

## Misinformation and Misleading Statements contained in What is Measure S?

Listed on the HBCSD website,

From approximately 2015 - 2016, HBCSD.org website: (for the original document [click here](#))

### What is Measure S?:

**“Were options other than the North School site explored?”**

*“Yes, options were explored by the Facility Planning Advisory Committee, Board of Trustees and the City Council during joint City Council/School Board Meetings.” (#1)*

**“What were the specific options that the Facilities Planning Advisory Committee explored?”**

*“In 2013, the Facilities Planning Advisory Committee (FPAC) held 7 meetings to discuss the modernization of North School, the new construction of North School, the consideration of a land swap of North School for other properties in the city and the hiring of an educational architect to develop a Long Range Facilities Master Plan.”*

**NOTE:** This is an incorrect statement. The FPAC held only four 1-1/2 hour meetings before recommending to school board members in April 2013 that they should re-build North School versus renovating it. The other meetings were to select a firm to provide a Facilities Master Plan.

**“What properties were explored by the FPAC as possible alternatives to North School?”**

*“On March 20, 2013, the FPAC discussed the Community Center option. City Planning Director Pam Townsend was present at the meeting and later provided documents and a statement that there is no provisions for the school district to reoccupy the site for a school so that option is not viable as discussed. (Lease Agreement located under Measure S – History)”*

### **COMPETING INFORMATION:**

1. The Memorandum of Understanding was found by a FPAC member in September 2013, six months after Pam Townsend made her remarks. Therefore, Pam Townsend did not have all the information regarding district provisions for use of classrooms, office and storage space at the Community Center that the school district quotes in this “information” on their website.
2. See also item 4. above. Misinformation contained on the district website for “Lease Agreement located under Measure S – History.”
3. According to Monique Ehsan, the FPAC committee chair, there email sent to school board member Patti Ackerman and Superintendent Pat Escalante on October 2014: (TL-2014Oct19 email M Ehsan) *“I am writing just to clarify a matter with regard to the FPAC so that we don’t fan the flames of the opposition. Your letter to the Editor last week indicated that the FPAC considered Prospect Heights, South School, the Time Warner building and the Community Center. The FPAC never discussed Prospect Heights or South School because we didn’t understand the history of the School District with regard to the sale of these properties and any leaseback options nor did we have a mandate to do historical research. Katrina Bacallao, on her own time and with her own funds, exhaustively researched the history of the District but her findings were presented to Pat, not to the FPAC. At a couple of meetings Pat [Escalante]*

brought up the Community Center and the fact that we don't own it but we never had an FPAC discussion about the States rep's tour of the facility, the Title V inadequacies, the MOA [MOU], etc." **NOTE: Superintendent Escalante did not bring up the Community Center members of the public brought up the Community Center during FPAC discussions. There was no substantial discussion of the Community Center in the FPAC meetings.**

4. Why would school board members and Superintendent Pat Escalante add this to the information on their website if it wasn't quite true – and they knew it. Were they hoping to mislead the people of Hermosa Beach by having this on their website under Measure S information?

*"Also considered and discussed by FPAC were the Time Warner Building, Hope Chapel, St. Cross, and South Park. Each of these properties is either privately owned or owned by the City. The discussion criteria was based on cost, timeline, location, state requirements and site flexibility."*

**COMPETING INFORMATION:**

1. Does anyone really believe that HBCSD actually considered the Time Warner Building, Hope Chapel and St. Cross as viable solutions to district overcrowding? If the FPAC DID actually consider the Time Warner Building, Hope Chapel and St Cross for district use, why didn't they create a written report or video tapped their findings and decisions for the community?
2. According to Monique Ehsan, the FPAC committee chair, there email sent to school board member Patti Ackerman and Superintendent Pat Escalante on October 2014: (TL-2014Oct19 email M Ehsan) *"I am writing just to clarify a matter with regard to the FPAC so that we don't fan the flames of the opposition. Your letter to the Editor last week indicated that the FPAC considered Prospect Heights, South School, the Time Warner building and the Community Center. The FPAC never discussed Prospect Heights or South School because we didn't understand the history of the School District with regard to the sale of these properties and any leaseback options nor did we have a mandate to do historical research. Katrina Bacallao, on her own time and with her own funds, exhaustively researched the history of the District but her findings were presented to Pat, not to the FPAC. At a couple of meetings Pat [Escalante] brought up the Community Center and the fact that we don't own it but we never had an FPAC discussion about the States rep's tour of the facility, the Title V inadequacies, the MOA [MOU], etc." **NOTE: Superintendent Escalante did not bring up the Community Center members of the public brought up the Community Center during FPAC discussions. There was no substantial discussion of the Community Center in the FPAC meetings.***
3. Why would school board members and Superintendent Pat Escalante add this to the information on their website if it wasn't quite true – and they knew it. Were they hoping to mislead the people of Hermosa Beach by having this on their website under Measure S information?

**"Why has the district proposed the building of 17 classrooms at North School?"**

*"Third grade falls under the state class size reduction ratio of 24:1 and when the current kindergartens become third graders in 2019, seven classrooms would be appropriate plus 5-6 classrooms for fourth graders. Residents and other participants in the February Board Envisioning Workshop supported the proposal of 17 classrooms at North stating flexibility and options for specialty classes.*

**COMPETING INFORMATION:**

1. Seven classrooms for third graders plus 5-6 classrooms for fourth graders equals 12 to 13 classrooms. Five to four classrooms less than the 17 additional classrooms planned by the district at North School. NOTE: HBCSD was also making plans to expand View School capacity.
2. In 2014-2015, at the height of district overcrowding, HBCSD was ALREADY using 7 classrooms for approximately 164 third grade students at Valley School. (DI-5 HBCSD Enrollment Rpts 2008 – 2022) Would HBCSD need ANOTHER seven classrooms at North School for third grade in 2019? What would happen to the seven classrooms vacated at Valley School if third grade students were shifted to North School? Wouldn't most of them remain unused? Did HBCSD have need of seven additional unused classrooms at Valley School?
3. The same goes for fourth grade students at HBCSD. In the 2014-2015 school year HBCSD used five classrooms at View School for approximately 146 fourth grade students. (DI-5 HBCSD Enrollment Rpts 2008 – 2022) Would HBCSD need ANOTHER five classrooms above what they already had available at Valley School for third grade in 2019? What would happen to the six classrooms vacated at Valley School if fourth grade students were shifted to North School?
4. Vacating seven classrooms at Valley School for third grade students PLUS another vacated five-six classrooms for fourth grade students at Valley School would give the district a grand total of at least 12 classrooms that would be vacant at Valley School. How would that make sense for taxpayers or the school district?
5. By "Residents" did HBCSD mean the residents around North School? To our knowledge the vast majority of residents surrounding North School were worried about the noise and traffic of 510 students at North School. In the past, North School had typically only serviced about 400 students. As a private baby, toddler and after school care center, the children attending Children's Journey came and went at staggered times. In addition, many of the 350 or so children that attended Children's Journey and the South Bay Adult School only came a couple of times a week, not every day as they would for normal educational use.
6. Why would HBCSD use under-informed residents and "other participants" at "Envisioning Workshops" to drive district needs? Because school board members wanted to have someone to blame for their mistakes?: That it wasn't the school board members fault that the district overbuilt. The "residents and other participants" told them to build 17 classrooms, so they had to build them whether they actually needed them or not.

**"What is the role of the Citizen's Oversight Committee and how is it regulated?"**

*"Upon passage of a local bond measure, the state of California requires that all school districts create a Citizen's Oversight Committee, ED CODE: 15272, which will conduct annual independent audits to assure that funds are spent only on the list of projects authorized in the board language and for no other purpose."*

**COMPETING INFORMATION:**

1. The reality of a Citizen's Oversight Committee is that it is biased in favor of district decisions because the members of the COC are chosen by school board members. The school district will often only appoint their friends and supporters to the COC. Would any of those friends and supporters actually sue the school district, aka their friends who appointed them, if they found violations of district use of bond funds?

2. The Citizen's Oversight Committee only okays expenditures on a quarterly basis. By the time the COC audits the expenditures, the funds have already been spent. How would the COC "claw" back any misappropriated funds from a vendor if the vendor was working in good faith with the school district?
3. On the COC spending information released for Measure S, bond funds were spent on things like lunches and making keys. Those expenditures had nothing to do with the list of projects authorized in bond language. Providing lunches and keys are expenditures that could have been and should have been taken out of the district's general fund account instead of the funds being taken from a 40-year interest accumulating liability account.

**"Is it true that the cost of completely rebuilding North School estimated at \$14 million in 2014 is now estimated at \$32 million to completely rebuild?"**

*"No. On page 115 of the 2014 district Long Range Facilities Master Plan (LRFMP), Option B is an option to modernize, not rebuild North School for \$14 million [actually \$14,780,400]. On page 117 of the district LRFMP, Option D is an option to completely rebuild (new construction) a new school at North for \$28 million + \$5.8 million for a second story of classrooms." [\$28 + \$5.8 = **\$33.8M**]. (TL-2014 FMP p115 and p117)*

**COMPETING INFORMATION:** It is not known exactly what estimates and dates HBCSD was referring to in this informational item. None of the actual information seems to collaborate the district's answers.

1. **GKK Works gives two different costs to modernize North School (Option B):** The cost to modernize North School (Option B) on page 115 of the Long Range Facilities Master Plan is listed as **\$14,780,400**. The cost to modernize North School (Option B) on page 2 of the 2014 Executive Summary by GKK Works is **\$17,470,496**. Which is the correct cost to modernize North School? (TL-2014 GKKWorks p115 and Exec Sum p2)
2. It is believed that the CORRECT answer should be **YES** not No to the above question. In 2013 the estimate given by Paul Bunton, the district's hired expert, to fully reconstruct North School was \$14.9 million dollars. In 2014 the Long Range Facilities Master plan authors GKKWorks estimated that the average cost to completely rebuild North School as being \$32,378,954. (TL-2014Jun6 GKK Works exec summary 2014)
3. **NOTE:** Please see additional information on the Time Line regarding district hiring of Paul Bunton on March 13, 2013. B-46-12/13 (TL-2013Mar13 FPAC Consultant) a legal complaint against Paul Bunton filed in San Diego Superior Court (TL-2012Jul30 BCA Accusation) and HBCSD hiring BCA Architects (aka Paul Bunton) to supposedly close out three past construction projects that had been overseen by architects Y'Deen & Associates. B-76-12/13 (TL-2013Jun12 BCA Close Out DSA projects)
4. In 2013, the Facilities Planning and Advisory Committee was given an **estimate of \$14.9 million and 30 months by the district's hired expert Paul Bunton of BCA Architects to completely reconstruct North School**. In the same report, Paul Bunton gave the FPAC members an **estimate of \$10.9 million and 20 months to modernize North School**. (TL-2013Feb06 BCA NS estimates) The FPAC used these estimates in order to make their recommendations to the school board. Given the small difference of approximately \$4 million dollars that the FPAC was given between completely reconstructing North School and just modernizing the campus the FPAC recommended to school board members that they completely reconstruct North School.

5. The reality in April 2021 was that North School cost approximately **\$29 million dollars and took approximately 54 months** NOT \$14.9M and 30 months to reconstruct.
6. However, another way the question can be answered is that in 2014 GKK Works estimated an average cost of \$17,470,496 to modernize North School and \$32,378,954 to reconstruct North School.
7. Juge Construction company gave an estimate of \$6.2 million dollars in 2017 to fully renovate North School and build a new, additional administration/classroom building on the NS campus. (TL-2017 Juge NS reno estimate)

**“What are the Children’s Journey and South Bay Adult School programs currently located at North School? Are these programs being evicted?”**

*“The Children’s Journey is a private preschool/childcare business that has leased space at North School for many years.”*

**NOTE:** HBCSD has lost approximately \$140,000.00/annually since they stopped leasing North School in 2017. Enrollment has dropped by at least 270 students since 2014. There are approximately only 249 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at North School in the 2021-2022 school year. HBCSD has LOST approximately \$700,000 in revenue since 2017 by not leasing out North School.

*“Parents park and walk their children into the school whose original entrance is on 25<sup>th</sup> street and is open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. The South Bay Adult School (Redondo Beach Unified School District), Mommy and Me, preschool program also leases space at North School.”*

**COMPETING INFORMATION:**

1. The notable thing about children attending Children’s Journey from 7pm to 6pm is that there is no firm start and end time to the drop off and pick up schedules. Therefore, there isn’t a sudden rush of 100 to 300 cars and 250 – 500 students descending on the neighborhood in the morning or afternoon as there is with normal school operating hours.
2. There is also a small North School parking lot off of 26<sup>th</sup> Street. Some parents may pick their children up at the entrance on 25<sup>th</sup> Street, but parents can also pick up and drop off children in the back of the campus on 26<sup>th</sup> Street. Therefore, parking is also staggered. Since (because of) building the new North School campus, the City of Hermosa Beach has turned 26<sup>th</sup> Street into a one-way street, much to the consternation of residents. The street parking in the North School neighborhood is extremely limited and the streets are very narrow.
3. There are only three major feeder streets that run east/west in and out of the neighborhood west of the sand dune hill which includes North School. One of the major east/west thoroughfare is 27<sup>th</sup> Street which becomes extremely backed up with automobiles at Valley Drive and Ardmore at Gould. Reopening North School as a public school has exacerbated this problem for residents. Right now, North School is not being used close to capacity. IF North School is ever used near its capacity of 510 students the situation would become much, much worse for residents.
4. The district’s other choice for a temporary campus was the Community Center which was located on major feeder streets with a large parking lot with two entrances and already had crossing guards working the streets in the area for Valley School. HBCSD had to hire many additional

crossing guards to work the intersections near the North School which only adds to the morning and afternoon chaos for residents.

5. The traffic study that the district commissioned in November 2015 was a joke and an insult to Hermosa Beach residents. See information regarding Richard Garland & Associates Traffic Analysis for North School.

*“The state licensing facilities requirements for private preschools/children do not fall under the more restrictive Title 5 public school Ed Code criteria which is why it is not possible to house public school students in the current North School facilities.”*

**COMPETING INFORMATION:** This is a two-part statement. The first part is correct, the second part is incorrect and VERY misleading.

1. It is true that private preschools/children do not fall under the more restrictive Title 5 public school Ed Code criteria, but that has **NOTHING TO DO** with housing public school students at the current North School facilities. **The fact that school board members and Pat Escalante may actually think this is alarming and shows their utter failure as administrators of the district’s facilities. Didn’t any of the school board members verify information before posting it on their website, reports and in informational meetings and before asking taxpayers to foot a \$59M dollar facilities bond!?**
2. Title 5 does NOT apply to private schools. Title 5 only applies to public schools. Title 5 applies to **new facilities** only, not to grandfathered-in campuses like North School.
3. North School can **INDEED** be used **as is** for public school students. North School was a grandfathered-in campus built to Department of State Architecture strict Field Act earthquake safe specifications. It did NOT need to be torn down in order to be used for public school students. If it did, then why did both BCA Architects AND GKKWorks **BOTH** have estimates to use the current North School for HBCSD students?
4. If every school in California that was leased to a private school had to be torn down before it could be used by a school district again, California taxpayers would be on the hook for billions of dollars in public school building costs.
5. Both Robinson School in Manhattan Beach and View School in Hermosa Beach were leased out to private preschools while their respective school districts had declining enrollment. When enrollment started to climb, both schools were brought back to be used for public school students with only minimal improvements/renovations made. Like North School, View School and Robinson School are grandfathered in for use by public school students. Grandfather-in means that they are CDE Ed Code compliant **AS IS**.
6. In addition, HBCSD school board members have been shown to ignore Title 5 Education Code standards when it is more convenient for them. For example, according to Title 5 Ed code, TK and Kindergarten classrooms are required to be 1,350 square feet with attached bathrooms and casework, toilets, sinks sized for children six years old and younger. Normal classrooms (1<sup>st</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade) only need to be 960 square feet when built new with “normal” sized casework, toilets, sinks, etc. When HBCSD rebuilt North School (aka Vista School) they sized all 17 brand-new classrooms for older students, in this case 3<sup>rd</sup> through 4<sup>th</sup> graders. However, the first year that

North School opened, school board members used it to hold Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten students from View School, while View School was being enlarged and renovated. By housing TK and K students at the newly rebuilt North School (even for just one year) which only has classrooms sized for older students, school board members were violating Title 5 regulations. Obviously, this wasn't an illegal action by HBCSD, even though in the statement above school board members/Pat Escalante claim that to do so "is not possible".

***"Is there a proposed plan to build a road and parking along the south side border of Valley Park between the Kiwanis/Rotary parking lots and the North School site?"***

***"THE BOARD HAS NEVER DISCUSSED OR PROPOSED THIS PLAN! This is a proposed plan developed by a resident who lives on 25<sup>th</sup> street across from the North School site and was circulated amongst the neighbors along with a petition. THE BOARD HAS COMMITTED TO AND HAS PUBLICALLY STATED THAT VALLEY PARK WILL NOT BE TOUCHED (ice plant hill exempted).***

### **COMPETING INFORMATION:**

1. HBCSD owns a large portion of Valley Park. The portion that HBCSD owns used to be the playfields for North School.
2. School board members and superintendents come and go. Often there is NO CONTINUITY from one set of school board members to the next. Information is usually not passed down to the next set of school board members. Therefore, it doesn't matter what THIS board had committed to, the next board can do whatever it decides to do, whether or not the last board had committed to the public to not touch Valley Park.
3. The current playground at the new Vista School (aka North School) is not big enough to support 510 students for which Vista School was designed.
4. If HBCSD ever decides to increase enrollment at Vista School from its current enrollment of third and fourth graders, HBCSD will again need to use the portion they own in Valley Park for student playfields. If this happens it is likely that HBCSD will need to erect an 8'-10' fence around the Vista playfields in Valley Park for safety. It is also likely that any gate erected around the North School playfields in Valley Park will remain locked like the playfields at Valley and View schools.
5. If school board members decide to rebuild North School for 510 students as they did in 2016 there is absolutely NO GUARANTEE that a future school board will not decide to use Valley Park as the playfields for the campus.