



The Foundations of Canyon Crest Academy, La Costa Canyon High School, and San Dieguito Academy

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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An Open Letter to the San Diego Union Tribune

May 25, 2017 (San Diego) On the field of play, in the battle of school rankings, and for countywide supremacy on standardized test scores, Torrey Pines High School is our archrival and we delight in our victories over them and mourn our losses against them in those arenas. But we take no delight in the treatment they have received in the press over the past week, beginning with the May 14, 2017 UT article, and feel compelled to rise to their defense to correct the record on this subject.

Central to this discussion, and something that was ignored in the article, is the state funding formula for public schools. Although you would never realize this from press coverage at any level of media, California's funding model provides the least funding to districts located within what they define as affluent communities, such as San Diego's North County. As a result, our district, the San Dieguito Union High School District (SDUHSD), receives the lowest amount of money per student of all the high school districts in San Diego.

In fact, we are the lowest funded high school district of our size in California.

What does this mean? SDUHSD receives \$18 million less than the average high school district in the state. In San Diego, it means SDUHSD receives \$25 million less than Escondido HSD, \$17 million less than Grossmont HSD, and \$13 million less than Sweetwater HSD.

The current model for funding public schools intentionally shifts the burden to parents in districts like ours. What does this mean for our students?

With EIGHTEEN MILLION DOLLARS LESS in funding, our district cannot fund athletics.

With EIGHTEEN MILLION DOLLARS LESS in funding, our district cannot fund arts programs.

With EIGHTEEN MILLION DOLLARS LESS in funding, our district cannot fund after-school programs.

With EIGHTEEN MILLION DOLLARS LESS funding, our district cannot fund weekend custodial services, or maintenance of baseball fields, or stadium bathrooms, or athletic trainers, or transportation, or game officials, or lights in the gym, the maintenance of the weight room, or uniforms, or balls, bats, or paint, or clay, or computers.....

I think you get the point. And here is another point, the sum of the revenue of **all four SDUHSD high school foundations** falls far short of \$18,000,000 per year. In fact, foundations provide less than 30% of the funding shortfall.

Yet, despite that, many of the schools of our district are nationally recognized as the best in the United States. How does the lowest funded high school district of its size in California consistently produce the top high schools in the country? Are we measuring success by how much money we spend or by an actual outcome? Our district is an example of exemplary outcomes achieved on a comparably low budget. If we are ever going to improve educational outcomes in this county, this state, and this nation; highlighting and studying how this district outpaces most others in measurable outcomes on the lowest funding in the state is where the Union Tribune can make a valuable contribution to the narrative.

Does it cost less money to run a school in the North County of San Diego? No, arguably, everything costs more here rent, gas, groceries. Do we have less infrastructure or personnel here? No, we have the same, if not more, infrastructure costs, as any other school in the County.

Despite the fact that there is low income housing across the street from several district schools, the funding formula, using the average income for our neighborhood, provides \$1,431 less annual funding for each and every student in our district regardless of their family socioeconomic status.

Many of the parents of this district essentially give twice. First, by shouldering a disproportionate amount of the tax burden, they are funding the other districts in the state which are deemed more worthy of additional funding; and second, by voluntarily donating to their own district they are making up the difference in what our district is shorted under the funding formula.

The important, and yet untold, story here is this peculiar statewide school funding system, not the Torrey Pines High School baseball team or the school foundation that supports it. Without these dedicated volunteers and generous parents, there would be no school sports, arts, or extra-curricular activities in our district.

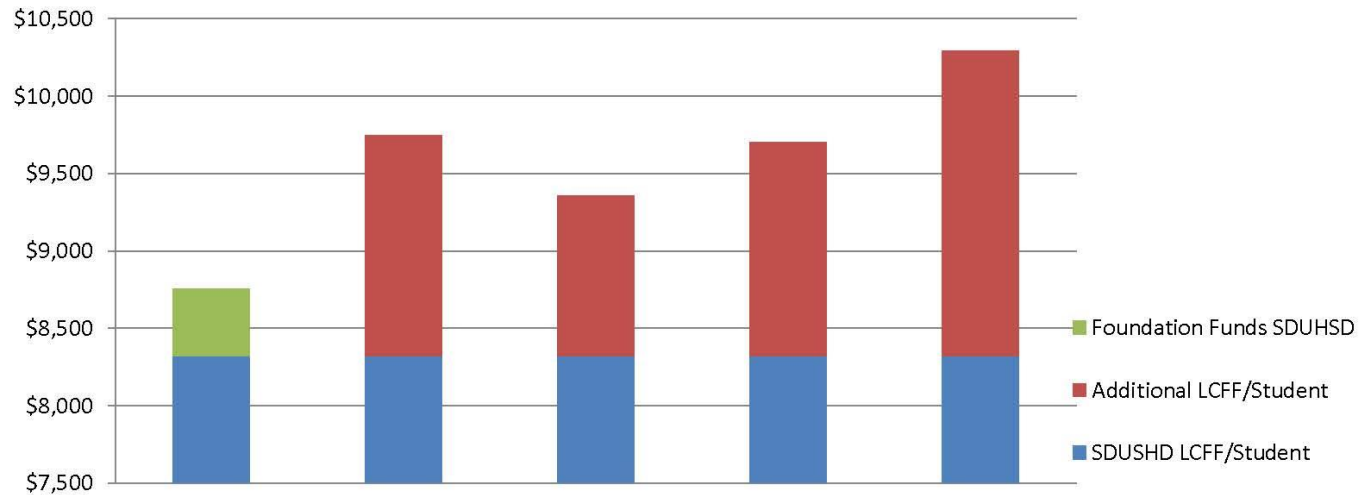
Should we all carefully evaluate how we ask for money? Yes, we should and we will. Additional volunteer training is being planned and implemented.

But more importantly, should we illuminate the vagaries of the school funding formula in California? Absolutely. The Union Tribune should aim their spotlight about 500 miles north onto Sacramento, where the problem starts. We are disappointed that they misdirected it onto our rivals on the playing fields, but our allies in supporting our children: the dedicated parent volunteers, coaches and staff of the Torrey Pines Foundation.

Sincerely,

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San Dieguito Union High School District Receives Far Less Funding per Student than Average California & Local School District Foundation Funding Does Not Fill the Gap



	San Dieguito UHSD	Average High School District	Sweetwater UHSD	Grossmont UHSD	Escondido UHSD
SDUSHD LCFF/Student	\$8,319	\$8,319	\$8,319	\$8,319	\$8,319
Additional LCFF/Student	\$0	\$1,431	\$1,040	\$1,383	\$1,974
Additional LCFF/Student@12,890 ADA*		\$18,445,590	\$13,405,600	\$17,826,870	\$25,444,860

*The Average Daily Attendance (ADA) of the San Dieguito Union High School District is 12,890 students. This row represents additional funding that would be available to the SDUHSD if they were funded at the same levels as these districts.