

Mike Peritz Proposal
Creating Scenario 3

The Superintendent of WCCUSD Schools, the Richmond City Council, and the Board of Education need our help. The County Board of Education mandated (August, 2008) that the WCCUSD consolidate schools and negotiate lower medical and retirement benefits for employees.

For the school consolidation and closures, Dr. Harter wants everything equitable, transparent, collaborative, and FAST. Dr. Harter is a good man, working hard with his staff to comply with the demands from the state and county; however, a superintendent can only operate “within the box.” That is his job description—to work within the constraints of applicable rules and available money. The superintendent and his cabinet have designed two scenarios that fit the requirements; these models have been presented for us to contemplate, modify, improve. (Neither was intended to serve as a final “closure list,” but, unfortunately, they have been widely perceived as such.)

It is our charge as creative citizens to “think outside of the box” and come up with better solutions—Scenarios 3, 4, 5, 6, etc. until we have an agreement that best serves the needs of all our students. The Board says it will consider our opinions, ideas, and evidence, but we are responsible for articulating so that they can figure out what to do. Irreversible decisions will be made in January for closure announcements in February.

What follows is my Scenario 3. It is a compilation of many ideas that I have heard and borrowed. A lot of my emphasis is selfishly for Kennedy High, but that is the plant where I have spent over 40 years, have seen the highs and the lows, and have learned from both. Kennedy is the only school NOT FOR SALE because the District recognizes its many assets and its underutilization. They are right on both accounts. A fantastic, busy, waiting-list Kennedy (again) would be the best use of the property.

Most of what I illustrate could benefit other schools. Please let me know of your adaptations and improvements. Together we can conceive and implement some scheme that will get us through this desperate moment. Add to the vision. Involve others. Improve the public schools. Hurry. Time is our only enemy. What’s your Scenario 4?

Scenario 3

- Step 1 Develop a campaign to request debt forgiveness
 - Chain letter
 - Publicity
 - Approval of elected officials

- Step 2 Delay school closure 2 years
 - Enlist cities
 - Injunction
 - Civil disobedience
 - Feds

- Step 3 Use criteria list as a rubric for school improvement
 - School size, API growth, etc.
 - Scoring system for rubric
 - School has 2 years to meet district standards
 - Minimal consolidation in year 3

- Step 4 To boost attendance, develop unique, desirable programs (magnets) for undersubscribed schools
 - Re-draw attendance boundaries

- Step 5 Involve cities, non-profits, community, unions, colleges, alumni,
 - Have each school know and celebrate its history
 - Have each school know its present—stats, scores, goals, demographics, resources, accomplishments
 - Create partnerships for joint use
 - Create collaborations for mutual benefit
 - Reduce duplication of services
 - Partner with trade unions
 - Partner with service clubs

- Step 6 Develop income streams
 - Partnerships
 - Tax credits
 - Real Estate
 - School Based Enterprise
 - Selling recycles
 - Selling unused, obsolete equipment, furniture, etc.

- Step 7 Cut Expenses
 - Consultants
 - High end employees
 - Facilitate retirements
 - Waste
 - Accounting snags

Step 1 Campaign for Debt Forgiveness

(Cover letter)

For financial reasons, the West Contra Costa Unified School District has announced multiple school closures and consolidations. In order to avoid this, WCCUSD must immediately eliminate debt incurred in the late 80's, early 90's. Until the budget problems are rectified, the students are being robbed of their education dollars and many neighborhood schools will be closed. You can help. We must all help. Ask for loan forgiveness. Demand loan forgiveness. Beg for loan forgiveness.

Here's how you can help:

- 1) Write to the Governor and Legislature, Contra Costa County officials, city councils and mayors within WCCUSD, contacts in real estate and industry who appreciate the economic and social justice implications of quality education. Use the attached letter, an adapted one or draft your own. Get the word out to —Democrats, Republicans, local, county, state: BAIL OUT OUR SCHOOLS. SAVE OUR SCHOOLS.
- 2) Next, send your letters to acquaintances who will send their own versions to elected officials and corporate connections. Send to at least 10 people who will send to at least 10, etc.
- 3) For friends who aren't on computers, print hard copies of this email and the attachment. Give this to your friends who handwrite or type their letters; generic letters copied on a copy machine are fine but personalized ones are the best.

Teachers, get your students involved. Parents, get your children involved. Congregations, social clubs, merchant or neighborhood associations, athletic teams--get your communities involved. Your letters are important. You CAN make a difference

Contact Information for Political Officials

For non-local officials, you must email them via a form on their website. You can click on the links below their mailing address to go directly to the online form.

Maria Viramontes, Richmond Councilmember
maria_viramontes@ci.richmond.ca.us,
P.O. Box 266
Station A
Richmond, CA 94808

Jim Rogers, Richmond Councilmember
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162 Lakeshore Court

Richmond, CA 94804

Nat Bates, Richmond Councilmember
natbates@comcast.net,
1401 Marina Way South
Richmond, CA 94804

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Tom Butt, Richmond Councilmember
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235 East Scenic Avenue
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Ludmyrna Lopez, Richmond Councilmember
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Gayle McLaughlin, Mayor, City of Richmond
Gayle_McLaughlin@officeofthemayor.net
P.O. Box 5284
Richmond, CA 94805
Senator Barbara Boxer
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510
<https://boxer.senate.gov/contact/email/policy.cfm>

Senator Diane Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20510
www.feinstein.senator.gov

U.S. Representative George Miller
7th District
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D. C. 20515
http://georgemiller.house.gov/contactus/2007/08/post_1.html

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814
<http://gov.ca.gov/interact#email>

State Senator Mark DeSaulnier, District 7
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814
<http://legplcms01.lc.ca.gov/PublicLCMS/ContactPopup.aspx?district=SD07>

State Senator Loni Hancock, District 9

Capitol Office
(916) 651-4009
State Capitol, Room 4061
Sacramento, CA 95814
<http://legplcms01.lc.ca.gov/PublicLCMS/ContactPopup.aspx?district=SD09>

Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner
State Capitol, Room 4126
Sacramento, CA 95814 or
712 El Cerrito Plaza
El Cerrito, CA 94530
<http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a14>

12-30-08

Dear Supporters of the School Children:

The West Contra Costa Unified School District needs to balance its budget and is being pressured by threat of state takeover if it does not immediately implement a program of school consolidation and closure. The District budget includes debt repayment for obligations made almost two decades ago and the state believes selling surplus properties after the schools are closed could furnish some of the money needed to pay off those loans.

When Walter Marks' "System for Choice" could not pay its bills in the late 1980's, the Richmond Unified School District attempted to file for bankruptcy. The state would not allow this, instead requiring the District to take a state loan. Monies owed to IBM were not included in that loan; the state was supposed to be paid off first and then IBM. Because of rising costs and decreasing enrollment, the District had difficulty making its payments, and the loans were restructured for longer terms.

The consequence of this arrangement plus subsequent obligations is that we are now simultaneously paying on four loans, and the students of the WCCUSD are therefore netting less per capita funding. The result of this has been a lesser education--for a longer period of time. The students of 2009 are being deprived of an education equal to their peers in neighboring school districts because of decisions and errors made over the last TWENTY years. AND THERE'S NO END IN SIGHT.

In August the state demanded through the County Board of Education that schools be shuttered and the properties sold ASAP. The world has changed a lot since last summer. Is this really a viable solution for the District's money problems? At a time when developers aren't developing, banks aren't loaning, businesses are closing, people are moving out of state, builders are postponing—is this really a good time to try to sell properties? Or is this just another bad idea with unintended consequences, another short sighted pennywise solution that will forever contribute to inferior education, an uncompetitive salary/benefit schedule, overworked disgruntled employees, and division and animosity between the cities of the unified district?

Sure we should consolidate some schools, but at what gain and what cost? Will this really have a significant impact on the debt and the long-term finances of the District? The drastic plan now envisioned yields \$3 million over two years. (Then what?) How does this affect a \$37.2 million debt? We will be paying forever and depriving our students forever. We can only become solvent and equal if some of our debts are forgiven. We must ask for help. Car companies do it, banks do it, credit card over-spenders do it, even upside down homeowners do it. Can't school districts be forgiven?

Let's start with the state loan. The state had no precedent for school district bankruptcy; the RUSD would be the first ever. The county and state had the responsibility to see that we were properly managed and they failed. They could not allow a bankruptcy and

embarrassment so they demanded a loan. This loan came with a state-appointed trustee (with a salary twice that of the highest paid teacher) whose responsibility was to oversee the finances and operation of the District. It's 20 years later and we have had a series of such trustees.

We now have more laws ensuring quality, equitable education as the highest priority for the state budget and less money and employees to serve the students. The state and the state trustee have had control for twenty years. Is not the state and its trustee responsible? For how many more years must WCCUSD students be deprived because a large portion of their education dollars must go to the State of California? We DEMAND THAT THE STATE DEBT of \$14.2 million be forgiven.

The District owes IBM for computers purchased and delivered before the schools were wired adequately to accommodate them. The District installed several systems but much of the hardware was stored awaiting installation. The District attempted to return some of the computers, but IBM would not accept them because by then they were antiquated. In recent years IBM adjusted its loan, but they certainly have the means and the methods to forgive our loan and give back to our students another share of their education dollar. We REQUEST THAT THE IBM DEBT of \$4.4 million be forgiven.

The District owes the Federal Government \$3.7 million. This controversial debt also goes back almost 20 years. The District, under Superintendent Marks, used Voluntary Integration Money for his "System for Choice." While this funding was allowed here and in other states for several years, the Feds at some point disallowed the practice and demanded that the money be repaid. We REQUEST THAT THE DISTRICT SEEK AN APPEAL OF THAT DECISION with Arne Duncan, the new Secretary of Education.

Forgiveness of the State and IBM loans would remove over half of the District's \$37.2 million debt and impact positively our financial future, but mostly improve the quality of education that the District can deliver. We DEMAND THAT THE STATE DEBT of \$14.2 million be forgiven. We REQUEST THAT THE IBM DEBT of \$4.4 million be forgiven. We REQUEST THAT THE DISTRICT SEEK AN APPEAL OF THAT DECISION with Arne Duncan, the new Secretary of Education.

For CommUNITY,

(YOUR NAME HERE!)

Step 2 Delay School Closures 2 Years

An open letter to Mayor Gayle McLaughlin:

Hello again. This is Mike Peritz retired Kennedy High teacher and parent, the present JFK Graduation coach. You might remember me from Fridays with the Mayor or “Day at the K” last April.

This whole school closure situation is very sad and a terrible distraction from what we could be/should be working on. It will have devastating, unintentional consequences for the unified school district and our relationship with the neighboring communities. We must be very careful. We are making decisions that will become irreversible and we barely have a month.

If we could just pause, step back, take a closer look, listen to our experts, seek remedies, create....

Richmond can provide the pause. Richmond can take the lead, as it used to. Richmond can conceive of a plan that the other cities will follow.

Richmond can provide the pause. Negotiate with the other five mayors; have each of them commit to pony up \$.3 million for Year Two of debt reduction if Richmond comes up with \$1.5 million for Year One.

Richmond can provide the pause. Richmond can say, "Freeze" and throw a \$1.5 million dollar check at the school district. The first round is on Richmond, and that buys us a year to contemplate a better scenario and watch what happens with the economy and real estate.

Pinole, Kensington, El Cerrito, San Pablo, and Hercules contribute together another \$1.5 million for an additional year to think, to calmly implement, to seek loan forgiveness, to find efficiencies and new revenues.

A lot of us worked hard to pass Measure T. \$1.5 million is just the bottom of the Chevron bucket for one year. From environmental, economic or social justice perspectives, this seems like a good investment.

Step 3 Use criteria list as rubric for school improvement

Based on the criteria list or a modification thereof, create a District point system to measure school improvement for the next two years. Establish the standards using agreed upon criteria, formulate fair outcomes to determine progress. Redraw attendance boundaries and develop magnet programs to foster schools' attractiveness. After two years consolidate undersubscribed, underperforming schools in such a way to strengthen the weaker ones without weakening the strong ones.

Steps 4—7 (See above) While details and even whole points may be absent in this writing, the intention is to stimulate and collaborate; most of the points in Steps 4-7 are exemplified in the following narratives:

The Past

From its beginning, Richmond, California offered appealing landscape and employment. In the late 1800's and early 1900's, in one of the most beautiful and temperate parts of the world, people came to work, to build their lives and town. Here they nurtured their dreams of family and community. These citizens saw the building of attractive parks, the saltwater Plunge, a Carnegie Library, and Richmond Union High School. The railroad-refinery-brickyard-automotive-chemical-farming town became a small city of industry and pride. Richmond's population multiplied times 50 between 1905 and 1947 when workers were needed for the shipbuilding and other "home front" industries. (2,150—101,500) From Point Richmond the city stretched eastward to the hills. An active downtown with big name stores, family businesses and theaters grew up along Mc Donald Avenue.

After World War II and into the 1950's, the diverse Richmonders shifted the war industry efforts to projects of innovation, idealism, and civic pride. In Richmond were built some of the country's first examples of attractive "modern" city amenities: public art, childcare centers, public housing, museum, swimming pools, city-wide parks, and the civic center with its excellent library, versatile auditorium, art center, police and city offices. Richmond, with its strong industry support and a populace yearning for education, built a public school system purported to be one of the best in California--and California ranked in the top five of the nation.

In the late 1950's and early 1960's came replacement for wartime housing and factories. Flatland temporary housing was replaced by ranch-style homes attracting the largest number of middleclass minority families in the Bay Area. Kaiser Shipyards became Marina Bay; Hilltop Drive-in Theatre became Hilltop Mall, Hoffman Boulevard became the Hoffman Freeway, (580). BART was completed with two stops for our citizens. The Richmond Union High School District (known nationally for the "Richmond Pre-tech Plan") became the Richmond Unified School District, incorporating the city schools of Pinole, El Sobrante, Hercules, El Cerrito and Richmond. This prospering and changing

metropolis outgrew Richmond High and the overflow attended Harry Ells High School, a converted junior high, until another high school would be built.

The newly-formed unified school district and civic leaders, students and parents planned together a new high school unlike any other. This would be a quality institution, the pride of the district and model for the state and country. This would be a comprehensive school, including programs that met the needs of all the community's students, whether vocational or college bound. The location, lighting, furniture, team-teaching design, absence of distraction (windows, noisy halls, etc.), modular flexible scheduling, and a talented, diverse, creative faculty were specially chosen. The architecture reflected both the openness and security demanded in this era of free speech and burning cities. It would be a bold and innovative campus, and its students would be the bold and innovative leaders of the future. The community passed a bond specifically for the new school, and after the assassination of their much admired and inspirational president, the community leaders chose the name, John F. Kennedy High School.

Built on the site of Granada Junior High (the previous location of Portola Elementary School), Kennedy adopted the red and white colors and Eagle mascot from Harry Ells High, slated for closure when the new school was ready. Kennedy first opened its doors in September of 1967; the school quickly gained acclaim for its state-of-the-art academic and vocational programs. Kennedy became the "flagship" of the District and was renowned for its athletics, debate team, and diverse student body. Visitors from all over the world came to observe the school's operation and programs.

The school had "computerized modular flexible scheduling," very similar to today's college scheduling; the staff had been trained to utilize this system for the most efficient and customized program for each student. Classes met in different configurations (small seminars, medium classes, and large lectures) and were team taught by enthusiastic and competent staff.

Through the Richmond Voluntary Integration Plan (RIP) many students were bused for free—two yellow busloads a day from the Kensington, El Cerrito, and Richmond hills. Many youngsters carpooled from Point Richmond. The school became so popular that the District had to impose boundary limits that disallowed the families of all new houses in Richmond; to this day, many of the students who live within walking distance of JFK get on a bus to go elsewhere. (An aerial photograph in the frontispiece of the 1968 ISNALA yearbook shows vacant acreage all around the brand-new school.)

Eventually the appeal of flexible scheduling waned and it was discontinued. After Proposition 13, the free busing was eliminated and the students from the "hills" stopped attending Kennedy. Many of the faculty chose to go elsewhere and a lot of the successful programs were eliminated. (Pre-tech, Aerospace, Bio-Medical, Electronics, etc.) In the late 1980's and early 1990's violence and murders in the city, along with an inconsistent economy, high unemployment, poor management of the District's "System for Choice," the bankruptcy of the District, and misfortunate publicity regarding a safety survey for Kennedy, all did severe damage to the city and school's reputation. The District attempted to improve its image and changed its name to the West Contra Costa

Unified School District. Many families chose to transfer their students to other districts or schools, and Kennedy continued to shrink, at one time housing less than 800 students. Again there were losses of key programs such as FEAST and MESA. Private schools sprang up and rumors circulated about the closing of Kennedy. Although most of the students received a quality education and most of the faculty were excellent, competent professionals, the school was widely perceived as a dangerous and uninviting dropout factory. Some said that “JFK” stood for “Jail For Kids.” (These perceptions survive today although all statistics indicate a reality quite the opposite.) There were many ups and downs throughout the rest of the 90’s, but the school (hopefully) hit its nadir around the school year 2000-2001.

By then Kennedy had become a reflection of a new Richmond, still with many systemic problems, but very much influenced by an influx of immigrant students who brought to Kennedy a seriousness for education, a desire to succeed, and unprejudiced ideas about the school. With an energetic and dedicated administration and faculty and the implementation of small learning communities and academies, Kennedy started achieving stability and success. Since 2005, there has been very little faculty turnover and the students have shown great progress (better than any other school in the District), as documented by improvements in test scores, attendance, safety, suspension rate, incident reports, requests for transfers, size of senior class, number attending college, etc. Much of this improvement is credited to Mr. Julio Franco who served longer than any Kennedy principal, from 2001-2008.

During his tenure, in 2006, an unpopular move by the West Contra Costa School Board, which would integrate Leadership High (charter school) with Kennedy and move the current Kappa (Continuation) High (opened in 1992 on the Kennedy campus as a “necessary small school” to better serve at risk students) over to Kennedy High, was proposed. Students and faculty members fiercely opposed this, staging numerous protests against the school board’s decision. An outgrowth of this crisis was a community outpouring of concern regarding the future of the school. Former faculty and students joined those of the present to demand parity for their much maligned and beloved school.

“Once an Eagle, always an Eagle” (attributed to Pat Rupley and Dolly Felix) became the rallying cry.

In 2007 JFK@40+ was born; this community group of alumni, parents, former staff, school neighbors, and concerned Richmonders came together to celebrate the school’s 40th birthday and to offer support for the present students and teachers. The role of JFK@40+ has been important in the recent renaissance of Richmond and Kennedy. In 2008 the Eagle Foundation was created as a nonprofit organization to perpetuate the goals of JFK@40+ and the larger Richmond community.

For more information about the Eagle Foundation, the JFK Heritage Center, the JFK History Quilt, and current JFK news, go to jfleaglefoundation.org

Kennedy Principals:

Richard Lovette	9/67—6/68
Harry Reynolds	6/68—1/71
Thomas Anton	1/71—6/76
Lawrence Chapman	9/76—1/79
Patricia Rupley	1/79—6/82
Charles Dorton	6/82—6/84
Sylvester Greenwood	9/84—6/88
Levonya DeJean	7/88—11/91
Ted Abreau	12/91—6/97
Rosalyn Morgan Upshaw	11/97—6/00
Gwen Huntington-Lumb	9/00—6/01
Julio Franco	9/01—6/08
LaToya Williams	9/08—

The Present

With Kappa the student population on the Kennedy campus is 1018 (931+87). Not counting Kappa, Kennedy still has more students than De Anza. JFK has grown by 100 students—more than any other high school. While Kennedy is still considered undersubscribed, enrollment is closed and there is a waiting list to get in, pending revision of the master schedule for Semester 2 and the hiring of an additional counselor and math teacher. The counselor and math teacher have been needed since the beginning of school but the District has been unable to provide them.

The Kennedy faculty has remained stable for several years now, but teacher morale is waning with the prospects of closure or severe cutbacks. A lot of the recently hired great teachers are applying elsewhere for next year (out of district, out of state, out of teaching.) The non-certificated staff carries on admirably and competently, despite the 1/3 reduction of staffing since last year.

Our “growth” API for 2008 is 580, which is a 31 point gain over our 2007 base (549) and an overall gain of 81 points. (That’s a 139% increase!) This year’s score is very close to the median for our “Similar Schools” (586). We met the growth targets for all of our significant subgroups except “Students with Disabilities.” African-American students improved by 40 points; Latinos, 35 points; Socioeconomically Disadvantaged, 37 points; English Learners, 35 points; Students with Disabilities, 13 points. Kennedy has the largest number of special education students in the District (and still growing); yet, our test scores continue to climb. Our teachers are the only ones in the District that volunteer an extra period and the results show the difference.

Our African-American students outscored their peers at RHS and ECHS in 10 of the 14 comparable CST Tests. Latino students at KHS outscored their peers at RHS and ECHS in 8 out of the 18 comparable CST tests. Socio-economically disadvantaged students at KHS outscored their peers at RHS and ECHS in 10 out of the 16 comparable CST tests,

The paint job is now finished and the students have renewed pride in their school as expressed in the holiday issue of the "Eagle Eye." Seniors have witnessed the development of the great athletic field and track, the renovated library, and now the school board has approved the contracts to start on the BATHROOMS.

(Creating) The Future

Year 1 Turning the dirigible

The city of Richmond has agrees to "buy the first round" and gives the school district the \$1.5 million needed to satisfy the county and state for one year. A moratorium is declared on closure, each school defines its district goals for year 1, and we go on as best we can, hoping for some debt forgiveness and/or Federal money being released to the state by the new President and Congress. Boundaries are re-drawn. Measure J improvements continue. Attractive magnets are created; partnerships are sought. The District retains and improves all high schools but absorbs the Greek necessary small schools. Kennedy gets lots of attention in year one and is projected to reach its goals. (De Anza after the rebuild attracts some Pinole's students and is expected to reach its goals in year two. Pinole will have to wait for year three.) The country crawls through hard but improving times.

The Superintendent and his cabinet are directed to take dramatic measures to curb expenditures and restore confidence and efficacy in the public schools.

1. Fire most of the consultants. Respect and rely on your present employees and former employees--the Cabinet, teachers, coaches, police officers, former school board members, retired administrators, counselors, custodians, aides, principals, cafeteria workers, etc. Seek their opinions and listen carefully for solutions, techniques, warnings. (See item 3.) Need names?

2. Impose a ("voluntary") permanent 9% salary cut for all employees whose gross income is more that \$100,000. Share the "suffering," inconvenience, and disappointment. Employees who balk are free to work for some other district or retire. Freeze hiring except for teachers, site administrators and counselors for one year. (See item 4.) (9% is the cut we all took + the state loan in 1991.)

3. Take \$100,000 of the "savings" from above and create the Superintendent's Fund for the best ideas that will save money, stop waste and inefficiency. Design a contest with appropriate rewards; the money should not all be used the first year. Pay the woodshop/construction classes to make District Suggestion boxes for every school in the district and encourage participation from everyone—students and parents, too. Get everyone thinking how we can economize and profit at the same time. What systems can we use, what commitments can we make? What enterprise can we bring to the classroom so that meaningful training can also benefit the District and the community? (See items 8, 9, 10.)

4. Take another \$100,000 to fund the good ideas whose “investment” will pay off in the long run OR to pay a grant writer to research and apply for grants to implement or complement these investments.

5. Streamline the HR hiring procedure. Every year we lose competent professionals who hire on with other districts because they “...never heard back in time.” Get ready to capture dedicated new teachers and counselors, because we’re going to need lots of newbies for our class reductions (QUEI), retirements (See item 6), and increasing enrollment (See ABAG projections via Richard Mitchell, Richmond Chief City Planner; enrollment will also increase next year because many people are withdrawing their secondary students from private schools like Prospect-Sierra to better afford college). Work with the union and site administrators to gear up for new folks, especially if they WANT to come to this District. (I can name many people working in nearby districts who live in and would like to work in Richmond; they applied here but weren’t hired fast enough so that started their careers elsewhere—Berkeley, San Mateo, Mill Valley, Albany—and are now too comfortable to leave.)

6. Coax your employees at the top of the salary schedule to retire this year. The threat of diminishing benefits will already cause a lot of people to go, but sweeten the pot so that they leave with a desire to continue helping us in the District. Try a “Silver Parachute.” This silver parachute will net them the highest one year salary they’ve ever had. It will bring retired experienced “volunteer” educators back into the classroom during our years of cutbacks and, after one year of retirement/volunteering, allow these teachers to return to work part time (hopefully) or even full time without a cap on their salaries. Sponsor retirement workshops taught through Adult Ed by retired teachers who already know and enjoy the benefits of staying in the classroom (job sharing or part time) and earning a salary in addition to their pensions.

7. Form a task force, especially with volunteer lawyers (alumni?) to pursue debt forgiveness from IBM and the state, whose series of appointed trustees have been in place for almost two decades. This task force should include the school board, city and county officials (who agree we have to go to Sacramento) and the West Contra Costa Community for Quality Education.

8. Invite RichmondSOLAR and RichmondBUILD to expand their growing programs in the empty auto shop at Kennedy High. Create curriculum for high school students already in the ACET and Welding programs that complement what RS and RB do so well. Train the students in age-appropriate work tasks (sort of like the Richmond Pre-Tech Plan of old) that will prepare them for RS or RB, entrylevel industry jobs, or community or four year colleges with construction management programs. Partner with PG&E, the trade unions, the contractors involved in District rebuilding projects, and alumni to train the students to do energy audits, brazing, soldering and other realistic tasks. Use the model of “school based enterprise” (more later) and have the students do energy audits of all of the schools (starting with the high schools) to collect starting data for a contest (with rewards) for the schools that conceive the best energy saving (money

saving) ideas for the District. Eventually (starting year two?) have these coordinated programs solarize the District's schools' roofs, just as you did at the new \$120 million El Cerrito High.

9.Hire the Kennedy students and their instructors (under the guidance of union electrical contractors) to vandal proof and to install smart switches for all of the lighting at Kennedy—like El Cerrito High and Albany High. (\$ from item 4?) The lights turn off when heat sensors no longer detect any people. Start the night custodians one hour earlier; completely darken the campus when they leave. Studies from San Diego Unified show a significant reduction in electricity use; a side benefit is the LOWERING of vandalism and theft. School neighbors and police are alerted by ANY lights that turn on at night. Interlopers (if they stay on campus) can be found in the lighted area. Sell the District's hand held and standing metal detectors.

10.Hire the Kennedy students and their instructors (under the guidance of union welders) to manufacture the \$85,000 worth of attractive security fencing for the Kennedy campus. Have it installed with a partnership of contactors, RichmondBuild, and ACET students. Create another school based enterprise that will train students for real and available work, keep money in the community, support the various programs, increase the attractiveness of Kennedy as a school site and as a realistic learning place, and instill pride with the students' lasting contribution to their school. Establish innovative precedents for future cost-saving. Many other school district and city properties need attractive, secure fences.

11.Use part of each Kennedy Staff Development Wednesdays to plan for transition into a QEIA school for next school year. Have teachers find compatible roommates so that we better utilize classrooms with the lowered student-teacher ratio. This \$900,000/ year grant goes to Kennedy because Kennedy competed and was selected; this money is intended to fit the unique needs of our students and we must immediately start to implement the demands of the award. Compatibility for room sharing can be based on subject matter, student grade level, cross-disciplinary teaching, personalities, friendships, book use, etc. Develop the master schedule, determine room use as soon as possible.

12.Bring Kappa—its students, teachers, counselor, materials and assets—into the Kennedy population as an additional Small Learning Community. Keep with Kappa any special funding for which it would still qualify. Now we have almost 1100 students.

13. If there are sufficient classrooms to implement the QEIA program with Kappa integrated into Kennedy without using the 900 wing, move some of the portables now at El Cerrito High directly to Kennedy. Again, involve ACET students wherever possible. With as little intrusion as possible on the playing fields construct a second school facing south, using the renovated 900 building along with enough of the new portables to accommodate one of the homeless charter schools. (Manzanita? Leadership?) In addition build a multipurpose theatre/gymnasium/cafeteria/auditorium (with ACET!). This building should have an adequate kitchen for cooking classes, community gatherings, and student breakfast and lunch. A second story could contain affordable studio apartments for District beginning teachers. This new building should be between

the eastern edge of the gym and the swimming pool for dual access and dual use. It could serve as a venue for small community events, especially coordinated with the pool.

Kennedy teams would have an extra gym (like the other schools) to alleviate the heavy use for practice during basketball/badminton/volleyball times. Additionally, it could be available for late night use, especially if there are school teacher tenants.

14. After rebuilding the bathrooms, we should designate them for specific class use, i.e., Senior Women, Senior Men, etc. The Senior Class should pick theirs, then the Juniors, and so on. The restrooms should thereafter keep these designations and become “tradition.” Best practices show that “buy in” and pride regarding the restrooms from the students contributes to the cleanliness, maintenance, and preservation. Pleasant, healthy environment and effective cost control.

15. Take the investment of the Kennedy staff (certificated and non-certificated) and administration developing small learning communities and slowly evolve them into occupational magnets. Re-invent Kennedy as a high tech vocational high school:

“John F. Kennedy High School—The School that Works”

Kennedy could uniquely promise all of its vocational graduates that they would leave with an apprenticeship or job AND be prepared for postsecondary education.

All students involved in the vocational programs would spend a part of each day involved in work related to their vocation. Their jobs will be designed to either save the District money or to bring income to the District. Each school based enterprise will serve the school and community while providing realistic training. Future Academies: Law and Justice, Hospitality and Innkeeping, Health Services, Visual and Graphic Arts, etc. Present Academies: Information Technology, Architecture and Construction, Welding,

Run by the management principles of School based enterprise (Dr. David Stern, UC Berkeley) these programs would fill to capacity and have waiting lists. If the District is ready to support a high school that would eventually be 100% vocational, and the students were successful in employment and/or college, very quickly Kennedy would reach its capacity. In Year One, we have to coordinate, tune and maximize what we have—and fight to keep it.

The key step for year one is to develop the advisory committees for ACET and welding programs. . These boards comprised of union members, successful alumni, contractors to the District, etc. will lead us to the unions, apprenticeships, study trips, scholarships, mentorship, guest speakers, improved motivation, discipline, and attendance for students, eventual waiting lists and higher status for the vocational classes, and, oh yea, skills, attitude and EMPLOYMENT.

This is enough for now; surely you get the idea.

Conclusion

The consequences of any school closure are mind-boggling. We have unified, connected and evolved over many years and suddenly we must amputate and patch. The ideas I have presented here are from many people. The sources are unimportant--what is important is that we come up with the very best solution(s) and that we make no **IRREVERSIBLE ERRORS**. It is my opinion that the well being of the children (so that they are comfortable and free to learn) and the survival of the **UNIFIED** school district trump all other criteria.