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Subject **{BVS Board} School sizing decisions with declining enrollment**
To "bvs.board@bvsd.org" <bvs.board@bvsd.org>
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BM_BEGINBoard Members and Superintendent:I will not be able to attend the meetings this week during the discussions on handling the decline in BVSD enrollment. But I have a personal perspective that I would like to share with you. Both of my children went to BVSD public schools graduating from BHS in the late ‘90s. I was pleased with their educational and social experiences. I know it is troubling for you to decide how to proceed with fewer students. I want to address the problem I see, with 1 round schools.I was a student in CT in the 1950s with the opposite problem, too many students for the available buildings. I feel they made a bad decision in choosing to reopen a closed 1913 building with only 5 rooms. When elementary schools of the era housed k-6, this was a problem. Rather than add on to the bigger school that had replaced that old building, they reopened it for only grades 1-5 and bussed the K and 6th grades to the bigger newer school. These schools were a few miles apart. That left a 1 round school with only 5 teachers, no specialists or adequate lunch room or library. It was also a case of very little concern about diversity. As the only member of my ethnic group in the school until 4th grade, and with far fewer economic benefits than most other students, it left me isolated. Each teacher ruled their grade alone. I had little recourse when the 3rd grade teacher decided that though I was the highest achiever in the class, well behaved and always on task, I did not “fit” her choice of student profile. My parents were unable to intervene in those days, especially as first generation Americans. At the end of that year, that teacher left for a private religious school which better fit her “choice" for class membership. When I went to the bigger school for 6th grade, they could easily accommodate 3 rounds in grades 6 and K. If they had added 5 rooms to that building which had lots of land, from the beginning, we would all have had a better education. We were bussed either way, independent of which building we were in. The bigger school had more time with specialists, better lunch room and library and a teamwork approach by the 3 rounds’ teachers. And far more diversity in every way for students, ethnicity, abilities, economic assets.I am sure you think this is irrelevant in BVSD these days, but anything can happen when there is no teamwork among teachers or diversity of students. I would hate to see that happen here and hope you consider consolidation rather than saving single round schools. That may seem like heresy in the district but I think in the long run everyone will benefit. If I still had children in the district, it's what I would want for them. And as a taxpayer, what I want for all the students in BVSD.Thank you for your hard work on this problem. Addressing the decline itself is a bigger issue for Boulder on housing styles and zoning. But that is for Boulder City Council for the schools within the city which seem to have the largest decline.Thank you,SARA MITTONBoulder resident for 52 years