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<th>Timestamp</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<th>Comment</th>
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<tr>
<td>4/10/2020 16:35:15</td>
<td>Susana Gonzalez</td>
<td>Closing Joseph Perry Elementary</td>
<td>I am disappointed and concerned with why the district would close Perry Elementary! My son Ismael Ramirez goes to kindergarten with his awesome teacher Ms. Alavez. My son is happy and in love with his school and his fellow classmates and teacher. Perry feels like a home to us and the staff is amazing. After this quarantine, having to explain to the kids that they can't go to school for the rest of year constantly, now having to tell them that they can no longer go back to their 2nd home is so sad and disgusting. What should we as parents need to do in order to keep Perry elementary open? What school are they going to attend? What if there is isn't transportation for them to get to school? will the classes be ful? THERE ARE MANY QUESTIONS AND WE ALL NEED ANSWERS AND FAST!!</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/10/2020 18:03:49</td>
<td>Justine Emch</td>
<td>Don’t close Perry!</td>
<td>Perry is more than just a school for our kids, it's a safe place. Not only is the staff amazing but the community around the school is as well. After school our kids play for hours and hours on the playground with their friends. Neighbors use the gated field to let their dogs run off some energy. With everything going on because of Covid-19 No schools should be closed. All of our children miss being at school and seeing their teachers and classmates. How could you have the heart to tell them they will NEVER return because the school is closing. It breaks my heart how heartless the district is being with giving the worlds situation. Give all the kids another year at the school they miss so much.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/10/2020 18:16:47</td>
<td>Crystal Mandel</td>
<td>Proposed Closure of Perry Elementary</td>
<td>Please do not follow the recommendation to close Perry School. I am a parent of a Kinder student and one future student. I myself am a teacher and have very high standards for what I want for my children, and have chosen Perry and am so happy that I did. His teachers, Dr P.J. and everyone there is beyond amazing. The school is so important to my son and he has built so much community in the short time he has been there. After the school closure he wishes so much to go back to Perry next year and I want that for him as well. He and his fellow schoolmates have been through so much this year, and his teachers have done everything they can to stay connected, to ensure their continued growth, and to show them how much they are cared for. Beyond my personal experiences, I know that Perry serves a more diverse group of students than others in the district, and know that this change will not be easy on them as well. The prospect of busing students and/or dealing with the already congested drop off at Peterson is also an issue for all of the families in our neighborhood. I am certain that if Perry is closed next year it will only mean more parents are going to choose other school options. I work at a charter school and will most likely be taking my son there next year if Perry is not an option for him, as I am sure many parents will want to do. I think in light of everything that has occurred in the last few months, closing in Perry would be cruel and I hope that the board can come up with another solution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/10/2020 18:43:51</td>
<td>Alicia Seevers</td>
<td>Perry Closure</td>
<td>I understand that you feel your School Consolidation Task Force was fair because you took a citizen from each area. However, if any of those selections attend the two schools that were up for closure, Perry and Peterson, they should have had to abstain from the vote. This is a CLEAR conflict of interest!!! How many people on that task force attend those schools. Where is this information? This whole process has been skewed from the beginning. Fair would be two representatives from EACH SCHOOL and then one at large in the case of a tie.</td>
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<td>4/10/2020 21:45:54</td>
<td>Roger Chavez</td>
<td>Please Keep Perry up and Running...</td>
<td>Perry school has been a Blessing to my 2 children( and I know) to many other families as well.......Since my children have moved to HB in 2017.......their teachers throughout these last 3 years.......have been nothing short of excellent.......All the areas that my children need extra help in.......their teachers and staff.......have lovingly and diligently always.....did their best to help them succeed.......as well as letting me know personally.......what to focus on ...with them......while they are at home with me.......I know that there are many other parents who feel the same way.......about the teachers/ staff employees at Perry Elementary...........I am always content while my children are at school.......Because I know.......that they are in good hands.......with teachers that genuinely care about them and their success in life.......And what more can you really ask for?? Thank you for taking your time to read my lil letter... I Hope and Pray That you come to the Right decision... Whatever that may be: God Bless You.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/10/2020 21:46:21</td>
<td>Roger Chavez</td>
<td>Please Keep Perry up and Running...</td>
<td>Perry school has been a Blessing to my 2 children( and I know) to many other families as well.......Since my children have moved to HB in 2017.......their teachers throughout these last 3 years.......have been nothing short of excellent.......All the areas that my children need extra help in.......their teachers and staff.......have lovingly and diligently always.....did their best to help them succeed.......as well as letting me know personally.......what to focus on ...with them......while they are at home with me.......I know that there are many other parents who feel the same way.......about the teachers/ staff employees at Perry Elementary...........I am always content while my children are at school.......Because I know.......that they are in good hands.......with teachers that genuinely care about them and their success in life.......And what more can you really ask for?? Thank you for taking your time to read my lil letter... I Hope and Pray That you come to the Right decision... Whatever that may be: God Bless You.</td>
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| 4/10/2020 21:53:27  | Nancy Cervantes   | PERRY CLOSURE                  | I have found it very hard to put into words exactly how I feel about Perry closing. I feel angry, disappointed but overall I feel a great sadness. Our children have had to abruptly stop attending school, seeing their beloved teachers and friends due to Covid19 pandemic. Our children are now being kept home to be safe and healthy. All my child can talk about is the day he gets to go back to school. How do I tell my child he will have to start a new school next fall? How do I tell my child there’s a chance he will never see his friends? Or his teacher? Who he loves so much. My child's teacher is Mrs. Martinez and a blessing she truly is. There are not enough words in the world to express my appreciation. She has taught my child to love reading and encourages his storytelling. Perry has been a second home for my child. He comes home telling me all the wonderful things he did and learned. Paws assemblies is his favorite and almost every week he comes home with a paw award. Those assembly alone have given him the self assurance and esteem he has been lacking. Perry has taught him to work hard, be responsible, respect others and overall be kind. This world lacks kindness and you board members lack kindness. You are taking advantage of this pandemic and have strategically been sneaky about this closure. You are leaving our children behind and for what? Money.......greed. Take a lesson from Perry and show some kindness and be fair. Be fair to our children. Be fair to our teachers and to the staff. The school has not failed. The teachers and staff have not failed. You board members are failing our children! What will you do to make it right?!

SINCERELY A VERY PROUD PERRY PARENT, Nancy Cervantes

posted 4/15/20

www.hbcsd.k12.ca.us
Dear Board Members,

I have found it very hard to put into words exactly how I feel about Perry closing. I feel angry, disappointed but overall I feel a great sadness. Our children have had to abruptly stop attending school, seeing their beloved teachers and friends due to Covid19 pandemic. Our children are now being kept home to be safe and healthy.

All my child can talk about is the day he gets to go back to school. How do I tell my child he will have to start a new school next fall? How do I tell my child there’s a chance he will never see his friends? Or his teacher? Who he loves so much.

My child's teacher is Mrs. Martinez and a blessing she truly is. There are not enough words in the world to express my appreciation. She has taught my son to love reading and encourages his storytelling.

Perry has been a second home for my child. He comes home telling me all the wonderful things he did and learned. Paw-assemblys are his favorite and almost every week he comes home with a paw award. Those assembly alone have given him the self assurance and esteem he has been lacking. Perry has taught him to work hard, be responsible, respect others and overall be kind.

This world lacks kindness and you board members lack kindness. You are taking advantage of this pandemic and have strategically been sneaky about this closure. You are leaving our children behind and for what? Money....greed. Take a lesson from Perry and show some kindness and be fair. Be fair to our children. Be fair to our teachers and to the staff. The school has not failed. The teachers and staff have not failed. You board members are failing our children! What will you do to make it right?!

SINCERELY A VERY PROUD PERRY PARENT,
Nancy Cervantes

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Claire Christensen
School Closure

I was very sad to, again, see the naivety that our school board has allowed to ensure within our community. Once again you have pitted one school against another. One of our parents put it perfectly “divide and conquer”. Due to this division we have made it easier for our district to get away with what they want and what they want is definitely not what is best for our children. The bottom line is the protection of ALL of the children in this district. Time and time again members of this community have come to the school board with many wonderful, logical options that would keep all of our schools open. Unfortunately those options fell on deaf ears, nothing changed, and here we are. Options that surrounding school districts have employed that have been successful. Our neighboring districts are not and have not closed schools.

Once again we are here fighting for the protection of Perry Elementary School. A school that has the highest number of low socioeconomic students. A school, that geographically, sits by itself. A school that was recommended to remain open one year ago. A school that has been demonized by other parents in this district. I implore the school board to think about this logically. Perry should not be closed. No school should be closed.

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Justine Emch
Proud Perry Parent

Our Mission is to support the academic and personal development of every student so that each student becomes a responsible, well-rounded individual who achieves success and fulfillment in a global environment. - HBCSD

This is YOUR mission statement... now lets see you actually do what it says. You say your mission is to help support EVERY STUDENT, well closing ANY school during this time of a pandemic is doing the opposite. Our community, Our Schools, Our Teachers, Our family’s, we all need to stick together in this time. The students, our future, they have been through so much this year already. How could you even have to heart to tell them they will NEVER return to there school they miss so much. This is unacceptable and heartless. Everything else in the world is on hold, this matter on ANY school closer should be as well.

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Nicole Gaylord
Perry Closure

This school is essential to our neighbors. This should not be shut down due to the fact that kids are learning and progressing. Some of our Girl Scout sisters attend and through all of us have been through we plead you to not close Perry. Thank you for your time.

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Tarryn Tyler
Don’t close the school!

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Jen Yamabe
Potential School Closure

Good evening Board of Trustees. My name is Jen Yamabe and I am a teacher at Perry. I’m finishing up my 19th year in the district having spent all of those years only at Perry. I am not one to speak at board meetings or even really at staff meetings. But, I am compelled to do so today. Something I tell my students’ parents every year is that they are our child’s greatest advocate. Today, I feel the need to be the students’ greatest advocate and share my joys and disappointments in our flawed system. I’ve attended countless board meetings but what was said last week at the schools consolidation meeting was so hurtful that I could no longer stand back and be silent. A few committee members openly spoke about their concerns and reasons why they chose Perry to be the option to close. Numerous times a few committee members mentioned friends of friends who said they wouldn’t send their child to Perry or if their borders changed they’d have no choice but to leave the district because they wouldn’t send their child to Perry. What I wanted to ask but couldn’t was...Did they stop to ask WHY people feel this way? What’s their reason? Bad location? Horrible teachers? Fear of violence? Terrible leadership? What was the reason?

As each person spoke no one said why but, let’s all be honest here. There was no spoken reason because they’d dare not say the true reasons aloud. The reality is the only conclusion that could be drawn was about Perry’s test scores and the elephant in the room... Perry’s diversity (socio economics and race) which is very unique compared to all of the other elementary schools. That was very evident in the data findings and was the only data presented that separates Perry from the other schools. This isn’t news to us teachers, it’s just blindingly on the eyes of the rest of the rest of HBCSD. These comments made by member after member were just downright hurtful and sad. I’m not saying they themselves made the comments but the people they called their friends did. Makes me the most sad in all of this is that exactly of the current board members, past board members and cabinet have continued to allow the beliefs of the community (not everyone but many) to continue without trying to be a voice of change and hope. To be honest, we’ve allowed it for years and have perpetuated it without being an advocate for change and solutions. They ask us to teach about diversity, inclusion, and embracing others, yet this is the exact opposite of what they preach. They have failed to help the kids who need it the most... my students and families who don’t have a voice or who are too afraid to say something or don’t have the luxury of time to invest in such things and simply trust the educators to do what’s best for their kids. Sadly there was not one representative selected to represent Perry on this school consolidation committee. Not one chosen who a child at Perry or lives in the boundaries of the school. Again, this isn’t news to any of the Perry teachers and staff. That’s why we show up every year and everyday, thinking today will be the day. This hope is what keeps us at Perry. To reach as many kids as we can with love, compassion and empathy.

Good leaders lead. They provoke change even when it’s against societal norms. They push people to think, not just sit and wait. They leave impressions that are long lasting which makes our society better and inspire kids to do better and expect better. HBCSD leaders are taking a huge step back by allowing a school closure to continue to move forward. What was said by some of the committee was made public for all to hear. It is evident that some of the communities’ perceptions are following many board members and past board members who have chosen not to lead their community in a way which demonstrates equality and most of all change. They may say it publicly that Perry is a great school but where are the actions to help change the communities perceptions? Where’s the leadership to guide the way? Where’s the change to promote our school? What have you done to help?

I don’t envy the decisions that need to be made tonight. I understand that HBCSD is in a dire budget constraint. But, tonight you have a chance to change the trajectory for the kids and community of HBCSD in a way that leads the community towards healing, unity and positive change for all students. By choosing not to close ANY school, we can then have open conversations as a community on how to work together to provide viable solutions for all kids. You chose to close Perry over another school without a sound reason why....sadly it’s very evident that HBCSD will continue to have a much bigger problem than just money.
Dear School Board,

I am writing on behalf of my family, including my youngest sibling who is currently attending Joseph R. Perry Elementary School. I am currently 22 years old and also have attended Perry Elementary myself, from kindergarten to fifth grade and greatly enjoyed my time while attending. I have three younger brothers who have attended Perry Elementary, and my youngest brother is currently a third grade student at Perry. Perry is within walking distance which has always been a gift. When I was in the first grade, I have been greeted by past teachers I had there. Many teachers at this school have had a great impact on my life and helped inspire me and pave a great pathway into an adult. I am grateful for all my experiences here as a child and will forever cherish the memories created while at Perry. Mrs. Forgiantini and Mrs. Alvarez have always been such great teachers and mentors, and I was so happy to see that they remembered me after so many years. The teachers at Perry truly care about their students and their success outside of school. They are all inspirational and so caring for their student's academic career and personal lives. I also remember Mrs. D'Zmura who was such an amazing teacher and mentor. She had a great impact on my personal life. Mrs. D'Zmura went out of her way to write a letter to my mother to use in order to help my dad come back into the country after he was deported when I was about six or seven years old. This is when I realized how precious teachers truly are. The fact that she went out of her way to help out my family is beyond amazing and I will forever cherish her for trying to help us out when she did not need to. All my teachers knew about the situation I was living through, and when we would leave to visit my dad, they would tell my mother and I to have a safe trip. Even little moments like that, have had a great impact on me and the way I view teachers. I have always had such great respect for them, especially when they go out of their way to help. I want to know each of their students on such a personal level. I am forever thankful for the teachers I had during my elementary years, they helped pave my career path and choice. This is why it saddens me so much to hear that Perry may be closing. I do not think any school should be closing as a matter of fact. So many children will be suffering from this choice, both for their personal lives and educationally as well. There will be a lot more children cramped into one classroom now, which takes away from their connection with teachers, because as much as a teacher wants to make sure she/he gives the child the attention and help they need, it will be very hard for them to do so when there are 30+ students in one class. Students may begin to feel frustrated and possibly lose motivation if they are not receiving the help they need from their teacher(s). An article, When Fewer Is More: Small Groups in Early Childhood Classrooms, written by Barbara Wasik in 2008 as shows that larger classrooms can be overwhelming for both the students and the teachers, and “children can receive the individualized attention and instruction that may not be possible in large group settings”. There are many statistics and studies that have been done on the benefits that “small groups” rather than larger groups of individuals, as well as other research in early childhood which “supports the fact that the more quality contact young [children have] with a competent adult, the greater the positive impact it can have on learning and development” (Wasik, 2008). Smaller groups can affect a child in a more positive way when it comes to interactions with fellow students, it may also be less stressful for the child to interact with a smaller group versus a larger one where they may feel intimidated or not want to speak up if there are other students speaking. In smaller groups, the children may feel as if they are actually being listened to, which will be beneficial as they grow older and learn to listen to others as well.

I hope this helps keep Perry Elementary open, for the benefit of the children it will impact.

Sincerely,
Stacy Martinez, Perry Panther Alumni

References

April 14, 2020 HBCSD Study Session
Public Comments

Dear School Board,

My name is Katie Brown and I have been teaching at Perry Elementary for 23 years. Today I am writing to you on behalf of all of the voices that have been silenced. There are so many points to be made it is difficult to know where to start. I will start from the beginning. I started teaching at Perry two years before Seaciff Elementary opened. Since then, I have gone from teaching with a team of six 1st grade teachers which has been reduced over the years to one teacher and a combo in every grade level. I have watched as every Board has let us bleed out. Every year we have watched our incoming kindergarten classes dwindle. You have allowed families to transfer out of Perry without even a proper visit to our campus.

Two months ago, a school consolidation task force was formed to look at each school and decide which would be the best to close. The application process required a resume, online access to the application, and to be able to read and write in English. The application and the process were in English only, in direct violation of the California Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination by agencies that receive state funds and requires them to provide equal access to benefit, without regard to race, color, national origin, or ethnic group identifications among other factors. The California Bilingual Services Act also requires local agencies to provide language access services to limited English-proficient speakers, which the application process directly violated. Both of these are violations I am sure you would shudder to see publicized in the media.

As we have begun administering distance learning programs, it has become apparent to those who didn’t realize this before, that MANY of our Perry families DO NOT have internet access, computers, or speak English. Those of us who work with these wonderful families already knew this, but the Board must not have, otherwise there is no way they would have the school consolidation task force application process ignore their language needs. Or perhaps, they did know this, and requiring English-only applications was a way to ensure Perry was once again unrepresented? Reviewing the Board’s track record, I believe this was a calculated move.

Perry was reviewed by last year’s 7-11 committee, which unanimously decided Perry would remain open. This decision was obviously unpopular with the Board, since we are revisiting the same issue 12 months later. Perry Elementary should not have even been considered for closure so soon after a unanimous vote to remain open.

When the school closure task force was created, Shari Kowalke selected two representatives from Moffett School, yet deliberately declined to select a single representative from Perry Elementary. The very school facing closure is the only location without a representative! Each meeting, we have watched representatives from their home schools motion for their removal. vegetables. As we sat and listened, one committee member bravely proclaimed, “I have heard from several GATE families that if Perry is the new GATE site we will not go there. We will transfer to Fountain Valley.” With mouths agape, we listened to another member state, “Yes, I have been told the same thing.”

I find it shameful that such openly prejudiced statements are being repeated by the committee. You and your predecessors have encouraged the stereotype that Perry families, faculty, and needs are second-class. You could not be more wrong. Perry Elementary is a community of strong families working together to encourage values of hard work, equality, and respect, against all odds and privilege. This is your chance to practice what you ask your faculties to teach, and to lead by example. You need to finally stand up for the underdog. Don’t allow an empowered vocal minority within your community say these hurtful words about a school, and its families, that make so many wonderful contributions to our neighborhoods. Let the class be trained among us know it is not okay to say, “We will never send our kids there”. Stop this now while you have a chance.

April 14, 2020 HBCSD Study Session
Public Comments

The decision to close a school due to financial issues within the District is a business decision, and business decisions ought not be made out of emotion. However, that said, we are in an extremely unique situation with the onset and continued advancement of the Covid-19 pandemic. With so many families out of work, and emotionally strained by the abrupt changes in their lives due to Covid-19, I challenge the Board to think outside of the box at this time and entertain the other ways around this financial issue. I request that the Board and Superintendent Haulk put the decision on hold, and utilize the resources you have available to you to find alternative ways out of this debt. Even if an alternative takes longer to solve the problem, wouldn’t it be worth it, to keep all the schools open and thereby eliminate undue stress being put upon hundreds of families with children? The children have lost so much already with schools being closed, missing friends, missing field trips, missing graduations, etc. Is this really an appropriate time to close of an elementary school? The choice of whether or not to close a school at this time is, without a doubt, a humanitarian issue. Please think hard about this choice, and the ramifications it will have on families and children, especially in light of the fact that there are other ways out of this debt. There is a choice.

posted 4/15/20
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<td>4/11/2020 17:10:47</td>
<td>Lauren Cheh</td>
<td>Keep Perry Open</td>
<td>I’m a friend to a family with a student at Perry. It would be terrible news to hear that this school would be shutting down. With many hardships currently in our lives and homes, it would be so rough on students to lose their safe, constant, comfortable, school environment. Not only is it hard for young children to make the adjustments to all the new stimulus going on in their lives, it would be so much harder for them to have their school shut down and have to start all over in a new place. Please reconsider the closing of Perry and keep it open so kids can have something to come back to when these rough times are over. I know that my friends would be heartbroken to have this closure happen. Keep Perry open.</td>
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<td>4/11/2020 17:31:22</td>
<td>Ryan Brown</td>
<td>Keep Perry Open</td>
<td>No schools should be closed during this time!</td>
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<td>4/11/2020 21:39:38</td>
<td>Naomi Roesner</td>
<td>Perry closure</td>
<td>My son attends Perry and currently he is in Kindergarten. He’s autistic but he’s thriving at Perry due to the caring stuff and teachers. We are very concerned that moving him to a different school may negatively impact his growth. Our son really loves his school and teachers, we believe it would be detrimental to him and this community if you decide to close this wonderful school.</td>
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<td>4/12/2020 11:32:13</td>
<td>Andrew McEachin</td>
<td>School Closure Task Force</td>
<td>Dear Superintendent Haulk and HBCSD Board of Trustees, We dissent with the School Closure Task Force’s majority (7-4) decision to recommend the closure of Joseph R. Perry Elementary. We also want to acknowledge the immense challenges caused by COVID-19 and related school closures and job losses. The global crisis and electronic format of our meetings made careful deliberation under this timeline difficult, and created Brown Act violations including capping meetings to 100 participants, forced end times of 8pm, and task force members dropped from the calls and/or losing audio during meetings. We discuss our four main critiques of how the task force arrived at its majority decision: 1. Number of Families Impacted: The task force overlooked two key factors during discussions on the impact of school closures. First, the district never presented the task force with detailed information on the number of reassigned students for each closure scenario. The lack of these data favored schools in the center of the district. Second, the task force often discussed Perry’s low enrollment. However, the combination of your open enrollment policy and lack of proactively counteracting transfers (e.g., failure to implement recommendations by the prior 7-11 committee) contributed to its low enrollment, and now residents within Perry’s boundaries are being disproportionately punished for it. 2. Impact of Closure on Travel Distance: The district did not present several relevant and important data until the task force had already eliminated four schools relying on incomplete information. It was clear by the end of this process that distances traveled were a critical measurement to understand the impact of a school closure on students and families, and these data not being made available earlier in the process is a major error. Although not shown, it is clear that if you closed a school in the center of the district, there would be far fewer boundaries to redraw, fewer families would have to attend a new home school, and fewer families would have to travel long distances to their school. 3. Green Space: Greenspace and parks are a premium in HBCSD as the city continues to grow and develop. Peterson has the largest lot and is one of the few elementary schools that is not co-located with a park. If Peterson is closed and the district sells the land, the neighborhood would lose its only play space. Further both Peterson and Perry are used extensively by AYSO and other organized sports, and Perry is the only elementary school with lighted fields available for use. 4. School Closure as a Social Justice Issue: It is imperative you consider which communities would bear the brunt of the closure. Last year the 7-11 committee voted 8-0 not to close Perry Elementary school, and you unanimously agreed. They said the question of whether to close Perry is a social justice issue, and we strongly agree. Closing Perry will disproportionately harm your most vulnerable students, which is especially troubling in wake of the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. If the you deem it necessary to close a school, the rubric provided by the district and that should have been followed would not lead to Perry being a reasonable selection. We implore the board to consider the broader impact of closure on the district, and select a school whose closure would still provide their communities with play space for kids, would minimize the distance families travel to their new school, and would not put the burden of a school closure on our most vulnerable students. Sincerely, Mrs. Elizabeth Armstrong, Dr. Joslin de Diego, Dr. Andrew McEachin, and Mr. Joshua Yates</td>
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<td>4/12/2020 16:31:38</td>
<td>Eric Jones</td>
<td>Adjustment Swiftness</td>
<td>No question I just want to thank Dr. P and Mrs. Martinez for the swift adjustment and seamless transition to online schooling for the children. That was fantastic! Of course, there is nothing like being around your friends but to have the chance to still see them and learn as a group is such a great relief for them all and the staff realizes that. So thank you very much let me know if there is anything I can do. Thank you.</td>
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<td>4/12/2020 19:07:17</td>
<td>Tony Zini</td>
<td>Possible School Closure</td>
<td>Dear HBCSD Board,</td>
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<td>I hope you are doing well in these unprecedented times. I am writing to you to offer encouragement and to share some thoughts as you face the momentous task of making some very, very tough decisions in regards to closing a school and other issues we face in our district.</td>
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<td>It is vital that each community is heard equally and that decisions by the board are approached in a way that balances all the relevant factors.</td>
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<td>This will be a very difficult change to any community that experiences a school closure. As I listened to community members share about how devastating this would be to the Peterson community, it is important to remember that the same holds true for Perry (even if there is no one on the call or at the meeting to share these realities). Closing any of our schools would cause that particular community to experience equally significant and devastating impacts.</td>
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<td>I am not faulting anyone for looking out for their community in this situation. I would do the same, but it is vital that the Board take a wider view and evaluate all decisions by looking at the entire district as a whole. The short-term and long-term implications must also be part of the decision making process. Our district has to consider what is best for our current students and our future students as well.</td>
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<td>It is vital that we look at this challenge objectively and balance all the factors involved. We cannot give too much weight to one single factor when making this decision or let emotion drive our decision making process.</td>
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<td>That is extremely difficult because of all the emotions involved when we think of a community and it relationship with its school. The connection, the memories, and the close ties each community builds with its school should not be dismissed. However, it is also problematic if those factors drive the decision making process.</td>
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<td>I am writing you to encourage you to focus on all the factors that come into play in a balanced and equitable way. These factors include (in no particular order):</td>
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<td>• Sowers Renovation/Relocation</td>
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<td>• Community Impact</td>
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<td>• Geological considerations (soil condition)</td>
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<td>• Geographical location of schools</td>
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<td>• Property value of site</td>
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<td>If we ignore some of these or give too much weight to a particular factor, it can lead to decision that creates unintended consequences. For example, if we keep a site with a soil condition that significantly increases the cost to renovate, that will have an impact on our district that impacts the entire district.</td>
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<td>Each community vigorously defends their school and that shows how great HBCSD schools are! But some are more able to be visible and vocal than others when it comes to voicing concerns.</td>
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<td>I implore you to be a voice for those who don’t have voice in this process. Due to economic realities, language barriers, etc. there are many voices that are not being heard. Please consider the unheard voices because the impacts are just as real for them as any of the compelling voices of those who have shared.</td>
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<td>Each school in HBCSD is amazing and unique. Every school is uniquely connected to their community and that is a testament to the community, teachers, administration, and to HBCSD. I strongly believe that all the schools in HBCSD are impacting their communities in profound ways and that each school is an integral part of their respective communities.</td>
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<td>This is one of the many reasons I love this district and I love working at Perry. We impacting our students and communities in positive and powerful ways. This is true for every school in our district.</td>
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<td>That is also what makes this decision so difficult.</td>
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<td>I don’t know what the right answer is, but please don’t let emotion nullify good judgement and sound reasoning. Please lead us down the right path, even if it is not the easiest path. Please make decisions that are right for our entire district by considering all the factors involved and all communities equally.</td>
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<td>My thoughts and prayers are with each of you as the board navigates this process.</td>
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<td>Thank you for your time, Tony Zini</td>
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<td>Teacher, Perry Elementary School</td>
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<td>4/12/2020 21:33:42</td>
<td>Analilia Standley</td>
<td>Possible School Closure</td>
<td>I went to this school growing up! Now my son is going to perry and I wish to see my son go though 5th grade like I did! Still knowing the teachers that are there from when I was in that school! Looking forward to knowing that Perry j elementary has the most incredible teachers any parent can ask for! I pray that this school doesn’t close! It’s been such a great school to me the teachers that are still there changed the way I see things in life! They changed the way I looked at this!! I always new that when I went to in to their classes they always made me feel loved and cared for! If they choose to close perry! They’ll be destroying a lot of people’s lives especially the ones who believe that this school is by far the best schools in Huntington Beach! Please let our kids continue to walk down our paths at perry!</td>
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<td>Screen reader support enabled.</td>
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<td>Please don’t close the school! We believe in this school and it would be the worst decision you make for our kids</td>
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My name is Heather Gilbert and I am a proud teacher from Perry Elementary School. First, I’d like to discuss the inequality of the School Consolidation committee. Although Perry parents were interviewed by Board Member Kowalke, not a single member from Perry was on this committee. Also, a member of this committee eluded to the idea that there was a representative from Perry, she was wrong. The member she was referring to is a grandparent of a Preppy K student that will attend Moffett next year. This committee follows Robert’s Rules of Order. So those of you who are not familiar with these rules, it works this way… A committee member must make a motion and get a second to vote on any decisions. Then all of the members get to vote with a majority winning. So, Perry never had a fair shake. Moffett parents made the motion to get Moffett off the list, Eader parents made the motion to remove Eader, Peterson parents motioned to remove Peterson from the list, and so on. Since no parent was there from Perry, no motion was made to save Perry until the very last. A few members would have left no school on the list. And I get it, but it’s just not right since Perry didn’t have a representative. The committee did not want to be seen as a failure and not recommend at least one school. Several members also expressed that neither Peterson nor Perry were in their bottom two. So, this committee was biased from the beginning. Perry did have support from some members of the committee early on, but when push came to shove and backed were against the wall, motions were made to save their own children’s school. The common reason from committee members choosing to close Perry was because we have the least amount of kids even though we are the most northeast school in the district.

Now, let me tell you a little bit about why Perry’s population is so low. If it’s a story that has repeated itself throughout history. In 1999, a brand new beautiful school opened in our district, Seaciff Elementary and boundaries were redrawn. Students were pulled from Perry to go there as their new home school. Perry’s test scores went down several hundred points that next year. Nothing had changed in regards to teachers or programs, but test scores went down. In fact, our principal at the time brought in new programs like the Beckman science kits and ST Math which is now used by the entire district. Year after year, determined teachers, students, and parents worked hard and improved scores over the years. Unfortunately, our scores are still the lowest in the district and that is the only information that parents use to look at schools. I love working at Perry. It is an awesome place to be just like all of the other schools in our district. We have Trunk or Treat, Science Night, Family Dine-Outs, 5th grade science camp, and a STEM teacher among many other events and programs. I’m not sure what the community thinks happens at Perry, but some truly horrible things were said at last week’s committee meeting which should have never been said out loud. A committee member said that a few GATE parents told him if the GATE program was moved to Perry, they would not send their child there. Ouch, that really hurt! We have trained and educated teachers at Perry just like the other schools as well as students who are smart and eager to learn, and parents who want a safe place for their children to be successful… just the same as all of the schools in our district. Perry has been fighting this battle of feeling less than and unsupported by the district and community for many many years and the district and board continues to allow us to sink. Perry has been through this possible school closure for two years, and our teachers continue to hold their heads high and remain positive with our school community. I will never stop advocating for my Perry kids and families since their voice is the quietest. Please consider keeping Perry School open.

To whom it may concern, first of all I want to thank the district for supporting me, 5 years ago I came to this city and moving my daughters from school was a big change but as the days went by they continued adapting to the school and teachers of Joseph Perry elementary. I would like to keep the school open for the community.

I am retired from 30 years of teaching. I hold a Masters Degree in Education, and credentials that include Physical Education, Art and Special Education, which I taught at the Secondary Level. During my years I have never had the experience of working with a Principal as good as Dr. Rene Polk Johnson. She is amazing. She is protective of her staff and her students. She is friendly and caring enough to learn the names of her students and their parents on sight. She knows who is coming and going at all times. She makes her students feel so happy to come to school and happy to make the effort to learn. She is efficient, kind, intelligent, and has her school, in my opinion, a most desirable place to attend school.

Each Thursday the students gather to receive recognition by presenting awards for their achievements. The award system is positive and develops a sense of desire to achieve and learn the things expected of them. My grandson just blossomed at Perry. You could observe the Pride he had in himself and the love he has for his teachers and his school.

Students with behavioral problems are handled diplomatically and with positive reinforcement. Students with learning problems are recognized and provided for. I say this because as an experienced special education teacher I recognized students in the Kindergarten class that I followed along with as I moved up to the next class. I found it interesting to watch the students each year just as a volunteer could help where needed. I can’t emphasize enough how impressive it is at Perry Elementary as to how the overall aura is one of guidance, recognition, support, peace, learning and security.

Perry offers an amazing program in Science using up to date materials for these students. I taught High School Science and would have loved to have had the programs available to use that Perry has. I loved helping during science hour. So much fun. The use of computers, hands on curriculum allowing for experimentation and understanding of each concept. My grandson could go home and explain to his Dad each concept he learned. I also impressed with the art program, the music program, the computer program. They are all tied in with curriculum.

This school is nestled into the surrounding neighborhood where it is supported by the community. It is peaceful rather than chaotic. It is a clean school. It is a RARE JEWEL among schools. I couldn’t believe my goodness fortunate to land at Perry. Every report I’ve heard of Perry has been positive. It is a loved school. It would be a crime if this school were to be closed.

I can see a boundary moved for the schools here and there but definitely I don’t see closing schools. Schools are the kids security. Their home away from home. Movement is a threat to this security. Perry is just to wonderful a school to lose. Please do not close this school.

Regards,
Page E. Rogers
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<td>4/13/2020 16:18:51</td>
<td>Victoria Brinez Family</td>
<td>School Closure</td>
<td>Please read this letter in it's entirely in Spanish before reading it in English. Thank you!</td>
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<td>Estimate Junta Escolar.- Nousotros la familia Brinez Sierra, nos dirigimos a ustedes a fin de expresarles nuestra preocupación por el cierre de la escuela Joseph R. Perry Elementary School, nuestra hija Victoria Brinez, quien cursa 3er grado, llegó a la Escuela, proveniente de otro país sin conocer el idioma Inglés y esta escuela le ha brindado la seguridad, el apoyo continuo que ella necesita, ya este es su tercer grado y realmente su escuela es su segundo hogar, todo el personal educativo es realmente maravilloso y le brindan a todos los niños la atención y los aprendizajes que ellos necesitan y es la escuela Perry Panthers un lugar esencial en las vidas de nuestros niños. Por favor no la cierren, para que así mas niños puedan disfrutar de la maravillosa Perry Panthers como la hace nuestra hija Victoria y todos los demás niños que en ella estudian. Familia Brinez Sierra.</td>
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<td>4/13/2020 16:23:52</td>
<td>James Martinez</td>
<td>Perry Elementary</td>
<td>My name is James Martinez and I am a 5th grader at Perry Elementary. Perry has been an important part of my life. I have been at Perry since kindergarten and have loved every minute of it. Every teacher at Perry is kind and fair to every student. They take the time to get to know all of the students in the school not just the ones in their class. The teachers at Perry listen to students and always want what’s best for us. It’s not just the teachers who are kind at Perry, it’s everyone. Our custodians, Mr. Wences and Mr. Jorge always are on the playground and in the lunchroom talking to the students and making sure we are safe. Ms. Cathy our office manager is someone that will help students anyway that she can. Our principal, Dr. PJ is in the lunchroom everyday to make sure that everyone is being kind to one another and she likes to talk to us too. I have made lots of friends at Perry. I have had so many good memories at this school. It makes me sad that my own brother and many other students won’t be able to have those great memories if Perry is closed. Please don’t close Perry or anyone else’s school.</td>
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<td>4/13/2020 16:28:28</td>
<td>Delia Bradley</td>
<td>Perry school closure</td>
<td>As a parent of two children that attend the wonderful Perry Elementary I am extremely against the idea to close our school. Perry not only has some of the best teachers around but caring and great office staff. We are fortunate with the education our children are afforded in Huntington Beach and a decision to close ANY school is absolutely wrong especially given our current situation. Not only will this affect the well being of many students having to switch schools and enlarge classroom size but the emotional toll of ripping their school life away from them will be extreme. They have had to deal with too much for a young child, not seeing the teachers they love and friends as well. Now we want to set them back even further by closing their school. This is WRONG on EVERY level and us parents are extremely upset. I, like many, implore you to look for other options as closing any school in our district is NOT the best thing for the livelihood of our future...our children.</td>
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<td>4/13/2020 16:41:10</td>
<td>Joy Forgiarini</td>
<td>Perry Elementary</td>
<td>Good Evening Board Members, All HBCSD schools are special! Tonight I would like to start by telling you why Perry Elementary is special and how things have changed over the years. My name is Joy Forgiarini and I am a proud teacher at Perry Elementary. I have been teaching at Perry for 23 years. I have taught with amazing teachers, principals, and staff. Perry is like a family. Over the years, I have taught several generations of families in our community. Currently, I have a student whose grandma, mom, aunts, uncles, and cousins have all gone to Perry. Perry offers them a safe environment in order for them to thrive. The teachers at Perry have relationships with students and families that are not even in their class. The students know they can go to any teacher with a question or for help. The majority of our staff has been teaching at Perry for over 15 years! Our student numbers have shrunk throughout the years due to the district allowing families to NEVER start their child at our school. Parents transfer out because of rumors, hearsay, and test scores that do not paint the full picture of our school. We have many students that exceed standards on state testing, but we also have students that score below the standard. These scores do not take into account the students growth over the year or explain each child’s special circumstance. I have a student that just moved here from Ecuador. I am having him use programs to help him acquire English and he has come such a long way in only a month’s time. However, when he takes the state test next year he will most likely score below the standard. This is not because he is not learning, it is because he has a special circumstance that hinders his ability to take a test in English. To be honest, I believe that he is gifted and in time will most likely pass the GATE test. Again, none of these circumstances show up in the test score data! HBCSD has continued to allow intradistrict transfers without even following the open enrollment timelines or having parents explain the reason why they want to transfer. We have over 200 students that belong to Perry at other schools in HBCSD. Why? Rather than changing the perception of Perry our district has allowed the transfers to grow out of control. Wouldn’t it have been a perfect time to modernize Perry Elementary first back in 2017? Not only were we one of the oldest campuses but we also had the most need for something to boost our appeal. Instead the few improvements that were slated for Perry, new windows and hardscape were removed from phase 1 and are now part of the final phase. Since Perry has dwindled in numbers over the years we have lost many teachers to other schools in HBCSD. These same teachers are looked at differently by some now that they teach in a school with higher test scores. All HBCSD teachers are well trained and we pride ourselves on being the cream of the crop. That does not change because we teach at Perry. Students will excel at any school in HBCSD.</td>
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Translation: Dear School Board, We, the Brinez Sierra family, write to you in order to express our concern for the closure of the Joseph R. Perry Elementary School, our daughter Victoria Brinez, who is in 3rd grade, came to the school, coming from another country without knowing the English language and this school has given her the security, the continuous support that she needs, and this is her third grade and really her school is her second home, all the educational still is really wonderful and they give all the children the attention and the learning they need, and Perry Panthers School is an essential place in our children’s lives. Please do not close it, so that more children can enjoy the wonderful Perry Panthers as our daughter Victoria does and all the other children who study there. Brinez Sierra family. |
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| 4/13/2020 16:56:38 | Kristina Mahan      | Perry should not close!         | Dear Board Members,  
I have been made aware of the startling decision that the school board will once again consider closing Perry Elementary. I must communicate how stressful these past couple years have been, knowing that our neighborhood school is on the brink of closure. I was relieved last year when it appeared to have been decided that Perry would be spared, only to find out it is once again on the chopping block.  
My family’s history with Perry spans 6+ years. My daughter began attending in 2nd grade and she was quickly recognized for her academic excellence by becoming the only Perry student member of the Scholar Squad in 2015. That same year she was tested and qualified for GATE. Our family decided to move and asked her to Peterson in favor of her remaining at her neighborhood school. She was again a member of the Scholar Squad in 2017. Throughout her elementary education, she was provided excellent and challenging curriculum designed by extraordinary teachers. She thrived and excelled, and she is currently a student at Dwyer in honors/advanced courses achieving straight A’s.  
My twin boys started their education at Perry in preschool. They were recognized in kindergarten for their academic excellence and they were members of the Scholar Squad alongside their sister in 2017. They have also received an excellent education by their very dedicated and amazing Perry teachers.  
Perry is a very loving school and it feels like family. Dr. Johnson knows each and every one of her students and has crafted a very warm and respectful environment. The students at Perry genuinely care for each other. My children have developed friendships at Perry that I know will last a lifetime. I cannot say enough wonderful things about Perry!  
It is unthinkable that the school consolidation task force committee has pursued the agenda of closing a school during this pandemic. All of the changes have been so hard on the students, they are sad that they cannot go back to school this year and now I might have to tell my sons that they will NEVER go back to Perry? On top of everything else? That is heartless and unethical for their emotional well-being.  
Additionally, I have strong feelings of the school district taking advantage of this time of stay at home orders. Meetings have been held remotely, only being available to the 100 people allowed to join the zoom meetings. I would imagine most parents are not able to stay informed of what is going on, because we are all dealing with our own situations during this challenging time. Major decisions are being made without parent input and limiting those families who may not have access to the technology required to remain informed in these times. It is disgraceful and deceitful that this agenda is moving forward with little community involvement.  
I implore the board to review the 7-11 Advisory Committee’s decision from last school year and the reasons why Perry should remain open. I felt somewhat secure with the decision that was made last school year, and when the fences were installed around the school I felt secure that the school would remain open. To find out now that the school might be closed leads to a feeling of insecurity and mistrust in my school district. During these unprecedented times, our school district should be a source of comfort and stability when nothing else in the world is stable. Please make the right decision for our families and our students. Perry is a gem in the school district, it is family, and it will be the a great shame on the district if it is closed.  
Warmest Regards,  
Kristina Mahan |
| 4/13/2020 17:33:22 | Dulce Montenegro    | Perry Elementary Closure        | Our Family would like to let the Board know that we are saddened by the thought that Perry Elementary School is up for school closure discussion.  
We are not for it, and would never want any school to close either.  
Perry Elementary was our first choice when we were looking for an Elementary school for our daughter. Not just because it was close to us (5 min ride or 15 min walk) to and from, but because it was the perfect location, a private cul-de-sac. It isn’t located where all the traffic is and it’s not next door to a middle school or high school or it isn’t next door to businesses (businesses are away from the school).  
We love how close nit everyone is. The whole staff is about our kids. They all make sure our children gets the best of them. Our children can’t wait to go to school and see their favorite teachers, school staffs, their friends and classmates.  
Please don’t close us down. It’ll be a huge disappointing change our children that has learned structures, has learned stability.  
Thank you for your time. |
| 4/13/2020 18:09:46 | Eric French         | Perry school closure            | I am the father of two students currently attending Perry Elementary. Both have thrived in this school with the awesome Principal, teachers and staff. My children like many others I know have been set back emotionally due to the sudden closure with the ongoing situation. To take their school away for good would further their emotional distress. With all that is going on right now this should be the last thing the board should even be considering. Please do not set our children back and please do not close any of the wonderful Huntington Beach schools. |
Junta Escolar HBCSD,  
Llegamos desde Ecuador a los Estados Unidos hace 5 meses, sin duda ha sido todo un reto para nuestra familia, empezar de nuevo en todo sentido, y particularmente para nuestro hijo Sebastian quien encontró en Joseph R. Perry Elementary School, el lugar ideal para sentirse acogido por una nueva sociedad, la labor realizada por sus maestras y directivos de la institución, ha sido sin duda fundamental para que tanto nuestro hijo como nosotros como familia, nos sintamos seguros de que se encuentra protegido, que está aprendiendo, lo respetan y sobre todo lo aceptan y lo quieren, este ambiente ha creado en nuestro hijo, y supongo que en muchos de sus compañeros, u ambiente de confianza, que le ha permitido solventar el miedo al cambio drástico que ha sufrido su vida. Joseph R. Perry Elementary School, es ahora su Segundo hogar, a pesar de la actual situación mundial, es evidente que extraña compartir con sus compañeros y maestros, eso solo nos dice una cosa, se siente como en casa y a ello le damos mucho valor. Me permito comentarles esto porque no es fácil para ninguna persona cambiar totalmente de un país a otro y más aún cuando ni siquiera su lengua es la misma, nos ha costado a toda nuestra familia, pero es muy importante el apoyo que directa o indirectamente brinda nuestra sociedad que nos acoge para desarrollarnos en ella. Tal vez, no seamos los únicos que pensamos que Joseph R.Perry Elementary School, tiene todo lo que nuestra comunidad necesita, y digo nuestra porque así lo sentimos, de tal forma que solicito a la junta escolar, en nombre de mi hijo Sebastian Calapaqui García estudiante de 2do grado, de mi familia y en mi nombre, reconsiderar la idea de cerrar esta noble institución, empezar de nuevo por tercera vez, no será fácil, y pensar en el impacto que podrá tener esta acción para muchos de los niños que actualmente asisten a esta escuela, pues como lo hemos visto con nuestro hijo, los cambios no siempre son sencillos.  
Agradecemos sobre manera su atención, y de verdad espero que se pueda considerar nuestra petición, expresamos nuestro total apoyo a Joseph R. Perry Elementary School, y estamos seguros de que la junta sabrá valorar tanto o más que nosotros la labor que su Staff realiza para con nuestros niños.  
Atentamente  
Fabian Calapaqui De Prada |
Translation: Dear Representatives of the HBCSD School Board, We arrived from Ecuador to the United States 5 months ago, without a doubt it has been a challenge for our family, to start again in every way, and particularly for our son Sebastian who found Joseph R. Perry Elementary School, the ideal place to feel welcomed by a new society, the work done by its teachers and directors of their institution, has undoubtedly been fundamental so that both our son and us as a family, it makes us feel safe that he is protected, who is learning, respect and above all accept and love it, this environment has created in our son, and I suppose that in many of his companions, or environment of trust, that it is allowed him to overcome the fear of drastic change that his life has undergone. Joseph R. Perry Elementary School is now his second home, despite the current world situation, it is evident that he missing sharing with classmates and teachers, that only tells us one thing, he feels it is his home and we give that a lot of value, I would like to comment on this because it is not easy for any person to completely change a county to another and even more when not even their language is the same, that has been difficult for our family, but the support is very important that directly or indirectly we have been given by this society that welcomes us to develop selves with it. Perhaps, we are not the only ones who think that Joseph R. Perry Elementary School has everything our community needs, and I say our because that's how it makes us feel, so I request the school board on behalf of my son Sebastian, Alejandro Calapaqui Garcia 2nd grade student, from my family and on my behalf, reconsider the idea of closing this noble institution, starting over for a third time, will not be easy, and to think about the impact this action can have for many of the children who currently attend the school, because as we have seen with our son, changes are not always simple. I greatly appreciate your attention, and I really hope our request can be considered. We express our full support for Joseph R. Perry Elementary School, and we are confident that the Board will value as much or more than we do the work that their Staff does for our children.

4/13/2020 18:53:27 Jeffrey Collins School Closure Good evening HBCSD Board Members, I have been following the closure committee meetings of late with a mix of interest and a heavy dose of granting. Granted, valid arguments have been made and data presented. I can understand how committee members whose children go to their neighborhood school, moved to save that school from closure. Nobody wants to be inconvenienced. Nobody wants their neighborhood school to close, even Hispanic families. I empathize, in fact. It happened to me as a child. Wardlaw Elementary closed and I was forced to move during my fourth grade year. Did I love that, No. Did I survive and thrive? Yes. The cold fact remains, due to budget issues and a change in our funding model, HBCSD needs to close a school. It saddens me, but I understand the reasoning.

The choice to recommend Perry for closure was misguided in many ways. Perry is situated in basically the northeast part of the district, Eader in the southeast, Smith in the southwest, and Seacmill in the northwest. Closing anyone of these schools will result in an exodus of students, as it will became in a corner of the district. So where that have you with the Indianapolis corridor, on which 4 schools remain open: Hawes, Sowers, Moffet, and Peterson. All of these schools are on or near Indianapolis Ave. What is more, they are all within 2 miles of one another and in the middle of our district. It is logical, geographically, to close one of these schools. Some might say Hawes and Moffet cannot be closed reduced to the fact that they have been modernized. While that is true, it should not be a factor. The new technology, furniture, and linoleum can be moved. What really happened was all of these schools on the school closure committee. Some schools were represented more than once, in fact, Perry had no representation. This is immoral and might be illegal. That being said, we should not be considering Perry for closure. While it is true, Perry's student population is smaller than all of the other schools, there are some obvious reasons why. After the opening of Seacmill, Perry's numbers have been in steady decline. One would expect that to be true when a school initially opens and some of the population go to that school. What is alarming though, is that the student population has continued to plummet for the last twenty years. This is due to the fact that HBCSD has an open transfer policy. Families can send their kids to virtually any school in the district.

So why are they leaving Perry? Yes, it is roughly 40% Hispanic. I am ok with that. Why isn’t everyone else? Does Perry have low test scores, social diversity, and low socio-economic levels. Yes, yes, and yes. Guess what? That’s who lives on Perry's side of town. The children didn’t sign the lease, or rental agreement as it were. They are those categories? Certainly not! But no matter how you characterize the students of Perry, the children that go to THAT school, I know they are wonderful. They should be treated like valued members of our community, not unrepresented cast-offs.

Some parents voiced a concern that the GATE wouldn’t work at Perry. That is offensive and ignorant. Those individuals put their feet in their collective mouth on that note.

Teachers of HBCSD receive professional development as a community. Furthermore, there are GATE trained teachers at every school site. The education of the children of our community does not find its value in the walls of a building, instead it flows through these lessons, is that we study the past so we don’t repeat the mistakes of our predecessors. Perry is on the chopping block this evening, but should not be. The burden is on your shoulders, Board Members. Do you want your legacy to be one that you will be embarrassed to share with grandchildren, or do you want to let the sun set on a clear conscience. The decisions you make will indeed help write your legacy. I pray it is written with honor.

Sincerely,
Jeff Collins
Perry Elementary
GATE Certified

4/13/2020 18:55:14 Gena Jones Perry school closure We are writing on behalf of our 7 year old child who has grown up at Perry. He not only attends school there but is in the after school program at the YMCA. This is all our child has known. Coming in as a shy kid in Kindergarten, Perry has given our child the confidence to be a leader. The teachers principal and staff are all outstanding. Our child has formed lifelong friendships and we as parents have done the same. To separate them at this point in their growth would be nothing less than tragic.

They have been through a lot this year. They need to stay connected, stay strong and emerge from this unfortunate situation united as Perry Panthers. Please consider not closing the school that we love. This is our family.

4/13/2020 19:47:44 Carolina Alferez Please do not shut down Perry. Hello! I am a 29 year old Huntington Beach Resident and I am pleading you do not close down Perry. I have so many great memories of being a student at Perry. I feel like we've always been treated like valued members of our community. Our child loves going to school! The teachers and staff at every school site. The education of the children of our community does not find its value in the walls of a building, instead it flows through these lessons, is that we study the past so we don’t repeat the mistakes of our predecessors. Perry is on the chopping block this evening, but should not be. The burden is on your shoulders, Board Members. Do you want your legacy to be one that you will be embarrassed to share with grandchildren, or do you want to let the sun set on a clear conscience. The decisions you make will indeed help write your legacy. I pray it is written with honor.

Sincerely,
Jeff Collins
Perry Elementary
GATE Certified

4/13/2020 19:49:34 Stephanie Armenta Perry Elementary Perry and staff are not what make this school great. It's the parents and community that really make this place standout. My daughters first year of school and she loves it. She has improved in many areas academically and socially as well. I value this school the staff and parents who genuinely care about Perry. Closing Perry doesn't just mean a building but closing a community of parents and students unlike any other campus out there.

4/13/2020 19:56:36 Brenda Ramos Please don't close Perry! Please don't close Perry! My daughter and the rest of the students will be devastated.
I am disappointed to see that my children are valued below the school board. Children should be the number one focus of a school board.

Hi. My son has attended Perry Elementary for the last 4 years. He is currently in 2nd grade in Mrs. Brown's class. It is my understanding that the committee has recommended that Perry Elementary be closed. I personally don’t understand how that decision can be made, when there was not one representative from Perry Elementary appointed to the committee. This does not seem like a fair decision. I believe an appropriate committee should have a representative from each school.

We have had a wonderful experience at Perry Elementary, and we would be greatly saddened should it be closed. My son is doing very well there academically, and we appreciate the cultural diversity that Perry Elementary has to offer. No other elementary school in the district can offer that. We feel that it is important for our son to have friends who come from varying cultures and backgrounds. If Perry closes he will have to go to one of the other schools in the district that are predominately of white race. I’m sure those schools are great, but, if you close Perry you will lose the cultural diversity that is so important for opening minds & facilitating acceptance of others regardless of the color of their skin.

Lastly, I would also like to mention that Dr. Polk-Johnson and the staff have facilitated a great sense of pride among the students with the "purple perry panthers." My son still believes that Perry the panther lives in the tree on campus. It would be sad to see that all gone.

So, of course I am going to be biased in my opinion because my son goes to Perry and we love it there, however I do believe that I have very valid points, and I ask that you consider them in your decision.

Thank you for your time.

I am 8 years old and I have been at Perry for 4 years. I really like the school. It makes me sad that Perry might close, and I hope it doesn’t. It makes me sad that I won’t be able to finish my 2nd grade year there because of the coronavirus, and if it closes I can’t ever go back.

Good evening to all,

Thank you to the Board for reading my comment for all since we are unable to physically gather. I guess we were all naive to think that Perry Elementary was safe from being closed down and sold... especially, since it was recommended to stay open by the 7-11 committee. Please note my family lives in the Perry neighborhood. Currently my child is not old enough to attend Perry, nor are the three other little girls that live next to us. However, we all plan on sending our children to Perry. It seems like a convenient time for the Board to have such an important meeting- during a pandemic. We neighbors and parents can't meet, gather, and show our support for the school.

I beg that Board reconsider closing the school with the most Hispanic population, during a pandemic... especially to sell it for profit. That would be an awfully sad thing to tell all those children who attend Perry.

I thank you for your time, I hope you all remain safe and good health.

I am disappointed to see that my children are valued below the school board. Children should be the number one focus of a school board. Instead, it is focused on themselves. Clearly they have opened a fancy new office instead of helping improve the schools within the district.

The schools they have actually helped are also ones of means. It is interesting to note that the school with the highest rate of free lunches has to be the one that gets the cut. How dare you take away a school at this time for these kids. It is already hard enough right now, yet here this board thinks closing a school and dispersing these fragile kids is a good idea? Why not close your fancy office and actually put money where it should go, to educating the children of this school?? Perry is such a wonderful school. The principal, the teachers, and all of the staff care deeply for these kids! In its wonderfully classic 1960s architecture, they provide an inclusive environment for all who attend. I would rather my kids attend a school that is inclusive to all cultures and perspectives, a school where they will learn more about the world from those around them, and a school that cares about the kids over anything else! Name me a principal that knows every child’s name. I can, it’s Dr. Polk-Johnson! I deplore you, keep Perry open!!! Let the kids come back to a warm and welcoming place after this pandemic is over!!

Good evening board and fellow community members. My purpose of this letter is to reconsider the recommendation the board was given to close Perry Elementary. My plea comes as not only a parent’s perspective but also as a public school educator for more than fifteen years. My child attended the Preppie K program at Perry before continuing on to another school in the district for kinder. The decision to put him in Perry was very difficult. He attended a small private preschool for years before TK, but the program was highly recommended within the community. Sending him to Perry was the best decision and experience we could have given our child socially and academically. Not only is the Preppie K program one of the strongest I have ever witnessed, the experience he had at the actual school surpassed any expectation. The campus is filled with loving teachers that truly care about their students, their education, families, and community. The love and passion I’ve seen within the staff is without question a true gift to the community. Dr. PJ and her staff of super heroes have fostered an environment for every child to succeed, from preschool to 5th grade. Part of this magic comes from the small population that this campus is blessed to have, which provides every student with the opportunity to learn in an uncrowded classroom and receive undivided attention from their teachers and administrator. I ask as a parent and fellow teacher, please don’t take this away from our students. Perry provides these students a safe learning environment. As many of you know, we can’t control what happens to students outside of school hours, but we can at least maintain a safe, familiar place at their school. Don’t take this away from them, please. It will be devastating to most, if not all, students to lose their home at Perry. We need to think about doing the right thing and putting our students first. Thank you for your consideration.

Our children have been going to Perry Elementary for years and we believe it is a great school with wonderful teachers and staff that help our kids grow both socially and educationally. Closing this school will be a great loss to the community as well as to the families who attend.

Both my children went to Perry from kindergarten to 5th grade. The memories we have are why Perry stands out.

I have been fortunate to see first hand as a Perry PTA President, how this school makes a difference in the kids and their families at Perry. Closing this school would be a disservice to the kids and our community that so desperately need hope and support for the future.

I like almost everything about Perry elementary. All my neighborhood kids including my son goes to Perry. Teachers are great. I request the school board to cancel the idea of closing this school. Thanks so much.

I’m sure those schools are great, but, if you close Perry you will lose the cultural diversity that is so important for opening minds & facilitating acceptance of others regardless of the color of their skin.

The disruption in all our lives, the surprise infusion of money from the larger-than-expected Geisler sale and the uncertainty going forward are all reasons to stop the push to close a school next year. Please keep all HBCSD schools so every student has the opportunity to attend their neighborhood school. Give the community the opportunity, time and transparency to help find solutions to increase funding without closing schools. We can do it, together.
April 14, 2020 HBCSD Study Session

Public Comments

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<td>4/13/2020 23:57:06</td>
<td>Ted Barsh</td>
<td>Perry school closure</td>
<td>Greetings board members. As you are fully aware, the Task Force Committee recommended closing Perry. I sit here as former PTA President and current Vice President of Perry Elementary and question what more could I have done to protect my school and community when I know deep in my heart it wasn’t me that failed them it was you, our board, and our district. From the minute I became involved with Perry I could see the district failing to put time and energy into the school. It has always been the staff and Perry families that have given the school life. Last year after the recommendations of the 7-11 committee to not close Perry and an unanimously agreed upon vote by the board to keep Perry open, board member, Diana Marks, made the remark that “Now we need to discuss how we are going to help Perry? We need to plan to study a school’s success.” Yet here we are with that session never scheduled and again a failure on our district’s part to rejuvenate the school and getting families back to where they should be, at Perry. I am sickened by you, the board, and your failure with this whole Task Force process. It began with your failure to include representation from Perry school and also limiting such representation by having the application available only online and in English. Instead, you chose members from affluent areas of the district who were solely invested with their school or school in their neighborhood. It’s very fishy Ms. Kowalke, when 4 of the 11 members are directly linked to your former school, Moffett. Then, the state mandated school closures due to Covid-19 and thus created another failure by our district. All meetings have been held via video conference and the district limited the number of people allowed to view the meetings. I do believe this was in violation of the Brown Act as these meetings have not been accessible to all. I think about the hardships many of our families are currently experiencing due to Covid-19 and the added anxiety and stress this is going to cause not just for the parents, but the children too. I think about the friends my children have made over the years at Perry. Friends from very diverse cultures and backgrounds, each with a unique quality and gift that makes their friendships so valuable. My wife and I chose to have our children attend Perry for that very reason. Perry has always provided a school culture that it doesn’t matter who you are or where you come from, we will embrace you and love you, even long after you have moved on from the school. I am not giving up. I will continue to fight for what I know is right, and that is to keep Perry open. I will defend my school from the bullies that continual try to beat down my school without even knowing what a truly amazing school Perry is. I will continue to pray that just maybe this time around that you, the board, and district will actually do what is right for Perry, its staff, and families. In closing, please remember that the world, our country, our state, county and wonderful Huntington Beach community has changed forever. We are quite literally stressed and stretched thin. As the nation’s physicians suggest, we need to slow the spread, now you need to slow the close. Thank you for your time.</td>
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<td>4/14/2020 0:39:40</td>
<td>Maria Maldonado</td>
<td>The best school</td>
<td>I am very sorry to hear that the school probably will close, because it’s been the school of my family since I move to these place. And now my kids are part of it, and I only can say that we have an amazing team. The teachers are always giving an excellent job. My kids are happy and proud of been a Panther. Please don’t close the school...thanks !!</td>
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<td>4/14/2020 4:22:12</td>
<td>Valerie Robfogel</td>
<td>Perry Elementary</td>
<td>I went to Perry Elementary from 2004-2010. Even though that’s quite some time now, I have this school to thank for many things in my life right now in my 20’s. The teachers who share the Perry Panther school spirit, collectively, are what make the difference. At Perry, I was taught kindness, self-acceptance, and how to be strong like a panther; three very important developmental factors any child should be learning. I’m very grateful for my time at Perry and strongly hope that every child and future student has the experience I did.</td>
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<td>4/14/2020 7:58:56</td>
<td>Jennifer Spehar</td>
<td>Public Comment</td>
<td>Good evening Trustee members, Superintendent Haulik, Assistant Superintendents Haggard and Guerrero and community members. My name is Jennifer Spehar. I have been a teacher in the Huntington Beach City School District at Sowers since you, Dr. Morrow, hired me in 2003, and our family has lived in the district since 2011. I am writing today not only as an HBCSD teacher, but as an HBCSD parent, an HBCSD community member and an HBCSD voter. As Board Members, you were elected to be leaders in this community. Being a leader means having to make difficult decisions. Decisions based on logic, not necessarily emotions. However, the world has changed dramatically since the decision to assemble a Task Force to recommend a school site closure was made. And it’s time to hit the pause button. In our board units, we have all had to make, and adhere to extreme changes. We are all being faced with financial challenges, emotional challenges, homeschool challenges and for some even challenges finding food to feed our kids. We, your community members, are finding ourselves having to pull up from our savings accounts to help ourselves and our neighbors make it through this pandemic. While doing so we discuss our hurdles as a family, come up with a plan and solve it together. We look at all options and considerations and prioritize appropriately. In times of change and restructuring, I would encourage the Board to be creative moving forward. This is NOT the time to be closing ANY school. It is time to look at all options thoroughly, not rushed and irresponsibly. The fact that the Task Force was directed to continue even after schools were closed is disappointing. In a world where we are fighting for our lives, we should not have to be fighting to keep neighborhood schools open. Community members: we should not be putting one school over another. We should be uniting over the fact that these are unprecedented times and certainly not the time to be closing a school. I would like to respectfully ask the Board and District Administration to take the time now to look at other options just as your HBCSD families have had to do. Assemble a proper 7-11 committee that has the appropriate amount of time to dig into all considerations rather than a forced quick fix to put a fire out. Examine ideas such as selling the Burke site or removing the decrepit portables off all campuses. I don’t understand why you would choose closing and selling a site that our students call home over a site like Burke where students from surrounding districts pay to attend. In closing, please remember that the world, our country, our state, county and wonderful Huntington Beach community has changed forever. We are quite literally stressed and stretched thin. As the nation’s physicians suggest, we need to slow the spread, now you need to slow the close. Thank you for your time.</td>
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<td>4/14/2020 8:16:50</td>
<td>Kyle Cason</td>
<td>School Consolidation Task Force</td>
<td>My name is Kyle Cason and I was one of eleven community members selected for the School Consolidation Task Force. First, I want to thank the Board for selecting me for the daunting task of recommending up to two schools to the Board for closure. I knew it would not be simple, but I signed up to take this task on. My colleagues on the Task Force were incredible, bringing multiple perspectives and strengths to the conversations. We all spent at least 50 hours each on this subject, pouring over multiple sets of data and applying this data to the State’s “Closing a School Best Practice Guide” prescribed to us. While the pandemic was certainly unexpected and the meeting setting changed, the group was able to complete this important task. I want to thank my colleagues on the Task Force for persevering. The conversation towards the end of the Task Force centered much around distance, and I suspect you will hear many comments tonight about that. Distance is one of the eleven factors we were asked to consider, but not the only factor. I do not believe there are any elementary students walking 2 miles to the end of the Task Force centered much around distance, and I suspect you will hear many comments tonight about that. Distance is one of the factors important to me and the number of students affected, investment in the campus, busing, neighborhoods, and environmental factors. Perry’s closure would affect the least amount of students, and most of its students are already on buses. I was also compelled by a conversation I had regarding Perry regarding transfers. Unfortunately, families have been transferring out of Perry for years, and they will continue to transfer out of Perry in the future. Families who have chosen to transfer their students to other schools in the District will not send their children back to Perry if forced to, instead choosing to leave the District, go to private school, or go to charter school. If Perry remains open, low enrollment will remain. The Task Force’s recommendation was not taken lightly and I was not happy to vote yes for any school to close, but we signed up for a task and completed that task. The decision was not rushed and it certainly was not made without adequate data. Now the Board has the incredibly tough decision on how to move forward. Once again, thank you for selecting me to be a part of this Task Force, best of luck to you with this decision in the coming weeks, and stay safe.</td>
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<td>4/14/2020 8:52:41</td>
<td>Kurt Chrestensen</td>
<td>Perry Elementary</td>
<td>This entire process has been an absolute charade of democracy. From ignoring your district’s own findings last year about Perry, to putting it back on a potential closure list, to the selection process of “School Consolidation Task Force” candidates, and to the bias judgments some of those members made to preserve their own schools over others. Although they are not totally at fault, the data was not fully presented from the start. As time went on more information came to light, so much so that at one point that members tried to change their previous votes. It was so poorly deliberated, four of the members wrote a dissenting opinion about the 7-4 decision which has been sent out to the media, watchdog groups, and civil rights organizations we are working with. It truly broke my heart when one of the “majority” votes made their case by making the ridiculous statement, “I’ve talked to parents who told me they would pull their kids out of the district if their kids have to go to Perry.” It just exposes the sick, elitist attitudes of some of the people in our community. I remind you, Ms. Kowalke’s trustee area includes three schools, not one. But parents which were appointed lived in the Moffett tract. It’s interesting that Moffett was one of the first schools to be saved, and that the last two schools on the chopping block were Peterson and Perry, which also are in that trustee area, yet had no representation from Kowalke’s appointments. The closing of Perry causes students to travel much further than if certain other schools were to close. Student safety, a sense of community, and recreation for all neighborhoods should be a priority. We can’t expect some families to travel over two miles to a new school, while in other places schools are only a mile apart. For these reasons the Perry community will continue to use our leverage with organizations to continue to fight for the entirety of our district, and not just children from a certain wealthier neighborhoods.</td>
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<td>4/14/2020 8:53:50</td>
<td>Rebecca Gonzales</td>
<td>Joseph Perry Elementary</td>
<td>With today's current events, this has caused a big shift in my children’s lives, but when we heard that Perry was an option for closure this has caused an even bigger hurdle for my children and their future. Their love for Perry and the teachers since Preppie-K will always be there, but knowing there is a possibility of not continuing next fall is truly unfair to the children. Perry Elementary is an phenomenal school and the teachers have always been there for my children and are the reason why my children have excelled throughout the years. Please have compassion for these children by keeping Joseph Perry Elementary open. Knowing that 2019-2020 school year has been canceled for all students around the country is a tragedy for these kids, but also now living in stress with not knowing if they have Perry to come back too is something these children do not need to add to the stress. We as a community love, appreciate and deserve the right of consideration to have this school, these teachers and the amazing principal, Dr. Polk-Johnson to continue to stay open and working next year and the many years to come.</td>
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<td>4/14/2020 9:13:45</td>
<td>Aidan Gonzales</td>
<td>Joseph Perry Elementary</td>
<td>I'm feeling very ready to head on to middle school this fall, that's because I went to Joseph R. Perry Elementary. I don't think I could have gotten as good of an education anywhere else. All the teachers that I have had throughout my years at Perry have given me confidence within myself and respect for others, so by closing Perry Elementary you would be letting go of amazing teachers that my sister could have for the rest of her elementary years. You will be changing the education and respect for the students and most likely changing their confidence level of heading on to middle school as well.</td>
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<td>4/14/2020 9:37:16</td>
<td>Tara Holmes</td>
<td>Perry the Place to Be</td>
<td>Dear HBCSD Board Members, I started teaching at Perry Elementary school 15 years ago. While subbing at the other schools most times I'd go an entire day without another teacher even saying hello to me. When I came to Perry the staff welcomed me with open arms and treated me as family. The staff at Perry is truly a family. We care about each other. We care about our students. We have learned and used ANY and EVERY program ever created just to service the needs of all of our students. The staff at this school is knowledgeable, tireless, selfless and they create such a safe and nurturing environment for our students. The same students that boundary lines were bent to prevent them from attending other schools in the area. I am worried for these students the most. Will the other schools open their arms to these students? Will they blame these new students if their test scores go down? Will these students feel at home and safe and loved at a new school? Perry has been referred to as the “Black Sheep” of the school district which is a heartbreaking reality. We have been labeled and treated as such for years. If you were to close Perry which school would be the “Black Sheep” then? It’s a tragedy that any school in HB would earn this label. I am also worried for the program that I helped create and that has become recognized as one of the strongest and most sought after Preppie-KTK programs in the county. We have trained teachers in all the surrounding districts how to teach this program years before TK was even on the horizon. Thank you for allowing us all to be at Perry and collaborate over the past 12 years. It allows our program to be strong and engaging for our favorite five year olds. Their test scores alone show the benefit to having this program in our district because they are 6 months more advanced academically than students who do not qualify for this program. If you close Perry what happens to us? Right now we have 4 Preppie-KTK classrooms AND Extended K. That’s 5 full classrooms of 5 year old friends. Perry loves having the program. Where are you going to put us if you close Perry? Would you tear the program apart and have us lose any chances of collaboration for things like the Scarecrow Olympics, Teddy Bear Picnic, Mother's Day Tea Party, and all our Preppie-K choir music performances? Or how about just recess? The children need to be with other students in their same grade level. I hope when deciding if closing Perry you think through these things. We have 2 kindergartens, 4 Preppie-K classes, 1 Extended kindergarten, and 3 preschools that use the same playground at different times at Perry. How will this work at another school in the district? Perry is my home. Perry is the home to so many students that need a home away from home. Please do what's right and keep Perry open. In our favorite saying to all current and past Perry Panther employees and students: “Once a Panther, always a Panther” Sincerely, Tara Holmes Perry Panther for Life</td>
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<td>4/14/2020 10:01:13</td>
<td>Holly Deatrick</td>
<td>School Closure</td>
<td>Perry Elementary is a wonderful community school. All 3 of my kids have gone there and we have made lifetime relationships with the teacher and neighbors. All 3 kids have done wonderful in their educations and are thriving. We would vote no school to close and definitely have you reconsider Perry closure! PERRY PRIDE!</td>
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Dear School Board Members,

In January you had to make the difficult decision to close one of our elementary school sites due to declining enrollment and budget constraints. At the last school board meeting Dr. Morrow mentioned that the Task Force Committee should be put off for another year due to Covid-19. I feel that this is absolutely the worst decision that you could possibly make. There is never going to be a perfect time to close a school and not one person in our community wants to close a school. "Astounding" & making tough decisions is never fun but we have to be responsible adults about the future of our community and try to provide the best education for the kids in this community. If we couldn’t afford to keep a school open when our economy was thriving why would we possibly think that we would be able to keep it open now? Extending it for another year is only going to make matters worse in our district. When the kids return to school in September, they will have been out of school for six months. When is there a better time for transition? The answer is unequivocally yes – we need to keep this school open! It was a school I went to that my kids went to and now my grandkids going to.

Now is not the time to be making this decision and ripping off the band-aid as some have suggested - The lives of the teachers and students have been upended. Give them the gift of a reprieve and re-address this issue when we’re back to the new normal.

Mandi Silvaggio
Dwyer Parent of Twins
Task Force Committee Member

April 14, 2020
HBCSD Study Session
Public Comments

Timestamp | Name | Topic | Comment
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4/14/2020 10:50:39 | Sanchez | Perry Elementary | I ask that you please consider really hard to keep this school open! It was a school I went to that my kids went to and now my grandkids going to!
This school and teachers have helped me and my kids achieve their goals till this day they remember my kids! This school means so much more than just a school the school and teachers are a home. A home for the kids to feel safe and loved. This school is not a mill, it is a home and this is a home for our children. If Perry is closed it would be a serious detriment to the children and the district’s quality and reputation.

4/14/2020 11:02:26 | Jennifer Earle | Perry Elementary School | Perry Elementary is the school with the strongest sense of purpose for the students. This school is run expertly from the principal, teachers, office staff, all the way through to the janitorial staff. Each staff member on that campus is 100% focused on the overall success of their students and they know each and every one of them and their families. This school embraces each of their classes and specializes programs, hires the best teachers suited for them and does not allow for any personal agendas. They are equal advocates for special needs, ESL, socio-economic diverse and all of their other students. Keeping Perry open, gives children in the district opportunities they could be denied at other campuses. We need to make sure that our children have all of their needs met and no opportunities cut based on this new restructuring. Where would these children go where they would still feel comfortable and not like they don’t fit in? I fear that Perry is being dismissed and not properly represented for what it brings to the table. Please take a look at all the programs and resources Perry provides that are essential and would have to be provided in the new structure. We would not want any of those benefits to be lost or provided at a lesser level as that would be a serious detriment to the children and the district’s quality and reputation.

4/14/2020 11:35:30 | Mandi Silvaggio | School Closure | In January you had to make the difficult decision to close one of our elementary school sites due to declining enrollment and budget constraints. At the last school board meeting Dr. Morrow mentioned that the Task Force Committee should be put off for another year due to Covid-19. I feel that this is absolutely the worst decision that you could possibly make. There is never going to be a perfect time to close a school and not one person in our community wants to close a school. "Astounding" & making tough decisions is never fun but we have to be responsible adults about the future of our community and try to provide the best education for the kids in this community. If we couldn’t afford to keep a school open when our economy was thriving why would we possibly think that we would be able to keep it open now? Extending it for another year is only going to make matters worse in our district.

When the kids return to school in September, they will have been out of school for six months. When is there a better time for transition? The families and kids that do not live in the Huntington Beach City School District have been notified they will not be able to attend our schools in the fall. They have made plans as to where they will attend school and have started to accept it. The decision was made to allow our 4th and 7th graders to stay at their school sites to finish out their final year. So, by extending this for a year, what are we supposed to do? Are we now going to tell the 3rd graders and the 6th graders that they can also stay for another year so that they can finish out their time at their school site?

This has been predicted and proved every year in negotiations about the declining enrollment. You have managed to make it work so that no one believed it was a pressing issue. Programs have been built in the meantime through grants, PTA funds, etc. By not closing a school site this fall, programs will have to be cut, and it will take us years to rebuild. I know any parent wants their children at a school site that doesn’t have anything to offer. It does not matter how we got in this situation at this point. What matters is how we deal with the situation and move forward from here. Keeping a school open for another year is financially irresponsible and does seem in the best interest of the students of Huntington Beach City School District.

Mandi Silvaggio
Dwyer Parent of Twins
Task Force Committee Member

posted 4/15/20
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<td>4/14/2020 12:31:46</td>
<td>Lillian Allamirano</td>
<td>School Closure</td>
<td>Dear Huntington Beach City School Board,</td>
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<td>First and foremost, thank you for the time you have dedicated to our schools and community. We appreciate that in this crazy time, you haven’t faltered in your dedication to our schools. At this time, I’d like to address the potential school closure in our district. The state of the world has changed in a matter of minutes and we’ve been living in this crisis reality over the course of the last month. We’ve adjusted to so many changes in the last few weeks. Many of us are learning how to manage our work from home along with our children's education. As a teacher in another district, it has been a challenge to teach my students from home the first half of the day and then teach my own children in the afternoon. In all this, I know I am not alone. These new normal ha...</td>
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| 4/14/2020 12:41:06 | Samantha Doan       | School closure, bad          | I’ve never made a statement of this type but I feel that in a time like this everyone needs to be heard. It is a disgrace that with everything that’s happening in the world right now the Huntington Beach school district is trying to take even more from its students, teachers and families. The problems facing the district can’t be solved completely by closing a school, the district especially the board needs to be better at managing our transfers, perhaps looking closely at the funds we will receive from Gisler will prove that some of that money can save our schools, etc. There are a myriad of options that can be explored and the families in this district ask that the board present them with some of these new possibilities rather than choosing to close a school. This is not about the board being weak in any way, it is simply the board joining together with the families in this district and asking for a better solution. This way we can work collaboratively to help HBCSD earn the trust of it’s families and act in the best interest of its students and hopefully prepare for a much brighter future. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my thoughts this evening.  
Sincerely,  
Lillian Allamirano  |
| 4/14/2020 14:11:55 | Alison Duran        | Perry Elementary             | During this process that started around December/January, when it was determined that a school closure was necessary, it was all about the possibility of joining Sowers and Peterson, and then, if the district the Sowers land to sell, or the possibility of keeping our schools open. The parents and voters in this district would ask that the board strategically and with purpose examine all possible options to resolving the district’s financial woes without the closure of a school as suggested by the Department of Education. There have been talks in the community about the possibility of joining Sowers and Peterson, and in turn, giving the district the Sowers land to sell, or the possibility of keeping our schools open. As a child, I went to three different elementary schools. Giving my children consistency has always been important to me, as a parent. On the first day of school, my eldest child wakes up at 4:30 in the morning. A child that loves his sleep, and drags his feet every morning to get out of the door; he is ready in under 20 minutes and rushing for us to wait in the parking lot until he can run to his classroom. We have been attending Perry Elementary for four years, and they are one of the few elementary schools that haven't been renovated yet. Speaking of renovations, the district still has to answer why it chose to renovate schools in that order? Not the Sowers Prepositional Kindergarten program. My children have loved every teacher, they love the after school programs offered, the PTA dine-outs, and they (and we) especially love that our Principal takes the time to learn each child's name attending her school. It is a disgrace that with everything that’s happening in the world right now the Huntington Beach school district is trying to take even more from its students, teachers and families. The problems facing the district can’t be solved completely by closing a school, the district especially the board needs to be better at managing our transfers, perhaps looking closely at the funds we will receive from Gisler will prove that some of that money can save our schools, etc. There are a myriad of options that can be explored and the families in this district ask that the board present them with some of these new possibilities rather than choosing to close a school. This is not about the board being weak in any way, it is simply the board joining together with the families in this district and asking for a better solution. This way we can work collaboratively to help HBCSD earn the trust of it’s families and act in the best interest of its students and hopefully prepare for a much brighter future. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my thoughts this evening.  
Sincerely,  
Lillian Allamirano  |
| 4/14/2020 14:24:17 | Elizabeth Thai      | Our Community                | As a child, I went to three different elementary schools. Giving my children consistency has always been important to me, as a parent. On the first day of school, my eldest child wakes up at 4:30 in the morning. A child that loves his sleep, and drags his feet every morning to get out of the door; he is ready in under 20 minutes and rushing for us to wait in the parking lot until he can run to his classroom. We have been attending Perry Elementary for four years, and they are one of the few elementary schools that haven't been renovated yet. Speaking of renovations, the district still has to answer why it chose to renovate schools in that order? Not the Sowers Prepositional Kindergarten program. My children have loved every teacher, they love the after school programs offered, the PTA dine-outs, and they (and we) especially love that our Principal takes the time to learn each child’s name attending her school. Our children deserve to attend school in the fall at Perry. They deserve the staff, and the consistency of attending the same they were promised to come back to after leaving so abruptly mid March.  
Dear Huntington Beach City School Board,  
First and foremost, thank you for the time you have dedicated to our schools and community. We appreciate that in this crazy time, you haven’t faltered in your dedication to our schools. At this time, I’d like to address the potential school closure in our district. The state of the world has changed in a matter of minutes and we’ve been living in this crisis reality over the course of the last month. We’ve adjusted to so many changes in the last few weeks. Many of us are learning how to manage our work from home along with our children's education. As a teacher in another district, it has been a challenge to teach my students from home the first half of the day and then teach my own children in the afternoon. In all this, I know I am not alone. These new normal ha...  
Right now we don’t feel in control. We are looking to you for empathetic and compassionate leadership. Your community needs you now more than ever. We want a Huntington Beach to be the best place to live. It’s not too late to do what is right.
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| 4/14/2020 14:26:15 | Sarah Elrod  | School Closure         | Good Evening Board Members,  
My family is new to HBCSD as of October of 2019. We attend our home school, Peterson Elementary. Our decision to move to Huntington Beach was not one we made lightly. Our decision to move into the Huntington Beach City School District, instead of Ocean View, was also not made lightly. I spent days researching academics, teachers, clubs and activities, diversity, college prep, and health and safety as well as state rankings and test scores. We have been blessed to have the option to move almost anywhere we wanted. We were looking in San Clemente, Dana Point, Newport Beach, Costa Mesa, Corona Del Mar, and Huntington Beach. The major factors in the decision? Functional Location and Schools.  
In my extensive research, not once, did I come across any information about the district being in financial distress. NOT ONCE. We moved from a district where the Assistant Superintendent has been charged with money laundering and embezzlement over $1.7 million through construction. This was discovered in 2017 and he was arraigned on December 20, 2019. So please understand, I did my due diligence. Or so I thought.  
Is HB CSD going down the same path of my previous school district? The only things stake holders are seeing is that:  
• We are all of the sudden in financial distress  
• There is a ton of construction without transparency.  
• Budgets are ambiguous at best  
• There are non-competitive bids, many companies not submitting certified payroll correctly, and construction jobs are not being done in order of necessity. (i.e. Sowers)  
• There is irresponsible and reckless spending and defensive arrogance when asked about that spending (i.e. the expensive furniture purchase for Smith when Smith was still an option for closure)  
These are just a few things the stakeholders are seeing. What are we supposed to think?  
Now, on top of everything else, we have a global pandemic. This WILL cause financial strain on most of the community. Again, when the community’s economy is down, public school enrollment increases. That information came straight from Mr. Haulk. It is a dangerous decision to close a school now. Classrooms are already over crowded. What is the district going to do when we have too many students, not enough classrooms, not enough teachers and not enough support staff? Not to mention the reputation of HBCSD is going to plummet. Too many kids in a classroom= lower level of education= lower test scores= ruined reputation.  
It seems as though when money gets tight the first thing to do is sell off a school site. Take the fast and easy route that in the long run, could cause more harm than good. Mr. Haulk, can you address the school closures that happened in Eureka while you were the superintendent?  
I think the board will be hard pressed to find a stakeholder that is in favor of a school closure at this time. Isn’t the board supposed to speak for the constituents? We have expressed to you countless times what we want for our district. We know it will be a rough road. We are willing to make compromises for the betterment of the students. We aren’t going anywhere. We need to trust the people WE ELECTED to do what is in the best interest of the community and our kids. We will not stand by allow the board to make some detrimental decisions regarding our children with such haste. All angles need to be explored TRANSPARENTLY with the stakeholders.  
In closing, please take a moment and remind yourself, that while you may have more experience in education, we are still a resource to you. We are intelligent, creative, resourceful people. USE US. We are elected to speak for your stakeholders. You are to provide transparency and collaboration to your current stakeholders so that our future stakeholders are setup for success. Many of these students are the future and will be leaders of this community. Do you want to be remembered for making Huntington Beach a more flourishing, effective, productive, and sought-after community? Or do you want to be remembered for overspending, losing properties, not representing your community, being ineffective and possibly bankrupting your district even more? The choice is yours.  
Thank you for your time,  
Sarah Elrod |
| 4/14/2020 14:27:25 | Brooke Brady | Perry School Closure   | Dear HBCSD,  
I am a former Perry Student (2000-2006) and I am a current Perry Parent. I am writing this with high hopes that you choose to not close Perry Elementary. Perry is a family and it will be a devastating loss to the community if the closure is approved.  
How do you think closing a school will academically affect our children? What if your 4th grade and you are so excited to finished your last year at a school you love and that has set you up with the bases for success and in a blink it’s all taken away and you have to end up starting your last year in elementary school at a whole new school? It is not fair for our children to suffer.  
I strongly feel that Perry is one of the most diverse elementary schools in the district. Many students come from Spanish speaking families that don’t speak English. My daughter is in the State Preschool program and it’s amazing that her teacher is bilingual and teaches the children Spanish thru songs or reading. She then is able to communicate with some of her friends that she normally wouldn’t be able to. That is a base for my daughter’s future for her to potentially be bilingual and have a bright future when it’s time for her to pick a career. Why would you want to take that away?  
As for the teachers at Perry, they are amazing! They are the true definition of caring human beings that want nothing but the best for our children. It is my dream to have my elementary school teachers teach my daughter and also have my daughter promote 5th grade at Perry just like my brother, sister and myself did!  
Once a Panther, Always a Panther!  
Thank you! |
| 4/14/2020 14:41:36 | Lindsey Bartels | School Closure         | Dear School Board,  
I have spoken previously about the resilience of children, how we need to hug them and help them learn through any changes. Life IS change. They are resilient and life will go on. HOWEVER, HOWEVER HOWEVER that was when they went to school, and soccer practices and dance classes and playdates with friends and their parents had jobs and security. The situation has changed. We are adjusting. You need to adjust.  
Due to the current coronavirus situation, distance learning, and the difficulty providing quality education to special needs and at-risk children at this time- there should NOT be a school closure. The consequences are unnecessary to the children in this district who need it most. Just today I spoke to the principal of Edison about the many special needs students at his school and the terrible difficulty it is to provide quality education over distance learning. Imagine the detrimental effects to developing at-risk elementary-aged children of first, switching to distance learning with zero notice, and then closing the school. It’s just irresponsible.  
Okay, so say this school closure HAS to move forward. Imagine there is a map of Huntington Beach. Remove school names but only put X’s where elementary schools are located. What schools by the logical, area map, should be considered for closure? How far are you asking students and parents to travel? What is the cost of busing students? How many large, main roads should elementary children and families be asked to walk & bike across to get to school? Are you providing cross walks? What is the cost of that? I fear that the committee formed was not given ALL the relevant information, and also didn’t ask all the necessary, unbiased questions to reach an informed, unbiased decision. I BEG YOU to consider that Perry is on the VERY EDGE of the district and those families and children will be asked to travel over 2.5 to 3miles to the nearest school, in one direction.  
I do not believe we are enemies- we want what is BEST for ALL. The children of this district, and that would be NO school closure. Please DO NOT close Perry and add unnecessary burdens and difficulties to those families and at-risk children that need our help MOST. You have the power in this circumstance to provide unprecedented peace and comfort during a time of great upheaval.  
Thank you. Lindsey Bartels |
| 4/14/2020 14:42:02 | Mirna Ramos   | DO NOT CLOSE PERRY ELEMENTARY!!! | Closing Perry Elementary would be an injustice to the most vulnerable children in the school district. These children need all of the resources available to them and the closing of this school would affect the most disadvantaged children in the district. |
Hello this is Yvonne, California State Director of LULAC- or League of United Latin American Citizens. My family and I moved to Huntington Beach a year ago for many reasons, but the biggest draw for us were the amazing schools that we kept hearing about. We purchased our home in the Perry track and have been fortunate enough to send our child there for the last two years. We have had such a wonderful experience with the other families, teachers and Principal- the only downfall has been that for the past two years Perry has been up for closure and our community has been fighting to keep it open.

It has been such a disappointment to learn about the gross mismanagement of funds that have taken place over the years, and an even bigger disappointment that the only "solutions" that you and the Superintendent considered since the start of this process have been either the closure of a school, or taking away crucial services and programs. I don’t think that all of the options have properly been explored and now that we’re in a time when we are being asked as a society to social distance - how can you in good conscience close a school and overcrowd the others. No school should close. Our children deserve better than that. I am asking you today to reconsider your decision and look for alternatives. Perry is a very good school with wonderful staffs and teachers. They are all very sweet and I want my soon to be kindergarten daughter to experience the same thing her oldest sister got to experience. And my 1st grade son to experience the rest of the years at Perry.

Everyday is bringing new challenges and more uncertainty. As of yesterday, my work schedule for next year is influx. My husbands business is also on unsure footing with what is happening with the economy. The lack of predictability with our daughters school situation next year is weighing on us even more heavily than before. Not knowing what school she will be going to and what that means for the future is challenging. Teachers have become family at Perry. The teachers at Perry have to burn the candle at both ends, because of the diversity, and the love for their children. In the last several years the test scores have improved a lot. My children always tested well on the state test. My kids went to Perry from Kindergarten through 5th Grade. I spent many hours volunteering at Perry and being on the PTA board. Both my children received academic excellence as a 5th grader, and they only pick one student per year. Both are on a plaque in the office. I believe all teachers at Perry offer support and assistance when needed. Even the office staff, is wonderful at Perry. Kathy was great to work with and Patti was also, though she has left. Some of the teachers have become family to me. We have so many great memories of Perry. I don’t think my kids would be graduating this year from Rutgers University with honors and my son from HB with honors without Perry Elementary influences. We have to keep this school open for the kids: Teachers; Staff and the neighborhood. We LOVE Perry and the staff!!! We are the Perry Panthers!

Hello this is Yvonne, California State Director of LULAC- or League of United Latin American Citizens. Because of the continued target of our district’s most marginalized and at-risk students and families at Perry Elementary, parents and I have partnered with several organizations to ensure their equal rights. This is a portion of a letter from a national law firm in Los Angeles known as MALDEF, or Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund sent today to the Board criticizing the task force’s selection process and outcome, and more importantly advocating for our communities families which you continue to try and silence until you get the outcome you wish to receive.

I quote, “The exclusion of Perry stakeholders from the school closure process is, in the least, unfair…” and “The closure of Perry would require students who currently live within the school’s boundaries to travel to schools at least a mile and a half away from Perry, to ensure a more inclusive process, the District should desist the task force to be composed of membership more representative of the community.” They are expecting a reply and have assured us that they will not abandon us, but this is merely a first step. In the meantime, we will continue to strengthen our alliances and ad fuel to the fire you ignited. We will not be silenced. All kids matters. We urge you to reconsider closing any school at this time and look for alternatives and at the very least go through the selection process in the recommended fashion rather than this rushed process that has, it seems been unsatisfactory for just about everyone involved.

I am writing this letter to strongly urge you to revoke your decision to close Perry Elementary school. My son has attended Perry for the past six years. Sadly, he cannot even finish his last year at his beloved elementary school due to Covid 19. And to think, he might not even be able to say goodbye or just even visit the campus because it will be closing for good is heartbreaking. As a parent and educator for over 20 years, I cannot begin to tell you what an amazing experience and education my son has received at Perry. His teachers and staff have been none other than top notch. They have cared for my son, helping him grow academically, emotionally, and socially. I had the option to send my son to other schools, especially with the numerous questions of why I was sending my child "THERE". I could have had him attend the school I teach at, in another district. I could have sent him to the GATE magnet school in HBSCD when he qualified in first grade. I didn’t. Being a teacher myself, I know how hard educators work. The teaching was incoming. I hope he would get a stellar education no matter where I sent him and the Perry teachers well exceeded my expectations. I chose to send my son to Perry because it was our neighborhood homeschool. I chose because that is what we should do! We should be building camaraderie within our homeschool communities. I have fond memories playing together with the kids in my neighborhood that I went to school with. That is what I wanted for my son. If you are to close Perry, you are taking that opportunity away from these children. Many of whom now won’t live remotely close to or within the same community as their school/classmates. Closing Perry or any of the HBSCD elementary schools for that matter, is going to isolate the children and possibly carryover into the school setting. Much like it currently is doing to the two school communities that have been on the chopping block thus far. Now, we worry more than ever about everything else that could bring on a school closure. These children, parents, teachers, and staff didn’t even get a proper goodbye, and to end it like this is just unfaethemonial. Do not let our children suffer due to the mistakes and mismanagement of others. Once again, I urge you to strongly reconsider your decision. While you are all at it, recollect the reason why you ran for the school board in the first place or the reason one should run; to protect the welfare and well-being of ALL children! Find another solution.

In consideration,
Lisa Tarkanian
When asked to write something about Perry, I was afraid that it would be difficult. As a soon to be college graduate, elementary school feels like it should be the last thing on my mind. Yet, despite this worry, what I quickly remembered is that without the help of Joseph R. Perry Elementary and all that it has brought me, I would not be the person that I am today. Perry offered me not only lifelong friends, but teachers that truly cared, a solid foundation and support system, and the necessary life skills to help me succeed again and again.

Perry was my first experience with community. It has always been a place that brings people together. Today, both me and my family are still close with the other families and teachers that helped to educate me and my peers. In my six years at the school, I was able to see parents and teachers come together often to host events, bring amazing speakers to the school, and make things happen for each and every student. Through Perry I was able to learn about art, find a passion for reading, and discover the importance of giving back to those communities that matter most to you, all on top of learning the basics that every child should know. I hope that by writing this today, I am still able to give back to that community that I value so dearly.

As a former student of Perry, it is a part of my history as it is for so many others and should be for many more students to come. Though I may be just one among many, I feel confident in saying that I speak for the Perry community. The people that I met and things I learned in those years shaped me in more ways than I can mention. Perry is the reason that so many of us are better students, people, and friends. How could you consider taking that experience away from a future child? We will all be deeply affected if we lose our beloved school.

Respectfully, Madison Miller

The board and superintendent are continuing their agenda of railroadng through a school closure in light of a sever global health pandemic that has already shut down schools across the country indefinitely? While this body is intent on making a very big decision under the shadow of a statewide emergency, students, teachers, and parents have been severely disrupted and are struggling to find support and help in simply finishing out the school year. This global health pandemic is hitting our community and school district too hard already, and to think there should be continued focus on the elimination of a school site is completely wrongheaded in these times. Now is the time for pause and reflection. The only issues to focus on are how the board and superintendent can rally support and additional resources for teachers, students, and parents in all of our district schools. Supporting our community and keeping them a top priority and focus during this state of emergency, lockdown, and uncertainty is vital! Discussing school closures does not strengthen or help this situation in any way. Look around at what is happening now, and please deal with the here and now of this health crisis and how you all can support communities in all of our district schools. The students, teachers, and parents in this district are watching and hoping your focus will immediately turn to more critical issues that can help them directly in these uncertain times instead of causing more disruption to their lives by making a very big yet short sighted decision to close a school site. Thank you.

I think Perry should stay open because it has great teachers that teach students well. I feel well prepared to enter middle school. Also I had a great experience at Perry. The teachers are friendly and truly care for their students. Another reason Perry should stay open is because many students have younger siblings that go there and want them to have the same experience. Please do not close the school I love so much!

There is still an Option 3. Please consider this. Please do what is right for every child in this district today. You have the power to stop this from moving forward now. Last months study session, Ms. Marks and Dr. Morrow said this needed to be slowed down, because of this pandemic. Our community has been turned upside down. Teachers, parents and children are ridden with anxiety because of the unknown. Please, let’s come up with a better option rather than continuing with a school closure the end of this year.

Respectfully,

Aaron Haley

A Big Decision in a time of reflection and pause.

I am writing today, as I did last week, to urge you to stop plans for a school closure on this tight timeline. Perry should not be closing it doors the end of year, the number could be up to 47 pink slipped and over an $8 million deficit. And now guess what? There's no way we are going to finish out the school year. This global health pandemic is hitting our community and school district too hard already, and to think there should be continued focus on the elimination of a school site is completely wrongheaded in these times. Now is the time for pause and reflection. The only issues to focus on are how the board and superintendent can rally support and additional resources for teachers, students, and parents in all of our district schools. Supporting our community and keeping them a top priority and focus during this state of emergency, lockdown, and uncertainty is vital! Discussing school closures does not strengthen or help this situation in any way. Look around at what is happening now, and please deal with the here and now of this health crisis and how you all can support communities in all of our district schools. The students, teachers, and parents in this district are watching and hoping your focus will immediately turn to more critical issues that can help them directly in these uncertain times instead of causing more disruption to their lives by making a very big yet short sighted decision to close a school site.

Respectfully,

Jessica Pope

April 14, 2020 HBCSD Study Session

Public Comments

Malcolm Schmidt

Hello School Board and Task Force,

I am writing today, as I did last week, to urge you to stop plans for a school closure on this tight timeline. Perry should not be closing it doors nor should any other school in the district. The circumstances that got us in to this situation appear to be a result of reckless spending and should be resolved in a manner that allows more growth and change in the future. The community at large felt uncomfortable with the rash decision made in February to rip off the bandaid and make a decision on which school would close in less than two months. In fact the committee had to be renamed a "Special Task Force" in order to get around the rules that would normally guide a 7/11 committee. "Facts" (let it be noted that I used quotation marks around the word fact) were whipped together and the board and task force was not given adequate time, information, or preparation to make unbiased and informed decisions that would be best for the community as a whole. We are in a state of emergency and our focus should be on how to best heal our community's mental, physical, and economic state. The devastation on the students, faculty, and families of a school that is forced to shut down without getting to say a proper goodbye will be a lifelong wound for all affected. We haven't seen the full extent of what this disaster will do to our economy, but I think we all realize that when a significant portion of our society suddenly has orders to stop working for 6 plus weeks, that the economic impact will be beyond devastating. We need stability and consistency right now. School closure should not be an option. I want to give a special shout out to Perry right now. It has been a target for two years, yet a large portion of the school district students know and LOVE it as their first school. Honestly, our one short year there was so magical, that it has gained a special place in my heart next to my kid's school, Peterson. It was hard to leave there for the school my older son was already attending. Mrs. Grosscot made every day like learning from a Disney Princess and the amazing Mrs. Renee Polk, Johnson knew EVERY child by name with details about them. I was so impressed. Perry is amazing, Peterson is amazing, we have also been to programs at Seadrift, Hawes, and Easter which were amazing. I am confident that Smith and Moffett are amazing. NO SCHOOL should be closing. Let us slow this down and learn in our same communities again once this disaster is over! Do not close a school on this fast timeline!
Dear School Board Members,

This message pertains to the Task Force Committees’ recommendation to close Perry Elementary. I have sat by and watched this matter unfold over the past two years. I have previously taken comfort that in the end, the decision makers, whether the 7-11 committee members or the Board itself seem to come to satisfactory conclusions on the issues. However, the rushed timeline of the development and creation of the School Closure Task Force Committee (SCTFC), followed by the compressed schedule compelled upon the SCTFC gives me great pause that prudent decisions or recommendations are being made. Life experience shows us that good decisions rarely come when rushed. Full information is difficult to obtain, and thoughtful analysis is nearly impossible in a rush. In fact, the SCTFC did not even do what the Board requested, which is submit two elementary schools for consideration of closure. In the rush to render a decision, under the growing specter of a global pandemic, complicating meetings, input and public oversite (at least 2 Zoom meetings were oversubscribed and limited to 100 viewers) the SCTFC submitted only one school for consideration.

From the beginning, the recommendation to close an elementary school was based on speculative and specious assumptions. Enrollment has gone down. But the reasons for the decline have not been examined well enough to attribute all of the decline to demographic shifts. A charter school has been established in our district and is thriving and even expanding. Will the district examine the reasons behind that school’s success and look to adopt some of those measures itself? Perhaps we can increase enrollment in the district by continuously improving our own programs. Evidenced by the number of inter-district transfers, clearly there is existing interest in our district programs.

The district also has a bigger budget problem with its expenses. As was made clear during last year’s 7-11 committee report, and further supported by recent projections from the districts own information – closing a school will not solve the budget problem for the district. To paraphrase 7-11 committee chairperson Jill Hardy at the presentation of last year’s committee report, ‘the district has a spending problem’. That spending problem will not be resolved by a school closure. It is bigger than that. The district’s recent projections indicate that an elementary school site closure and commensurate layoffs will stanch the losses at the district for only 2-3 fiscal years. After that, the district will again be in a budget deficit.

We were all surprised ten months ago when the possibility of changing our funding model to Basic Aid was suddenly presented to the Board. It would seem to me that something so consequential would be clearly reviewed and planned for so as to best accommodate our entire community of teachers, students, families, and other stakeholders. Instead, the Board has reacted with impetuous decisions that impact all affected parties negatively. No thought or forward planning seems to have been part of this process. In the minutes of the June 2019 board meeting, Superintendent Hauck recommended that the board wait one year before any school closures are considered in order to “reaffirm that the district will become a basic aid district”. It has now been barely ten months and a SCTFC has been created, concluded, and named a school for closure. What happened to measured consideration of something with such wide-ranging effects? What happened to waiting one year, as recommended by the superintendent?

The argument for closing a school was weak earlier this year and has been rendered moot in our current time. Uncertainty is everywhere now – economic, social, political. We have no reason to accept any economic model or projection created in the past six months as accurate anymore. Simply too much has changed in just the past 60 days, and far too much remains unknown about our immediate and even mid-term future, let alone to consider projections over a longer horizon. Basic Aid funding is predicated on increases in the property tax base and lowered enrollment in our schools. The presumption that our district will move to Basic Aid funding is based on a rosy economic outlook that no longer exists, in the short term anyway. There is no prevailing evidence that the district will move to basic aid in the next year or two – and all prevailing common sense and economic factors show that this is not likely to happen in the near future. A sudden spike in unemployment, not seen since the Great Depression, is unlikely to facilitate an increase in property taxes in the district. In fact, it may boost enrollment, as the district will very likely receive students that can no longer afford to continue at private schools. A mere five weeks ago, students and teachers still filled our schools. That is not the case today, nor are we assured as to when, if, or how that might happen in the fall. In the midst of the social and economic crisis unfolding in our nation, what is the civic good to laying off teachers – those fortunate to still have a job – in the current market and may not be for some time. Teachers, many with families, some with students in our district – and all a part of our community – are assets for our district at a time when the future for all schools is uncertain. Let us not lose them due to short-sighted decisions. We do not know what the fall may look like for our schools and we should retain all resources that may be needed. I propose we reverse the decisions of the last six months: welcome back our inter-district transfers; thoughtfully consider our funding method and create a reasonable plan to make such a dramatic change; work on improving our schools to continuously seek out all the students in our community.

Speaking specifically of Perry Elementary, the school is an asset for the district as well. Our little school on the hill is an integral part of the community. It serves a more disadvantaged population than the other schools around; a population that may not weather crises as easily as more fortunate groups. Physically, it is one of the few elementary schools not in a designated natural hazard zone – it is not in an earthquake fault zone or liquefaction zone (Eader, Hawes, Moffett, Peterson), nor is it in a tsunami inundation zone (Eader, Peterson), or in danger of dam inundation from a Prado dam failure (Eader, Hawes, Moffett, Peterson) – a remote but very real risk per US Army Corp of Engineers. Perry is a great school, as are all of the schools in the district, that just has not been given the same opportunities for improvement. That is no reason to close it. Let us preserve all of our resources and plan to maintain and utilize them all in the best way for the district.