

December 1, 2009

Dear DMUSD 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 demographics.

First, in this era of state bankruptcy and cuts to education funding, it does not make sense to build a new district office rather than moving into existing buildings. If state spending is so dire that jobs are being cut and enrichment classes cancelled, how can the DMUSD justify spending money on purchasing or building new offices? 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.

Secondly, Torrey Hills has 300 students more than Del Mar hills (646 versus 329). In 5 years, the projection is for Torrey Hills to have 796 students versus 303 at Del Mar Hills - Torrey would have 2 1/2 times the number of students. How can it even be seriously considered to put all the DMUSD Offices at Torrey Hills with 800 students, and leave Del Mar Hills operating as it currently does with no changes and an enrollment of 300 students? I have to trust that the committee must see that this proposal is completely without merit.

Furthermore, please note the following observations based on the map image in Attachment B:

- Not only does Torrey Hills have the one of the largest enrollments in DMUSD, but the 4 large plateaus west of the Torrey Hills campus have been approved for 600-800 condo/apartment units.

Once these units are built, the census at Torrey Hills will explode to the point that some students will likely have to be assigned to other schools. Thus, it makes no sense to put district/maintenance offices at a site that will need more room for their students, not less.

- Torrey Hills has little parking now, and adding a set of district employees will further overburden the meager parking options at the school.

- The hairpin turn for the lower elementary grades is already congested at drop off/pick up times--adding district trucks to the chaos will further endanger the streams of kids biking, walking, and scootering to school.

I know there is always a heightened sense of alarm with the talk of closing any school, but the truth is that communities have a predictable pattern of growth. New communities tend to draw in young families with young students. As the students age, there is need for more middle schools, then more high schools.

Eventually, there is less need for elementary schools as the entire population in the area ages. When I grew up in Orange County, I saw the same pattern, and elementary schools were closed, and combined.

The same pattern was seen in Rancho Palos Verdes, the community my husband grew up in. When he was in high school, there were 3 high schools in the area, and now all 3 have been combined into one high school. I'm sure all of the board members can point to similar changes in the neighborhoods they grew up in. Please recognize that the DMUSD neighborhoods are going through similar maturity, and that soon

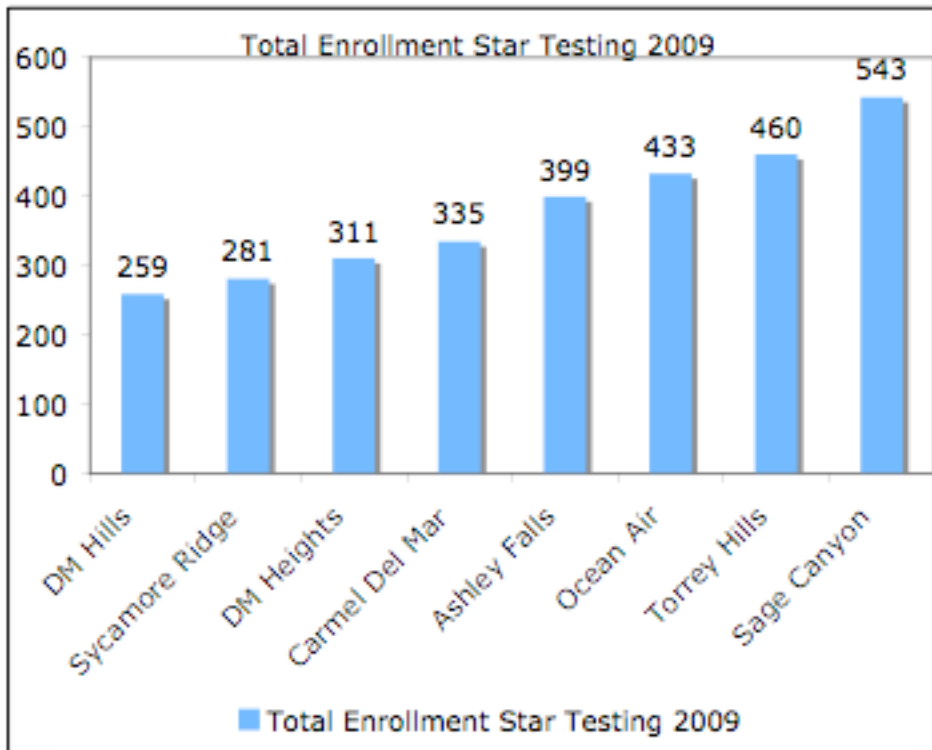
Carmel Valley families will need to address the overcrowded middle school and high schools, not maintaining 8 elementary schools. I implore the DMUSD board members to make their decision based on the growth patterns of each school neighborhood. Torrey Hills has the second most students in the district, and will be expecting possibly hundreds more once the new units are built within our school lines. Del Mar Hills has the least number of elementary kids, with no new building plans within their school lines to cause an increase in their school population.

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.

Respectfully,

Anna Quan, MD

Attachment A: Star Testing enrollment at DMUSD schools in 2009 (2nd-6th g only)



attachment B: google earth of Torrey Hills Elementary

