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SAN FRANCISCO LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO



1188 FRANKLIN STREET, SUITE 203, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94109-6852 • 415/440-4809 • FAX 415/440-9297

Resolution in Support of Keeping John Swett Elementary School Open

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SECRETARY TREASURER EMERITUS
Walter L. Johnson

Whereas, John Swett Alternative School is a school serving more than 220 children living in the Western Addition, Civic Center and Tenderloin neighborhoods of San Francisco; neighborhoods that have undergone a year of unprecedented violence amongst our youth; and

Whereas, John Swett School has promoted academic achievement and provided a unique arts education program for its students and has been a vital community institution for its students and their families for decades; and

Whereas, John Swett School serves mostly children of color from low income, working families, African American students are 43.2% and 21.1% are Latino students, the impact of this decision will disproportionately impact children from these communities; and

Whereas, John Swett has enjoyed a special partnership with employees of the California Public Utilities Commission for more than 15 years in which they have provided tutoring, special events, educational materials, funds and other support for the school; and

Whereas, on January 19, 2006, the community was not given any meaningful opportunity to have input into the decision-making process as they were only allowed 10 minutes of public testimony, the San Francisco Board of Education voted to close the John Swett School and to transfer its students to John Muir School in spite of the fact that John Swett did not meet the merger/closure criteria – it was at 81% enrollment and the criteria was under 75% enrollment – in fact the SFUSD is closing John Swett to house administrative offices; and

Whereas, on February 7, 2006, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors voted 9-1 for the Board of Education to rescind its decision to close John Swett, stating that the closure would "end a 100-year tradition of education in the Civic Center and Western Addition" and leave "many among the most at-risk students without a school," and citing the support of employees of the California Public Utilities Commission and following the submittal of formal testimony of several CPUC professionals and a petition signed by almost 500 CPUC employees; and

Whereas, the CPUC passed a resolution on February 16th 2006 for the BoE to rescind its closure/ merger decision and pledged their ongoing support for the program; and

Whereas, the San Francisco Labor Council not only has affiliated unions that work at John Swett, but many Labor Council families have been served by John Swett,

Therefore be it Resolved the San Francisco Labor Council go on record joining the Board of Supervisors and CPUC in calling on the Board of Education to rescind its January 19 decision and keep John Swett open, and furthermore this Council will notify the Board of Education, the Board of Supervisors, the Mayor and the CPUC that this resolution was passed.

Submitted by Tami Bryant, SEIU 1000, and adopted by the San Francisco Labor Council on March 13, 2006.

Respectfully,

Tim Paulson
Executive Director

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UNITY IS STRENGTH!

