

CITIZENS' OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Clifton B. Cates III – Chair
Quincy Hocutt – Vice Chair
Steven Cole
Glenn DeVeer
Joelle Morisseau-Phillips
Willie Ordonez
Mikala Rahn
Gretchen Vance
Diana Verdugo
Jenifer Wang
James Vitale
Leslie Cross
Francis Boland
Camille Dudley
Mike Mohit



Pasadena, California

July 24, 2017

Kimberly Kenne – Board Liaison

Dr. Brian McDonald
Superintendent, Pasadena Unified School District
351 South Hudson Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91109

Re: Requests for information

Dear Dr. McDonald:

The Citizens' Oversight Committee has directed me to write to you to inquire when it will receive important information that the Committee needs in order to do its job, information that it has previously requested on several different occasions. In accordance with your direction of May 15, 2017, I make this inquiry of you, although all of the information sought is within the possession of your Facilities Department.

Information necessary to complete project status report. The Committee has undertaken to generate for the benefit of the Board and the public one simple report which will serve as an executive summary of each TT-funded project, something which does not currently exist. The Committee asked for ten discreet pieces of information, which are listed in my letter of March 23, 2017 to Nelson Cayabyab and repeated in my May 11 letter to you. As of July 19, the District has provided some of the requested information, but we are still missing the following: 85% of percentage of completion of

all TT projects; 88% of the estimated completion dates of all TT projects; current estimated costs of completion of all TT projects; and whether the estimated costs of completion, whether contracted or estimated, have been approved by the Board of Education. Once we know those estimated costs, we will be able to show how those estimated costs compare with the current budgeted amounts.

Information regarding Norma Coombs Elementary School. Despite its best efforts, the Committee has been unable to ascertain the source of many of the numbers on the Spend-out Plan for remaining TT funds first promulgated by the Facilities Department in April, 2017. (There have been at least five iterations of the Spend-out Plan, not all of which the Committee has seen. None has been approved by the Board.) To illustrate the Committee's inability to figure out where the numbers came from, we used Norma Coombs Elementary School as an example. The last published budget for TT-funded improvements to the school was \$4,787,261, but the first version of the Spend-out Plan provided \$6,900,000. The Committee wondered where the additional \$2.1 million is to come from and on what it will be spent. By letter to Nelson Cayabyab dated May 2, 2017, we therefore requested specific information pertaining to that school. To date the following information has not been provided to the Committee: the needs assessment or the architect's written cost estimates, which are required to be provided at the completion of schematic design, design development, and completion of construction documents.

Board Reports requesting the expenditure of Proposition TT Funds. In my letter to you of May 20, 2017, I requested that the District provide to the Committee all Board Reports that do not end with the suffix "F" and that request Proposition TT funding. Principal examples are Board Reports 139-B and 113-B, which request TT funding of certain legal expenses of the District. The District routinely provides the Committee with "F" (for Facilities) Board Reports but not the others. Some of these we have discovered only by chance. However, in order to fulfill its oversight function, the Committee must be able to see *all* Board Reports that request the appropriation of Proposition TT funds.

A related problem is the District's frequent failure to provide Board Reports to the Committee in sufficient time to analyze them before the Committee's regular monthly meetings. For example, the Board Reports to be considered at our July 19 meeting were provided just six hours before the meeting. We realize that some Board Requests reflect information received at the last minute, but this should be the exception, not the rule.

The District has the ability to know what most of its appropriation requests will be well in advance of the time that they are now written.

Detailed bills from the District's law firm showing the reason for legal services paid out of TT funds. There is no need to belabor the serious problems inherent in the Board's approval of Board Report 113-B or the District's payment from TT funds of legal expenses not directly related to TT projects. The only way for the Committee to ascertain whether TT funds have been properly spent is to review the law firm's detailed bills. These I requested in my letter to you of July 16, 2017. I realize that you have been unavailable for the past couple of weeks and have not had sufficient time to answer our request, but I hope that you will make the bills for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2017 available to the Committee at the earliest possible opportunity.

Attendance by the Chief of Facilities at Committee meetings. Our last request, though not for specific information, is directly related to our ability to obtain necessary information on a continuing basis. We need the person most knowledgeable about TT projects to attend our regular monthly meetings. That person is the Chief of Facilities, Nelson Cayabyab. This year he has failed to attend Committee meetings in January, April, June, and July. Instead he sent a staff member who, though he wished to be cooperative, simply did not know the answers to many basic questions about the status of TT projects and their funding. The staff member was finally reduced to answering the Committee's questions with, "I do not know; submit a written request for the information." By letter to you dated May 11, 2017, the Committee specifically requested that Mr. Cayabyab attend our meetings. It is essential that he do so. The Committee knows that Mr. Cayabyab has a long commute. If he does decide to rejoin us, we will schedule his presentation and Board Reports review session early in our program.

The Committee looks forward to your responses, we hope before our next meeting on August 16, 2017. If you cannot or will not provide any of the information requested, we would appreciate an explanation why not.

Sincerely,

/s/ Clifton B. Cates
Chair, Citizens' Oversight Committee