



Patrick O'Donnell
City of Long Beach
Councilmember Fourth District

Councilmember Johnson & Honorable Members of the Joint Use Committee:

As a teacher, city council member and a parent of two children that attend a Long Beach Unified school, I urge the Joint Use Committee to approach the Restorative Justice Campaign item with caution for the following reasons:

School District/City Governance: The chartering documents of the Long Beach Unified School District and the City of Long Beach are very clear with respect to the governance of each entity. Each organization has its own governing body and neither body governs the other. State law and court rulings underscore this point. In short, the City of Long Beach cannot develop or direct school district policy-probably for good reason. The city attorney should opine on this point.

Factory Discipline: Creating a “one-size fits all” approach to discipline is not in the best interest of children. Factory model discipline disallows a teacher or administrator to take in the totality of the circumstances surrounding an infraction. This approach allows educators the flexibility to design programs that keep kids in school. Children are not made in factory and children are not educated in a factory. The fact is that certain situations require a modified approach to ensure a student can find success. Again, policies that mandate certain discipline procedures may be counter-productive to the goal of ensuring student success.

I applaud those who have displayed interest in our schools and urge you to stay in engaged. Further, take a day off work and volunteer or tour your local school. After all, no child succeeds on their own.

Sincerely,

Patrick O'Donnell
Councilmember 4th, District