



STAFF REPORT

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
MEETING DATE: NOVEMBER 2, 2026
FROM: TOM DUBOIS, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH ACUSD

RECOMMENDATION:

Give feedback to the City Manager on the proposed MOU with ACUSD and authorize the City Manager to complete the MOU in the next 15 days with the school district.

BACKGROUND:

As part of our CEQA response letter to the school district, we suggested an MOU to address concerns, some of which aren't necessarily CEQA issues like parking and funding for a School Resource Officer, as well as potential CEQA issues like safety on SR49/Sutter-Ione road. The school district has taken that request seriously, and Superintendent Critchfield prepared a draft MOU for discussion. The two of us met on October 26, 2026, and discussed the MOU in detail.

DISCUSSION:

Any successful collaboration is going to require two parties who want to work together and understand each other's role, responsibilities and motivations. The proposed MOU is high-level commitment from each party publicly stating the intention and the goals. Any assignment of funds or staff will require approval by the Council and the School Board as part of our normal processes.

1. Campus Security and Parking Impacts - The school district is proposing a fence along Oro Madre, which is the most convenient and adjacent land that students can park on city streets. In our discussion, they are also committing to having school supervisors and administrators do occasional sweeps on city streets to identify students parking off-campus and provide information to the City for enforcement against repeat offenders. The district also can take away student privileges or assign detention if there are issues. Items #3 and #6 will provide forums for discussion with the city to work on joint solutions. A lot of parking, including the upper parking lot will be dedicated to student parking; the district thinks parking supply will exceed demand.
2. School Resource Officer - The district is committed to funding a police officer. There are grants available to the district and they are willing to commit funds as well. A separate detailed SRO agreement will be needed - the MOU is just a commitment to work towards this. We discussed the current size of our department, and the need to be able to respond

to emergencies elsewhere and other constraints we have. I think we are generally aligned here.

3. Traffic operations and Safety Study - The school district is already starting on a traffic safety study to determine if Caltrans safety warrants will unlock funding from Caltrans. Defining a staggered release schedule is one of the tasks to be completed prior to consolidation next school year. The district will stagger the release of the different student parking lots and buses to avoid traffic backups from the high school. A mitigation monitoring plan will cap student permits if needed, help provide neighborhood protections, increase bus reliability (says they have had zero cancelled buses this year), carpooling for parents who drive kids to school, detailed circulation plans and the addition of an SRO at key times.
4. Grants - We discussed including ACTC in efforts to secure grants for roadway improvements.
5. Coordination - Both parties will commit to meeting at least quarterly during the upcoming school year, meeting more before school starts to discuss all relevant issues. The draft has the MOU in effect through June 30, 2028 - that can be extended to longer if we desire.

Most residents interact primarily with two public agencies - their city and their school. My recommendation is that the City and School district find ways to collaborate to achieve our goals rather than consider a costly fight. Not only can we be a role model for a positive way to come together and work things out, we can achieve what we want to achieve without wasting taxpayer funds.

CEQA is a very particular specialty in California law, and the school district has used reputable consultants in their CEQA work. Rather than engage in a CEQA fight, I recommend this MOU approach (and the follow through to make these things happen) to have a successful high school in which we can all be proud, based in Sutter Creek.

BUDGET IMPACT:

Having the consolidated high school in Sutter Creek is a potential boon to the City, bringing parents, visiting schools, and students into the City generating economic activity. SRO funding will help our law enforcement budget (and will also incur some policing commitments).

ATTACHMENT:

1. Draft MOU Proposal