



NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL OF WESTCHESTER/PLAYA

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LAUSD BOARD ACTIONS GIVE COMMUNITIES HOPE. REALLY!

Has the day come when Manhattan Beach families will be selling their homes and moving to our community so their children can attend Westchester High School? Well, maybe not quite yet.

But led by board member Yolie Flores Aguilar and board president Monica Garcia, the LAUSD Board of Education has recently passed three motions that offer hope to communities all across Los Angeles.

These board actions were passage of "Small Schools II, A Bold Vision for LAUSD" in June, 2008; granting the conversion charter petition of Birmingham High School in July, 2009; and passage of the "Public School Choice: A New Way At LAUSD" motion this August.

Our Neighborhood Council of Westchester Playa has forcefully argued for increased community say in LAUSD schools.

Last year, the Neighborhood Council formally submitted a proposal for the governance of Westchester High School based on the successful governance model at Palisades Charter High School. Although our proposal lost when union president AJ Duffy insisted that his union teachers have 50% of the vote weight, in a tremendous showing of concern for public education, nearly 700 community members voted over 93% for our proposal.

Although our community lost the governance vote last January, the three board

actions give us options for the future.

The "Small Schools" motion recognizes that "multiple small schools within a residence attendance area can provide families with more educational options," and officially declares board policy to be that large high schools should be broken up into multiple small schools of approximately 500 students.

Granting the Birmingham charter petition means that there will be three completely autonomous schools on that Lake Balboa campus: High Tech High Los Angeles, the Birmingham Community Charter High School and the Daniel Pearl Journalism Magnet. The addition of a fourth school, the Institute at Birmingham for the Humanities and Social Justice, is also being considered.

Most significantly, the Public School Choice motion that received so much media coverage recently declared that the board will accept "operational and instructional plans from internal and external stakeholders, such as school planning teams, local communities, pilot school operators, labor partners, charters and others." (Emphasis most definitely added!).

Implementation of the Small Schools and the Public School Choice is delegated to Supt. Ramon Cortines. Facing the real possibility of insolvency in the next two years, we hope Supt. Cortines sees community autonomy in public schools as the only way to bring back middle class students to the District and to right its financial ship.

OTIS COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN CELEBRATES ITS 12TH YEAR IN WESTCHESTER

With the start of fall classes this month, Otis College of Art and Design marks its 12th year in Westchester and its 91st as an institution. Founded in 1918, Otis is Los Angeles' oldest independent college of art and design. Having started with just a few dozen students, today the college is home to over 1,200 full time undergraduate and graduate students and nearly 1,000 more students taking classes through the Continuing Education division.

Considered the most ethnically diverse private art and design school in the United States, Otis draws its students from over 30 countries and over 25 states coming from as close as Los Angeles and as far away as South Korea and New Zealand.

Otis has been an important part of the community ever since it took up residence in the former IBM Aerospace research center on Lincoln Boulevard, which was renamed Kathleen Hossler Ahmanson Hall. Today it, along with the Bronya and Andy Galef Center for Fine Arts (opened in 2001), make up the college's main facility -- the Elaine and Bram Goldsmith campus. Additional facilities include the Fashion Design Department (located downtown), the Otis Annex (just next door to the Custom Hotel), Graduate Public Practice (at the 18th Street Studios in Santa Monica) and Graduate Fine Arts (studio space in El Segundo).

With 11 majors in the BFA program and four graduate programs leading to an MFA, Otis provides a wide spectrum of choices that include: Advertising Design, Architecture/Landscape/Interiors, Digital Media, Fashion Design, Graphic Design, Illustration, Product Design, Toy Design, Painting, Photography, Sculpture/New Genres, Public Practice and Writing.

The Ben Maltz Gallery located on campus showcases the work of local, regional and international artists with exhibitions throughout the year. Parking and admission are free to the public. The schedule of events is posted on the Otis website at www.otis.edu.

Students enrolled in Otis' Integrated Learning program have partnered with several local schools and organizations, including partners such as the Westchester Senior Center, Westchester Loyola Village Library and Friends of the Ballona Wetlands to solve problems in society and for the last few years have been a key part of the Westchester BID Halloween festival -- assisting local children in creating Halloween themed murals for the local businesses.

Businesses in the area have also provided Otis with generous support including Playa Vista, GraphAids, Tower Pizza, Hornblower Cruises and Westchester Watch Works to name just a few. Approximately 120 of the college's first year students are living at Playa Del Oro thanks to an agreement with the Decron Corporation.

In addition to the long list of classes available to adult residents of the area, Continuing Education also provides art classes for young children, college art preparation classes for high school students that are offered on the weekends and a four-week intensive program called Summer of Art, which takes place every July.

To learn more about Otis College of Art and Design, please visit the college's website at www.otis.edu or call 310-665-6800.

COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

Airport Relations: 4th Thursday at 6 p.m.
LAX Soundproofing Office, 8939 S. Sepulveda Blvd.
Board Meeting: 1st Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.
Westchester Community Room, 7166 Manchester Blvd.
Budget & Finance: As Needed at 5:30 p.m.
Westchester Community Room, 7166 Manchester Blvd.
Bylaws: As Needed
Visit www.ncwpdr.org for location

Communications: As Needed
Loyola Village Library, 7714 Manchester Blvd.
Education: 4th Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.
Westchester Community Room, 7166 Manchester Blvd.
Elections: As Needed
Westchester Community Room, 7166 Manchester Blvd.
Governmental Affairs/City Services: 3rd Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.
8740 La Tijera Blvd.

Outreach: As Needed
Playa Vista Library, 6400 Playa Vista Dr.
Planning and Land Use: 2nd Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.
Playa Vista Library, 6400 Playa Vista Dr.
Public Safety: 4th Monday at 6:30 p.m.
8740 La Tijera Blvd.
Lincoln Streetscape: As Needed
Visit www.ncwpdr.org for location
Sepulveda Streetscape: 2nd Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.
Westchester Community Room, 7166 Manchester Blvd.