

15 December 2009

Members of the 7/11 Committee and the DMUSD Board of Trustees:

According to an article in the Union Tribune dated 12/12/09, the San Diego Unified School District is experiencing a major budget crisis. In the next two years, that district is facing an \$84.1 million shortfall to its \$1.2 billion operating budget. This 7% deficit has resulted in a preliminary plan that will shorten kindergarten education time to half-day sessions, eliminate magnet programs, and axe hundreds of positions for teachers, librarians, and administrators. Other staff will be required to take furlough days. There is also a plan to ask remaining teachers to accept a 7% pay cut.

The incredible financial hardship currently experienced by SDU may seem remote and alien to us, in our seemingly wealthy, basic-aid district. But the truth is, the DMUSD is also facing a serious budget shortfall that is of a magnitude of what the SDU is dealing with. Our budget deficit for 2010/2011 is projected to stand at more than \$2.5 million, and our expected budget runs about \$40 million per annum. That's a gap of about 6.25% next year... not so far off from the 7% that San Diego unified is looking at.

The families of the DMUSD have always helped stave off the impact of insufficient funding in our district. The DMSEF (Education Foundation) has raised enough money in the last few years to maintain our ESC programs, allowing music, science and art to be a part of our children's education. The PTA raises funds to make purchases that keep the schools well stocked with the tools needed to ensure our students' success. Parents donate educational games and equipment to their children's classrooms to ensure that it is a maximally enriched environment.

In its current financial situation, the Board of Trustees of the DMUSD must do what it can to ensure that our district does not face the same drastic options that the SDU now faces. None of us wants to see our children's class sizes increased because teacher positions are cut. Or the kindergarten days shortened. Or our teachers leaving their jobs because they are forced to take pay cuts. We don't want to see the health technicians or the maintenance staff on a work furlough. But any of these can become a district-wide reality should the Board of Trustees not work to close the gap in the most significant way possible.

The U-T article states: "Although it's early in the budget cycle, the (San Diego Unified) district's chief financial officer... said he expects the situation to worsen as more details from the state become available. The governor is due to issue a state budget update Jan. 10." There can be no doubt: the dire budget situation is not going away soon.

The Committee must put before the Board the most financially sound options remaining: proposals B or I. Since proposal B eliminates the need for joint use at any other school site, it is the most preferable. Close a school in our district to save the whole of the district's students, including those who currently attend Del Mar Hills, from drastic cuts to their education.

Parents have been stepping up and doing their part. Now its time for the Committee, and the Board of Trustees, to do the same.

Respectfully,

Suzanne Hall  
Torrey Hills Mom