

Paradise Adventist Academy Constituency Meeting

January 10, 2021

Delegate Information Document

To the Delegates of the Paradise Adventist Academy Constituency Meeting:

Thank you for your commitment to support Paradise Adventist Academy in the pursuit of its mission

“To develop well-educated citizens, who do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.”

Recently, a parent of one of our students sent the following message to the Paradise Adventist Academy Planning Committee:

“Paradise Adventist Academy has become dear to us as our children have flourished in this nurturing, Godly environment, and we long to see Paradise Adventist Academy thrive in the long term.”

We are grateful that the parents of our students value the education we provide at Paradise Adventist Academy, and we hope to continue providing excellent Christian education in the region until the second coming of Jesus.

Christ in us: The Hope of Paradise Adventist Academy

In our school community, there are various perspectives regarding how and where to operate Paradise Adventist Academy. As we process these different perspectives, may we proceed in a way that enables others (especially our students) to “know we are Christians by our love”. Toward that end, we embrace the following principles (as articulated by Jonathan Sacks and Gary Parks):

- The path to resolution is through listening.
- When we can feel the pain of those who disagree with us, we are beginning the path to reconciliation.
- Focusing on the past hinders reconciliation.
- Always assume the best in others until your assumptions are proven right.

We believe that the key factor for the growth and long-term sustainability of Paradise Adventist Academy is a supportive community that interacts with (and views) others (especially those whose perspectives differ from our own) as fellow members of the Body of Christ.¹ (To quickly access the footnotes, click on the footnote number.)

The Recommendation of the Board

A significant challenge before us is that of determining the best location to operate Paradise Adventist Academy, both for the “short-term” and for the “long-term”. We are grateful for the opportunity we have had to operate Paradise Adventist Academy on the Chico campus for the last two years. We are also grateful that the restoration of our Paradise campus is almost complete, and that there are no financial encumbrances associated with the Paradise campus.²

The most urgent question before us is whether to continue operating Paradise Adventist Academy on the Chico campus for one more year, or to begin operating on the Paradise campus at the beginning of the next school year. (Our permit to operate in Chico expires in October of 2022).³

A less urgent (but more important) question is where to operate Paradise Adventist Academy on a long-term basis. We agree that we need to operate the school in a location that is conducive to growth and long-term sustainability. However, we have not yet arrived at consensus regarding whether or not the Paradise campus is the location that is most conducive to growth and long-term sustainability of the school.

The governing board of Paradise Adventist Academy (Board) and the PAA Planning Committee (a subcommittee of the Board) have spent significant time addressing these questions. They have prepared a recommendation for the Constituency that addresses the most urgent question (where to operate Paradise Adventist Academy on a short-term basis) and the more important question (where to operate Paradise Adventist Academy on a long-term basis).

The recommendation contains two components, and the intention of the Board is that the recommendation be taken as a whole (that the components of the recommendation be considered inseparable). The recommendation of the Board is as follows:

The Board recommends that we begin operating Paradise Adventist Academy on the Paradise campus beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, and that the Board be authorized to spend up to \$15,000 to employ “neutral” and “objective” consultants to conduct a study to determine the primary factors (including location) that will promote growth and sustainability for Paradise Adventist Academy.

Questions from our Stakeholders:

***Q1:** Why do you recommend that we move to the Paradise campus next year when the Chico campus is available for one more year?*

A1: Some Teacher Perspectives

We believe that when we move to the Paradise campus, we will have more opportunities to enhance the high school experience of our students. In the same way that the life of a family is enhanced if they live in a home that meets their needs, we believe that the educational experience of our students will be enhanced if they meet on a campus that is designed to accommodate a high school.

While the opportunity to operate on the Chico Adventist Church campus has been a great blessing (and we are very grateful for the gracious hospitality of the Chico church community), the Chico church facility does not meet the needs of some high school programs (especially the music, science, and athletic programs). We believe that the dedicated high school facility on the Paradise campus (featuring spacious and fully equipped classrooms, a library/media center, music complex, gymnasium complex, athletic field, computer lab, woodworking/metalworking/automotive facility) will enhance professional effectiveness and will enrich student learning.

Students need more than classrooms to be successful. A thriving school offers a variety of spaces to enhance the students' sense of belonging and community. At the high school level, dedicated space for social gatherings are especially important. The Paradise campus offers various spaces (the "quad", gazebo, lunch area, student lounge) that are specifically designed to enhance the social/emotional development of students.

A1: Some Student Perspectives

"The Chico campus has been graciously shared with us as a temporary solution during our displacement. However, the facilities we are now using do not feel like a school campus. On the Paradise campus we have resources to run more smoothly and better as a community. As a result, I believe we can have a more enjoyable experience on campus as well as a more productive learning environment."

"When I look back on some of my fondest memories, almost all of them have happened on our Paradise campus. The gym, the field, and the quad at our Paradise campus hold a special place in my heart. The love that I have for our school is something that I would like every student to feel, and I believe that being on our Paradise campus would encourage that."

"I believe that Paradise Adventist Academy needs to be on a campus that is designed to be a school. I am grateful to have been on the Chico campus while our Paradise campus was being restored, but I believe that the Paradise campus provides a more adequate environment for students to learn."

Q2: Will the Paradise campus be ready for high school operations soon enough to operate Paradise Adventist Academy there next year?

A2: The restoration of our Paradise campus is nearly complete, and we are certain that it will be ready for us to operate Paradise Adventist Academy there next year.

Q3: Are there any other location options that are available?

A3: We are not aware of any other facilities that would meet the following criteria:

- able to safely and fully accommodate the operation of our high school
- available by August of 2022
- minimal financial investment (there are no financial encumbrances linked to the Paradise campus)
- is within a reasonable travel distance

Q4: Since so many of our Paradise Adventist Academy students now live in the Chico/Oroville/Durham area, why operate the school in Paradise where students would have to travel so far to get to and from school?

A4: For our current student population, the average one-way travel time from home to campus (based on Google Maps estimates), is as follows:

From home to the Chico campus - 16.3 minutes

From home to the Paradise campus - 20.0 minutes

We understand that the average student travel time will vary from year to year, depending on which students enroll. One of the objectives of the research for which we are requesting authorization is to determine the feasibility of operating Paradise Adventist Academy where it is not only less vulnerable to wildfire, but is also more centrally located to the homes of current and potential students.

Q5: If we operate on the Paradise campus, some students will have to spend much more travel time to get to and from school. What will be done to support those students?

A5: Due to policies regarding insurance, it would be most efficient to have transportation support coordinated by non-school entities. The churches have demonstrated a commitment to support students in this way. (At the time of this writing, the Chico Adventist Church has one van, and the Paradise Adventist Church has two vans that are used to provide student transportation to and from school.)

Q6: Currently there are facilities on the Paradise campus for our high school students, but what will happen to the elementary students and church personnel who are currently using those facilities?

A6: Paradise Adventist Elementary is currently operating on the Paradise campus. However, they are not using the high school facilities. (They are using what used to be considered the “middle school”.)

Church personnel are currently using the Paradise campus administrative offices, and some portions of the high school facilities are being used for Sabbath school classrooms.

If we operate our school on the Paradise campus, the modular classrooms that are currently located on the Chico campus would be moved to the Paradise Adventist Church campus for use as office space. (Our permit requires that the modular classrooms be removed from the Chico campus by October of 2022.) Until the Paradise Adventist Church finishes building its new facilities, portions of the high school facilities will continue to be used as Sabbath school classrooms. We are confident that this can be done in a way that will be conducive to our high school program.

Q7: Isn't it distracting and disruptive to the students when a campus is mixed with elementary and high school students?

A7: It has been our experience that a campus mixed with elementary and high school students is beneficial to all students. Some of the primary benefits are the enhanced opportunities for mentorship and the development of a sense community.

Q8: Why must the two components of the recommendation be “inseparable”? Why can't we vote on them as two separate recommendations?

A8: Once we begin operating on the Paradise campus, there may be a tendency to “settle in”, and it will require a higher level of intentionality to put energy into seeking other opportunities/locations for our school. For that reason, we will need to be very intentional about developing a long-term plan for the growth and sustainability of our school. If we keep the two components of the recommendation inseparable, it will help ensure that operating our school on the Paradise campus will be viewed as a short-term solution to be implemented while we develop a long-term solution.

Q9: Since we seek to develop a long-term plan for the growth and sustainability of Paradise Adventist Academy, what is being done to seek the input of “younger” families whose children are currently in elementary school?

A9: Members of the planning committee have solicited input from families with only elementary school children as well as from families with only high school youth. If we are authorized to employ professional consultants, we will instruct them to do the same.

Q10: *Why would we operate our school in a location that is so vulnerable to wildfire?*

A10: Many communities in California (including Paradise) are vulnerable to the threat of wildfire. However, we believe that the reduction of wildfire fuel on the ridge, as well as wildfire prevention strategies being implemented by local authorities, will reduce the probability of another major wildfire event in the Town of Paradise.

Since we believe that there will always be a possibility of wildfire, we are committed to heightened vigilance regarding the threat of wildfire regardless of where we operate our school. This will include appropriate monitoring of the local situation, addressing defensible space, and maintaining access to local resources for support and information.

Q11: *How would students be kept safe from endangerment due to wildfire?*

A11: The safety of our students is one of our highest priorities. We have begun to develop a plan to minimize the risk of endangerment due to wildfire, and we will improve that plan on a regular basis.

Some components of our wildfire safety plan are as follows:

- We will not conduct school on our Paradise campus on days that have been designated “red flag days” due to elevated risk of wildfire. (On those days, we would use “distance learning” strategies to conduct school.)
- We will maintain sufficient transportation capacity on campus to evacuate all staff and students in the event of any emergency that requires evacuation, including wildfire. Since Paradise Adventist Elementary is operating on the Paradise campus, we will coordinate with the elementary school regarding the evacuation plan. Once this recommendation is approved, we will develop the specific evacuation plan, including vehicle acquisition and other logistics. We want to emphasize that we will maintain sufficient transportation on campus for the purpose of evacuation in the event of an emergency.
- We will establish evacuation routes and procedures to enable parents to have advanced notice regarding evacuation rendezvous locations.
- We will conduct drills periodically to ensure efficient evacuation capabilities.
- We will not conduct school on the Paradise campus if a wildfire was burning within a predetermined distance from the campus.
- We will establish a system by which we can be notified in a timely way regarding the threat of wildfire. (Our system may be supplemented by an “[early warning system](#)” being planned by the [Town of Paradise](#). The Town of Paradise expects to “break ground” on this early warning system in 2021.)
- Upon notification of the threat of wildfire, we will notify parents immediately (our parent alert system is capable of sending text messages to all parents who are registered in our FACTS SIS system).

Q12: Since the evacuation infrastructure of the Town of Paradise is inadequate, how would you evacuate students in the event of a wildfire?

A12: In the past, the evacuation capabilities in the Town of Paradise have certainly been inadequate (traffic congestion has been a major problem). The following factors indicate that evacuation capabilities have improved and will continue to improve:

- The Town of Paradise has established a Long-Term Community Recovery Plan, and [evacuation route improvements](#) are a Tier 1 priority of that plan. (The Town of Paradise has received a 1.8 million dollar grant to conduct a [comprehensive transportation study](#) as they implement their Long-Term Community Recovery Plan.)
- There are fewer people on “the Ridge” (Paradise/Magalia) who would need to evacuate, and this will reduce the probability of traffic congestion during an evacuation. (In 2018, the Ridge population was approximately 43,000. The current population on the Ridge is approximately 15,000.)

Q13: How will education continue during Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events?

A13: We will not conduct school on our Paradise campus during PSPS events if those events are conducted due to elevated risk of wildfire (some PSPS events are not related to risk of wildfire). During those events, we will use “distance learning” strategies to conduct school. (Accommodations will be made for students who are not able to access distance learning platforms.)

Q14: If we operate on the Paradise campus, is there a higher probability that we would miss school days during the regular school year, and have to extend the school year?

A14: We are confident that we will be able to provide an excellent educational program without having to extend the school year.

Q15: Why would we operate our school in a town that has minimal infrastructure for emergency support (police, ambulance, medical)?

A15: Changes have been made that give our Paradise campus improved access to emergency support. Butte County Emergency Medical Services now operates a base station in the center of Paradise (quite close to our Paradise campus), and two ambulances are assigned to that station. Adventist Health operates a Rapid Care clinic at the Health Center on Skyway (a five minute drive from the Paradise campus). Law enforcement officials have testified that the decreased population of the town has resulted in an enhanced ability for them to provide law enforcement services to the entire community.

Q16: If we operate Paradise Adventist Academy on the Paradise campus, how will student enrollment be affected?

A16: It is possible that some parents who are currently sending their students to Paradise Adventist Academy may not enroll their youth if we operate on the Paradise campus. It is also possible that some parents who are not currently sending their students to Paradise Adventist Academy may enroll their youth if we do operate on the Paradise campus. We hope to retain all of our students, and if some do not enroll due to campus location, we would certainly regret the loss. We do not have the ability to accurately predict how the location of the campus will affect enrollment. (One purpose of the study for which the Board is requesting authorization is to provide more accurate information regarding this topic.)

Q17: How will we “cover” all our classes if we operate on the Paradise campus?

A17: While Paradise Adventist Academy has been operating on the Chico campus, we have benefited from enhanced opportunities to collaborate with Chico Oaks Adventist School. For example, during this 2020-2021 school year, one of our Paradise Adventist Academy teachers has been teaching an English class at Chico Oaks Adventist School, and one of our Chico Oaks Adventist School teachers has been teaching a US History class at Paradise Adventist Academy. Furthermore, the close proximity of the two schools has made it very convenient to “share” a music teacher.

We will continue to collaborate with Chico Oaks Adventist School as much as possible. However, if we operate our school on the Paradise campus, it is likely that we will not be able to continue collaborating in the exact same way.

We realize that, if we operate our school on the Paradise campus, we may need to find a different staffing solution for our US History class. We are confident that we will be able to continue to find staffing solutions regardless of where we operate our school.⁴

Q18: If we have an excellent (and paid for) campus in Paradise, why do we need to spend so much on research regarding where to operate Paradise Adventist Academy?

A18: Many of our stakeholders are concerned that we will have limited opportunities to recruit students to our school, and that our school will not be able to grow (or even survive) if we operate on the Paradise campus on a long-term basis. Since this is such an important issue, we believe that it would be best to employ professional consultants to help us to make wise decisions regarding this issue.

Q19: Who will conduct the research?

A19: We are in the process of soliciting proposals from consulting entities. At the time of this writing, we have received a proposal from [GraceWorks Ministries](#).

Q20: *If you are requesting authorization for up to \$15,000 to conduct research, where will those funds come from?*

A20: Our first strategy will be to solicit donations. If we are unable to get the full amount donated, we will fund the balance from the Paradise Adventist Academy operating budget.

Q21: *How do you expect our school to be able to grow and thrive if we operate it on the Paradise campus?*

A21: The location of our school is certainly a significant factor that will affect our ability to recruit students. However, there are other factors that are equally (or perhaps more) important. It is most important to provide an excellent educational program. One of the most effective strategies for recruiting students will be the enthusiastic testimony of satisfied parents and students. (“Word-of-mouth” continues to be the most effective marketing strategy.)

Q22: *How many people must vote in favor to approve this recommendation?*

A22: Article 2.3.7 of the Paradise Adventist Academy Constitution states that “a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the delegates in attendance shall be required to pass a motion or implement an action.”

Q23: *What will happen if this recommendation is not approved?*

A23: The Board will need to go “back to the drawing board” and develop a different recommendation to bring to the Constituency.

Q24: *How can I support Paradise Adventist Academy?*

A24: Participate with the feasibility study components; share your honest opinion in a spirit of kindness and compassion; listen to those whose perspectives are different than yours with the intent to fully understand; put away the things of the past; support the outcome of this meeting and the impending feasibility study; prioritize the well-being of our youth; model our Mission (to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God).

Final Thoughts Regarding a Strategic Plan for Long-term Sustainability

We are committed to the long-term sustainability of Paradise Adventist Academy. We will continue to seek God's guidance as we strive to be aligned with His will. We recognize that, regardless of what plans, policies, and procedures we may develop, the greatest factor regarding the long-term sustainability of Paradise Adventist Academy is our commitment to continually "abide in Christ".

We are grateful for your support of Paradise Adventist Academy. May we grow together in love and grace, and may our youth see us model our Mission:

To develop well-educated citizens who do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

¹ Please invest five minutes to read the story entitled [“The Rabbi’s Gift”](#)

² The restoration project was primarily funded by insurance. However, some upgrades were funded by donations. We would like to express particular gratitude to Rich Cochrane, Doug Hamilton, and Modern Construction. They went “above and beyond” to accomplish this restoration project. [Resume](#) (To resume reading the document, click on “Resume”, and then “Bookmark”.)

³ In November of 2018, the City of Chico developed the “Disaster Recovery Program ” (DRP) to assist those who were displaced by the Camp Fire. Under the DRP, Paradise Adventist Academy was granted a permit to install modular classrooms and operate on the Chico campus through the end of the 2021-2022 school year. This permit stipulates that by October of 2022, the modular classrooms must be removed, and the site must be restored to its “original condition”.

The DRP allows for an 18 month extension of the permit if Paradise Adventist Academy can demonstrate that such an extension is necessary. Since we expect that the Paradise campus will be ready for high school operations by October of 2022, and since the conditions that motivated the City of Chico to grant the permit no longer apply, we do not expect to be able to demonstrate a valid need for the 18 month extension. For that reason, we do not expect Paradise Adventist Academy to be able to operate on the Chico campus after the 2021-2022 school year. [Resume](#)

⁴ It is common for us to be in a position of needing to find staffing solutions. (It happens almost every year.) Since teachers are seldom able to inform us of their intentions for the following school year before January, we are usually not able to establish our staffing configurations for the next school year before March. (That is why we have not specified exactly who will teach all the classes we will offer next year.) It may be reassuring for our constituents to know that most of our staff members are certified to teach additional subjects that they are not currently teaching. With our current educational team, we have enough certified staff members to cover all the classes we offer. We also have the opportunity to collaborate with other schools for staffing solutions (as we are currently doing with Sacramento Adventist Academy). [Resume](#)

THE RABBI'S GIFT

A monastery had fallen upon very hard times. Once a great order, but over time it had been reduced to only five monks -- the abbot and four others -- all well into their seventies. The order was dying.

Deep in the forest surrounding the monastery there was a little hut which a rabbi from a nearby town used occasionally for personal retreats. The old monks had developed a sixth sense about the presence of the rabbi, and always could tell when he was in the forest. On one such occasion, the abbot, who had been agonizing over the demise of his order, decided to visit the hut to ask the rabbi if he could offer any advice.

The rabbi welcomed the abbot into his hut, but when the abbot explained the purpose of his visit, the rabbi could only empathize with his plight and commiserate with him. "Yes, the spirit seems to have gone out of the people. It's the same in my town. Almost no one comes to the synagogue anymore."

So it was that the abbot and the rabbi spent time that day talking of deep things. Finally, the time came for the abbot to leave. The men hugged and the abbot said, "It is wonderful that we could meet and talk after all these years, but I have failed in my purpose for coming here. Is there no advice at all you can give me that would help me to save my dying order?"

"I'm sorry," said the rabbi. "I'm afraid I have no advice to give. All I can tell you, though, is that the Messiah is one of you."

Upon his return to the monastery, the abbot was joined by the other monks who asked, "Well, what did the rabbi say?"

"He couldn't help," the abbot replied. "We just sat and talked. And as I was leaving, he said that the Messiah is one of us. I have no idea what he meant."

In the days and weeks and months that followed, the old monks pondered this and wondered if there could be any possible significance to the rabbi's words: The Messiah is one of us. Do you think he meant one of us monks here at the monastery?

If he meant one of us, he surely must have been referring to Father Abbot. He has been our leader for more than a generation.

On the other hand, he could have meant Brother Thomas; he is a holy man. Everyone knows that Thomas is a man of light.

Certainly he could not have meant Brother Eldred! Eldred gets crotchety at times.... But even though he can be a nuisance, when you look back on it, Eldred virtually always has a valid point to make. Perhaps the rabbi did mean Brother Eldred.

But surely *not* Brother Phillip; he's so passive, a real nobody....But then, almost magically, Philip has this knack of appearing at your side just when you need him the most. Maybe Phillip *is* the Messiah.

But of course the rabbi wasn't referring to me. I'm just an ordinary person. Yet what if he were? What if I am the Messiah? Please, God, not me; I couldn't mean that much to you, could I?

As they reflected in this manner, the old monks began to treat each other with extraordinary respect on the off chance that one among them might

be the Messiah. And on the remote chance that each monk himself might be the Messiah, they each began to treat themselves with extraordinary respect as well.

Because the forest was so beautiful, people still occasionally came to visit the monastery to picnic on its tiny lawn, to walk along its paths, to sit quietly in the chapel. As they did so, without even being conscious of it, they sensed this aura of extraordinary respect which seemed to surround each of the elderly monks and which permeated the atmosphere of the whole place. There was something compelling, empowering about it. Without knowing exactly why, they began to come back to the monastery more frequently to visit, to play, to pray. They began to bring their friends to share this special place. And their friends brought their friends.

In time, some of the younger men who came to visit began to talk more and more with the elderly monks. After a while one asked if he could join the order. Then another. Then another. Soon, the monastery once again housed a thriving order, and, thanks to the rabbi's gift, became a beacon of peace, love, and hope.

This is an edited version of the story from Scott Peck's The Different Drum (1987). New York: Simon & Schuster. [Resume](#) (To resume reading the document, click on "Resume".)