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SV parents pack final hearing on local high school

By MAY WONG

Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Scotts Valley parents said repeatedly Thursday they don't want their voices muffled by Santa Cruz voters if a proposal for a local high school reaches the ballot.

Their message came at a final local hearing on a proposed Scotts Valley high school. Scotts Valley parents and residents composed the majority of 150 audience members.

Who will get to vote on the proposal is the center of debate and was the primary concern of those who spoke at the hearing.

Faced with the fact that voters in the Santa Cruz school district out-

number Scotts Valley voters 8-1, Scotts Valley parents fear their longstanding desire for a hometown high school may easily be defeated by Santa Cruz district voters.

Scotts Valley has no high school, and sends about 600 Scotts Valley students attend the three high schools in the Santa Cruz district.

Some 30 people spoke before the county Office of Education board Thursday, which will recommend for or against the high school and send the recommendation to the state Board of Education on Oct. 21.

The state board has the final say on the proposal after a public hearing. If it approves, it will rule on

who will get to vote. School officials don't expect the issue to be placed on a ballot before November 1994.

About 20 Scotts Valley residents spoke.

Some said Scotts Valley students were being "shortchanged" because they have less access to the high school facilities and for extra-curricular activities. Others noted the problem of transporting their children.

"I moved to Scotts Valley for the schools," said Mark Dettle. "The kids should be playing football, they should be being kids. But no, instead, they're in a car."

All asked for the right to vote.

But so did David Sklarz, superin-

tendent of the Santa Cruz school district.

Saying Santa Cruz schools would lose about \$1.8 million in revenue with the loss of Scotts Valley students, Sklarz said his entire district has a stake in the issue.

"It's not fair to our kids. The economic impact will permeate the entire district," Sklarz said. "It will not be limited to high school kids. It will hit K through 12."

But several Scotts Valley residents argued that the losses will not be as bad as Sklarz outlined. They cited projections that the Santa Cruz school district would grow by more than 300 students over the next three years.

"I'm convinced with careful

planning and with the gradual phasing out of our students that this impact can be minimized," said Thomas Balch, a Scotts Valley trustee.

Scotts Valley residents also said they feared Santa Cruz voters would hear only how the existing

schools would be negatively affected and not how class sizes may go down when Scotts Valley students leave.

"It's doomed to failure if they hear what I heard tonight" from Sklarz, said Sheryl Ainsworth, a Scotts Valley resident.

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