

An open letter to the 7/11 District Advisory Committee
Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for investing your time and energy in serving Del Mar Union students, families and staff. As a parent of a Torrey Hills student, I appreciate the opportunity to contribute my voice to the discussion about the placement of DMUSD offices and the potential for school closures or joint use options for schools within the district.

I would urge the committee to consider two major factors in making their decision: financial stability, and school site integrity.

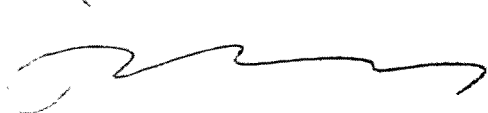
In these unsettled and uncertain times, it makes sense that DMUSD, like many of the families it serves, should be prudent in managing its finances. The State is in poor financial condition, and cuts in education funding are forecast to continue in coming years. As a parent, I have been asked to give more than \$800 to the Education Foundation to support an enriched school environment for my Torrey Hills student, not an insignificant financial burden to endure in times such as these. If parents have to reach so deep in their pockets, and the State has taken and will continue to take more of my tax dollars away from my local schools, how can the DMUSD reasonably justify spending money on unnecessary purchases or buildings? Suitable space and buildings exist at Del Mar Hills to accommodate the needs of the district. Since the Governor has uncoupled the money from the sale of the Shores property to a required property purchase or expense, there is no financial impetus to look at buying or building. But there remains a strong and sensible need for practicality with regard to district monies.

One of the wonderful things about the schools of DMUSD is that there is a real sense of community, ownership and pride about our schools. At Torrey Hills, the children are learning in exceptional environments, and the school is a hub for families to focus on supporting the students and staff in their educational goals. Subdividing the site into a school-slash-business office reduces this atmosphere and would degrade the quality of the educational experience at any school. Additional automotive and foot traffic, not to mention the short-term building and construction noise, would create a disturbance and a distraction that would impinge upon the student learning experience and introduce a nuisance aspect to our school site. Simply put: let schools be schools. Put offices in places designated specifically for that purpose.

For these reasons I urge the members of the 7/11 committee to vote for proposal B. I know there are some passionate voices urging you to save all schools, but on paper, this does not make financial sense for the district, nor does it reflect long-term growth projections for the district. Please, use our district monies and resources smartly, and keep schools and office sites separate.

Please accept proposal B.

Respectfully,
Joan Chen, parent of a Torrey Hills student



12/2/09