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Letters to the editor

School districts fail to meet challenge

While the last several years were challenging, the Lafayette (LAFSD) and Acalanes (AUHSD) school districts have unfortunately failed to meet that challenge or even their legal obligations.

In the early days of COVID, California's Legislature passed a new law allowing remote instruction but specifically requiring school districts to "offer in-person instruction to the greatest extent possible." Cal. Education Code section 43504(b). Health officials authorized our schools to fully reopen in October 2020, but it was Spring 2021 before elementary schools reopened even part time. Stanley and AUHSD students spent 1 1/2 years on Zoom; they didn't fully reopen until Fall 2021. Even this past year, LAFSD limited extracurricular activities and restricted parental involvement at school, contrary to state law requirements in Education Code section 51101.

Unsurprisingly, our districts experienced steep enrollment declines as a result-including a stunning 11% drop in LAFSD, which is nearly three times the state average. While California schools will receive unprecedented, one-time government funding this year, our local districts predict deficits in future years, making more parcel taxes and bond measures likely.

As a Lafayette parent heavily engaged with local school boards since 2020, I've seen the fundamental problem is an unwillingness to listen and respond to parents, or approach issues with an open mind. Parents advocated fully reopening in Fall 2020 and begged for a return to normal this past school year. School officials refused to acknowledge their concerns, ignored the learning loss and mental health impact of closures, and declined to pursue available avenues for reopening. The pattern is now being repeated as local districts are ignoring parents' pleas for greater curriculum transparency and a renewed focus on academics. As an attorney, I've repeatedly asked our boards to explain their failure to meet their legal obligations but was met with only silence.

The kids are not alright, and neither is our local schools' leadership. Concerned voters should support board candidates who will listen to parents and return schools' focus to their educational mission: Sarah Lind, Niels Larsen and Robb McSorley for LAFSD, and Renee Nowac, Mark Woolway and Gabe Ledeen for AUHSD Board.

Mark Lonergan
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DEI is racism because it is discrimination based on race

A recent letter published Aug. 17, 2022 denied that DEI is racism. Yet DEI surely is discrimination based on race. Ask any Asian excluded from Lowell High School in SF, or from Harvard, because of their race. They are being discriminated against based on their race. Call it whatever you choose, but it is wrong. The way diversity is achieved is by favoring one race over another until the "desired" proportional representation is achieved. "Racial discrimination" is treating people differently based on race. Call DEI racial discrimination rather than racism if that makes you happy.

In fact, the definition of "racism" includes "racial discrimination."

www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/racism

"Discrimination" is different treatment. That is what it is, and no amount of re-definition will change that fact.

Why are progressives so afraid to acknowledge the racism in their DEI programs? Is it because admitting that DEI is racist would be admitting that they are wrong? Is it because admitting that they are promoting racial discrimination would be admitting that they are wrong? I say, "If the shoe fits, wear it." If you are afraid to acknowledge that you are promoting racism, or if you are afraid to admit you are promoting racial discrimination, maybe you should revisit your views. As Chief Justice Roberts stated, "The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race." Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., famously said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." That day is come. It is time to stop discriminating based on race.

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