

December 18, 2009

Dear 7/11 Committee:

As parents of students at Del Mar Heights, we are deeply concerned about the impact that the closure of Del Mar Hills would have on our campus. Relocating Hills students to Del Mar Heights and Carmel Del Mar would immediately raise the enrollment at each campus to near or perhaps even above capacity *for the foreseeable future*. Even as it stands today, enrollment at the Heights requires that the entire 2nd grade class be taught in portable classrooms that are placed on the playground blacktop. Similarly, ESC and resource classes are taught in playground-occupying portables. Our children eat their lunches off their laps while seated on the amphitheatre benches because we are loath to sacrifice more playground space for lunch tables. It is difficult to even fathom how a large influx of Hills students could be accommodated on the Heights campus.

In addition to the problem of on-campus crowding, because the Heights is located at the end of a cul-de-sac it has issues with limited ingress & egress. Traffic during drop-off and pick-up times is problematic as is, and a burden on the surrounding community. Combine the cul-de-sac location with its location at the edge of a canyon and there may also be some fire safety concerns to assess before the committee proposes making the Heights the only elementary school west of I-5.

School closure is a short-sighted attempt to ease the District's budgets woes. Yes, Del Mar west of 5 is an aging community, but demographic trends change. Many of the homes that are flipping in our community are being purchased by young families. If the Hills is closed, the Heights will have no room for growth and new families will be turned away from their neighborhood school. Any immediate cost savings from school closure must be balanced against potential future expenses should district schools need to be reconfigured or even a new campus built because of increased enrollment.

There has been a lot of talk about equity in our district lately, perhaps most notably in the switch from site-specific fundraising to district-wide fundraising for the DMSEF. While some among us had reservations about this change, the wisdom in it is obvious: district-wide funding of our ESC programs diminishes divisions between our schools and embodies the noble goal of providing the greatest good to the greatest number.

Why should this be any different? Finding a new home for the district office is a district-wide problem. It is not equitable that two or three schools should shoulder the burden of the solution. We urge the 7/11 committee to take school closure off the table and recommend to the Board that they use the money from the sale of the Shores property to lease or buy space for the district office.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Jacobs Baizer, Parent
Robert P. Baizer, Parent
Mark Myers, Parent
Tamar Gollan, Parent

Steve Montgomery, Parent
Kristen Montgomery, Parent
Ruth Montgomery, Grandparent
Susan Tapert, Parent

Eric Raimo, Parent
Victoria Cole, Parent
Nick Cole, Parent
Caron Gruber, Parent
Randy Gruber, Parent
Denise Selati, Grandparent
Sydney Selati, Grandparent
Stu Gruber, Grandparent
Amy Masuda, Parent
Peter Masuda, Parent
Sunny Bhalla-Regev, Parent
Ran Regev, Parent
Robyn Jackson, Parent
Paul Jackson, Parent

Mark Rowan, Parent
Monique Rowan, Parent
Mary ZoBell, Parent/Teacher
Gus Kriege, Parent
Karen Johnson, Parent/Teacher
Eric Johnson, Parent
Lisa Michaels, Parent
David Michaels, Parent
Bonnie Bertolaet, Parent
Carla Quay, Parent
Amy Gonsalves, Parent
Shelly Atkinson, Parent
Tina Bandemer, Parent
Mike Bandemer, Parent