

November 16, 2009

Memo To: Superintendent McClain, The 7/11 Committee and the Del Mar Union School Board

We know that you are besieged with passionate messages regarding the potential school reconfiguration/closure decisions, but we are compelled to add our “two cents” to the debate. We urge you to please respect and acknowledge the decades of success at the Del Mar Hills Academy. This success is evident in so many ways, ranging from measurable achievements such as student test scores and prizes across all disciplines, to immeasurable anecdotal personal stories of academic and personal enrichment. Yes, the school is the oldest and the smallest in the district, but instead of viewing this as a liability, why not embrace, reinforce, and capitalize on the long and extraordinarily positive history and reputation? In other words, why mess with success?

The families at Del Mar Hills have chosen to attend this school because of its reputation, curriculum, and unique culture. As you well know, each school has its own culture and organizational climate. We are fortunate that all the schools in the district provide quality education, but it is specifically these less tangible culture and climate factors that made many of us choose the Hills. These same factors fuel the passionate pleas you are now receiving. We have visited and worked in dozens of elementary schools for professional and personal reasons over the past 20 years (including the Del Mar schools). Prior to visiting the Hills in 2005, we had never encountered a school with such a joyous atmosphere. We enthusiastically enrolled our daughter at the Hills because of this, and we have never regretted this decision.

We are aware of the economic realities, and appreciate that your respective tasks and decisions are very difficult. However, consider the message to the children, staff, and the broader community if a very special, and very successful school is deemed expendable. Please choose to send a message to our kids and families that the decades of devoted commitment to education and to personal development are respected and will be reinforced. In addition, please act to end the current climate of divisiveness in the district “pitting” one school against another out of fear and protectiveness. Our kids and our educational staff deserve better. Please SAVE OUR SCHOOLS!

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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