

**INDEPENDENT CITIZENS' OVERSIGHT
COMMITTEE**



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May 21, 2004

Members of the Board of Education
San Diego City Schools
4100 Normal Street, Room 2231
San Diego, CA 92103

Dear Members of the Board of Education:

Subject: Recommendation for Proposition MM Eighth Area Elementary School

After continued review of demographic trends and forecasted enrollments, the Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee has unanimously voted to support staff's recommendation that the district not build the Eighth Area Elementary School due to lack of demographic need.

The ICOC did not take this decision lightly. The bond measure clearly states: "The bond will fund the construction of thirteen new neighborhood elementary schools to relieve current overcrowding and accommodate future enrollment growth."

However, the ICOC has considered the following:

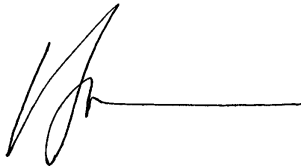
- The new schools to be built under Proposition MM were intended to *relieve classroom overcrowding and accommodate future enrollment growth*, with enrollment goals of 700-900 students per school. In the high-enrollment areas, the new schools being built under Proposition MM will achieve this goal. However, in the declining enrollment areas, the district will be able to reach this goal without building a new school.
- The ICOC's charge is to ensure the responsible expenditure of funds. It would be irresponsible to build a new school that is not needed.
- The Eighth Area Elementary School was originally to be built in the Sherman Heights community, a declining enrollment area. Instead, the Board approved the demolition and rebuilding of the existing Sherman Elementary using state facility funds. Although the ICOC was not involved in this decision, the ICOC feels that the Board's decision will provide Sherman Heights with a high-quality facility to satisfy the community's needs.
- Approximately \$30 million, the original amount budgeted for the new school, will be placed in a reserve account which will only be allocated upon recommendation of staff and the ICOC and final

approval by the Board of Education. The ICOC will return to the Board within two years with a recommendation for use of these funds.

- The funds will be allocated toward future needs, which could include the new Memorial Area Middle School (originally budgeted as an elementary school), additional funding requirements resulting from the continued escalation of land costs and construction costs, etc. As we move through the sixth year of this 10-year bond program, the ICOC has not recommended a specific allocation of these funds because of future unknowns.

This is a dynamic program that requires continual analysis, foresight and flexibility. The Board of Education has made other visionary program adjustments when demographics required it, such as building two middle schools instead of two elementary schools in the Scripps Ranch and Memorial areas. In the same way, this adjustment allows the district to be responsive to changing conditions while being responsible to the taxpayers.

We sincerely appreciate your continued support of the ICOC in our effort to oversee the implementation of Proposition MM.



Hank Killmar
Vice Chair, ICOC



Gil Johnson
Chair, ICOC Site Selection Subcommittee