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COPY OF DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION VERBAL STATEMENT READ TO GOVERNING BOARD BY DR. DOUG WILSON, SUPERINTENDENT

RE: Recommendation to close Thornydale
Governing Board Public Meeting March 27, 2018

Good evening. For those who do not know me, I am Doug Wilson superintendent of the Marana school district. Thank you for your attendance tonight.

I am going to start off the meeting by presenting information to the Governing Board on why District Administration is bringing forward the recommendation to close Thornydale Elementary School in June 2019.

Prior to presenting this information, I want to share that District Administration recognizes that the consideration of closing a school understandably generates a range of emotions, and over the past several weeks we have received communications both for and against the closure. We take pride that all of our schools in the District are exceptional places of learning; they are filled with passionate and dedicated staff and educators who work tirelessly to inspire students and make a difference for each and every child. We also recognize that relationships are developed between our schools, their families and community.

Recognizing this, District Administration's recommendation to close Thornydale due to declining enrollment is not one that is taken lightly; however, as Superintendent, it is my fiscal responsibility to ensure school sustainability for the 12,200 students we serve and be responsible for the resources entrusted to us by our taxpayers.

To begin....Thornydale Elementary was opened in 1974 and serves grades K – 6. Enrollment has declined at Thornydale since 1994 with an enrollment of 733 students to a current enrollment of 307 students. 190 of these 307 students live within the Thornydale boundaries.

The decline in enrollment since 1994 is not a result of any boundary change nor has the District opened a new elementary school in the surrounding area during this time. We believe the decline in enrollment is contributed to the neighborhood having matured, resulting in fewer elementary age students in the neighborhood, as well as competing Charter schools having opened in the area. In looking at the possibility of any future growth, there are no new homes projected to be built in the Thornydale community.

In regards to funding, public school districts are funded through the State equalization formula; which means that revenues are solely generated on a per pupil basis. The smaller the enrollment is at a school, the less revenue is generated to support all of the overhead associated with operating that school.

The average per pupil expenditure at Thornydale Elementary is \$6,197. Other elementary schools average per pupil expenditure is \$4,725, which is a difference of \$1,472 or \$461,000 annually more at Thornydale.

If the Governing Board votes on April 12 to close Thornydale Elementary, attendance boundaries would be redrawn to include Butterfield Elementary School and Quail Run Elementary School. Both of these schools are within a two mile radius of Thornydale and both have capacity for growth. Quail Run enrollment is 523 students and Butterfield enrollment is 472. Across the District, our elementary buildings are built for an approximate capacity of 700-750 students. Also, if the Governing Board votes to close Thornydale, District Administration would bring forward recommendations for the use of the facility beginning in the 2019-2020 school year.

In regards to class sizes, it is important to note that we have a strong relationship with our teacher association and class sizes are discussed and agreed upon as part of the negotiated agreement. When more students are added to any particular grade level, teachers would be added as necessary, aligned with our agreed upon class sizes.

All elementary schools in the District, including Quail Run and Butterfield provide a wide variety of academic and extra-curricular activities. In addition, Quail Run is one of the Code To The Future Computer Science Immersion Schools in the state and Butterfield will offer Title I services. Both schools will offer student mobile devices and new collaborative furniture, as well as STEM activities, gifted academics, media centers, fine arts, physical education, music, and LEAP. Regarding special education services, including the cluster program, students will continue to receive the same services at one of our other elementary schools, aligned with their IEP. In addition, students will continue to have access to Breakfast in the Classroom, free/reduced lunch program, counselors and health services, as well as both schools have an active parent teacher organization.

Thornydale students do not receive transportation however, transportation will be provided by the District to both Butterfield and Quail Run and, aligned with policy, parents may also choose to open enroll to another Marana school. For students who are currently open enrolled at Thornydale, they may return to their home school or continue with open enrollment at another District elementary school.

It is fully anticipated that all Thornydale teachers, staff, and administrators will have a position within the District due to the K-8 school, paid for through the voter approved 2014 School Improvement Bond, as well as attrition at other school sites within the District.

Again, I thank you for your attendance tonight and I now turn this over to you, Mr. Carlson to continue with tonight's agenda.

Inspiring students to learn today and lead tomorrow.