



Letters To The Editor

We Get Letters

(Updated: Wednesday, May 12, 2010 5:39 PM PDT)

Teachers don't solicit for RBEF

Doug Christensen is not accurately informed. He has recently stated that the Redondo Beach Teachers Association should be the conduit for telling the students' parents about the Redondo Beach Educational Foundation. Pursuing parents to solicit donation money is not our job. Our job is to secure the safety and emotional well-being of our students at all times and to teach the mandated curriculum using a differentiated approach that addresses all students' needs.

In regard to the district's 3.8 percent reserve, we have never said to go below the 3 percent. RBTA has said that RBUSD could dip only 0.8 percent into that reserve and still have a healthy 3 percent (the traditional "standard of budgetary health" mandated by the state). Districts are allowed to go below the 3 percent for the next couple of years provided they have a plan in place to replace those monies.

Another source of "new" revenue is the PARS early-retirement incentive offered this year to retiring teachers. By funding PARS up front, the district will see additional income of more than \$200,000 this coming year. Each no-pay/furlough day equals \$220,000.

Teachers have never said to dip below 3 percent; we don't solicit personal gifts of any kind from parents; we do support the Education Foundation appropriately; and, most importantly, we do our job, which is to teach the youth of Redondo Beach.

Go to www.sbut.org/RBTA/News to read statements made to the RBUSD School Board regarding no-pay/furlough days and the budget.

Amy Santa Cruz, President, Redondo Beach Teachers Association, Redondo Beach

PTA benefits from gift card sales

Regarding last week's letter by Doug Christensen ("Appropriate appreciation"), please allow me to clarify a few points on which he was mistaken. Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week is a function of the PTA, and has nothing to do with the RBTA or RBEF. No teacher or staff member at our school is "asking for gift cards." They have far too much class.

The PTA at Jefferson Elementary runs an ongoing fund-raiser by selling gift cards. Many parents want to acknowledge Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week by giving a token gift but they don't know how much to spend or what the recipient wants. So the PTA asks each faculty and staff member to name their top three preferred cards. The PTA publishes this list in our weekly newsletter before Appreciation Week. Parents appreciate the suggestions, teachers and staff get a gift they can actually use, and the PTA benefits from the sale. Everyone wins.

I am certain that any teacher or staff would sincerely appreciate an RBEF donation made in his or her

name. But the Jefferson PTA works with RBEF to help fill budget gaps in our school without direction from RBTA.

We are acutely aware of the fact that in this economy, in this community, those who can donate to RBEF do so, separate from and above giving a little something personal to that special teacher or staff member who makes a difference in their children's lives every day.

Tracy Mintz, Vice President, Communications, Jefferson Elementary PTA, Redondo Beach

Teachers don't ask for gifts

I believe that Doug Christensen owes a big apology to the staff and families of Jefferson Elementary for his incredibly rude and misinformed comments and insinuations in last week's letters to the editor.

For one thing, the teachers at Jefferson do not ask for gifts of any kind for themselves from parents. It is our amazingly supportive PTA that puts out the list of suggestions for parents for this special occasion. This plan also helps the PTA raise funds as it sells gift cards and scrip at school on an ongoing basis and receives a percentage of the sales. The typical items on a teacher's wish list put out for parents includes Kleenex, hand sanitizer, Lysol wipes, electric pencil sharpeners, reams of paper — everyday items needed, but in very limited supply, through school budgets.

Far more importantly to me, as a teacher at Jefferson for the past 22 years, is the feeling of being attacked from within. A school community is a tight-knit group of a variety of stakeholders all pulling together for the common good of the students. Since Christensen has not had a lot of experience in the school community, it would seem that he would seek out information from veteran employees and parents to learn a bit more about how the school functions before putting his name to such hurtful and inaccurate statements. Having spoken to many staff members since publication of that letter, I know that no one is pleased with his approach.

Barbara Barr, Manhattan Beach