

The Alpine High School Update for January 2010

By Bill Weaver, AHSCC Chairman

Excuse a faux pas in the recent December update! For background; everyone involved in our new 12th high school project is dedicated and hard at work doing their best effort; we all are tackling this new 12th high school's workload in order to assure that the bases are all covered! This dedication is all so important for our community to understand, recognize, and applaud.

If you did not notice the faux pas; In December I wrote, *"It is important that our community understand that countless numbers of hours are being spent by many folks on this [the 12th GUHSD high school] project. Some are doing this as a requirement of their duties as (paid) employees of the GUHSD... others are doing it as volunteers, to better our community."*

I complimented all the folks paid and unpaid, however my even mentioning that, "as a requirement of their duties as (paid) employees"; was thoughtless, inconsistent with my personal beliefs of the GUHSD staff, and downright irrelevant. I am sorry and I want to publicly offer my apology to all of those at the GUHSD; working the long hours. I appreciate all of you who are putting in those extra hours, working to better all education opportunities for our kids, no caveat intended, or needed! I honestly did not mean any ill intent.

The entire GUHSD Design Team consists of all hard working people who want the new 12th high school to be a centerpiece for the community of Alpine. Much has been written about schools as being centers of community. I hope that the GUHSD Design Team rewrites the precedent for schools as community centers. The next several months will culminate in the creation of our new high school's design drawings, specifications, and building plans.

Many concepts have been reviewed, some decisions have been made, and many are yet to be decided. It is hoped that there is several community shared use facilities; such as performing arts, sports, recreation, community arts and cultural museum facilities. The school site property (the old Alpine Lazy "A" Ranch site) is bisected by Viejas Creek, with large canopied older growth Live Oak trees, with surrounding gorgeous skylines and rolling hills. There are multiple campus buildings being planned for both sides (East & West) of Viejas Creek. The Creek itself will become a learning area and outdoor classroom of the natural landscape and environment surrounding our community.

At the forefront of our school design principles are state-of-the-art uses of technologies such as campus-wide Wi-Fi connectivity, both indoors and outdoors. There is a school Library/Media center that will create the capability to collaborate with the entire GUHSD system of internet connected campuses (bigger yet – we will have world-wide distance learning connectivity) offering a selection of courses not possible at any one single GUHSD high school campus. This concept leverages a multiple high school district for having course offerings advantageous over smaller

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high school districts, private or single site independent charters, and private for-profit high schools. It also offers more for those who decide their child is best educated by home schooling their kids, throughout the GUHSD.

At a recent national forum presented by the American Architectural Foundation, and attended by hundreds of school planners and educators, it was recognized that our young people of today are on a digital learning curve that will accelerate rapidly. They must use this capacity to learn through information technologies connecting to learning centers outside the classroom, with worldwide possibilities for distance learning.

In 2005, Roy Pea, director of the Stanford Center for Innovations in Learning, made a major presentation on technology at the National Summit on School Design. He said, "In the next ten years, there will emerge a growing number of 1:1 digital classrooms; where students bring some kind of Internet-enabled portable computing device equipped with wireless communication capabilities...these devices will be used frequently and integrally in the course of instruction, becoming indispensable learning tools like pencils and chalkboards, yet enabling students to learn more quickly, more deeply, and with more fun."

An increasing number of students will go to school virtually, students will develop lifelong digital learning portfolios, and learning will no longer be "place bound." School facilities will require greater flexibility in design to adapt to new practices that evolve as technology becomes more intertwined with the learning process. These changes and others will have a profound influence on education and design. Schools will adapt to stay afloat, and innovate with cutting edge technology to stay in the forefront of teaching and learning.

General designs for schools and classrooms have changed little over the last 70 years. Teaching techniques' have changed relatively little as well. But the last 10 years have changed the times we live in, advancing so technologically, assuring that, "change in school design and teaching methods are a must do."

The GUHSD should design and build a new high school here in Alpine that should set a new standard in technology use, new school designs, and teaching methodology. If that state-of-the-art standard is not achieved, "*shame on us all.*"

Keep checking the GUHSD website (www.guhd.net) and the Alpine High School Citizens Committee Website (www.ahsc.com) for updates and details. The next regular monthly meeting of the AHSCC is Monday, January 18th. Check in at the AHSCC website for the times and location.

Best Wishes for a Prosperous New Year to all!