

December 15, 2009

An Open Letter to the 7-11 Committee,

I am deeply troubled by the unresolved facility issues that are at the root of several equity concerns and the solution to some of the district's financial distress. I believe the Board of Trustees and committee have an obligation to represent and serve all students in the district during the arduous deliberation, recommendation, and decision process. On behalf of our community, I am thankful for your thorough and careful consideration of this matter.

As the committee nears its extended deadline, **it is incumbent upon the 7-11 panel to do what is in the best interest of every student in Del Mar** and not placate a small and vocal group who are vigilantly protecting their school at the expense of students across the district. The decision to close a school produces temporary trepidation, but it is the only responsible solution to offset expenses now and in the future.

The idea of further increasing class sizes for students sacrifices learning around the community to preserve two half full schools in close proximity. One published report suggests that each student at Del Mar Hills annually costs \$1,000 more than their peers at Sage Canyon! The \$300,000-\$585,000 in personnel and operations cost savings annually must be distributed equitably so that class sizes can be preserved.

Protracted inaction undermines DMSEF efforts. Parents are urgently being asked to contribute more in order to keep the programs that compelled us to buy homes in the district, and the community's generosity is essential. In these are challenging economic times why are being asked to fundraise programs that could be partially funded by combining schools? All students are short changed by this year's \$700,000 ESC reduction while the parents are paying more for less.

The proposal to eliminate ESC programs for our children and reduce valuable planning time for all teachers to protect a small percent of the district's enrollment is unfair to all students. As an educator, I know first hand that to maximize learning, teachers need time to plan effective lessons and collaborate to improve instruction. We are proud of the API's made possible by well balanced curriculum & personnel who carefully plan instruction; to strip away professional learning communities would be another disservice to our children.

Finally, a consolidation of the Hills & Heights provides a timely home for the district leadership's without wasting money on new construction, buildings that exceed our budget, or costly lease agreements. Investing in the facilities we already have is the solution to preserve resources for kids and plan for financial solvency.

Larger classes, \$800 donations, elimination of ESC, and planning reduction, should be tabled until facility consolidation occurs. **To maximize resources for everyone, the only prudent option is to combine student populations and centralize the district staff in the vacated site.** Thank you for your tireless and thoughtful examination of the options.

Respectfully submitted,
David S. Kalt
Ocean Air Parent