

December 14, 2009

Dear 7-11 Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a meeting at Torrey Hills—we appreciated the opportunity to express our views. I read the following comments below at the December 14, 2009 7-11 committee meeting, but would like to submit it as a letter for posting to the 7-11 website as well.

Hello, I have 2 boys at Torrey Hills, in 3rd and 5th grade, and wish to express my concerns with proposal G.1 which requires building offices on Torrey Hills blacktop and green space.

My 10 year old 5th grader wanted to come, but I was afraid it would go too late. So I promised to represent his voice against the proposal that Torrey Hills can afford to lose playground and green space because the Torrey Hills park is nearby:

- “First, it takes 10 minutes to walk down to the park, and our recess is only 15 minutes long. So if we tried to get to the park for recess, we’d have to turn around half way to get back to school.”
- “Secondly, our lunch is 45 minutes, with 15 minutes for eating. To take 10 minutes there and back would leave only 10 minutes to play.”
- “Third, Torrey Hills park is open to the public, so you might get strangers trying to grab kids, or sell them drugs.”
- “Fourth, it would take a lot more parent volunteers to walk the kids to the park, to make sure they don’t get run over.”

Clearly, stating that building on the Torrey Hills blacktop and greenspace, despite the fact that Torrey Hills has the least amount of square footage/student of all 8 schools, because we have the Torrey Hills park is as ludicrous as saying that Del Mar Hills doesn’t need a playground because they can play at the beach.

The fundamental question for the recommended proposal comes down to whether cost is an issue or not. If not, then these discussions are all moot—keep all 8 schools open, do not make any joint use campuses, and let the administration purchase or lease space in a less expensive area, like Sorrento Valley.

However, if you agree that cost is an issue, then you have to determine the factors that go into your recommendation to the board—will it be based on facts such as current and projected enrollment, square footage per student, growth patterns, cost per student, and the ongoing potential loss of school funding, or will it be swayed by emotional pleas of people saying

“Don’t close our school. We want it. We need it. We deserve it, and I don’t care what it costs.”

If we make a decision regardless of cost, it sounds a lot like the people who bought houses they couldn't afford or ran up credit card debt without weighing long term costs. We are all feeling the effects of the global economic meltdown caused by irresponsible financial choices.

I'm not a financial expert, and I wish we could keep all our schools, but as I see it, DMUSD can no longer afford to run 8 schools. If we try to do so, all 8 schools will suffer with staff firings, larger class sizes, and fewer programs. DMUSD has a huge operating cost deficit every year. If you had to make a decision for your family and one decision puts you further into debt each year, while the other allows a savings of \$400,000/year, which would you choose for your family? Please do not be more cavalier with spending taxpayer money than you would be with your own.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Anna Quan, MD