

**Report of the Hillcrest School
Long Range Planning Committee
on Enrollment**

**HILLCREST SCHOOL
30 Marguerite Drive
Oakland, California 94618**

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ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

CCR = California Code of Regulations

CDE = California Department of Education

CSR = Class Size Reduction

LRPC = Long Range Planning Committee

OEA = Oakland Education Association

OUSD = Oakland Unified School District

SBE = State Board of Education. The SBE is the governing and policy-making body of the CDE.

SSC = School Site Council

YRS = Year-round school

“Attendance area” means the geographical boundaries established by the OUSD to determine the households assigned to a particular school.

“Options program” means the OUSD enrollment system that governs school applications. OUSD materials from January 2007 explain that “The Options system was established about three years ago to make it easier for families who want to choose a school outside their attendance area.”¹

“Intradistrict transfer” means an assignment to attend a school within the OUSD other than the one associated with the attendance area in which a student resides.

(i) “The Options system was established about three years ago to make it easier for families who want to choose a school outside their attendance area. Families submit their top six choices for elementary school or their top three picks for middle or high school. Charter schools are not part of the program. Those applying to their neighborhood school receive top priority for enrollment, followed by those with a sibling already at the school and children whose neighborhood schools are in 'Program Improvement' under No Child Left Behind. Remaining slots will be decided by lottery.” webportal.ousd.k12.ca.us/docs/9148.pdf

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report presents the results of a study undertaken by the Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) of Oakland's Hillcrest School to understand the impact of changing enrollment demographics on the school and to make recommendations to the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) on how best to respond to the school's specific enrollment challenges.

The Long Range Planning Committee of Oakland's Hillcrest School declares the following set of principles:

- We believe in OUSD's provision of strong, **quality public education** for all of Oakland's children.
- We believe in Hillcrest's **K-8 educational model**.
- We believe in a **transparent enrollment process that provides a high degree of certainty** about where a child will attend school.
- We believe in **small, neighborhood schools** that support the fabric of a community.
- We believe in building a **sustainable, long-term, and constructive relationship** between the Hillcrest community, OUSD, and other Oakland public schools.

Whereas, the demand for student spaces at Hillcrest school exceeds the supply—given the size of Hillcrest's physical plant and the effects of changing neighborhood demographics and enrollment patterns—and in support of the principles stated above, we, the Long Range Planning Committee of Hillcrest School, put forth the following prioritized recommendations to affect enrollment for fall 2008 and beyond:

Recommendation 1: To ensure quality public education in a non-crowded environment, we recommend that the OUSD institute an enrollment plan at Hillcrest that eventually allows the total campus population to a) stabilize at a number that fits the size of the available physical plant and b) meets each grade level's needs with regard to class size. (As discussed in the Supply Subcommittee findings, utilization of the current physical plant in a manner that is the same or similar to its current use suggests a target population of approximately 310 students).ⁱⁱ

Recommendation 2: To promote an enrollment process that provides certainty to families, we recommend that the Hillcrest attendance-area boundaries be adjusted to more accurately match the expected number of applicants with the number of spaces available. (The committee

(ii) For a detailed discussion of how this number was derived, please see Section V-B., Findings and Recommendations, Results of the Supply Subcommittee, Table S-2 and section f., "Optimal Student Population for Hillcrest."

recognizes that this will necessitate the simultaneous adjustment of the attendance-area boundaries of other nearby schools.)

Recommendation 3: In addition to Recommendation Number 2, boundary adjustment, we recommend that the OUSD examine the feasibility of constructing or converting an existing site in the “Hills” community to accommodate the burgeoning number of students seeking enrollment in schools such as Chabot, Montclair, Thornhill, Redwood Heights, and Joaquin Miller.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that the OUSD conduct a feasibility study of the potential for implementing a multi-track year-round schedule to determine if doing so could increase capacity enough to accommodate demand, and also to determine the other effects (both positive and negative) of a year-round schedule.

Recommendation 5: To address the current gap in OUSD written policies regarding the placement of children who are involuntarily redirected from their attendance-area school, we recommend that any family whose child is involuntarily redirected from their attendance-area school be given the highest priority to attend the alternate schools they identify on their Options application form, consistent with the current proposed policy for the Alameda Unified School District.ⁱⁱⁱ

Recommendation 6: Consistent with OUSD Board Policy 0420.5^{iv} (regarding vesting school staff with decision-making power over matters that affect student learning), we recommend that the Hillcrest principal be given authority to determine whether there is room to admit students to grades other than kindergarten, taking into account the planned-for attrition required to prevent overcrowding. Should the principal determine that there is room for additional students in a grade band, we recommend that OUSD utilize a transparent, open, and traceable process to determine which particular student or students are admitted.

Recommendation 7: To offset the extremely large kindergarten classes admitted in the past three years, the size of upcoming kindergarten classes will need to be curtailed—perhaps substantially—relative to the steady-state school population, consistent with the models run by the Supply Subcommittee.^v

Recommendation 8: The process for determining which, if any, children are involuntarily redirected to another school should be transparent, traceable, and open, and should be fully described in writing and published on the OUSD website’s enrollment page before the

(iii) For information on AUSD’s proposed policy, see Appendix A. This recommendation should not be interpreted as an endorsement by the committee of using redirection as a standalone solution to overcrowding. The committee does not view redirection alone as being a principled solution to the problem of long-term overenrollment.

(iv) OUSD BP 0420.5, Philosophy, Goals, Objectives and Comprehensive Plans: School-Based Decision Making. “The Governing Board desires to improve student learning by giving decision-making opportunities to the people who are closest to the students.” webportal.ousd.k12.ca.us/WebItem.aspx?WebItemID=23&TabID=30

(v) For more information on the steady-state population model, see Appendix F, “Supply Subcommittee Enrollment Prediction Model.” For a general discussion of school population and alternate versions of the model, see Section V-B., Findings and Recommendations, Results of the Supply Subcommittee.

beginning of the open enrollment period. The website should also include information on the number of intradistrict transfers accepted by each school in the previous school year(s).

Furthermore, to the end of enabling a sustainable, long-term, and constructive relationship with the OUSD, we offer that the Hillcrest LRPC continue to work with OUSD staff and supply them with information that may be helpful in establishing policies for Hillcrest and its neighboring schools.

These recommendations are made by a committee of 13 representatives of different Hillcrest community constituencies, selected by caucuses of their peers to grapple with the challenge of overcrowding at Hillcrest; plus the Hillcrest Principal; a representative of the OUSD; and a representative of the Hillcrest teachers. The committee formed three subcommittees for the purpose of conducting investigation and reporting back to the full committee: the Demand Subcommittee (which examined changing neighborhood and area demographics, as well as shifting retention patterns at Hillcrest); the Supply Subcommittee (which examined Hillcrest's physical plant and space utilization relative to a variety of legal, pedagogical, and safety guidelines); and the Best Practices subcommittee (which looked at OUSD and other districts' goals and practices relative to nationwide trends in redistricting, lotteries, year-round schools, and communication to parents).

The balance of this report contains:

A further examination of the overcrowding challenges faced by Hillcrest, including a history of how the Long Range Planning Committee came to be

A List of Committee Members

Methodologies, findings, and recommendations of the Demand Subcommittee.

Methodologies, findings, and recommendations of the Supply Subcommittee.

Methodologies, findings, and recommendations of the Best Practices Subcommittee.

Overall conclusions and proposed next steps.