

Dear President Navarro and Members of the Board of Education:

Thank you for taking the time to read this entire Email. Please regard it as an extended Public Comment (conveyed electronically rather than as oral testimony). As such, it is being bcc'd to a number of other citizens, with the hope that they in-turn will forward it to others who might be interested.

Like many who received a recent mailing from the Superintendent, I was inclined simply to discard the envelope, the glossy brochure ["Annual Report to the Community, Spring 2007"], the cover letter, and the thoughtfully-provided copy of the newspaper article, without wasting the time to read any of it. Or rather, to place the material in my recycling bin, because one would hope that all of us are aware of the need to conserve resources and are careful not to waste them.

Then the themes of waste and the need to conserve resources struck me - again. After reading as much of the material as necessary to determine that it was in fact yet another example of the kind of propaganda packet we receive so often (attempting to assure us that our public schools are doing the very best that can be done given the resources available), I considered the response postcard, also thoughtfully provided. Postage-free (unless one considers that we all pay for it). With space to offer comment - if three lines on a postcard can be considered adequate space to pen a reasonable set of "specific topics". Hopefully no one would waste yet more time - and taxpayer money - completing and mailing the postcard. But it is hard to know. Does anyone know how many such cards are mailed in or what information they convey?

In the budget decision cycle that just ended we witnessed extensive testimony by citizens who expressed concern about the grave damage that would be done to our school system if even one single dollar that had been requested was not awarded. Presumably, all involved in the budget dialogue hoped that a reasonable compromise would be reached and valuable lessons would be learned; but was it and were they? Some citizens focussed on the billions of dollars requested. Others on the millions of dollars that might be denied. I ask you to think now of just two dollars: a minimal estimate of the cost of preparing, producing, and mailing just one copy of that brochure (and the accompanying letters). Think of the teachers who routinely spend a portion of their own salary, buying some needed supply item for their students. Would not the two (or more) dollars spent sending out even one such frivolous brochure be more wisely used to provide pencils, paper, and the like, to the kids in even one classroom, so even one teacher does not feel compelled to buy such materials themselves? Then multiply the effect by the number of such packets that were mailed out in late June.

This is, in essence, a request that you help us teach our children - by example - the importance of conservation. Conservation of ALL resources. Not just money, not just paper, not just postage, not just the environment. Time is a precious resource. Public trust is another. To those one might add patience,

respect and so on. How much of such resources can we "buy" by saving two dollars? Probably not much. But we can certainly waste a lot (if we fail to spend those dollars wisely) and at a cost that is incalculably large.

A new school year and a new cycle of budget preparation will soon be upon us. The flow of information - and mis-information - will again intensify. I urge you to stop approving - explicitly or implicitly - the kind of waste involved in the distribution of such brochures (and, yes, of so many needless pages in the annual budget proposal). Hopefully, every citizen who concurs with my suggestion will send you an Email - but NOT one of those postcards! - stating how they feel about the connection between educating our children and conserving our resources. Thank you all.

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