

EasyReader

Letters Part I

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Old school idea

Dear ER:

Hermosa School Board President Lance Widman's letter expressing outrage at my "bombastic" viewpoint (ER Letters, Jan. 17, 2006) conspicuously omits the provisions of Section 16053.1 of the Education Code, under which the City purchased the Pier Avenue School. Section C, of the 1977 code states "the property shall be made available in writing to the former owner." The provisions of the purchase agreement reflect the mutual interest in providing adequate educational facilities within the City of Hermosa Beach.

The fact that the District has not even broached the possibility of reusing the Pier Avenue School with the City reflects the summary dismissal of the option. Likewise, the contention that "current school standards" would prohibit use of the classrooms at Pier School is the sole opinion of the District's consultant -- a company that has sucked \$2 million in fees to date. Indeed, the State's Architect has actively encouraged use of other older school facilities throughout the State. The Pier Avenue School has both a gym and school rooms that could provide immediate benefit to our students.

Given the two year construction of school playground space for a gym, which has no floor due to budget constraints, it would seem to be in the best interest of students to use the existing gym and school rooms at Pier Avenue School. Unfortunately, it appears the School Board's insistence on spending huge sums on a gym at the expense of current and prospective classroom overcrowding seemingly reflects a disdain toward education.

Robert Benz

Hermosa Beach

Remember the Pier

Dear ER:

The Hermosa Beach School District is spending \$17 million and needs to pass another bond in order to build at Hermosa Valley School the classrooms, gym and additional parking that are currently available at Pier Avenue Middle School.

If another bond is passed to finish modernizing Valley and View schools, will that be the end of it? The school board has never done a demographic study to determine the future needs of the Hermosa school system, while two or three dwellings continually replace single homes. If enrollment continues to climb, has the school board decided at what point Valley School would become too crowded? Each new student contributes to congestion in the streets, parking lot and campus. Currently, there are 170 more students (that's after turning away 40 inter-district kids) at Valley School than it was designed for. How many more can it accommodate?

The middle school kids should be separated from the younger grades. Pier Avenue Middle School has space for future expansion needs and parking. By moving the middle school kids there, we could have more classroom space at Valley and View. The State matching funds could be used to expand and improve the gym at the middle school and we could accept more inter-district kids as a source of funding.

Perhaps school board president Lance Widman, who negotiated the sale of Pier Avenue Middle School when he was a city councilman, can help negotiate its return to the district.

Reopening the middle school would be cheaper, prevent overcrowding at Valley and View and provide for future growth.

Miyo Prassas

Hermosa Beach