

PROJECT: Archuleta School District 50JT – Facilities Master Plan (MPAC #5)

PROJECT NO: 2024-043.00 Archuleta SD Master Plan

DATE: August 25, 2025

ATTENDANCE: See list below

SUBJECT: Facilities Master Plan –Polling Data, Site Analysis, Safety and Security, and Board Direction

Attendees

- Lisa Scott (community volunteer)
- Becky Deitmeier (parent)
- Ronnie Doctor (community volunteer)
- Julie Gurule (parent)
- Tom Hanchett (retired & sub-teacher)
- David Harris (Town Manager)
- Stephanie Hirshberg (parent)
- Bill Hudson (PPOS Board & Pagosa Daily Post)
- Aubrie Limebrook (parent)
- Kelly Maestas (parent)
- Dee McPeck (community volunteer)
- John Ranson (County Commissioner)
- Lawrence Rugar (PPOS Board)
- Jeff Sams (parent)
- Bob Scott (business owner & Seeds Board)
- Marie Thatcher (Build Pagosa)
- Kelly Tuten (parent)
- Darcy Deguise (ASD H.S. Staff)
- Thomas Davenport (ASD M.S. Staff)
- Rick Holt (ASD Superintendent)
- Heather Schultz (ASD HR Director)
- Kelly Vining (ASD E.S. Principal)
- Stewart Bellina (ASD SJMS Principal)
- Jason Taylor (ASD COO)
- Clayton Chaney (The Pagosa SUN)
- Todd Schultz (community member)
- Jim White (community member, author)
- Butch Mackey (ASD School Board)
- Dave Iverson (ASD School Board)
- Bob Lynch (ASD School Board)
- Tim Taylor (ASD School Board)
- Amanda Schick (ASD School Board)

Facilitators: Doug Abernethy (RTA Principal), Ericka Everett (RTA Sr. Associate), Lynea Hansen (Hansen Communications), Kathryn Hahne (New Bridge Strategy)

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

2. School District Board Decision Criteria
3. Polling Data
4. Group Q&A
5. Board of Education Direction
6. Site Analysis
7. Safety and Security
8. Group Q&A
9. Next Steps

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began with introductions led by Doug Abernethy, Ericka Everett, Lynea Hansen, and Kathryn Hahne. They outlined the objectives for the session, emphasizing the importance of keeping students' interests first, maintaining respectful dialogue, and focusing on consensus-driven solutions.

Meeting Norms

The committee reaffirmed expectations for all MPAC meetings, including attendance, punctuality, preparedness, mutual respect, open discussion, and reliance on data-driven decisions. Members agreed to stay on task and support group decisions.

Polling Data

Kathryn Hahne presented the results of a June 2025 survey of 300 local voters. A majority of respondents reported hearing about the district recently, often in connection to graduation, athletics, or concerns about aging facilities and financial struggles.

- When asked to grade the district, most voters gave it a "C."
- A slim majority indicated initial support for a \$123 million bond measure, though many were unsure.
- Supporters emphasized the need for safety and modern facilities, while opponents cited tax concerns and overall cost.
- Framing the tax impact as a monthly cost, and including the possibility of a BEST grant, significantly improved support.
- Location preference shifted toward the uptown Veterans Memorial Park area once voters were told most students live nearby.
- Safety improvements and modernized buildings ranked as top priorities, while athletic fields were lower priority.

Group Q&A

Board of Education Direction

On August 5, the ASD Board requested more site analysis before making a final decision. Additional studies will cover safety and security, environmental due diligence, civil engineering, and traffic impacts.

Site Analysis

Two locations were reviewed:

- Pagosa Springs High School Site (PK-8 @ HS):
 - 140,000 sq. ft. building, 1,200-student capacity, separate PK-K area.
 - *Pros:* Consolidation of sites, cost savings from shared athletic facilities, proximity to high school.
 - *Cons:* Traffic congestion and loss of existing baseball field for parking.

- Vista Site (PK–8 @ Vista):
 - Same design as HS option, 140,000 sq. ft., 1,200-student capacity.
 - *Pros:* Expansive site, near residential growth, potential for exploratory curriculum.
 - *Cons:* May require new highway signal and traffic control measures.

Safety and Security

Both sites were analyzed for surrounding land use, access, and emergency response routes.

Understanding Surrounding Land Use

The high school site is bordered by the Pagosa Springs Sanitation District, a city park, private land, and single-family residential neighborhoods. This setting provides proximity to existing community amenities but also creates limitations, as some adjacent land uses may restrict future expansion or require coordination with multiple entities.

The Vista site, on the other hand, is surrounded by a mix of single-family residential developments, light commercial and industrial properties, and open space near Veterans Park and Pagosa Lakes. The larger and less constrained setting provides more flexibility for site planning and potentially greater separation from incompatible land uses.

Comparison: The high school site is centrally located and integrated into the community but constrained by neighboring uses and topography. The Vista site offers a larger buffer and room for growth, though it places the school adjacent to commercial activity that must be carefully managed.

Access, Traffic, and Circulation

At the high school site, traffic patterns are already complex due to the existing student population, multiple access points, and surrounding residential streets. The addition of a new PK–8 building would increase congestion, particularly at peak drop-off and pick-up times. Mitigation strategies, such as dedicated PK–K drop-off areas and separate traffic flows, would be required. Parking would displace the current baseball field.

The Vista site is accessible via US Highway 160 and Vista Boulevard. While the site benefits from its proximity to a major highway, it may require the installation of a new signalized intersection to safely manage traffic volumes. Pedestrian circulation would also need careful planning to ensure safe connections from nearby residential areas.

Comparison: The high school site compounds existing congestion challenges, while the Vista site introduces new traffic infrastructure needs. Both require investment, but Vista may offer a cleaner slate for designing circulation patterns.

Safety and Security Considerations

The high school site's integration with existing athletic fields and the high school campus could provide cost savings and functional efficiencies, but it also concentrates large numbers of students in one location, increasing traffic hazards and evacuation complexities. Emergency access is feasible but may be slowed by residential street patterns.

At the Vista site, the expansive property allows for broader separation between school functions, controlled access points, and secure perimeters. Its adjacency to open space and parkland provides opportunities for safe outdoor environments but also introduces the need for monitoring large, less developed edges of the campus.

Comparison: The high school site leverages shared facilities but presents security risks related to congestion and co-location. The Vista site enhances perimeter control and separation but must address supervision of large open boundaries.

Overall Site Safety Profiles

- **High School Site (Downtown):**
Offers consolidation benefits, integration with existing facilities, and central location. However, it faces serious traffic congestion, loss of an athletic field, and constrained emergency access. Safety challenges are tied to its density and limited space.
- **Vista Site (Uptown):**
Provides expansive land for controlled access, potential for innovative design, and centrality to growing residential areas. Traffic solutions will require significant investment, particularly at Highway 160, but the site allows for a safer long-term campus layout.

Conclusion

When comparing the two sites, both present opportunities and risks related to safety and security. The high school site maximizes efficiency but is constrained by existing development and congestion, raising concerns about student traffic safety. The Vista site requires upfront infrastructure improvements but offers greater long-term flexibility, stronger perimeter control, and alignment with future residential growth.

Group Q&A

Members were encouraged to identify outstanding questions and additional data needed to support final recommendations.

Activity – In Groups, Develop Pros and Cons for Both Sites

The following bullet points were created as part of a group activity from the attendees of MPAC#5.

Vista Property

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vista hits more positives • Property size • Transport to site • Safer walking / drop off • Fewer buses come from downtown up to the site than it takes to transport uptown to downtown – cost savings and fewer drivers need to be hired • Benefits students in the Vista area • Independent sports fields • Separate fields • Room for expansion of other buildings • Closer to the population of kids • Relieving downtown congestion • Adding outside space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway 160 • Vista is not well known, more registered sex offenders on that side of town • Inconvenient for families with multiple students • Distance from Downtown • Will need additional bus routes • Long drive for 84 • Surrounding neighborhoods – bad reputation • Harder 'sell' to the community • Concerned about security from the tree side of the single-family residence
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General Notes/Questions

- Parent voiced concern about K-8 concept. Doesn't like ES students in same building with MS students.
- Will there be a perimeter road or walking Trail between the property and single-family residential?

H.S. Property

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenience • Closer to the Police Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking/traffic • Congestion

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All in one area • Facilities – Operations & Support • Eliminates inter-transportation • Consolidation of resources • All the kids can be dropped off at one place • Closer to Hwy 84 • Library expansion • Afterschool options downtown • Police downtown • Not splitting up multiple-age families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will this impact the sewer system/sewer ponds • Close to the sanitation district • Cost of field – the distance • High school drivers – again, congestion • Lack of room for expansion • Don't want the mix of young kids with HS kids • Loss of the fields • Proximity of age gaps
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General Notes/Questions

- Is there an option of moving the bus barn and repurposing that space?
- Value of shared resources?
- Possible use of MAT building for HS 'shop' and move MAT to a different site, perhaps Vista?

Next Steps

The next MPAC meeting will be held on October 27, 2025, at 5:30 PM. At that session, site analysis results will be refined into recommendations for the Board of Education.

Decisions Made:

- Proceed with additional site due diligence.
- Reaffirm safety, fiscal responsibility, and community alignment as key priorities.

Action Items:

1. SMG to conduct environmental, civil, and traffic analyses.
 2. New Bridge Strategy to refine messaging on safety and tax impacts.
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Attachments: MPAC #5 PowerPoint Presentation

CC: Attendees

REPORTED BY: Ben Hearn on behalf of Ericka Everett