THE CASE AT A GLANCE

Keeping Sunset in Oak View

A parent guide to school access, enrollment, costs, and the questions that still need answers.

Sunset's strongest preservation argument is geographic access. The district's own earlier deliberations recognized the need to preserve a school in this community. A later numerical ranking does not, by itself, resolve that need. [2, 3]

7.8 miles

Nearest listed alternative

School-to-school distance in the earlier district analysis. [4]

87%

Boundary-area retention

208 of 239 students represented in the district matrix. [1, p. 6]

146

November combined score

Third-highest; only one point above two other schools. [1, p. 4]

Three requests to organize around

1. **Preserve local TK-8 access.** Retain Sunset as Oak View's local campus, consistent with the committee's earlier geographic-access finding.
2. **Require a complete alternative.** Before any contrary decision, identify receiving schools, transportation, service continuity, equity effects, and five-year net savings.
3. **Price a preservation plan.** Evaluate a smaller operating footprint, shared services, enrollment opportunities, and measurable academic improvement.

How to read this brief
DOCUMENTED = published records or calculations from them. **PARENT ACCOUNTS** = experiences supplied for this discussion. **ANALYSIS** / **PROPOSALS** = conclusions to test and options to evaluate.

01 / ACCESS & COMMUNITY

Preserve local school access

Identify a practical replacement for local access before treating Sunset as interchangeable with another campus.

DOCUMENTED FINDING

> **“Sunset remained outside further consideration because of its geographic circumstances and the need to preserve school access in that community.”**

District summary of August 20 and September 17, 2026 committee deliberations. [3, p. 6]

Listed receiving-school alternative	Distance from Sunset
E.P. Foster	7.8 miles
Sheridan Way	9.2 miles
Lincoln	10.1 miles

Earlier district proximity analysis. These are campus-to-campus distances, not home-to-school routes or bus ride times. They do not establish final placements or available seats. [4, p. 6]

Plan closures together. E.P. Foster and Sheridan Way are also ranked above Sunset for closure in the November presentation. A plan cannot assume both remain available without specifying the actual combination of campuses that would stay open. [1, p. 4]

A specific gap in the safety appendix

The final report lists Sunset relocation concerns as “None” but omits its map because Oak View is outside the City of Ventura. Request a county-specific assessment. This gap does not prove that relocation is unsafe or that no other assessment exists. [5, p. 865]

Preserve access to a community network

Oak View's two elementary schools consolidated into Sunset in 1999. OVPARC developed at the former school site. Its network includes the library, recreation, preschool, after-school programs, and family services. The November presentation identifies VUSD expanded learning at OVPARC for Sunset students. [1, p. 11; 7, 8, 17]

> **The practical test:** Can families still reach school, childcare, tutoring, and activities reliably? Assess school-hour travel, young children's bus rides, safe stops, afternoon routes, parent pickups, and emergency arrangements. Ojai Unified placement requires an approved interdistrict arrangement; it is not an automatic substitute. [9, 18]

02 / ENROLLMENT & FAMILY EXPERIENCE

Count unmet demand

Separate schoolwide building capacity from the number of staffed places available in a particular grade.

Attendance measure	Sunset
Sunset-boundary students represented in the matrix	239
Those students attending Sunset	208 (87.0%)
Those attending other VUSD schools	31 (13.0%)
Transfers into Sunset / transfers out	144 / 31
Net transfer balance / incoming from outside VUSD	+113 / 42

November presentation, p. 6. The 87% attend Sunset. This table excludes local children enrolled outside VUSD. The +113 is not 113 new district students. [1]

Account for the TK-8 model. Grades 6-8 at Sunset have no neighborhood attendance boundary; VUSD requires choice or transfer enrollment. A local child continuing at Sunset can therefore be classified as a transfer. Separate these students from nonlocal applicants before interpreting “capacity excluding transfers.” [6]

PARENT ACCOUNTS / SUPPLIED FOR THIS BRIEF

One Oak View family's experience. The family was fairly high on the TK waiting list and understood that some local families behind them may have gone elsewhere. They also considered private options, including Montessori and Monica Ros. In their comparison, class sizes were similar; additional travel and the size of the Montessori school in Meiners Oaks made Sunset the better overall fit.

A reported 2024-25 example. Another local resident reportedly enrolled their child in Ojai Unified because their place on Sunset's waiting list was too low to secure admission. These accounts have not been independently verified. [20]

What this supports: a specific reason to investigate unmet demand and enrollment lost outside VUSD. It does not establish the total waiting-list count, the reason seats were limited, or that the 31 students attending other VUSD schools were turned away.

Request the missing counts: unique applicants and waitlisted children by year and grade; residency; seats and sections offered; the cause of any limit; and eventual placements. Compare years and cohorts consistently. Ask whether opening another section would retain or add district enrollment.

03 / COSTS & FACILITIES

Measure the real net savings

The relevant comparison is the cost of preserving access versus the net cost of delivering that access after closure.

Sunset savings estimate in the final report	Amount
Positions categorized for elimination or reduction	$914,734
Estimated utility savings	$105,000
Total listed potential savings	**$1,019,734**

The final report acknowledges that retaining some positions could reduce savings. The displayed table adds staffing and utilities; it does not show all consolidation offsets. [5, pp. 100, 927]

Request a five-year net comparison

Include new bus routes and drivers; receiving-campus staffing and space; program moves and transition costs; maintenance and security retained at the closed site; and potential enrollment loss. Distinguish one-time expenses from recurring savings, and show assumptions rather than a single total.

The November matrix identifies **42 incoming students from outside VUSD**. Model several retention scenarios instead of assuming that every displaced family stays or every transfer leaves. Districtwide bus-fee examples in the presentation are not Sunset-specific closure savings. [1, pp. 6, 21-22]

Address the real enrollment challenge

The demographic report projects Sunset from **352 students in 2025-26 to 277 in 2031-32**, against listed capacity of 504. That is a material concern. Ask for current enrollment, forecast assumptions, county-area housing inputs, and any treatment of unmet TK demand before relying on the projection. [10]

A usable campus with options to evaluate

The earlier facilities analysis rated Sunset **Good**, with **$11.03 million** in needs, fourth-lowest among the 17 elementary/TK-8 campuses. This is not the revised November priority-cost total. The inventory lists **20 permanent classrooms and no portables**. [11, 12]

Cost a preservation alternative: shared administrative services, fewer active rooms where feasible, and compatible use of genuinely surplus space. Confirm staffing, safety, revenue, and implementation costs. Do not rely on unawarded grants or assumed enrollment growth.

04 / RANKING & EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

A score is a decision aid

The board should explain why its scoring choices produce a better outcome for students and the district.

November ranking comparison	Combined score
Sheridan Way / E.P. Foster	167 / 155
Sunset	**146**
Juanamaria / Lemon Grove	145 / 145

Sunset is third-highest in this table, one point above two schools. The revised framework includes low enrollment, excess capacity, and capacity excluding transfers. Test whether these appropriately reflect separate issues or repeatedly weight the same shortfall. [1, pp. 3-4]

Ask how the “Score” and “Rank Score” combine, how the current weights affect Sunset, and where transportation, community impacts, and net savings enter the final decision. The district FAQ says CDE does not prescribe a mandatory scoring formula. The current SharePoint workbook could not be accessed for a cell-by-cell audit. [1, pp. 3-5; 2]

Acknowledge weaknesses and protect progress

Measure in the November presentation	Sunset	VUSD
Math MAP target growth, spring 2026	40%	53%
ELA MAP target growth, spring 2026	53%	57%
Chronic absenteeism	16.4%	13.2%
English Learner Progress	61.2% / Blue	51.3% / Green

The presentation reports site averages for MAP growth; these are not proficiency rates. Dashboard measures use different definitions. Sunset also shows significant math challenges for students with disabilities. [1, pp. 26-27, 29, 32]

The two nearest listed alternatives, E.P. Foster and Sheridan Way, have weaker overall ELA and math results in the same presentation. That does not predict outcomes for transferred children. It does mean an academic improvement from relocation should be demonstrated using named receiving schools and available services. [1, p. 32]

Pair preservation with improvement. Request a funded math and attendance plan with clear targets, progress checks, English learner supports, and continuity of special education services. Compare that plan with the educational benefits and disruption of any closure scenario.

05 / A CONSTRUCTIVE PRESERVATION CAMPAIGN

Give the board a workable choice

Successful campaigns combine community support with a specific financial, educational, or procedural case.

Two campaigns with documented outcomes

Campaign	What happened / lesson for Sunset
East Elementary Long Beach, New York	A petition drew over 4,000 signatures. In January 2025, the board voted 4-1 to keep the school open. Reporting described concern that consolidation benefits did not outweigh the risks. **Lesson:** connect community impact to the financial case. [13, 14]
Don Benito Pasadena, California	The petition proposed partnerships, enrollment outreach, and revitalization. In May 2026, the board rejected the equity analysis and halted that closure process. **Lesson:** scrutinize the analysis and offer a preservation plan. This was a reprieve from that process, not permanent immunity. [15, 16]

The outcomes were checked against reporting beyond the petition pages. Neither case proves that signatures alone caused the outcome.

A practical package for Sunset

1. **Document access.** Collect an anonymous family travel survey, school-to-childcare routines, and county input on actual routes and stops.
2. **Document demand.** Request waiting-list and placement counts. Invite voluntary accounts from families who wanted Sunset, including those who enrolled outside VUSD.
3. **Price preservation.** Compare shared services, a smaller active footprint, and feasible use of surplus rooms with the complete closure scenario.
4. **Commit to improvement.** Set measurable math, attendance, service-continuity, and enrollment-retention goals, with regular public progress reports.

Keep the case accurate and focused

Use dates and page references. Request aggregate student data without names. Distinguish an available room from a staffed place, a projection from actual enrollment, and a family account from a measured trend. Ask for written responses tied to the specific closure scenario.

Avoid assuming that closure automatically increases class sizes, that school bond funds can pay operating salaries, or that OVPARC would close. The district FAQ distinguishes class-size agreements, facility-only bond spending, and later property decisions. [2]

06 / OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS - PART 1

Access, enrollment & learning

Use these with school staff, Student Support Services, transportation, and educational services. Ask for the supporting records.

School access and transportation

November presentation: 98 general-education bus riders at Sunset, including 78 unduplicated pupils. These are rider counts, not schoolwide demographics. [1, pp. 14-15]

01 **Which schools would receive each grade?** Show capacity by grade, programs, special education space, and the combined scenario if other candidate campuses also close.

02 **What would each family's trip become?** Provide county-specific route maps, safe stops, pickup times, ride lengths, costs or eligibility, late buses, and emergency arrangements.

03 **How would families keep using local services?** Explain connections to OVPARC childcare, tutoring, activities, and the library, plus parent access for conferences and urgent pickups.

TK demand and enrollment forecasting

04 **How many children wanted a seat but did not get one?** Provide unique applicant, waitlist, offer, and enrollment counts by grade and year, including 2024-25 and the latest enrollment cycle.

05 **What caused the seat limits?** Separate staffing or funding limits, class-size rules, space constraints, and transfer priorities. Identify how many applicants lived in Sunset's boundary.

06 **Where did those families enroll, and what does the forecast assume?** Report known placements inside or outside VUSD, distinguish local grade 6-8 continuers from other transfers, and explain county housing and unmet-demand assumptions.

Educational quality and continuity

07 **What educational benefit is expected from each placement?** Compare the named receiving schools with Sunset using relevant outcomes, available programs, and the needs of the children being moved.

08 **How would services continue without interruption?** Specify special education, English learner supports, counseling, tutoring, transportation, and after-school access at each receiving campus.

09 **What would a funded Sunset improvement plan look like?** Identify math and attendance supports, staffing, budget, targets, timelines, and measures for evaluating progress while preserving local access.

Suggested records: receiving-school capacity by grade; route and service plans; anonymized waitlist/placement tables; forecast assumptions; and educational-service comparisons.

07 / OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS - PART 2

Costs, scoring & accountability

Questions for district finance, facilities, administrators, and trustees.

Financial assumptions and alternatives

10 **What is the five-year net savings for Sunset?** Show staffing and utility reductions, added transportation and receiving-site costs, transition expenses, and costs retained at the closed campus.

11 **How sensitive are savings to enrollment loss?** Model realistic retention ranges for current students and incoming interdistrict families. Explain how attendance and funding assumptions affect the result.

12 **What would it cost to keep a smaller Sunset operating?** Price shared administration, fewer active rooms, and compatible use of surplus space, including implementation costs and confirmed revenue.

Scoring, evidence and fairness

13 **What changed since the geographic-access finding?** Identify the new evidence or policy judgment that now places Sunset near the top of the closure ranking.

14 **Can parents inspect and reproduce the current score?** Release the workbook, inputs, formulas, definitions, and revision history. Explain combined scores, transfer treatment, and sensitivity to reasonable alternative weights.

15 **Where are transportation, equity and community effects weighed?** Explain how the final decision considers these factors beyond proximity, including effects on families with limited transportation and students needing additional supports.

Implementation and a fair opportunity to respond

16 **Which facilities and safety figures are current?** Reconcile earlier facility-cost totals with revised priority needs, and supply the Oak View assessment missing from the mapped safety appendix.

17 **When will parents see the complete proposal?** Provide the decision calendar, response deadlines, receiving-school plans, and a written response to the preservation alternative before a final vote.

18 **Who owns each unanswered question?** Name the responsible department, requested record, and response date. Maintain one shared log so answers can be checked against the same scenario.

Requested board action: Retain Sunset as Oak View's local TK-8 campus. Before any contrary decision, publish a complete access, educational, equity, and net-savings analysis and evaluate a costed preservation plan.

08 / SOURCES & READING NOTES

Check the evidence

Numbers in brackets refer to the sources below. Linked titles open the original records. Page numbers refer to PDF pages.

[1] November 6, 2026 revised school-closure presentation
Parent-supplied 34-page PDF. Key pages: 3-6 (criteria/ranking/enrollment); 11, 14-15 (services/buses); 26-32 (outcomes). Ask VUSD for the current copy.

[2] VUSD School Closures Advisory Committee
Record hub and FAQ: advisory role, scoring, transportation, bond funds, and class sizes.

[3] Committee rankings and group rationales
August 20 / September 17, 2026 deliberations. Sunset geographic-access finding, p. 6.

[4] Earlier criteria 1-6 analysis
Proximity and capacity analysis, p. 6. Earlier assumptions require updating.

[5] October 13 amended final committee report
Large PDF. Staffing caveat p. 100; Sunset safety appendix p. 865; savings table p. 927.

[6] VUSD enrollment rules
TK-8 enrollment section: grades 6-8 use choice or transfer, not neighborhood boundaries.

[7] OVPARC history
Oak View consolidation in 1999 and the community resource-center history.

[8] Oak View Library
Library and surrounding community services.

[9] CDE school-closure best practices
Receiving capacity, transportation, equity, community effects, and financial analysis. Guidance is not a universal automatic veto.

[10] District demographic / enrollment report
Sunset enrollment/capacity and 2031-32 projection, pp. 17, 34. Presented in the 2026 process.

[11] Earlier facilities criteria 7-13
Condition and facility-needs baseline, p. 1. Not the revised November priority-cost total.

[12] District classroom usage inventory
Sunset permanent-classroom and portable counts.

[13] Save East School petition
Long Beach, New York. Financial justification and community preservation.

[14] East Elementary outcome: Patch
January 28, 2025 report of the 4-1 vote to keep East open.

[15] Save Don Benito petition
Pasadena. Proposed enrollment, partnership, and revitalization alternatives.

[16] Pasadena outcome: Pasadena Now
May 29, 2026 report that the board rejected the analysis and halted that closure process.

[17] Sunset library information
Connection to Oak View Library and homework support.

[18] CDE district-transfer information
Interdistrict attendance and approval requirements.

[19] Sunset school website / visual identity
Original bobcat logo and website blue used for this parent briefing; no institutional endorsement implied.

[20] Parent experiences supplied in this discussion
Anonymous family account and a reported 2024-25 Ojai transfer. Anecdotal; not district-verified waiting-list statistics.