

LECONTE SCHOOL MEASURE A SITE COMMITTEE SOTF REPORT -- 2/8/93

A. Site Committee members: Barbara Penny-James, Principal, 642-6290; Bruce Wicinas, 848-1797; Liz Brown, 841-4861; Dena Belzer, 644-0342; Kalima Rose, 843-0519; Susan Emerson, 841-4628; Diane Colborn, 649-1855; Denise James, 655- 7075; Nancy Wilcox, 841-4515; Louise Rosenkrantz, 642-6290; Clio Terazi, 841- 8234; Sloane Thomas, 841-3518; Amy Abern, 845-8339; Bruce Fireman, 548-8879.

B. The LeConte Measure A Committee strongly supports a K-3 grade configuration. There is no clear indication yet as to what the majority of parents at the school favor. Responses to an informal survey seems indicates that if people understand that they might have to make a trade-off between K-5 schools, and neighborhood schools, they would rather have a K-3 neighborhood school. However, the survey instrument was so poorly designed that these results must be viewed with great caution.

C. Proposed school size: 3 classes per grade level; 1 special day class.

D. Desegregation by zones, similar to those currently in effect with more careful control of inter- and intra-district transfers.

E. LeConte School is organized around principals of cooperation and collaboration among staff, administration, and parents. Teachers at each grade level are organized into teams to exchange ideas, develop curricula, and plan special activities. In addition, most teachers keep their classes for two years, moving up a grade level with their students. In addition to having academic benefits, this approach further enhances a strong sense of team work and community for students as well as their families. LeConte also had its Farm and Garden, a key element of the School's science curriculum, which further emphasizes the inter-relationship of all living things and the need for us to all work together. Over the next several years, LeConte also hopes to hire a staff person dedicated solely to parent out-reach. This person would further enhance the level of parental participation in the school which we hope will, in turn, help increase the academic achievement of all our children.

F. The site committee was not formed (or encouraged to be formed) until early December, 1992. We have held 5 meetings and have also discussed the issues at 3 PTA meetings. In addition, site committee members held extensive phone discussions with a randomly selected list of 5 parents from each classroom.

G. Other topics of interest: 1) A district-wide change of grade configuration will be chaotic. The process of determining and implementing assignments of students to schools, physically re-locating classrooms and supplies, and the breaking up and re-establishing of staff teams who have worked together for years, will entail a tremendous amount of time, energy, resources and funds. The outcome of these disruptions will not in any significant way address the weaknesses and short-comings that exist in our schools. Since the Measure A bond cannot provide the funds to bring this about, those funds must necessarily come from other sources. School funding state-wide and district-wide is disastrously low. Any money spent should instead go directly towards improving programs and schools, raising teacher's salaries, reducing class size, etc.

2) We are extremely concerned that any form of "choice" model can not assure adherence to the integration guidelines.

3) The allocation of Measure A funds is not the appropriate vehicle for studying the efficacy of changing the District's grade configuration model and integration program. These complex issues require a great deal of thought and study on the part of both administrators and parents. This process has not provided sufficient opportunity for such study or thought. Parents, in particular, have not been presented with any detailed information outlining the social costs and benefits of changing grade configurations, how this change would be financed, and how it would be implemented. We are being asked to make recommendations regarding something we know very little about. Although we favor change if it has positive benefits that far out-reach the costs, we do not favor change for change's sake!