

August 25, 2016

Open Letter to LVCS and LVCP Parent Communities,

I am writing to you ‘Stayers’, from my place as a “Goner” – one who has made the decision to move my Senior daughter (out of concerns over accreditation), and 4th-grade son (out of concerns over safety and stability), from the charter schools.

This note is not to pour any more gasoline on the “stay-or-go” question. My family has made our decision, and you need to make yours. I am writing instead to wish you the very best of luck saving your schools; and offer you the perspective of one who has been engaged full-contact in that effort myself, together with my wife, for many months now.

The recent flurry of activity and visibility has created a moment of opportunity for you: a last chance to galvanize your community from complacency to action, to finally undertake hard choices, to cut loose from the anchors that are dragging your schools under.

Unfortunately, but predictably, it has also produced an effusion of ill-informed, late-to-the-party Pollyannaish viewpoints, that could easily rob your community of the willpower to make the decisive moves needed to seize the fast-fading opportunity.

There are some who speak as if “uniting behind TVLC” is the answer. Make no mistake: Your schools have no future, if left with TVLC as currently incarnated.

For months, and in some cases years, many have labored to get TVLC to turn from the darkness toward the light – to renounce dishonesty, mismanagement, and adversarialism. However even in recent months, under intense pressure and with incontrovertible evidence of being deep in a hole of their own construction, the TVLC response has only been to keep digging.

The character and competence of the current TVLC Board and executive leadership are now well-known quantities, and you have ample documentary evidence (compiled at Reformourcharterschools.org) to draw your own conclusions. There is no mystery what behavior to expect from them going forward.

I am also hearing accusations being made against the motives of the Livermore Valley and New Jerusalem school districts, in their moves toward revoking the charters; there are suggestions that they somehow “benefit” by revocation. On the contrary, everything I see tells me revocation is their last resort, which they have sought to avoid at almost all costs. However, more importantly, their motives really don’t matter: TVLC’s conduct has been so egregiously irresponsible that the districts could not overlook and tolerate it even if they wanted to; as citizens, parents, and taxpayers, we would have to be outraged against them, if they did not fulfil their statutory oversight duty as authorizers and demand massive reforms.

So, what has LVJUSD done, actually? After months of fair-warning with successive Notices of Concern and other correspondence – which have been treated contemptuously by TVLC – they have done the

parents the clear favor of expressing unambiguously, in a Notice of Violation, what has to happen in order for the LVCS and LVCP schools to survive.

Some react to the stipulations in the Notice of Violation as though they are “ultimatums”. They are hardly that. When a physician tells you what treatment you need, he’s not giving you an ultimatum; he’s giving you a *prescription*. He is seeing your systems failure for what it is, and telling you: “If you don’t undertake these treatments, your body will be incapable of going on; if you don’t amputate the necrotic tissue, it will kill you.” No act of will on the doctor’s part can take the consequences of foregoing that treatment off of you.

Similarly, LVJUSD is pointing out to you that LVCS and LVCP have no hope of sprouting good educational fruit, as long they’re planted in a poisonous field.

Take the lifeline, folks. Adopt the prescription given in the NOV, as quickly as you possibly can. Get TVLC to surrender the charters, so they can be replanted in a fresh field. The opportunities to save the schools through lesser measures, which we fought so hard for in earlier months, are now past and gone.

It is now the ninth inning: your team is scoreless, have dropped every ball hit their way, and have been warned many times by the umpire for cheating. It is long, long overdue to change out the manager. Don’t fall for those who say that louder cheering by the fans is going to be what pulls out the win in the last at-bat, or miraculously gets your team extra innings.

These schools have an enormous value to our community. Don’t be party to their sacrifice as a human-shield for a doomed TVLC.

Sincerely,
Matt Weingart