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THE 7-11 DAC FINAL REPORT  
SUBCOMMITTEE

# Del Mar Union School District 7-11 District Advisory Committee Final Report

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VIII. Analysis of Student Impact of 7-11 Proposals

Executive Summary

The Del Mar Union School District board of trustees approved the formation of a "7-11" district advisory committee (DAC) to examine potential surplus property according to the California Education Code Chapter 4, Article 1.5. Seven people, and four alternates, were appointed to represent the community. The DMUSD 7-11 DAC met twenty two times between May 2009 and January 2010 including three public hearings.

The DMUSD 7-11 DAC reviewed historical enrollment trends and the most recent enrollment projections. The finding was that there was excess seating capacity across the district, with 1235 empty seats spread over the eight elementary schools in the DMUSD. This excess capacity will shrink due to enrollment growth in the east and/or south boundary zones of the DMUSD area but the timing is unclear.

The 7-11 DAC considered the space requirements for a district office, Maintenance & Operations (M&O), and space for a preschool that would incorporate the special needs preschool, employee childcare and perhaps an expanded public preschool. The guidance from the DMUSD board of trustees was to find 15,000 to 25,000 square feet for the district offices and either 10 or 14 classrooms for the preschool.

The 7-11 DAC reviewed current space usage. The eight DMUSD school sites contain 264 permanent classrooms and 46 temporary portable classrooms. In the 2009-10 school year of these 310 classrooms, 190 were used for grades K-6 sections, 32 for the Extended Studies Curriculum (ESC) program, 20 for after school child care, 17 for special day classes/preschool and 8 for Resource Specialist Program (RSP). The remaining 44 classrooms were used for a wide variety of things including small group instruction, computer labs, speech, PTA and PE. The quantity of these "extra rooms" varied from nine rooms at one school to one room at another. A classroom is approximately 1,000 square feet so there is approximately potentially 44,000 square feet of excess space, assuming no enrollment growth, but no site had greater than 9,000 square feet.

A 15,000-25,000 square feet district office and 10 (or 14) rooms for a preschool could be accommodated either by closure of a school or by utilizing existing sites with some rearrangement. Eleven proposals were put together by the 7-11 DAC with members either working in groups or solo. Three proposals were removed from consideration by their authors as unfeasible or impractical. The remaining nine proposals were assigned letters A through I and thoroughly discussed. Of these nine, two were similar and merged into one proposal.

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At its Dec. 2, 2009 meeting, two proposals, one to reconfigure grades 4-6 at Del Mar Hills and K-3 at Del Mar Heights, and another, to close Ashley Falls, were removed from consideration by a 5-2 and unanimous vote respectively. The 7-11 DAC did include two contingency plans that were not voted on; one to temporarily house the district office if the need arises and another to use excess DMUSD space for the preschool and/or M&O if the DMUSD buys or leases a building that is sufficient for the DMUSD district office.

Of the remaining six proposals, two would close Del Mar Hills and four would co-locate the district office at a school site by remodeling existing space at either Ashley Falls, Carmel Del Mar, or Del Mar Hills or by building a modular facility at Torrey Hills. These proposals were examined closely by the 7-11 DAC and were the subject of three public hearings to gauge the public acceptance of such actions.

Del Mar Hills was identified as a likely candidate for closure based on declining historical enrollment, declining projected enrollment, size and no planned developments in close proximity. The closure of Del Mar Hills would yield approximately \$400,000/year in administrative cost savings, approximately \$50,000/year in utilities, and an unknown amount of savings in annual maintenance and teacher salaries. The closure of Del Mar Hills would necessitate moving approximately 450 students, including assigning children in the 16GJK areas to Carmel Del Mar via a boundary change, revoking transfers to Del Mar Hills and Del Mar Heights, moving special day classes from Del Mar Heights to Ashley Falls, and directing all, approximately 575, students west of I-5 to Del Mar Heights. The closure of Del Mar Hills was seen to have a negative community impact with reduced green space, by eliminating the east blacktop area to make room for DMUSD Maintenance & Operations (M&O), increased traffic and congestion at Del Mar Heights, safety concerns, possible legal issues with respect to city zoning, state coastal and environmental concerns, and the expected community impact resulting from the closure of any school.

Four proposals included the co-location of the DMUSD district office at an operating school site. This could be accomplished with all DMUSD functions currently at 225 9<sup>th</sup> St. remaining together, however, some district functions, such as district technology services, childcare administration, curriculum storage, and M&O may be located at alternate sites. None of the proposals to co-locate a district office within an operating school would yield any appreciable cost savings, except for the avoidance of lease payments for space for DMUSD district offices, M&O and employee childcare space. Although very few students would be relocated, the placement of the district office at a site was seen to have negative community impact with green space, traffic, parking, Mello-Roos assessments, joint use agreements and security as major issues.

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At its Dec. 18, 2009 meeting the 7-11 DAC could not come to a consensus (80% approval, or 6 out of 7 if all were voting) on any of the proposals (detailed in the "Summary of Six Proposals" section below). According to its charter the 7-11 DAC could not move any proposal to the final recommendations stage. Details of these six proposals can be found in Appendix V.

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**Introduction**

*Formation of the Committee*

On March 25, 2009 the Del Mar Union School District board of trustees approved the formation of a "7-11" District Advisory Committee (DAC) to examine potential surplus property. This committee shall be comprised of at least seven and no more than eleven representatives of the communities according to California Education Code 17388. Committee members may be parents, teachers, and other local community representatives. The DMUSD board of trustees called for volunteers to submit applications by April 10, 2009. Each application was assigned a code number for anonymity and seven people, plus four alternates, were appointed to the 7-11 DAC by the DMUSD board of trustees on April 29, 2009. The 7-11 DAC was given direction by the DMUSD board of trustees that included and expanded upon California Education Code 17390 (see Appendix I). The DMUSD engaged a professional consultant, with experience in school closure, to serve as a meeting facilitator and a DMUSD employee to assist with administrative tasks.

**Members of the Committee**

- Jennifer Emberger, parent, Del Mar Heights
- Janet Handzel, parent, Sage Canyon
- Wayne Harris, parent, Ashley Falls
- Susan Paul, DMUSD principal, Torrey Hills
- Cinda Peck, DMUSD music teacher, Carmel Del Mar & Ashley Falls
- Bob Shopes, parent, Del Mar Hills (Chairperson)
- Randy Wheaton, DMUSD facilities supervisor

**Alternates:**

- Scott Williams
- Amy Nefouse
- Lisa Lutz
- Steven Brumer

Meeting Facilitator: Gayle Wayne

Meeting Administrator: Shirley Bales

**Adoption, and Amendments, of Committee Charter**

On July 2, 2009, the 7-11 DAC adopted a charter to guide its operation. The charter set forth the criteria to be used to judge proposals. The initial criteria were amended from the directions from the DMUSD board of trustees, which included the California Education Code. The criteria in the 7-11 DAC charter were further expanded, and prioritized, on October 21, 2009, upon direction from the DMUSD board of trustees, and after discussion and consideration by the 7-11 DAC, (see Appendix II).

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### Summary of Meetings

#### Regular Meetings

The 7-11 DAC held nineteen regular meetings from May 2009 to January 2010 including two to visit DMUSD properties. Meetings were scheduled for two hours each, and if necessary extended by the committee. Minutes for all meetings can be found at the DMUSD website.

May 20, 2009 – Committee reviewed Brown Act requirements and established draft of future meeting dates.

June 3, 2009 – A proposed timeline and future meeting dates were discussed. The role of the 7/11 committee, goal setting and contents of the 7-11 District Advisory Committee Binder were reviewed.

June 18, 2009 – The committee received a demonstration of the DMUSD email system and an update on the current DMUSD financial conditions. The committee presented a draft charter. The committee also discussed enrollment in areas 16G, 16J, and 16K. Additional information was requested for future meetings such as; criteria for closure/reconfiguration, joint use agreements and new enrollment projections.

June 24, 2009 – The committee made site visitations to the DMUSD District Office, Del Mar Heights and Del Mar Hills.

June 29, 2009 – The committee made site visits to Carmel del Mar, Ashley Falls and Sycamore Ridge.

July 2, 2009 – Clarification of Pupil Services and Child Care was presented to the committee. The committee discussed the tour of school sites. Adoption of proposed changes to the charter and appointment of committee was completed. The “what if” scenario worksheet was explained.

July 16, 2009 – Clarification on potential cost savings of closing a school was provided. Initial “What if” scenarios were presented by committee members. Preparation of the progress report to Board of Trustees was discussed.

July 23, 2009 – The committee had further discussion on “What If” scenarios.

August 3, 2009 – New proposals, or refinements of existing proposals, were presented by members and discussed

August 20, 2009 – Refined proposals were submitted. Clarification of preschool, district office and M&O space options were discussed. Procedures for the August 26, 2009 board meeting were discussed.

August 26, 2009 – Committee submitted its progress report as requested to Board of Trustees.

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September 30, 2009 – Committee adopted change in criteria, posting of proposals online and began audio recordings of meetings.

October 21, 2009 – A review of room usage at school sites and existing proposals were discussed. An amended charter was adopted.

November 4, 2009 – Operational costs and the process of gaining consensus on draft proposals were discussed. Public hearings were scheduled.

November 12, 2009 – Process for preparation of final recommendation to Board of Trustees was discussed.

December 2, 2009 – Cost per pupil, financial analysis, enrollment analysis, and removal of proposals from consideration were discussed.

December 18, 2009 – Discussion of preschool and contingency plans. Proposals were discussed and each voted on. No proposals were moved to final recommendation stage.

January 8, 2010 – Discussion of final report and presentation to the DMUSD board of trustees.

[January 11, 2010 – Approval of final report.](#)

*Public Hearings*

The 7-11 DAC held three special public hearings in December 2009. Public hearings were scheduled to be three hours.. Minutes for the public hearings are [can be found at the DMUSD website.](#)

December 7, 2009 – Public hearing at Del Mar Hills, December 10, 2009 – Public hearing at Del Mar Hills, December 14, 2009 – Public hearing at Torrey Hills.

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**Findings**

*Facilities*

The schools in the DMUSD vary in age, from 45 to 2 years old, and all are in good repair and fully functional. The two oldest schools, Del Mar Hills and Del Mar Heights, have been recently modernized. The next oldest school, Carmel Del Mar, while showing its age somewhat, is due to be modernized in 2017. All other schools are modern with no serious defects or deficiencies other than a lack of storage space, which seems to be an endemic problem at all schools.

The DMUSD has 46 relocatable buildings (or "portables") at six school sites. Only the newest schools, Ocean Air and Sycamore Ridge, do not have portables. The portables, largely installed to accommodate past growth in DMUSD enrollment until new schools could be built, and are counted as usable classrooms in Table A. The quality of the portables varied depending on construction, foundation type, age, and use. For example, the portables on the south side of Carmel Del Mar are of high quality whereas the ten older portables on the east side of Del Mar Heights are of lesser quality.

Table A – DMUSD School Properties Details

School	Year Open	Square Footage	DMUSD Acreage	Joint use Acreage	Permanent Classrooms	Portable Classrooms	Childcare Owned Rooms	Total Rooms on Site	Parking Stalls	Tax Funding Agency
Ashley Falls	1998	65155	4.18	3.5	35	3	2	40	98	NCWJP
Carmel Del Mar	1991	48644	3.02	8.8	25	6	2	33	63	NCWJP
Del Mar Hills	1975	45485	8.92	0	22	6	0	28	46	NONE
Del Mar Heights	1959	52406	10.85	0	22	13	0	35	48	NONE
Ocean Air School	2007	77700	6.07	6.25	38	0	0	38	102	CFD 95
Sage Canyon	2000	71927	5.3	4.7	34	8	2	44	63	NCWJP
Sycamore Ridge	2005	76290	11.33	0	36	0	3	39	82	CFD 99
Torrey Hills	2002	66273	14.41	0	41	8	0	49	83	CFD 95

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The DMUSD district offices are located at 225 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Del Mar (the former Del Mar Shores school property). The existing space at this location is insufficient and inadequate. The DMUSD no longer owns this property and the current lease expires May 2011. DMUSD Maintenance & Operations (M&O) and employee childcare are on the Shores property and must be relocated when the lease expires.

DMUSD technology services is located in two portables at Del Mar Hills, DMUSD childcare administration is in three portables at Ashley Falls and a classroom at Sycamore Ridge is used for district curriculum storage. All three places seem adequate, although they could be co-located with the district office in the future.

**Enrollment and Demographics**

The 7-11 DAC used ten-year enrollment projections prepared by DecisionInsite, dated January 2009. The DMUSD has such enrollment projections prepared annually by outside consulting firms to guide planning at each school based on anticipated enrollment for the coming school year. In prior years DMUSD enrollment projections had been prepared by Davis Demographics, instead of DecisionInsite. Past enrollment projections, looking at the DMUSD as a whole, were reasonably accurate in the near-term (2-3 years), questionable in the 4-7 year time frame and were not reliable 8-10 years out with projections of district wide enrollment typically off by more than 10%. The 7-11 DAC used the "Moderate Projections" for long-term planning as indicated by DecisionInsite. Enrollment growth in DMUSD is expected to occur in the south and the east.

The 7-11 DAC determined the amount of potential excess capacity by comparing the "modified capacity" at each site to the number of enrolled students (see Appendix). The modified capacity of a school is defined as the maximum number of students in classrooms at capacity, adjusting for rooms needed for Extended Studies Curriculum (ESC), Special Day Classes (SDC) and after school childcare. The percentage usage at each school was calculated and the number of "empty seats" determined if all classrooms are used at maximum efficiency (see Appendix III).

Overall the DMUSD currently has 1,235 empty seats spread though out the district (see Table B). Based on the DecisionInsite enrollment projections the number of empty seats drops to significantly in the next few years and there is no projected excess space in approximately eight years. The committee agreed that enrollment projections show likely trends, but not exact figures. As expected, based on housing development plans, enrollment growth is predicted at select schools on the eastern and southern areas of the DMUSD boundaries.

Table B – School Enrollment and Capacity

SCHOOL	2009-10*	CAPACITY†	% CAP.
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Ashley Falls	472	677	70%
Carmel Del Mar	439	573	77%
Del Mar Heights	455	593	77%
Del Mar Hills	330	445	74%
Ocean Air	682	712	96%
Sage Canyon	763	818	93%
Sycamore Ridge	396	712	56%
Torrey Hills	646	888	73%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4183</b>	<b>5418</b>	<b>77%</b>

Enrollment at Sage Canyon and Ocean Air are expected to be at 90% or greater of modified capacity for the near future with Torrey Hills and Sycamore Ridge growing to 90% or greater of modified capacity soon thereafter. Therefore, none of these schools were considered for closure.

Sycamore Ridge is expected to be significantly below capacity for the near term. However rapid enrollment growth is expected as Pacific Highlands Ranch develops in 5 to 10 years. DMUSD has an agreement with Pardee to reserve space for 659 students in the Pacific Highlands Ranch area. The conclusion of the 7-11 DAC was that Sycamore Ridge could not be considered for closure. However, excess space at Sycamore Ridge could be used in the near term for district use, albeit this opportunity would likely be only temporary unless additional space was developed at the site.

There are four schools in maturing housing areas where enrollments are affected by birth rates and housing turnover, rather than new housing development. Enrollment at Carmel Del Mar is predicted to grow by 5% by 2014. Del Mar Heights enrollment is predicted to grow by 10% and Del Mar Hills enrollment is predicted to drop by 8%, although Del Mar Heights and Del Mar Hills draws from the same boundary area. Ashley Falls enrollment is predicted to drop by 34% by 2014. The DecisionInsite data does not take into account students who will likely return to Ashley Falls due to the anticipated growth in Pacific Highlands Ranch and the Sycamore Ridge/Pardee mitigation agreement.

**Current Site Usage**

The 7-11 DAC surveyed how each of 310 rooms across the DMUSD are used (see Appendix IV). The majority of rooms, 190, are used as classrooms. Each school site also uses 4 or 5 rooms for ESC, one room for RSP and 2-4 rooms for after school childcare. After those rooms are accounted for the remaining rooms are used for such things as band, Spanish, storage, meetings and PTA depending on the school. No room went unused.

**Excess Space**

No site could be designated as surplus property according to the definition given by the California Education Code 17455. However, there was potential excess

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space in the form of rooms that are currently underutilized. The number of excess rooms depends on how you define underutilization though (see Appendix).

Using only strictly required space (class sections, ESC, RSP, SDC and childcare) then there are 44 rooms, that could be considered excess. Under those guidelines, the number of excess space varies from approximately 9,000 square feet at Ashley Falls and Del Mar Hills to 1,000 square feet each at Ocean Air and Sage Canyon.

Schools are using most of the excess rooms to serve non-essential, direct instructional functions such as band, Spanish and computer labs. If you exclude those rooms from excess space then the number of excess rooms drops to 18. Those rooms are used for indirect support purposes such as PTA, meeting rooms and district administration.

Financial Operating Costs

The 7-11 DAC was given three financial documents in the course of its studies: a table comparing the costs of operating a merged Del Mar Hills/Del Mar Heights school to Sage Canyon (including average administrative and maintenance costs since actual salary data was not available due to privacy issues), a table of DMUSD general fund expenses, and utility bills for each site. The majority of school costs arise out of teacher salaries, and since teacher salaries are directly proportional to the number of students, the committee determined that fixed operational cost per pupil shall not include teacher salaries. The 7-11 DAC calculated fixed operational costs using average DMUSD salary and benefits of administrative and maintenance staff since actual salaries by site were not made available to the 7-11 DAC. Fixed operational costs ranged from \$1,333 per pupil at Del Mar Hills to \$651 per pupil at Sage Canyon (see Appendix VII)

Cost Savings

Cost savings, combined with DMUSD financial stability, was one of the top two criteria to be considered by the 7-11 DAC as directed by the DMUSD board of trustees. As such, the estimated annual costs savings for any action proposed by the 7-11 DAC was considered more important than estimated operating costs.

Potential cost savings could be achieved in all proposals considered by the 7-11 DAC by avoiding leasing costs. The DMUSD administrative office may require 15,000 to 25,000 square feet, district M&O facility 4,500 square feet and the expanded preschool 10 or 14 classrooms (10,000 to 14,000 square feet). In total, between 29,500 square feet and 43,500 square feet would have to be leased.

The 7-11 DAC estimated that closing a school and eliminating associated administrative expenses (approximately \$400,000) and utilities (approximately

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\$50,000) could yield annual cost savings of approximately \$450,000. An unknown amount in annual maintenance costs would also be saved. The administrative cost savings was associated with the termination of a principal, office assistant, administrative secretary, librarian, plant manager and health aide. The estimated cost savings was based on average salaries for the terminated positions in the DMUSD since the employees to be terminated would not necessarily be from the closed school, but chosen from a pool of DMUSD employees based on position, seniority, and other factors. School mergers may also potentially eliminate one or two sections, with cost savings coming from a reduction of teaching staff, however, the 7-11 DAC was directed by the DMUSD administration not to consider changes in number of sections. Potential savings could be offset by approximately \$100,000 if the enrollment of an accepting school exceeded 700 students due to school closure and possibly necessitating the addition of a vice-principal.

The 7-11 DAC did not estimate the cost of closing a school. Environmental studies, according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA: Public Resources Code,) may have to be done at the closing school as well as the accepting schools. City of San Diego zoning may have to be changed for the closed site to be used for something other than a school. If the site were near the coast, a change in the site use could trigger an examination by the California Coastal Commission. The change would also be subject to local community plans already in place. All of these items are subject to public input, hearings and legal action.

**Community Impact**

The 7-11 DAC received a large number of communications in the form of letters, emails, reports, and speeches since the initial meeting on May 20, 2009. Most were comments about specific proposals, primarily from those in opposition to proposals that affected their own school site.

The perceived impact of the 7/11 proposals to the community differed depending upon the individual proposals. With respect to a school closure, the committee noted that the surrounding community's ties to their respective elementary schools were very strong, especially with regard to programs and school quality, and a given school's contribution to sense of community. Overall feedback to the committee indicated that the public considered closure of a school to be a critical loss to their respective community.

Other noted impacts to any community with a proposed closure include concerns regarding student safety, traffic, green space, re-purposing and Mello-Roos issues. Several community members expressed concern that a closure may cause property values to decline.

The proposals to close Del Mar Hills would redirect approximately 350 students to two neighboring schools, Del Mar Heights and Carmel Del Mar (see Appendix

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Prior to the formation of the 7-11 DAC the cost savings for closing Del Mar Hills was estimated at \$1,600,000 and then later at \$681,000. The 7-11 DAC estimated that closing a school and eliminating some administrative expenses could yield annual cost savings of approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000. To put this in perspective the cost savings gained by closing a school is ≈ 1% of the DMUSD annual ... [35]

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VIII). Approximately 85 transfer students would be returned to their home schools and 15 SDC students would be relocated to Ashley Falls. If boundaries are not re-drawn in the future, the two schools receiving these reassigned students would be operating at or near their current capacity for the foreseeable future. The Del Mar community voiced concern about operating Del Mar Heights near capacity; students in portables, traffic congestion, parking, and student safety issues were the primary issues. The community areas identified as 16G, 16J and 16K, near the Public Library, would have their boundaries realigned to Carmel Del Mar in the closure proposals. The committee received no impact concerns with respect to the increased enrollment from the Carmel Del Mar community.

Other proposals considered options for the use of excess space within the DMUSD and included the integration of a district office, preschool, and/or M&O facility within an operating school. These proposals did not require the movement of many, if any students. The committee heard concerns about parking, traffic, safety, and the loss of green space. The integration of a preschool within Sycamore Ridge generated almost no objections while the placement of a DMUSD district office or M&O at Ashley Falls, Del Mar Hills, Carmel Del Mar or Torrey Hills generated the most negative reactions with respect to co-locating district functions.

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**Proposals**

*Proposal Process*

The DMUSD board of trustees tasked the 7-11 DAC to evaluate a potential school closure and consider the needs of the district office, M&O facility, the special needs preschool, employee childcare, and an expanded preschool. The board provided the committee with a set of assignments and the committee responded with a set of proposals. The committee developed proposals on how excess space might be used, considering enrollment demographics and space utilization data. The DMUSD board of trustees directed the 7-11 DAC, to not consider the sale of any school property.

A primary consideration in all proposals was finding a place for the DMUSD district office, M&O facility and employee child care (all currently at the former Del Mar Shores site), plus the district technology offices (currently at Del Mar Hills) and the child administration offices (currently at Ashley Falls). The DMUSD administration now occupies ≈ 6,000 square feet at the Shores, ≈ 2,000 square feet at Del Mar Hills, ≈ 3,000 square feet at Ashley Falls and ≈ 1,000 square feet of storage at Sycamore Ridge. Initially, the 7-11 DAC received a document with three option for space requirements that ranged from 48,512 to 33,350 square feet based on a survey by the architectural firm of Westberg & White dated Sept. 2, 2008. A subsequent document from Westberg & White dated September 21, 2009 amended this space requirement to 24,857 square feet. The DMSUD board of trustees directed the 7-11 DAC to consider 15,000 to 25,000 square feet for the DMUSD administrative needs and to keep the district administration offices, now at 225 9<sup>th</sup> Street, together if possible.

The 7-11 DAC received a memo dated June 1, 2009 requesting space for a 22 room preschool. The new expanded preschool program would integrate the existing special needs preschool (currently in seven rooms at Sycamore Ridge), with employee child care (currently in three rooms at the former Shores property) and add up to 250 tuition paying, typical preschoolers. Later in the process the integrated preschool space requirement was lowered to 14 rooms. The DMSUD board of trustees directed the 7-11 DAC to consider space for the preschool either as 14 rooms together, 10 rooms together or 7 rooms with 3 rooms elsewhere.

The 7-11 DAC developed scenarios using a “what if” worksheet which would delineate the specifics of the concept, financial implications, movement of students, impact to the community and other factors. This format allowed the 7-11 DAC to review numerous ideas, even if not fully formed. The committee members authored proposals solo, in pairs and, in one case, a group of three members.

Initially, the authors of proposals presented them for the first time to the other members at public 7-11 DAC regular meetings. The members would then discuss each proposal and pose questions. The committee determined that it

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would be preferable to have the time to study the proposals, reflect and then develop relevant questions before discussion. The 7-11 DAC decided that proposals would be posted at the DMUSD website if they were to be considered, and set a deadline of October 30, 2009. Nine proposals were posted, and lettered A through I. Any new or modified proposals were to be posted thereafter on the DMUSD website, as a draft document, prior to a scheduled 7-11 DAC meeting.

The proposals were thoroughly discussed at subsequent meetings. At its December 2, 2009 meeting the 7-11 DAC voted to remove proposals from consideration. After three public hearings and additional discussion and review, on December 18, 2009 the 7-11 DAC voted on moving remaining proposals to the final recommendation stage.

**Criteria**

The 7-11 DAC was directed to establish criteria for closing any school and for evaluating each facility on the basis of the criteria developed. The original criteria provided to the 7-11 DAC in Appendix I was subsequently amended and is listed in Appendix II. The 7-11 DAC requested a prioritization of the criteria by the DMUSD board of trustees. The board of trustees directed the committee to consider the following four criteria as the highest priority:

- Operational cost based on enrollment.
- Improvement of District's financial stability.
- Minimize the number of students and families impacted.
- Impact of community.

The remaining criteria, 2 a-k and 3 a-c were of secondary importance and are listed in no particular order except that 3 a-c were directions given by the DMUSD board of trustees during the 7-11 DAC process. See Appendix II

**Final Recommendations**

The 7-11 DAC charter states that a final recommendation must receive at least 80% of the vote (6 out of 7 if all members vote). No motion to move a proposal to the final recommendation stage passed.

No proposal met the standard to become a final recommendation however, the 7-11 DAC wanted to document the last six proposals considered. Votes for the six proposals were taken on 12/18/09. Details of each of these six proposals are in Appendix 5.

**Proposal B: Close Del Mar Hills**

In Favor: 5 (Wheaton, Peck, Paul, Harris, Handzel)

Against: 2 (Emberger, Shopes)

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- Close Del Mar Hills
- Combine students from Del Mar Hills and Del Mar Heights at Del Mar Heights
- Redistrict students residing in 16GJK attendance area to Carmel Del Mar
- Reassign transfer students to their neighborhood school
- Reassign Special Day Class (SDC) students from Del Mar Heights to Ashley Falls
- Place district office, M&O, and proposed preschool at Del Mar Hills

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Proposal C: Co-Locate District Office at Del Mar Hills

In Favor: 4 (Wheaton, Peck, Harris, Handzel)  
Against: 3 (Emberger, Shopes, Paul)

Synopsis

- Place District Office at Del Mar Hills
- Place M&O at Torrey Hills
- Place Technology Department and Childcare Administration at Ashley Falls
- Place Preschool at Sycamore Ridge

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Proposal E: Co-Locate District Office at Ashley Falls

In Favor: 2 (Emberger, Paul)  
Against: 5 (Shopes, Wheaton, Peck, Harris, Handzel)

Synopsis

- Place District Office at Ashley Falls
- Place M&O at Del Mar Hills
- Place Childcare Administration at Torrey Hills
- Place Preschool at Sycamore Ridge

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Proposal F: Co-Locate District Office at Carmel Del Mar

In Favor: 0  
Against: 7 (Shopes, Wheaton, Peck, Harris, Handzel, Emberger, Paul)

Synopsis

- Place District Office at Carmel Del Mar
- Redistrict students in the 15C and 15D enrollment area as well as Special Day Classes from Carmel Del Mar to Ashley Falls
- Place M&O at Del Mar Hills
- Place Preschool at Sycamore Ridge

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Proposal G.1: Build a District Office at Torrey Hills

In Favor: 2 (Emberger, Shopes)  
Against: 5 (Wheaton, Peck, Harris, Handzel, Paul)

Synopsis

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- Build a new district office on land the district already owns.
- M&O moves to the east blacktop of Del Mar Hills
- Place Preschool at Sycamore Ridge
- Technology remains at Del Mar Hills
- Childcare administration remains at Ashley Falls
- All schools remain open and no students move.
- No boundary changes. No change to district transfer policy.

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Proposal I: Close Del Mar Hills (alternate)

In Favor: 5 (Wheaton, Peck, Paul, Harris, Handzel)

Against: 2 (Emberger, Shopes)

Synopsis:

- Close Del Mar Hills
- Combine students from Del Mar Hills and Del Mar Heights at Del Mar Heights
- Redistrict students residing in 16GJK attendance area to Carmel Del Mar
- Reassign transfer students to their neighborhood school
- Reassign Special Day Class (SDC) students from Del Mar Heights to Ashley Falls
- Place district office, maintenance and operations at Del Mar Hills
- Place preschool at Sycamore Ridge

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Other Proposals

On 12/2/09, the committee voted to remove Proposal D and Proposal H from consideration. A summary of those proposals and the voting results are as follows:

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Proposal D: Reconfiguration of Del Mar Hills and Del Mar Heights

In Favor of Removing: 5 (Wheaton, Peck, Harris, Handzel, Paul)

Against Removing: 2 (Emberger, Shopes)

This proposal would combine students in the Del Mar Hills/Heights boundary area and send grades K-3 to Del Mar Heights and 4-6 to Del Mar Hills. Del Mar Hills would become the site for the DMUSD district office, Sycamore Ridge would be the site of the combined preschool. Analysis implied cost savings would be minimal, excluding section changes. Low cost savings, combined with the potential negative impact on students, made this proposal untenable.

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Proposal H: Close Ashley Falls

In Favor of Removing: 7 (Shopes, Wheaton, Peck, Harris, Handzel, Emberger, Paul)

Against Removing: 0

Closure of Ashley Falls was initially considered since it had the most excess space and enrollment predictions indicated a precipitous decline in the near

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future. Cost savings would be approximately \$300,000 per year. Students in the current Ashley Falls boundary area would be split between Carmel Del Mar and Sycamore Ridge putting both accepting schools near capacity. The large number of students at Sycamore Ridge was especially problematic due to the agreement with Pardee to reserve 659 seats for students from the Pacific Highlands Ranch housing development. Closure of Ashley Falls would eliminate it as a "overflow" school for Sycamore Ridge. Ashley Falls is under a joint use agreement with the City of San Diego and was built with Mello-Roos funds. Both of these issues were viewed as significant legal impediments. The Ashley Falls community was strongly against closure for all these reasons (and more). The 7-11 DAC concurred.

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Three proposals were put aside by their authors:

Proposal A: Build a District Office at Torrey Hills:  
Motions on 12/2/09 to remove Proposal A from consideration and merge Proposal A with Proposal G to become Proposal G.1 were approved unanimously.

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Reconfiguration of Ashley Falls and Carmel Del Mar  
This proposal would combine students from the Ashley Falls and Carmel Del Mar boundary areas and distribute grades K-3 to one and grades 4-6 to the other.

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Creation of an Early Childhood Education Center  
All students in the Del Mar Hills /Heights boundary area in grades 1-6 would attend Del Mar Heights. All Grade K would be located at Del Mar Hills. The preschool, district office and M&O would be at the Del Mar Hills site. Two new buildings, approximately 10-12 classrooms in size, would be built at Del Mar Hills and Del Mar Heights

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Contingency Plans

Plan 1A: Temporary Location of DMUSD District Office

There may be a need to provide temporary office space and facilities for the district office, (M&O) and employee child care. It is possible that a decision will not have been made, or space identified but not yet available, when the lease runs out for the DMUSD operations currently at the Shores. Before that occurs, a temporary location will need to be identified. Plan 1A identifies Torrey Hills and Del Mar Hills as possible locations for the District Office and M&O however there is no reason they cannot be placed at other more suitable areas to be determined. Employee Child Care could be moved to Sycamore Ridge and occupy the childcare building. The existing after school program could temporarily move to classrooms within the main building. This would need to be coordinated with the existing school program.

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Plan 1B: Relocation if a Building is Bought for the DMUSD District Office

A large portion of the effort of the 7-11 DAC has been to find space within the DMUSD properties for all the district operations currently located at the Shores. Part of the \$8.5MM proceeds from the sale of the Shores property may be used to buy a new building. However, it may be very difficult to find a suitable property that can accommodate the District Office, Maintenance & Operations and Employee Child Care in one single facility, if the board approves of the purchase of a 10,000 to 20,000 square foot office building, maintenance & Operations and Employee Child Care can be placed in other separate locations. M&O could be located in an industrial area, for example Sorrento Valley. Employee Child care could be integrated with special needs preschool at Sycamore Ridge. Other suitable locations for M&O and employee childcare, separate from the district office, should be explored. (see Appendix VI for details).

This report was unanimously approved by the DMUSD 7-11 DAC on Jan. 11, 2010.

- Jennifer Emberger
- [Janet Handzel](#)
- [Wayne Harris](#)
- [Susan Paul](#)
- [Cinda Peck](#)
- Bob Shopes
- Randy Wheaton

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The 7-11 DAC was formed, in part, as a response to the sale of The Shores property for ≈ \$8.5MM and the subsequent need for relocation of the DMUSD district office.		
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Closure of Del Mar Hills would yield approximately \$394,000/year in cost savings by terminating administrative staff. The closure of Del Mar Hills would necessitate moving 450 students including permanently assigning children in the 16 g,j,k areas to the Carmel Del Mar boundary area, revoking all transfers to Del Mar		

Hills and Del Mar Heights, moving special day classes from Del Mar Heights to Ashley Falls and directing all students west of I-5 to Del Mar Heights. The closure of Del Mar Hills was seen to have negative community impact with reduced green space, increased traffic, congested parking, legal entanglements and compromised security as major issues.

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Page 10: [13] Deleted . If the Davis Demographics projections are any guide, the DecisionInsite projections could vary by 10% or more in the long term. As such	bob	1/9/10 10:25 AM
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TABLE xxx (to be added)  
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Where housing is mature enrollment at individual neighborhood schools is stable or, where in the process of maturing, drops significantly.

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Page 11: [23] Deleted There are four schools in maturing housing areas where new student enrollments are due to birth rates and housing turnover rather than new development. Enrollment at Carmel Del Mar is	Wayne Harris	1/9/10 9:23 PM
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Page 11: [29] Deleted Again, the 7-11 DAC would like to stress that enrollment predictions are of dubious value beyond a few years out, and should not be taken as hard fact, but may show likely trends. The enrollment decline at Ashley Falls, as predicted by DecisionInsite, also does not take into account potential ramifications of the development of Pacific Highlands Ranch. Growth in this housing development may cause Sycamore Ridge to exceed capacity. Changes in boundary areas, such as Seabreeze Farms, may be warranted, which could impact Ashley Falls enrollment. The timing of Pacific Highlands Ranch development is not clear though.	Wayne Harris	1/9/10 9:23 PM
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Determining actual relevant operating costs of a school site or costs per pupil was difficult with the scant information available. The 7-11 DAC was given three financial documents in the course of its studies: a one page table comparing the costs of operating a merged Del Mar Hills and Del Mar Heights to Sage Canyon; a one page summary table of DMUSD general fund expenses; and utility bills for each site.

From this information the 7-11 DAC calculated the actual expenses, from the general fund only, per pupil at each site for 2009-10 (Table XX). These costs include on-site administration, janitorial service, teachers and other direct personnel costs. It does not include costs associated with special day classes, district administration or other actual costs. The average cost per pupil, from the general fund only, was \$6552. This ranged from \$5972 at Torrey Hills to \$7248 at Sycamore Ridge. There was some correlation with school size, or how close the school was to modified capacity, but there was no clear causal relationship to any single factor. For example, the two schools considered for closure, Del Mar Hills and Ashley Falls, fell near the median of general fund operating costs per pupil despite the small size of one and the number of excess rooms in the other. The lack of correlation of costs to known factors could be due to variation in the salaries of teachers and other personnel costs, however, the 7-11 DAC did not have sufficient data to make that judgment.

#### Table xx operating costs from general fund

The 7-11 DAC also calculated marginal operating costs by excluding expenses associated with direct instruction (teacher salaries, etc.) but included the administrative costs, janitorial and other items. However, actual relevant salaries by site, and some of the other costs, were not available to the 7-11 DAC. As a proxy for actual site expenses, the average cost across the DMUSD was used and the administrative operating costs per pupil calculated (Table xx). As expected, there was better correlation with school size. Smaller schools cost the most while the larger schools cost less per pupil.

#### Table xx operating costs per pupil from Wayne on 12/18/09 mtg

Neither method of determining operating costs per pupil at each site was satisfactory and was not deemed determinative information for the 7-11 DAC.

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At rental rates of \$24 to \$36 per square foot per year for commercial space, annual leasing costs could be significant.

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Cost savings would accrue for integrating the preschool at an existing school site but the size of the potential preschool varied. If the preschool consisted of just the minimum 3 rooms required by employee childcare then the annual cost savings might be \$72,000 (based on avoiding leasing 3,000 square feet at \$2/square foot/month). If the maximum preschool size of 14 rooms is used then the annual cost savings may be \$336,000 (based on avoiding leasing 14,000 square feet at \$2/square foot/month).

Prior to the formation of the 7-11 DAC the cost savings for closing Del Mar Hills was estimated at \$1,600,000 and then later at \$681,000. The 7-11 DAC estimated that closing a school and eliminating some administrative expenses could yield annual cost savings of approximately \$300,000 to \$400,000. To put this in perspective the cost savings gained by closing a school is  $\approx 1\%$  of the DMUSD annual budget. This cost savings was associated largely with termination of a principal, office assistant, administrative secretary, librarian, plant manager and health aide. This could be offset by the cost of adding a vice-principal if the enrollment of accepting school exceed 700 students. The estimated cost savings was calculated based on average salaries for the terminated positions in the DMUSD since the employees to be terminated would not necessarily be from the closed school but chosen from a pool of DMUSD employees based on position, seniority and other factors. Additional cost savings by school closure may also include some savings on utilities but the 7-11 DAC did not determine an amount. School mergers may also potentially eliminate one or two sections, with cost savings coming from firing teachers, however, the 7-11 DAC was directed by the DMUSD administration not to consider changes in number of sections.

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## Section 21000 et seq

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## Other Cost Savings

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As expected, the local communities viewed any change to their school site as unacceptable. The 7-11 DAC received over 500 communications in the form of letters, emails, reports, notes and speeches over the course of more than twenty meetings. Nearly all were negative comments about specific proposals. Communications varied from a short, formulaic email to a 500+ page report

weighing in at more than 4 lbs. In addition, over 300 people attended three public hearings in December 2009 at which over 100 members of the community, mostly parents of current students, gave testimony.

The community impact resulting from a closure of a neighborhood school takes several forms: the number of students impacted, how they are impacted, the impact on the receiving schools, and the intrinsic loss of a school to a community.

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The impact to the community of closing a school takes two forms. Primary is the direct educational impact on students and families.

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Del Mar Hill would involuntarily relocate approximately 450 students. Moreover, new students in that area would not have the opportunity to enroll in a neighborhood school for many years to come. An important finding was that not only were students at the closed school affected. Two accepting schools would be needed to accommodate those students. The new enrollees would put both accepting schools at, or very near, capacity. For example, closing Del Mar Hills would place approximately 575 students at Del Mar Heights if done in 2010-11 school year and push Carmel Del Mar beyond its modified capacity. While there is some historical experience with Del Mar Heights at that population there is concern that this high enrollment level will adversely affect congestion, parking, and will require too many students to attend classes in portables. Intradistrict transfers into all three schools would also be likely be severely limited. This would lower educational choice and the diversity of learning opportunities for all students in the DMUSD.

The secondary effects of closing a school felt by students, and the community at large,

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arking, traffic, safety, green space access, district unity and community

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All change for the worse with school closure. A neighborhood school is a community focal point and this would be lost with school closure.

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Del Mar Hills was remodeled in 2001 and has a new MUR. Families have donated additional funds to upgrade facilities to support programs at Del Mar Hills and while not confirmed by any studies, many Del Mar Hills families believe that the loss of Del Mar Hills as a school site would negatively impact their property values. Many Del Mar Hills families feel strongly about the programs at the school, and it's unclear how or if those programs would be affected or duplicated at a merged Hills/Heights school

Other options for use of excess space within DMUSD included the integration of a district office, preschool and/or M&O facility within an operating school. These proposals did not require the movement of many students and diversity of schools would be maintained. However, the same secondary effects arose with parking, traffic, safety, green space access and the community

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all being negatively impacted. The integration of a preschool within

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s while the placement of a DMUSD district office,

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Ashley Falls, Del Mar Hills, Carmel Del Mar or Torrey Hills,

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engendered the most negative reactions.

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As expected, the local communities viewed any change to their school site as unacceptable. The 7-11 DAC received over 500 communications in the form of letters, emails, reports, notes and speeches. Nearly all were negative comments about specific proposals. Communications varied from a short, formulaic email to a 500+ page report weighing in at more than 4 lbs. In addition, over xx people attended three public hearings at which xx members of the community, mostly parents of current students but not exclusively, gave testimony. Emotions ran high. This issue has divided the DMUSD at time when it most needs to be united.

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In view of DMUSD administration needs, enrollment demographics and space utilization data, the 7-11 DAC developed proposals on how excess space might be used.

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. No proposal was put forth that considered any use of excess space other than use by the DMUSD administration.

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maintenance & operations

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however none passed (see “Summary of Six Proposals” section below for voting details).

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or greater

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that standard

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## ***Summary of Six Proposals***

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<b>Page 16: [64] Deleted</b>	<b>Wayne Harris</b>	<b>1/10/10 12:19 AM</b>
Motion on 12/2/09 to move to Final Recommendation stage failed on 5-2 vote. (In Favor: Wheaton, Peck. Paul, Harris, Handzel; Against: Emberger, Shopes).		