

7-23-09

12760 Sandy Crest Court  
San Diego, CA 92130

Dear 7/11 Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concern. We are a future Ashley Falls family. When purchasing our home nearly three years ago, we made finding a home where our children would attend Ashley Falls Elementary School the top of our priority list. When deciding between three homes to make an offer on, we choose the one that in the end would require more work and money to make it our home but for the sole reason that our two boys and future children would have the opportunity to attend this California Distinguished School. With API and CST scores higher than most in the district, Ashley Falls has proven to be one of San Diego's top schools. We love the fact that it is the center of the neighborhood, far from the noises and pollution of the 5 freeway. We love the beautiful layout of the campus, from the different age appropriate playgrounds to the openness the land around it brings.

What a shame it would be on the district to take one of Del Mar Unified School District's most beautiful campuses away from the children it was created for and transform it to district offices unable to utilize it to its full potential. I realize that an economic crisis is the reason for considering such a closure. However, I urge that all strategies be considered even if it is temporarily taking away electives across the district and handing those responsibilities over to the teachers and parents. I was a teacher for 7 years and have first hand experiences in teaching PE, as well as, keeping art alive in my classroom. I also have firsthand experience using eager parents to buy supplies and books, letting them take on teaching the arts, and doing the many tasks a teacher's assistant would do. I know how much it costs to renew and buy new books and workbooks. Times are tough, and so I don't think it is unreasonable to ask the students of the DMUSD to use paper for answering questions instead of writing in workbooks. This is not only a good lesson in economics but saving the environment too. When I taught, I would have graciously taken a decrease in pay if it meant my coworkers, as well as myself, would be able to continue to have a job teaching. And as a future parent, I am willing to buy more supplies for Ashley Falls if it means the savings would make a difference. Spending the extra money on the supply list and giving a donation that would go towards other costs is more convenient than paying the growing tuition fees in private schools. Down sizing is inevitable, but there has to be a better proposition than closing Ashley Falls. I feel that if a school must close, the age of the buildings with the extra costs of upkeep, safety of the students in relation to the public eye (and I mean, proximity to busy streets, gas stations and plazas with high numbers of strangers) and having lower test scores should be determining factors for a closure. If those factors were a guideline to finding the right school to close, Ashley Falls would not fit the guidelines.

Sincerely,  
Shanell Pierce

# 8