

Dear Jeff,

I will be composing an email today to the arts groups listed below as well as other organizations I think might be interested in our perspective and we will see.

Dance 10
West Coast Dance
Dance Arts Project
Rythmix Cultural Center
Circus for the Arts
Alameda Childrens Musical Theater
Virago Theater
Alameda Theater & Cineplex
Alameda Multi Cultural Association
Altarena Playhouse
PSBA - GABA - WABA - COC
Alameda/Oakland Magazine
Tomorrow Youth Repertory
Alameda Sun
Alameda Journal

I do not know what these groups views are and specifically to dance schools this is the worst timing possible because we are up to our necks in planning end of year recitals. Unfortunately art groups tend to be very jaded to the political process as we are generally first on the chopping block and little is done to inspire us to not be cynical. Many artists go into the arts because they find that actions speak louder than words.

I will also be composing an email to our entire data base of students and audience members to let them know that this is going on in our community and encourage them to get involved.

Since I am new to the political process in this city, I am trying to come in with an unbiased opinion towards the process and not fall prey to the disillusioned attitude I keep hearing voiced in the community. I realize the school board has some tough decisions on their plate and I appreciate the steps they are taking to move forward.

As the leader of a nonprofit arts organization I understand the constraints of balancing a budget and trying to create the most out of very little. I believe AUSD has put themselves at a disadvantage because gaining support for any kind of Bond Measure or Parcel Tax to help with this issue is going to be very difficult for them due to past actions. I really have to question their thinking when after the last Parcel Tax that was supposed to directly benefit the schools it became known that the Superintendent and other administrative personnel were given substantial raises and the Superintendent was offered a large bonus. Whether all of this was warranted or not, the timing was horrendous and sent out a very negative message to the community about what is being done with our tax dollars. Add to that the cuts, the fight the teachers have had to go through just to get a contract for a living wage increase and now we are hearing that not only is a large amount of money being spent to house the administration but that they are considering buying the building? Then on the other hand we are being told there is no money. It just doesn't add up anyway you try to cut it. If there is money to buy a building why is there not money to fix a building? The students often have to settle for portables why can't the administration in the interim do the same while a financially responsible solution for the whole district is worked out? Why is it the students and the teachers get the dregs while the administration is first and foremost? I sit and listen to the parents in my studio lobby and I can tell you across the board they are not happy and they have little faith in the current administration due to past actions so why would they throw anymore money their way? AUSD needs to do something to improve/restore faith in their actions. With these meetings and future decisions they have the opportunity to impress us. I would like to challenge AUSD to do something inspirational for the community with the Historic AHS Buildings so that they are able to begin to gain back some of the trust they have lost over the past decade.

Sincerely,

Abra Rudisill

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