

Village of Cottage Grove Board Meeting
December 1, 2025

School District of Monona Grove Proposed Potential Site Updates at Cottage Grove School

The Monona Grove school board is considering the consolidation of 4K–2 grade level students from both Taylor Prairie School (TPS) and Cottage Grove School (CGS) into the Cottage Grove School facility. The proposed consolidation was most recently discussed at the November 11, 2025 Board of Education meeting and is scheduled for a vote by the Board of Education on December 16, 2025, with an effective date of the 2026–2027 school year.

The proposed consolidation is driven by the current underutilization of Taylor Prairie and Cottage Grove schools coupled with current and forecasted declining total enrollment. This proposed consolidation directly supports the District's strategic priorities: strengthening our fund balance, eliminating non-referendum debt, and maximizing operational efficiencies. By streamlining operations, we can more effectively rebuild and sustain a resilient fund balance. Consolidating Taylor Prairie and Cottage Grove schools is a key step in this work, generating an estimated annual savings of approximately \$600,000.

Total enrollment is forecasted to decline as the district's open enrollment strategy will be to fill empty seats rather than fill full classrooms with open enrollment students. Resident students are forecasted to increase, however, they will not increase at a rate that outpaces the open enrollment student decline. The estimated low rate of 0.14 students per single family home in new housing developments in Cottage Grove further underscores the long-term structural capacity surplus. The consolidation move is projected to increase the CGS occupancy from the current 51% (278 students/540 capacity) to a combined 85% (458 students/540 capacity), maximizing resource efficiency and providing fiscal and operational stability for the district.

Proposed Site Update

Should the consolidation be approved by the school board, there would be a need for an upgraded traffic flow solution to safely and efficiently accommodate the increased vehicle traffic at the Cottage Grove site following consolidation.

- **Current CGS Traffic:** The site currently manages approximately 65–74 cars for daily drop-off/pick-up and 8 total buses. The current traffic pattern has space for 34 cars to queue resulting in congestion on Main Street due to cars turning left and right into the parking lot.
- **Projected Consolidated Traffic:** The consolidation is anticipated to increase daily drop-off/pick-up traffic to approximately 134 total cars (plus 10 total buses).

The proposed site plan options aim to:

1. Maximize safety by creating substantial on-site queuing space and an added fire/bus lane.
2. Utilize a "right turn only" access/exit strategy to eliminate congestion caused by left turns onto the street.
3. Connect the existing parking lots to allow for efficient flow of traffic

Proposed Site Plan Options

1. Option C: Fire/Bus Lane (Full Access)

- **Cost:** \$1.63 Million
- **Description:** This option involves the addition of a new bus/fire lane that wraps around the back of the building, connecting the existing parking lots. This design may be considered the safer option as it provides full fire and bus access around the entire building.
- **Queuing Capacity:** Creates on-site queuing for 71 cars (plus additional queuing of 34 on Main Street).
- **Features:** Gate-controlled access, maintain existing playground, resurface existing blacktop, widen the center sidewalk, and relocate dumpsters.

2. Option E: Fire/Bus Loop (Lower Cost Alternative)

- **Cost:** \$1.30 Million
- **Description:** This plan, developed after the initial November 11th discussion, adds a dedicated fire/bus turn-around loop near the existing parking lots on the north side of the building. It represents a lower-cost alternative to Option C.
- **Queuing Capacity:** Creates on-site queuing for 71 cars (plus additional queuing of 34 on Main Street).
- **Features:** Gate-controlled access, widen the center sidewalk, and includes a full bus turn-around.

This traffic flow and site plan is intended to prioritize the public safety impact of facility consolidation. The MG leadership is presenting this information to request the Village Board's support for the concept, with a final Board of Education vote scheduled for **December 16, 2025**.