

Dear Members of the 7/11 Committee,

My name is Stacey Eaton, I live at 187 Ocean View Ave., Del Mar – on the “other” side of Del Mar Heights Rd. I am addressing you as a Del Mar Community member and a Hills parent to ask you to take the option of closing any school off the table now, before the decision is left up to the board. In my opinion it is an unacceptable option.

Closing a school is a short-sighted and reactionary solution to a deeper fiscal problem. From the shifting numbers of potential projected savings to the unknown future enrollment of students which have been stated, the only thing that seems clear to me is that you do not have a strong enough case for closing a school. The costs far outweigh the benefits. Yes, the district will save some money by firing teachers, a principal and staff; by displacing students; and by fracturing a community. But there will be other costs that tip the scales: the cost of hiring Vice Principals for over-capacity schools. The cost of building a new school in 5 years when enrollment is again up, as is predicted. The cost of increased traffic and wear and tear on over-crowded campuses. These are just some of the financial costs.

But the cost that is not as easily measured, that always seems to get lost amidst fear and number crunching, is the quality of our children’s’ education. I moved to Del Mar because I saw a district that didn’t go along with the trend when ESC programs were being cut all over the country. I saw a district that appeared to place high value on small class size, integrated curriculums, and a creative, whole-child, community approach to teaching. In my 7-year tenure as a Hills parent, I have seen this enacted at the Hills. If there are sacrifices to be made in the district, the thing that Works should not be one of them. I agree that during hard economic times we all have to re-think our priorities. Our children should Always be the priority.

As an impartial, practical body, I urge you to value the input of the community. Look at both the concrete numbers **and** the unquantifiable costs. The safety, security, community, and sense of family that all of the children in all of the Del Mar schools have does not have a number value. When you close a school, that takes years to re-build. It does not just impact the budget. You are charged with the task of weighing each cost and benefit – please don’t let the short-term numbers be your only guide. Please do not allow a school to close in our community.

Sincerely,

Stacey Eaton