

November 15, 2009

Dear DMUSD Board of Trustees, 7/11 Committee Members & Superintendent McClain:

My name is Sandra Hoyle and I live on Crest Way, Del Mar. My two oldest children attend Del Mar Hills Academy of Arts and Science (DMHA) and my two youngest hope to attend in the next few years. I am contacting you today to ask that you form a Strategic Planning Task Force to resolve budgetary issues, current and future and instruct the 7/11 committee to take school closure off the table.

When my husband was transferred to San Diego, there was no question that we would place our children in DMUSD. The only question we had was what area and what school. After arduous searching, we realized that we loved the small town community feel of Del Mar. On entering the lobby of DMHA, we encountered Linda Mettling, the school administrative assistant. Was it important that Del Mar Hills be a nationally recognized Blue Ribbon and California Distinguished school? Yes. But it also mattered that from the second we entered the school, we felt welcomed and comfortable. DMHA is more than just a building. It is a wonderful, small school filled with innovative and energetic staff and teachers as well as dedicated and caring parents. As members of our community, you as a Board are fully aware that the impact of closing DMHA will be extremely significant. The negative impact will include increased traffic, pollution, loss of programs, over-crowded schools, safety issues, detract from our community feeling and more. Other schools in our district will also be impacted through overcrowding as well. I did not bring my children to Del Mar for the small town school feel to have them placed in a 10 year old portable in a school not due to be updated for 17 more years. Our children should not be displaced so that less than 20 District employees can have new District headquarters.

The projected cost savings of closing a school are significantly less than we were originally led to believe. The new estimate of less than \$400,000 in cost savings to close a school is insignificant in the greater scheme. It is very clear that school closure will not solve the District's projected budget shortfall however it does solve the problem of the district office. The District will be losing more in DMSEF (Foundation) contributions than school closure will generate in cost savings. I refuse to give money to a district that is frivolously spending it at my children's expense. I strongly encourage the Board of Trustees to form a Strategic Planning Task Force to resolve budgetary issues, current and future and instruct the 7/11 committee to take school closure off the table. When Superintendent McClain came to our school to encourage us to support the DMSEF, she gave us a pamphlet on "Budget Reduction Areas Under Consideration – Budget Year 2009-2010." That pamphlet and excuses just aren't good enough. According to the 7/11 Committee best practices guidelines, the District should have examined all other budget cuts and opportunities for cost savings before deciding to close a school. As a parent, I don't feel it has been done.

The formation of the 7/11 committee was premature. However, their work in identifying excess capacity in the District has successfully found a solution for the District office location in Proposal G which saves all schools, builds a district office at Torrey Hills using less than 15,000 square feet of their 14 acres, co-locates the employee childcare and preschool with the existing preschool at Sycamore Ridge and relocates the Maintenance and Operations yard elsewhere.

I thank the Board and 7/11 committee members for their hard work, dedication and service. This has been a mentally exhausting and stressful ordeal. I respectfully ask that you consider my important request: please do not close any school.

Thank you,
Sandra Hoyle