

EasyReader

Letters Part II

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An inconvenient truth

Dear ER:

It's August, and Miyo Prassas has again written her monthly letter (Letters, ER Aug. 3, 2006) to proffer some more misinformation on behalf of the so-called Committee for Responsible School Expansion. This month Ms. Prassas floats the whoppers that the School Board never had the money to pay for the construction, that the lawsuit filed by CRSE could have been avoided had the School District only agreed to the reasonable requests of this noble group, and that the District should return the gymnasium and library building and get classrooms instead.

A quick review of the District's financials shows that the District had the financial wherewithal to accept the binding bids we received in May 2005 and has the funds to pay for the construction contracted for in December. What is noticeably missing from her letter is any discussion of the Board having had to reject the May bids in the face of the CRSE lawsuit. After the court rejected their lawsuit and we rebid the project in December, the resulting bids came back \$1.6 million higher than the original bids. This increase – which we could not afford – then resulted in classrooms being cut from the project. That the CRSE lawsuit has cost the District \$1.6 million (and counting) in construction delays and has resulted in the loss of classrooms are facts which are inconvenient to Ms. Prassas and which she dutifully avoids.

Ms. Prassas sniffs that we could have avoided their lawsuit by simply agreeing to let her neighborhood control usage of school facilities. The District did incorporate restrictions suggested by residents into the District's current facility usage policy, but CRSE demurred and demanded further restrictions that would have been irresponsible and probably illegal for the District to agree to, and we dissented. Their response: take it or leave it, we're going to court. (The proposed settlement demands are a matter of public record.)

Her final point – that had the School Board made classrooms the priority, the construction project would be done by now – is sorely inaccurate since CRSE members have sought to stop any expansion on the school site. More accurate is that had CRSE not filed its lawsuit, the school construction, including classrooms, would be completed by now. Interestingly, CRSE's lawsuit would have prevented the construction of classrooms; and in its appeal CRSE is still trying to stop construction of the library and classrooms. Ms. Prassas glosses over both points.

Of course, Ms. Prassas is free to be as inaccurate as she wishes, and she has been consistent in her inaccuracy. I suspect hers are not her opinions, and that she is simply the spokeswoman for CRSE, a cabal that blithely spins its own justifications of its actions. Ms. Prassas should take the necessary few minutes to review public records rather than spouting CRSE dogma.

Greg Breen

Board Member, Hermosa Beach City School District

When colleges collide

Dear ER:

I have served as a faculty member at El Camino College for over 35 years. I have been intimately involved in District policy making as President of the Federation of Teachers, over ten years on the Negotiations Team, almost twenty years on the Planning and Budget Committee, and currently as a Vice President of the Academic Senate.

I have had my differences with the Board of Trustees. However, I respect the thoughtful and thorough approach taken by the Board when making decisions. They may be overly cautious at times, but never "cavalier," as Fred Huebscher states in his letter about the ECC-Compton College partnership (Letters, ER Aug. 3, 2006). Reflecting his typical disdain for facts, Fred goes for the rhetorical jugular castigating the Board for "taking over another