



February 13, 2013

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Dear Mark Twain Families:

In an effort to “right-size” our district, which has struggled with steadily declining student enrollment for a decade, we are recommending the closure of several under-enrolled schools in 2013-14. **This letter is to inform you that Mark Twain has been added to the list of schools considered for closure as an alternative to closing Tahoe Elementary School.**

Please know that the decision to close a school is extremely difficult to make and, of course, we would prefer not to make it. But over the past decade, the Sacramento City Unified School District has been hit hard by economic forces beyond our control. State budget cuts necessary to address California’s deficit have greatly impacted SCUSD. In the last five years alone, SCUSD has been forced to cut \$146 million from our budget due to state cuts, declining enrollment and a loss of one-time federal funds. Balancing our books has meant raising class sizes and eliminating or reducing librarians, nurses, teachers, counselors, custodians, social workers, central office staff, bus drivers and assistant principals. These cuts have damaged our ability to continue to provide a high-quality education to every student on every campus. Next year, we are predicting another drop in enrollment, which will lead to fewer state dollars yet again. Still, our costs continue to rise.

As we move forward, we must look at long-term solutions to our financial struggles. Currently, SCUSD operates 56 elementary schools. By comparison, neighboring Elk Grove Unified School District – which has 14,000 more students – operates 39 elementary schools. San Juan Unified, with a population nearly identical to our own, has 43 elementary schools. Because we have so many campuses, SCUSD elementary schools serve only 56 percent of their enrollment capacity.

SCUSD has scheduled a community meeting at Mark Twain at 6 p.m. on February 27. This meeting is your opportunity to provide feedback and gather information on the recommendation to close Mark Twain next fall.

A final Board of Education vote on this issue is scheduled for March 7.

I understand that this news may be upsetting. I assure you that we are committed to making this transition as easy as possible for your family and that we will mitigate any challenges that closures create. Our staff is already working on a comprehensive transition plan and we will be sure to keep you updated.

Sincerely,

Jonathan P. Raymond
Superintendent