

Comments from Regnart PTA / Parent Leader

From: Kelly Crosby

Thu, Sep 24, 2020 at 12:06 PM

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To the members of the CUSD School Board, and members of the CUSD Executive Cabinet:

Thank you for your attention. I have taken quite a bit of time to think through what I'd like to express to all of you, because I am not one to let my emotions get the better of me. I wear two hats in Cupertino, so I'd like to include two messages in this email.

First, writing as the President of the Regnart Elementary PTA:

I have spent countless hours recently listening and processing the anger, concerns, and anxieties of my parent community. When I was elected to the President of the PTA Board, I took my role as seriously as you take yours. I work tirelessly to advocate for my school, as I am sure many of you have done over the years. When there's a job to be done, both within Regnart or outside of it, I'm the first to volunteer, because I feel an inherent need to serve not only my own two children (5th grade and 3rd grade) but also the other 350+ children currently at Regnart. As a PTA, we do amazing things. We never say no to parent requests; we say, "let's figure out how we can do that." As a community we've weathered a lot: we've seen three principals in two years, last spring we had a first grader tragically and suddenly pass away, we've been fighting the target on our backs for over two years now regarding declining enrollment, we had both (2) of our TK classes taken away (and our wonderfully amazing TK teachers moved to other campuses), and yet - our parent community is still incredibly close, resilient, and active. Our children are vibrant, engaging, involved, driven, and - most importantly - they are kind. I am proud to lead the Regnart community because we are all open and honest with each other - and most of all, we are friends. Our closeness knows no racial divides; we are truly all in it together at Regnart.

This may be the case at every other Cupertino school; in fact, it probably is. However, as an acting PTA President I have made a concerted and conscious effort to reach out to the PTA/PTO Presidents of every school that has felt "threatened" by Scenario 1 and I have received no response. Regnart would love to make a connected effort with our greater community as we really do believe that NO schools should be permanently closed, but because we cannot connect with other schools we've been forced to fight for ourselves. It's not a position we like to be in; it doesn't feel comfortable or good to us. But we do feel like our backs have been put against a wall and we have no choice, or voice, in this matter as it moves forward. And this leads me to my next point.

As an engaged and knowledgeable volunteer, I've read every email and attended every meeting; many with several of you on this email. I've volunteered for every committee and devoted a considerable amount of time to the CUSD United effort. I watched Dr. Baker and team roll out CUSD25 and, at Regnart, we threw ourselves and our PTA behind it full force. It was a flop (as I think we all admit by now) for reasons we all may disagree on; but I've heard quite often from many leaders at the top that "the Cupertino community has known this {school closures} was coming for many years now, but engaging them has been hard." Yet, in one week, three of us leading the parents at Regnart have been able to mobilize our community enough to the point where they want to: put up 200+ lawn signs, rally, open their checkbooks, speak with their bosses and higher-ups, write to the government, march on Sacramento, and basically do anything and everything necessary to stop school closures. I personally worked very hard on the Measure O campaign. I never once heard, "If Measure O does not pass, we will have to close schools." I never once heard the Board or the District state, "CUSD United is a wonderful way to monetarily support your school District, let's get this thing off the ground and do it now." Instead we've been sitting in meetings for months waiting for some type of support or legitimacy behind the scenes. In every email sent, where you have to click link after link to find buried meeting minutes and click through multiple websites to find the relevant bits of buried data, it never once screamed, "WE ARE HEADED OFF A STEEP CLIFF AND WE NEED TO DO THIS OR YOUR SCHOOL WILL CLOSE IMMINENTLY." And if I'm an active, engaged volunteer ...what about regular, busy parents who aren't "in the know"? These are comments I'm getting from my parents on a daily basis, and I have to say that I agree. I felt rather blindsided, and I knew the state of the situation. I cannot imagine how other parents or other schools have felt.

Second, I will write to you as a Parent in the CUSD Community:

I'd like to step back and take a 30,000-foot approach to this for a minute. As a District, we have children at home, stressed, anxiety-ridden, worried about COVID, in many different types of home situations. We have parents who are just barely keeping it together while working from home, or who are essential workers and trying to figure out how to school their children while still working, or parents who have lost their jobs (yes, it's happening in Tech too, even in our neighborhoods.) And now you are telling them that they have to worry about changing not only the *entire* way they go to school next year (with masks, distanced, probably in a new schedule, eating differently, etc.), but some of them to an entirely different school too? Maybe with their friends, but maybe not? And for my particular neighborhood, if Regnart closes, we will most likely be headed to school in Saratoga-an entirely different city? If you think that out... it feels morally wrong, for our children, on so many levels.

I urge you to pull other levers. Any other levers. I am aware of what those are. And I know these are incredibly difficult decisions; I do not envy you and I know that you each have big hearts and you do truly care about our children. But to rush this - something that will have lasting impact (and I argue damage) on Cupertino and its children for decades - is irresponsible. If there is any way to delay this, to let us parents get involved and help solve the problem, let's do that.

If we are truly all in this together, let us mobilize, and do it together.

Thank you for your time,

Kelly Crosby
Regnart Elementary School PTA President