SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS & RESPONSE
TO THE THINK TANK REPORT
August 9, 2007

WHAT THINK TANK RECOMMENDATIONS SHOULD BE FORWARDED
TO THE PUBLIC & STAFF INPUT PROCESS?

Note: Materials for the public and staff input process have yet to be developed, so the final wording of each option may be slightly changed or the categories may be combined when these materials are prepared.

Facility and Service Configurations

1. Elementary School Size	Superintendent's Recommendation
1. The Think Tank recommends the Board seek public input concerning the size of elementary schools. The Think Tank recommends a targeted minimum enrollment of 350 students, and a maximum enrollment determined by a site's capacity. Further, the Think Tank recommends that the District implement smaller learning environments in elementary schools whose enrollment exceeds 400 students. **Rationale:** The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation is consistent with the Think Tank's guiding principles in that it would increase equity amongst schools, and have positive impacts on achievement and the achievement gap.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board seek public and staff input** concerning the size of elementary schools and that the public process consider the following options: •Continue current policies and practices. •Establish a goal or target that enrollment of elementary school sites range from 300 to 500 students. Note: This goal or target could be achieved by having more than one smaller school on the same campus or site. (See Attachment 1: School Enrollment and Percentage of Free/Reduced Students) **The superintendent further recommends that the Board refer for internal staff discussion** the issue of implementing smaller learning environments in larger elementary schools.
2. Grade Configurations	**Superintendent's Recommendation**
2.1. The Think Tank recommends the Board wait before having the community deliberate converting schools to a K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 or K-3, 4-8, 9-12 model. **Rationale:** The Think Tank believes there is inadequate evidence to justify the significant cost and disruptions associated with such a configuration change and this option is potentially inconsistent with its guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends retaining current grade configurations and that the Board not seek public and staff input** on the option of converting schools to a K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 or K-3, 4-8, 9-12 model. If, in the future, the staff recommends, and the School Board decides to seriously consider a change in grade configuration district-wide or at specific schools, then input from affected public and staff should be requested at that time.
2.2. K-8: **The Think Tank recommends the Board assess** the success of K-8 schools in nearby districts before having the community deliberate converting all schools to the K-8 model. However, the District should consider a new K-8 school during its reconfiguration process if it makes sense educationally and financially.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board refer for internal staff research and discussion** consideration of converting to a K-8 model in additional schools.

Rationale: The Think Tank believes there is inadequate evidence to justify the significant cost and disruptions associated with such a configuration change making this option inconsistent with its guiding principles.	If, in the future, the staff recommends, and the School Board decides to seriously consider this model in additional schools, then input from affected public and staff should be requested at that time.
3. Middle School Size	**Superintendent's Recommendation**
3. The Think Tank recommends the Board seek public input concerning the size of middle schools. The Think Tank recommends a targeted minimum enrollment of 400 students and a maximum enrollment set at 600 students. **Rationale:** The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would increase (and protect) equity amongst schools—furthering the Think Tank's guiding principles of equity, increasing achievement, and closing the achievement gap.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board seek public and staff input** concerning the size of middle schools and that the public process consider the following options: •Continue current policies and practices. •Establish a goal or target that enrollment of middle schools range from 400 to 600 students, and that this be achieved through the management of enrollment (i.e., managing student transfers). Managing enrollment will improve the ability of each middle school to provide comparable programs and services. (See Attachment 1: School Enrollment and Percentage of Free/Reduced Students)
4. High School Size	**Superintendent's Recommendation**
4.1 The Think Tank recommends the Board seek public input concerning high school size. The Think Tank recommends keeping the four current high schools as the best feasible option. **Rationale:** The Think Tank believes many of the suggested options are unfeasible due to associated costs, while others create circumstances that might negatively impact student achievement. Both factors are inconsistent with the Think Tank's guiding principles. **4.2 The Think Tank recommends the Board seek public input** on managing enrollment. The Think Tank believes managing enrollment will result in more equitable distribution of high school students and programs across regions, which will have positive outcomes for the District. **Rationale**: The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would increase equity amongst schools, and subsequently have positive impacts on achievement and the achievement gap. Both these factors are consistent with the Think Tank's guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board seek public and staff input** regarding the size of high schools and that the public process consider the following options: •Continue current policies and practices. •Reallocate resources among the existing four high schools so that smaller high schools can offer a range of program choices similar to those offered by larger schools. This would result in a reduction in per pupil funding to the larger high schools and an increase in per pupil funding to the smaller high schools. •Establish a goal or target that enrollment of comprehensive high schools range from 1,200 to 1,500 students and that this be achieved by managing enrollment through school choice and/or changing boundaries between the four high schools. (See Attachment 1: School Enrollment and Percentage of Free/Reduced Students)

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4.3. The Think Tank recommends the Board seek public input on improving career academy programs within high schools. The Think Tank recommends enhancing career academy options at each school, particularly through community partnerships (e.g. with Lane Community College). **Rationale:** The Think Tank believes an independently sited career academy would be financially unfeasible, but that the suggested recommendation would have positive impacts on overall achievement in the District. Thus, in terms of the Think Tank's guiding principles, it could increase overall achievement, but the option was not considered feasible. The Think Tank believes that career academies provide great potential for boosting post-secondary opportunities for high school students. However, there are significant barriers to implementing any career academy model. **4.4 The Think Tank recommends the Board seek public input** on smaller learning communities within each high school. The Think Tank believes strongly that small learning communities will have positive outcomes for the District. Total enrollment at individual high schools might depend on how many learning communities exist at each site. **Rationale:** The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would have positive impacts on overall achievement in the District, and is therefore consistent with its guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board refer for internal staff research and discussion** the extent to which the District should consider expanding career academy programs and implementing smaller learning environments. If staff recommends, and the School Board accepts expansion of these programs, then public and staff input should be requested at that time. **The superintendent further recommends that the Board seek public and staff input** on whether or not the District should include in the next bond measure providing sufficient infrastructure so that high schools can expand their career academy programs and implement smaller learning environments. **What are career academies?** Career academies are small learning communities, comprising a group of students within the larger high school, who take a college preparatory curriculum with a career theme. They involve partnerships with employers, the community and local colleges, bringing resources from outside the high school to improve student motivation and achievement. Environmental studies, health occupations, and engineering are examples of career academy focus areas. **What are small learning communities?** Small learning communities are programs in which groups of students learn from a team of teachers over an extended period of time during their high school career. They may take various forms and include structures such as freshman academies, multi-grade academies organized around career interests and other themes, and "houses" in which small groups of students remain together for at least 2 years during high school. Another form of small learning community is autonomous schools within larger high schools, or independent small high schools. In all their forms, small learning communities provide opportunity for rigorous and relevant learning activities as well as foster a greater sense of school community and belonging among students. This sense of belonging allows for closer and more comprehensive oversight of a student's academic and social progress.
5. Alternative Schools	**Superintendent's Recommendation**
5. The Think Tank recommends the Board seek public input on alternative schools. The Think Tank recommends that alternative school sites adhere to the same 350 minimum enrollment as other elementary schools, allowing these schools to meet the needs of all students equitably. The Think Tank believes steps should be taken to encourage equitable distribution of students with special needs in alternative schools.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board seek public and staff input** on alternative school enrollment and that the public process consider the following options: •Continue current policies and practices. •Establish a goal or target that enrollment of alternative school sites range from 300 to 500 students.

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Rationale: The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would increase equity among schools in the District and would further the Think Tank's guiding principles of equity, increasing achievement, and closing the achievement gap.	Note: One or more alternative schools could be located on one site. (See Attachment 1: School Enrollment and Percentage of Free/Reduced Students)
6. Early Education Infrastructure	**Superintendent's recommendation**
6.1 Kindergarten: The Think Tank recommends the Board seek public input on providing kindergarten infrastructure. The Think Tank believes there is logic in providing sufficient space for additional kindergarten offerings that could be funded by the Legislature. **Rationale:** The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would increase the possibility of closing the achievement gap in the District, which is consistent with the Think Tank's guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board seek public and staff input** on whether or not the District should include in the next bond measure providing sufficient infrastructure so that each elementary school could provide a full day kindergarten program when sufficient funds become available.
6.2 Pre-kindergarten: The Think Tank recommends the Board seek public input on providing pre-kindergarten infrastructure. The Think Tank believes there would be benefit to providing more pre-kindergarten opportunities within 4J buildings, and encourages the District to collaborate with pre-kindergarten providers. **Rationale**: The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would increase the possibility of closing the achievement gap in the District consistent with the guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the school Board seek public and staff input** on whether or not the District should include in the next bond measure providing additional space for pre-kindergarten programs.
Operational Options	
7. Operation of Early Education	**Superintendent's Recommendation**
7.1 Kindergarten Implementation: The Think Tank believes there is limited benefit to having the public deliberate about substantially increasing kindergarten services because there is insufficient funding to do so in the foreseeable future. However, the Think Tank does believe the District should continue to allocate funding for kindergarten, particularly where it helps high needs populations. **Rationale**: The Think Tank believes it is currently financially unfeasible for the District to provide full-day kindergarten making this option inconsistent with its guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board refer for internal staff research and discussion** the issue of increasing the number of full day kindergarten programs. This could include Title 1 or other grant funding and/or the use of private funds. If funds to provide district-wide full day kindergarten become available to the school District then public and staff input should be requested at that time.

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7.2 Pre-Kindergarten Implementation: The Think Tank believes there is limited benefit to having the public deliberate about increasing pre-kindergarten services because 4J does not currently provide pre-kindergarten classes, nor is there funding to do so in the foreseeable future. The Think Tank, however, does encourage the District to collaborate with pre-kindergarten providers to increase the availability of pre-kindergarten. **Rationale:** The Think Tank believes it is currently financially unfeasible for the District to begin providing pre-kindergarten, which is inconsistent with the Think Tank's guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board refer for internal staff discussion** how the District can work more collaboratively with pre-kindergarten providers to increase the availability of pre-kindergarten programs.
8. English Language Learner	**Superintendent's Recommendation**
8. The Think Tank believes there is limited benefit to having the public deliberate *how* English Language Learner (ELL) services are delivered in the District. However, the Think Tank recommends increasing the services for ELL students. The Think Tank believes there is benefit to increasing services for ELL students, with particular consideration of a Spanish dual-immersion program. The Think Tank further recommends that the Board consider grouping students in regions with only a few ELL students (*low-incidence regions*). **Rationale**: The Think Tank believes the recommendation would increase the possibility of closing the achievement gap in the District, which is consistent with the Think Tank's guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board refer for internal staff research and discussion** how to improve the delivery of ELL services. This research and discussion is to include involvement of parent stakeholder groups. **The superintendent further recommends that the Board direct the superintendent to report to the Board** in a timely manner the progress it is making in improving the delivery of ELL services, including the creation of a dual immersion program and the grouping of ELL students in low incidence regions. Special attention should be given to assuring that ELL students are not segregated from the mainstream.
9. Technology	**Superintendent's Recommendation**
9.1 Technology Infrastructure: The Think Tank recommends the Board seek public input on increasing the infrastructure for technology. The Think Tank believes there are currently inequities that exist around availability and use of technology in schools, which warrants further public discussion. **Rationale** The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would increase overall achievement in the District, which is consistent with the Think Tank's guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board seek public and staff input** on whether or not the District should include in the next bond measure sufficient funds to increase the infrastructure for technology and to correct the inequities that exist amongst schools. Bond funding can be used to fund those items that are considered to be part of the building (e.g., wiring, fiber, and wireless networks). Bond funds cannot be used for computer hardware and software.
9.2 Technology Operations: The Think Tank believes there is limited benefit to having the public deliberate *how* technology services are delivered in the District. However the Think Tank recommends that the District create a technology "scope and sequence" (e.g., the content and timing) for student instruction. Further the Think Tank recommends that the District require a minimum level of technology at each school. The Think Tank also recommends centralized purchasing and increase teacher training around the use of technology.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board refer for internal staff research and discussion** how technology services are delivered in the District. **The superintendent further recommends that the Board direct the superintendent to report to the Board** in a timely fashion the progress the District is making in creating a technology "scope and sequence," establishing a minimum level of technology at each school (including un-bondable items such as computers and software), and moving to centralized purchasing and teacher training related to technology.

Rationale The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would increase overall achievement in the District, which is consistent with the Think Tank's guiding principles.	
10. Special Education	**Superintendent's Recommendation**
10. The Think Tank believes there is limited benefit to having the public deliberate *how* Special Education services are delivered in the District. However the Think Tank does recommend that the District provide earlier and more comprehensive screening to identify developmental disabilities. The Think Tank believes there is benefit to enhancing partnerships with other organizations that provide and coordinate services for special education students, like EC Cares. The Think Tank also recommends that the District consider inclusion of special education students at a level in excess of state and federal guidelines, where possible. **Rationale**: The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would increase the possibility of closing the achievement gap in the District, which is consistent with its guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board refer for internal staff research and discussion** how best to deliver special education services, provide earlier and more targeted interventions and evaluations, enhance partnerships with community services, and move to a more integrated instructional services model with access to the general education curriculum for all students. This research and discussion is to include involvement of parent stakeholder groups. **The superintendent further recommends that the Board direct the superintendent to report to the Board** in a timely manner the progress it is making in reshaping the delivery of services.
11. Title 1	**Superintendent's Recommendation**
11. The Think Tank believes there is limited benefit to having the public deliberate *how* Title schools implement their programs. However, the Think Tank does recommend that the District improve coordination of Title efforts and maintain flexibility on Title Schools' use of Title funds while increasing accountability of outcomes. The Think Tank also recommends that the District develop policies that will ensure the enrollment of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch does not exceed 50%. **Rationale**: The Think Tank believes that it is logistically unfeasible for the District to dictate how individual schools utilize Title 1 funds. Thus, facilitating a public discussion around this issue would not be particularly productive.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board refer for internal staff research and discussion** how best to deliver Title 1 services. **The superintendent further recommends that the Board seek public and staff input** on whether and how to implement a goal or target of ensuring that no more than 50% of a school's enrollment qualify for free and reduced lunches and that the public process consider the following options: •Change school boundaries. •Provide transportation for low SES students to attend other District neighborhood and alternative schools. •Provide targeted education and advocacy for the parents of low SES students of the choices that are available to them. •Implement programs (e.g., language, arts and music, and technology) and allocate additional resources to targeted neighborhood schools to attract high achieving students. •Work with the Intergovernmental Housing Policy Board to address the issue of residential segregation. See Attachment 1: School Enrollment and Percentage of Free/Reduced Students

District Policies and Programs	
12. School Closure & Consolidation Policy	**Superintendent's Recommendation**
12. The Think Tank recommends the Board seek public input on the criteria regarding school closure. The Think Tank believes several additions should be made to the school closure policy, including considerations of additional special uses, unique service of the school to the community, real estate value of school sites, and equity considerations. **Rationale**: The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would increase the possibility of closing the achievement gap in the District, while taking financial and educational outcomes into account—outcomes that are consistent with the Think Tank's guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board seek public and staff input** on criteria for closing and consolidating elementary, middle and high schools and that the public input process consider the following criteria: •Enrollment projections. •Transportation of students. •Program. •Facility. •Community impact. •Fiscal impact and cost savings. •Special uses of the school. •Unique service of the school to the community. •Real estate values. •Equity. •Building capacity. .
13. School Choice Policy	**Superintendent's Recommendation**
13.1 School Choice Policy: The Think Tank recommends the Board seek public input on school choice policies. Better distribution of students with special needs between all schools is a goal for achieving greater equity within the District. Further, the Think Tank believes there is reason to use specific criteria to prioritize special needs populations at schools with district wide enrollment. The Think Tank also recommends that the District review under-enrolled schools to increase desirability where possible. **Rationale**: The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would increase equity amongst schools in the District, helping to close the achievement gap in the District. Both of these outcomes are consistent with the Think Tank's guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board not seek public and staff input** on the District's school choice policy. **Rationale:** The School Board has received extensive public and staff input on school choice through the Access and Options process. In addition, the public and staff will have the opportunity to discuss school choice as a part of this input process. See the superintendent's recommendations above regarding elementary, middle, and high school size, alternative schools, and Title 1.
13.2 Naming "Alternative Schools": The Think Tank believes there is limited benefit to having a public deliberation about the language used to describe schools. However the Think Tank believes that the District should strive to eradicate any potential elitism by encouraging equity amongst all schools. To achieve this, the Think Tank believes the District should stop using the term alternative schools, instead using school names to describe each school. Descriptions of schools with district literature would indicate if an individual school accepted applications from outside its neighborhood boundary.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board refer for internal staff research and discussion** how best to describe alternative schools.

14. School Attendance Boundaries	Superintendent's Recommendation
14. The Think Tank recommends the Board seek public input on attendance boundaries (or "catchment zones"). The Think Tank believes the School Board should adopt catchment zone criteria that encourages equitable and diverse schools throughout the District. **Rationale**: The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would increase equity amongst schools, increasing the possibility of closing the achievement gap in the District. These outcomes are consistent with the Think Tank's guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board seek public and staff input** on how to establish and change attendance boundaries that meet the following criteria: •School boundaries that encourage schools to meet their enrollment targets. •School boundaries that better distribute low SES students throughout the District and reduce the number of schools with more than 50% of students on free and reduced lunches. •School boundaries that disperse special need students more equitably throughout the District. •School boundaries that do not contain major internal geographical barriers.
15. Site-based Decision Making	**Superintendent's Recommendation**
15. The Think Tank believes there is limited benefit to having a public deliberation about site based decision making in the District. However the Think Tank recommends that the School Board adopt site-based decision-making criteria that encourages flexibility and accountability in decision making, but also requires a minimum level of services at each school. **Rationale**: The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would increase equity amongst schools in the District, which is consistent with their guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board refer for internal policy clarification and staff training** the issue of site-based decision making.
16. Professional Development	**Recommendation to School Board**
16. The Think Tank believes there is limited benefit to having a public deliberation about professional development in the District. However the Think Tank recommends the Board increase professional development around successful support of high needs populations and technology. The Think Tank strongly believes that the success of the District ultimately rests with the quality of its teachers and staff and that professional development is necessary to provide these individuals with growth opportunities. The Think Tank also recommends that the District increase professional development opportunities for school site committees. **Rationale**: The Think Tank believes the suggested recommendation would increase the quality of instruction, leadership, and administration of schools, increasing equity amongst all schools. These outcomes are all consistent with the Think Tank's guiding principles.	**The superintendent recommends that the Board refer for internal discussion** improving professional development in the following areas for classified, administrative and licensed staff: •Successful support of high need students. •Technology. •Site Based Decision Making (to include local site committees). **The superintendent further recommends that the Board direct the superintendent to report to the Board i**n a timely manner the progress it is making in improving professional development in the specified areas.