

Dear Dr. McClain, DMUSD board, and 7/11 committee:

This is Dr. Joan Chen, a faculty member at San Diego State University. Unfortunately, I did not get the chance to speak during yesterday's public hearing because there were dozens of people ahead of me. However, I did listen to a lot of speeches, and feel strongly compelled to express my opinion about the issues of school closing and DMUSD office relocation.

While many parents stated serious personal concerns in regards to school closing, and are strongly against school and administrative offices jointly occupying the same location, few of them seem to realize that we are facing an extreme budget crisis affecting the whole State of California, and the economy is not predicted to get much better in the next **five** years. As our Dean of College of Sciences clearly stated: five years is a long time, so it is imperative that we make **drastic changes now**, simply to sustain current educational levels.

I have heard so many parents repeating that there has to be a way to solve the DMUSD financial problem without any changes. Ironically, this is exactly what I thought one and half years ago about our College of Sciences at SDSU. But the reality is, many lecturers and staff lost their jobs and the survivors are now required to take furloughs that effectively amount to a 10% pay cut.

If nothing is done, similar things could happen to DMUSD. Remember, about 80% of the DMUSD budget pays for teacher and staff salaries and benefits. If the state budget does not improve, and our economy does not recover soon, I would like to ask: what else can be done besides furloughs, pay cuts or even layoffs?

DMUSD is a great school district, mostly because we have so many passionate and loving teachers. I am sure no one wants to lose these great teachers. In my opinion, this would have a greater negative impact on our children, our community, and entire school district in the long run, than a change in one school location. Although I am not sure proposal B is the best choice for DMUSD so far; nevertheless, it makes the best sense. Thus, I strongly urge you, the decision makers, to carefully consider the current DMUSD financial situation, and adopt proposal B, which I think will benefit DMUSD over the years to come.

Please, make a wise and financially responsible decision. Give our children a bright future!

Joan. Chen, Ph.D
Director, Microchemical Core Facility
Assistant Professor
Biology Department
San Diego State University