

Summary and Almanac

In November 2024, the San Benito High School District (SBHSD) asked voters to approve two bonds totalling \$140 million to support the construction of a second high school within the district.

Founded in 1895, SBHSD today serves nearly 3,500 students within a single high school campus in Hollister, Ca. Hollister High School is one of the 10 largest high schools in the state by student enrollment, and is growing at the fastest rate of any high school in Northern California.

Research and Planning

Hollister High School has seen an increase in enrollment over the past decade, spurred on in part by local residential housing development in the Hollister community. Further, district and local officials have projected a continuing increase in enrollment over the coming years based on current and planned residential construction and other factors.

From 2022-23, a Facilities Needs Committee of about 60 community members and student representatives met to explore the district's options for accommodating a growing student body. The Committee's [final report to the board](#), in May 2023, emphasized the need for a second high school. The report highlighted the need to engage the community in the process of working toward a second high school to build awareness.

In addition, the district's [2023 Facilities Master Plan](#) provided enrollment and population projections, and a detailed analysis of the reasoning for seeking a second high school. These two documents effectively established the charge of the communications campaign and set the tone for the work that followed.

To support the success of this initiative, the Communications office of the San Benito High School District set out to communicate about the need for a second high school.

Since the California State Constitution prohibits public agencies from using public funds for personal or campaign purposes, such as supporting or opposing a ballot measure, the district focused on ensuring that **San Benito High School District residents will understand the district's reasons for seeking to construct a second high school.**

To this end, the district communications specialist coordinated with external communications and public engagement vendors, as well as an architectural firm, to plan a campaign of public engagement and information.

Primary audiences for district communications included district employees, parents/guardians of current Hollister High School students, and district residents. Secondary audiences included local business leaders, students, retirees, and alumni.

Implementation

The communications campaign was overseen by the SBHSD Communications office, with professional input from bond consultants Team CivX, architectural firm HMC Architects, and communications consultants Nichols Strategies. The tagline 'Building a Brighter Future' was established to focus attention on the goal of the initiative.

The campaign began with two Town Hall events in August 2023 (one in English, one in Spanish). HMC Architects lead two activities to gather feedback from the 75+ attendees to highlight community priorities for the proposed second high school.

Between August 2023 and January 2024, district leaders conducted 10 listening sessions at local elementary and middle schools, repeating the feedback activities at each. Translation into Spanish was provided. In addition, Superintendent Shawn Tennenbaum visited several local government and civic groups, and the district's architectural firm brought together four committees of internal and external stakeholders, and conducted multiple focus groups.

Bond consultants Team CivX conducted public opinion research polls in Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 to identify key messages and evaluate public sentiment of the project. Team CivX developed targeted talking points and created a Frequently Asked Questions document and a one-sheet highlighting key points about the proposed second high school.

In January 2024, the district hosted two more Town Hall events (one in English, one in Spanish) in partnership with HMC Architects. In conjunction with the January Town Hall events, the district distributed a [K-8 Listening Sessions report](#) prepared by Nichols Strategies to summarize the 1,300+ comments received from more than 200 community members, students, and employees. A "[Building a Brighter Future](#)" web page was established on the district website to highlight key talking points developed by Team CivX.

Throughout the 2023-24 school year, the district used its weekly email newsletters to share updates about the second high school campaign with more than 9,500 parents, students, employees and community members.

During the spring, the district conducted targeted outreach to priority audiences through several events, including a breakfast and high school tour for retired teachers, a community open house with campus tours, and bilingual Parent Night events. In addition, a social media campaign was launched to highlight a diverse spectrum of voices speaking in support of the second high school. Branded 'Building a Brighter Future' graphics were shared weekly to the district's Facebook and Instagram accounts from April through June.

Evaluation

While the bond measures funding the second high school did not receive the required supermajority of votes to pass, each measure received support from thousands of voters. Volunteers working in support of the bond measures reported back that an overwhelming majority of voters contacted were aware of the ballot measures and their impact. However, Measure L was defeated 10,426-9,993 and Measure M was even closer, going down at 10,151-10,150.

Support Materials



Mockup of a postcard invitation sent to retired San Benito High School District staff.



Building a Brighter Future

“Investing in our children’s education today is an investment in the future of our entire community. By investing in a second high school, we expand the capacity for quality education for all our children and better prepare them to compete in tomorrow’s employment market.”

Carlos Galvez

Vice Chair, Facilities Needs Committee
Hollister HS Parent

Social media graphics highlighting community support for the second high school.



“Investing in our children’s education today is an investment in the future of our entire community. By investing in a second high school, we expand the capacity for quality education for all our children and better prepare them to compete in tomorrow’s employment market.”

Carlos Galvez

Vice Chair, Facilities Needs Committee
Hollister HS Parent



San Benito
HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

SAN BENITO HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
Protecting High-Quality Education

For 128 years, San Benito High School District (SBHSD) has delivered high-quality education for our students. The mission of SBHSD is to educate all students to their highest potential so they will have the greatest range of personal options upon graduation.

Overcrowding at Hollister High School

Hollister High School is the 10th largest high school in California. Enrollment is above its maximum capacity of 3,400 students and expected to reach 4,300 students in the next five years. Hollister High School is overcrowded, which threatens student and teacher safety when quick action is needed in emergency situations and makes effective student supervision difficult.

Locally Controlled Funding for School Upgrades

The SBHSD Board of Trustees voted to place two companion measure, Measure L & M, on the November 2024 ballot. The pair of companion measures would raise about \$140 million for a second local high school and cost the average homeowner about \$38 a year per \$100,000 of assessed value (not market value) of property. If approved by local voters, Measures L and M will:



Provide our local high school students access to high-quality education



Offer local students classes and access to hands-on learning programs



Ensure that a second high school includes facilities for developing college and career readiness



In partnership with Gavilan College, provide college and job training for our students



Add classrooms and labs for math, science, engineering, technology and core academics



Deliver specialized learning facilities for students with disabilities

Mandatory Fiscal Accountability

SBHSD has a proven track record of fiscal stewardship. A clear system of accountability would be required:

- A detailed project list indicating projects that could be funded
- A Citizens' Oversight Committee and independent audits
- All funds must remain under local control
- The State cannot take local funds
- Public disclosures of all spending would be required
- No funds for administrator salaries or benefits

We Want to Hear from You!

As SBHSD explores options to build new local school facilities, we value your input. For more information, please contact our Public Information and Communications Officer, Adam Breen at abreen@sbhsd.k12.ca.us.

sbhsd.org [/haybalers](https://www.facebook.com/haybalers) [@balernews](https://www.x.com/balernews) [@balernews](https://www.instagram.com/balernews)

Superintendent's Weekly Message



**Together We Can,
Together We Will, Build a
Brighter Future**

Community Town Halls On Second High School This Week

June 12, 2024

Dear Hollister High School parents, students, staff and community:

We look forward to welcoming our community to two town halls this week regarding a second high school in the San Benito High School District. Attendees will learn more about plans for a second high school, including preliminary designs and financial plan for the new campus, as well as a report on feedback the community has provided regarding the visual identity of the school.



The town hall in the school library on Wednesday, June 12 will be presented in Spanish and the Thursday, June 13 event will be presented in English. Dinner will be provided both nights. Please RSVP to Carol Heiderich at cheiderich@sbhsd.k12.ca.us or by phone at 831-637-5831, ext. 1132. We hope to see you there!

Excerpt from Superintendent's newsletter highlighting a community town hall related to the second high school. Read more here: [Second High School Town Halls](#)