- Open school enrollment		

TK-8 option



## ***Consolidation option pro/con breakdowns based on established priorities***

### ***Option 8: Transition to TK-6th at elementary sites: EVC 7-8th, Skyridge and Rock Creek TK-6th***

*Pros: Retain middle school, supports vulnerable population, meets financial goals, North/Mid/South schools, Few AE walkers, Open school enrollment.*

*Cons: Site logistics - Too many kids at Elementary, RC conditions, location is on major roads, lots of traffic.*

### ***Option 7: Transition to TK-6th at elementary sites: EVC 7-8th, Skyridge and Auburn Elementary TK-6th***

*Pros: Families at one school site longer, bridging gap protected - small school environment, maintains middle school model, and maximizes elementary.*

*Cons: Additional headcount for PE, teachers may not be able to compartmentalize, more vacant space at EV Cain, and Limits growth.*

### ***Option 6: Consolidate Auburn Elementary onto the upper level of EV Cain campus, bottom level to remain all district 6-8th middle school.***

*Pros:*

*Programs - expanded learning opportunities (offer middle school programs to AE)*

*Parent choice - One stop for AE families who have middle schoolers (TK-8 model).*

*Site Use (after closure) - Could potentially attract community partnerships who would want to use the site (Pre-school).*

*Enrollment - Rebranding of EV Cain may bring positive narrative to our middle school reputation, could have a gradual phase in (5-6-7-8 then 4-5-6-7-8)*

*Staffing - Shared VP to support AE site*

*Cons:*

*Site Logistics - Capacity is not there currently (would require 12 rooms and there are only 11 in the village as is), closes our newest school site, Playground structures/restrooms would need to be retrofitted for younger students, and would need a gated area for elementary campus.*

*Parent Choice - Parents may not want elementary students on a campus with middle schoolers.*

***Option 5: Close EV Cain campus, all other sites to TK-8th grade.***

*Pros:*

*Equity - Very little to no impact*

*Staff Impact - 6th, 7th, 8th teachers would be able to move to an elementary school campus.*

*Location - Still have North and South Auburn schools.*

*Site Logistics - Adding 170 kids to each school*

*Parent Choice - More choices*

*Site Use (after closure) - Could house District Office and be a site for Alta Vista Community Charter*

*Cons:*

*Equity - No melting pot of middle school students*

*Middle School - no separate middle school*

*Site Logistics - Sites would need 6 classrooms each to accommodate additional students*

***Option 4: District to TK-8th at all sites: EV Cain, Skyridge, and Rock Creek***

*Pros:*

*Equity - All TK-8 services would be comparable, and could potentially focus additional services where they are needed most.*

*Location - Has North/Mid/South Auburn school sites*

*Middle School - Less movement for students with potential transportation issues.*

*Transportation - Rock Creek students can walk to school.*

*Cons:*

*Timeline - More time consuming and difficult*

*Staff Impact - Lots of staff movement, credentialing issues, loss of collaboration with other middle school teachers, boundary changes (which come with additional impacts)*

*Middle School - Loss of a comprehensive Middle School site and less parent choice as far as MS options.*

*Site Logistics - Loss of middle school equity between Rock Creek, Skyridge, and EVC.*

*Parent Choice - none for this option*

***Option 3: District to TK-8th at all sites: EV Cain, Skyridge, and Auburn Elementary***

*Time Frame - Lots of logistics moving schools*

*Equity - Closes RC, loses single credential teachers, losing sports and electives*

*Financial - On Fiscal Recovery Plan*

*Staff - Losing single credential teachers, admin.*

*Middle School - No middle school*

*Site Logistics - Lots to coordinate*

*Transportation - Need to get walkers from RC to AE.*

*Post Closure - What to do with RC?*

*Enrollment - Lose kids who want advanced classes*

*Parent Choice - Yes*

***Option 2: Consolidate Rock Creek onto Auburn Elementary campus***

*Pros: Building condition is newer, bigger cafeteria with stage, retains a middle school, covers North/Mid/South, meets financial needs, larger, in a neighborhood.*

*Cons: Could lose enrollment due to transportation issues, no transportation/ mostly walking students, homeless encampment could prevent safe walking, providing transportation is expensive, equity to vulnerable populations and people without access to transportation, and portables need work.*

***Option 1: Consolidate Auburn Elementary onto Rock Creek Campus***

*Pros:*

*Time frame - Electric and Water on blacktop for any new portables needed*

*Equity - Lower impact on families that would be impacted*

*Financial - Cheaper transportation (less or no bussing), less infrastructure work*

*Site Logistics - Infrastructure, underutilized/open lot*

*Transportation - Large number of walkers, little to no bussing*

*Post site closure use - AE better to lease out, expand pre-school*

*Enrollment - Increasing enrollment and keeps families that can't travel*

*Cons:*

*Location of school - Homeless, busy streets, tough access for drop off./pick up*

*Site Logistics - Slightly smaller rooms/site, drainage issues, water issues, access*

*Enrollment - Stigma for others*

After these write ups were shared aloud with the group, an elimination was done by the Committee on options that they agreed were not feasible based on the Committee's shared perspective.

Options with grade reconfiguration were not considered to be impractical at this time, as there was a concern within the Committee that there would be enough time to implement this effectively prior to start of school in August 2023. It was decided that the consolidation should happen first, with any changes to grade levels happening at a later time. As such, a majority of the options were removed from the voting pool.

A majority of the Committee outlined the following key elements of retaining a comprehensive middle school in addition to concerns for being able to mindfully reconfigure grades prior to the 2023-24 school year:

- Abundance: as Auburn Union is the only District that matriculates into Placer High School from a comprehensive middle school model, the District offers a different choice than surrounding TK-8<sup>th</sup> grade models.
- Staffing: ability for the District to appropriately staff 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade depending on program models and credentialing.
- Sports: District would be unable to immediately secure league assignments, or would need to form their own league against our own schools.
- Facilities: the EV Cain campus has a variety of unique facilities in the District such as large gymnasium, larger fields, specialty classrooms, larger kitchen/serving area.
- Socialization: concerns about having younger elementary students integrated with older middle school students, and the current blending of students from all elementary sites prior to moving onto high school.
- Electives: unable to offer the variety of options for elective selections, or the ability to provide daily elective programs such as band/music.
- Advanced Class Offerings

For Alta Vista Community Charter School, Principal Diana Wilson was asked to provide feedback on the three options up for consideration for where the charter program would be housed. She was able to address the concerns of fiscal feasibility, growth, site mobility, and future partnerships.

A secret ballot vote for both AUSD and Alta Vista Community Charter School was held and votes reported out publicly.