



PLAN FOR CONSIDERING POSSIBLE CLOSURE OF TIDE ACADEMY

*Prepared for the Sequoia Union High School District Board of Trustees
December 10, 2025 Meeting*

BACKGROUND

At the November 12 Board meeting, a Board Subcommittee composed of Trustees Rich Ginn and Mary Beth Thompson provided a report-out on its review of enrollment, program offerings, and the long-term fiscal health of the District. Speaking on behalf of the Subcommittee, Trustee Thompson reported that because TIDE Academy is such a small school, it requires a disproportionate amount of resources to operate over time, and recommended that the Board ask the superintendent to develop and bring forward a clear plan to discuss and consider a possible closure of TIDE Academy at the December 10, 2025, board meeting.

The Subcommittee recommended that the plan outlines how and when the District will communicate with students, families, and staff, how the community will be informed and invited into the conversation, and what information and data will be presented to the board. The Subcommittee also requested that the plan include an opportunity for input from students, parents, employees, and community members, as well as clear communication to all stakeholders about what the potential impacts on each of them will be if a decision to close TIDE Academy is made. The Board asked the Superintendent to present a proposed process at the December 10, 2025, meeting that would enable the board to make a decision by the end of February about whether to close TIDE Academy after this academic year.

The process of determining the future of TIDE Academy, a small, innovative high school whose vision is to inspire students to grow academically and socially through core programs such as dual enrollment, CTE pathways, and Nucleus (the advisory program), is part of the District's broader effort to realign resources, address enrollment shifts, and ensure long-term sustainability across all school sites. As the District continues to face a structural deficit, it is the organization's responsibility, carried out through the Superintendent, to ensure that all schools and programs remain both thriving and financially sustainable so that students across the District continue to receive a high-quality education. A board subcommittee was formed at the September 10, 2025, board meeting to examine District property and enrollment trends, including both rising and declining trends. According to the 2024-25 School Accountability Report Card (SARC),

approximately \$39,000 is spent per student at TIDE, compared to an average of \$22,467 per student at the district's other high schools. The District will conduct a deeper analysis of these figures in January. The District is committed to ensuring that every student continues to receive a supportive, rigorous educational experience, regardless of where they attend school.

The District recognizes that discussions about a potential school closure can be challenging for everyone affected. We do not take lightly the possibility of closing a school and understand the significant impact our decision will have on students, families, and staff; we are committed to approaching every step of this process with care, respect, and support. TIDE is not just a building – it is a community, a hub of learning, and a source of pride and connection for students, families, and staff. With that in mind, we are committed to moving through this process with transparency, care, and respect.

GOAL OF THE PLAN

The plan defines the information we will gather, how it will be analyzed, and how we will provide transparent and consistent communication before, during, and after key decision points.

The plan includes:

1. Summary of actions to date.
2. Community feedback from November.
3. Areas of Analysis and Framework for Evaluation.
4. A communication and community engagement strategy.
5. Timeline.
6. Conclusion.

1. Summary of Actions to Date

- November 12: A Board Subcommittee composed of Trustees Rich Ginn and Mary Beth Thompson gave a report-out on its review of enrollment, program offerings, and the long-term fiscal health of the District. The Subcommittee reported that because TIDE Academy is such a small school, it requires a disproportionate amount of resources to operate over time, and recommended that the Board ask the superintendent to develop and bring forward a clear plan to discuss and consider a possible closure of TIDE Academy at the December 10 board meeting.

Emails were sent to TIDE staff, union representatives, and TIDE families, summarizing the November 12 action and inviting stakeholders to stay engaged, including information about the December 10 Board meeting and first community and staff meetings.

- Staff and Community Meetings on November 13, 18, 19 and 20: A first round of meetings with TIDE staff and families were held to share initial context, explain the developing process and timeline, and gather early questions and concerns to inform this plan and January engagement.
- Week of December 1: Board agenda including this plan was published.
- November 13-present: The Superintendent has begun working with staff to gather the detailed data and information needed to support the Board's decision-making. This information will be shared with parents, staff, and the community during meetings on January 13 and 15, as well as at the Board study session on January 26.

2. **Community Feedback from November**

Since November 12, The District has held two question and answer sessions with TIDE staff members and two with TIDE parents. These conversations were critical in shaping this plan. Parents, staff, and students all raised important questions that will be considered and addressed before any recommendation and decision is made.

The major themes heard during comments and questions at the input sessions include, but are not limited to the following:

- TIDE's Impact on Students Who Thrive in a Small School Environment
- Concern About Process, Timing, and Trust
- Data Related to Enrollment, Finances, and Marketing
- Questions About What Happens to Students and Staff If TIDE Closes

An evolving list of questions raised at parent and staff meetings will be made available soon.

3. **Areas of Analysis and Framework for Evaluation**

After the Board's direction on November 12 and informed by feedback from the community, the District began analyzing and preparing information in five key areas. These areas reflect the most frequently raised questions from families, staff, and students, and will be presented in detail at the January community meetings and the January 26 Board Study Session.

A. Enrollment & Demographics

- TIDE enrollment over time compared to original projections
- Districtwide and feeder district enrollment trends

- Special Education, English Learner, and other student group data (when available; in cases where subgroup sizes are extremely small, data may be omitted to protect student privacy)

B: Fiscal & Facilities Impact

- Cost per student at TIDE compared to district averages
- How small-school costs contribute to the District's structural deficit
- Facility costs associated with TIDE

C. Program Quality & Student Opportunities

- Course offerings, academic pathways, and staffing feasibility
- Student access to AP, advanced classes, dual enrollment, and CTE programs
- Comparison of academic and extracurricular opportunities at TIDE vs. other SUHSD schools

D. Equity & Access

- Equity: Which student groups TIDE serves relative to districtwide demographics
- Access to specialized supports and services at TIDE compared to other schools

E. Human Impact & Community Input

- Themes that emerged from November staff and family meetings
- Community questions requiring further analysis
- How community feedback will be incorporated into the Superintendent's recommendation

The areas of analysis above will form the basis of a framework that will guide the evaluation of TIDE Academy's long-term viability. The District's intent is to understand the impact of various options, and provide a rationale that considers both quantitative and qualitative data for the Superintendent's recommendation to the board at the February 4, 2026, meeting. The framework will:

- Provide a transparent, criteria-based structure for evaluating TIDE Academy's viability.
- Demonstrate to families, staff, and the Board what factors were considered and how a recommendation was reached.

- Ground the Superintendent's recommendation in student-centered evidence, including access to programs, educational opportunity, equity, and long-term sustainability.
- Acknowledge that students are not numbers, and that while quantitative data is essential, qualitative considerations, such as sense of belonging, small-school environment, and impact on student experience, must also be weighed, even when they are more difficult to quantify.
- Recognize that not all data may be available for all measures, and that gaps will be explicitly noted and addressed.

4. Communication & Community Engagement Strategy

The purpose of the communications strategy is to outline the District's approach for communicating with and engaging TIDE Academy families, students, staff, and the broader community as the District conducts a review of TIDE Academy's long-term viability. It includes:

- A clear description of how information will be shared
- The structure of the community engagement process
- The timeline for analysis and communication
- The criteria and tools that will guide the Superintendent's recommendation

This strategy is written for the Board and is intended to be publicly accessible.

Guiding Principles for Communication

The District's communication and engagement efforts will be grounded in the following principles:

- Transparency and Timeliness: Information will be shared openly, accurately, and at key decision points to ensure stakeholders are never caught off guard.
- Empathy and Respect: Communications will acknowledge the emotions and concerns of affected families and staff and will be delivered in a tone that centers care and dignity.
- Equity and Inclusion: Engagement opportunities will be designed to meet the needs of diverse families, including translation, accessibility, and scheduling considerations.
- Responsiveness: The district will provide timely answers to stakeholder questions and demonstrate that feedback is heard, recorded, and considered.
- Message Consistency: All communicators—Board members, administrators, and staff—will use unified key messages and FAQs to maintain trust and clarity.

- Community Voice: Parents, students, and staff will have structured opportunities to share input through town halls and other engagement formats.
- Data-Driven Updates: Decisions and communications will reference clear data on enrollment, finances, and facility use to ensure the rationale is understood.

Key Elements of Communication

A. Central Information Hub

The District will maintain a dedicated TIDE Academy information page that includes:

- A clear overview of the process and rationale
- FAQs updated regularly
- Board presentations
- Community meeting slides and summaries
- Timeline and next steps
- Translated materials

Updated FAQs will be posted within 48 hours after major meetings.

B. Engage Stakeholders Through Inclusive Forums and Listening Sessions

- Plan and facilitate community meetings from November 2025-February 2026 for TIDE families, students (as appropriate), staff, and broader district stakeholders:
- Staff and Community Meetings #1 (held mid-to-late November 2025)

Focus on sharing the context (structural deficit, enrollment, small-school implications), explaining the Board's November 12 direction and the process being presented on December 10, and gathering early questions, concerns, and suggestions to shape the January engagement.
- Community Meetings #2 (January 2026)

Focus on reflecting back what the District heard in the first sequence of community meetings, sharing data, financial information and analysis, discussing potential impacts and transition support if closure is approved, and gathering feedback that will inform the Board study session, superintendent recommendation, and final Board decision.
- Ensure accessibility for all community meetings, including translation, appropriate timing and locations, and clear information on how to participate.
- Capture and summarize key themes and questions after each sequence of meetings.

- Provide summaries and findings at the January 26 Board Study Session and February 4 Special Board Meeting.
- Use findings from both December and January meetings to refine subsequent communications, FAQs, and talking points.

C. Communications Before and After Major Milestones

The District will provide timely, aligned communication before and after each major milestone, including:

- December 10: Board meeting presenting the plan and updated timeline. Clarify the full engagement plan, including community meetings, information to be brought back to the Board, and anticipated decision points.
- January 13 and 15: Second round of community meetings to share updated information and data, reflect back themes from earlier engagement, and collect additional feedback.
- January 26: Board Study Session. Present a synthesis of community input, enrollment, and fiscal analysis.
- February 4: Board meeting presenting findings and data, and recommendation from superintendent.
- Develop post-early February communication outlining the Board's decision

D: Ensure Communication Consistency

- Provide targeted briefing sessions and alignment conversations with key leaders (Board members, Superintendent and Cabinet, TIDE principal, union leadership, and key district administrators) ahead of each major external milestone
- Provide Q&A sheets for staff to use in conversations with families and students, updated after each key milestone
- Ensure communication follows the established internal sequence: 1. Superintendent 2. Board 3. Staff 4. Families 5. Community for each major announcement or update.

5. Timeline

November 2025

- Board Committee review and direction
- Staff and family listening sessions

December 2025

- Districtwide communication, including initial FAQs and communication updates via a TIDE Academy information web page, housed on the district's website
- December 10 Board meeting outlining the process

January 2026

- January 13 & 15 Community Meetings
- Summary of community input
- January 26 Board Study Session

February 2026

- February 4 Special Board Meeting with Superintendent's recommendation
- Follow-up communications outlining next steps

6. Conclusion

This plan provides a clear, comprehensive roadmap for how the District will examine the long-term viability of TIDE Academy and engage the community in that process. It outlines what information will be gathered, how it will be analyzed, and how students, staff, and families will be communicated with at each stage. By grounding this work in the Areas of Analysis and the Framework for Evaluation, the District seeks to ensure that all decisions are guided by transparent criteria, student-centered values, and a commitment to both educational quality and long-term sustainability.

As we move into the January community meetings and the January 26 Board Study Session, the District will present the detailed data, findings, and considerations that will inform the Superintendent's recommendation. These meetings will also serve as essential opportunities to reflect back what we have heard from students, staff, and families, and to gather additional feedback before a recommendation is presented to the Board on February 4, 2026.

Throughout this process, the District's priority is to ensure that students, families, staff, and the broader community are informed, respected, and supported. The future of TIDE Academy is an important question, and no decision has been made. The District will approach this process with transparency, empathy, and clarity so the community understands how any final decision is reached:

- What information was considered
- How the evaluation was conducted
- How they could participate and provide input
- When and how decisions will be made
- How the District will support students and staff moving forward

By following this plan, the District aims to provide a fair, transparent, and thoughtful process, ensuring that any decision made is grounded in what is best for students now and in the future.