

**The Hermosa Beach City School District June 7, 2016, facilities bond Measure S  
unreported campaign expenditure and contribution to the Yes on S campaign;  
Using taxpayer funds to hire a professional communications media service for the  
purpose of passing bond Measure S.**

**Submitted By:** Miyo Prassas, 1753 Valley Park Ave., Hermosa Beach, CA 90254  
310-977-6293, [jwprassas@yahoo.com](mailto:jwprassas@yahoo.com)  
Date Submitted: May 18, 2020

**VIOLATOR:** Hermosa Beach City School District  
Mailing Address: 1645 Valley Drive, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254  
Physical Address: 425 Valley Drive, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254  
Phone: 310-937-5877  
Fax: 310-376-4974

**RECIPIENT Ballot Measure Committee:** Committee to Improve Hermosa Schools – Yes on S  
I.D.#1383261  
Principal Name: Michael Collins  
Principal Mailing Address: 2309 Pacific Coast Highway, Suite 207, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254  
Principal Phone: 310-989-4323  
Treasurer Name: John Friberg  
Treasurer Mailing Address: 1927 Valley Drive, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254  
Treasurer Phone: 310-809-3006

**VIOLATION:** Section 18420: Failure to report nonmonetary campaign expenditures by local government agency (Hermosa Beach City School District (HBCSD)) of more than \$8,000 for the benefit of the Committee to Improve Hermosa Schools – Yes on S, I.D. #1383261.

1. **Dates of benefit:** March 1, 2016 to June 7, 2016 - Date Yes on S Committee received the benefit of the expenditure.
2. **Amount of expenditure \$8,000.00 to \$25,000.00:** Agreement for Education Consultant Services dated March 1, 2016 from TPRC Communications (Jonathan Zaleski President, 310-569-0153, [jonathan@tprccommunications.com](mailto:jonathan@tprccommunications.com) and [jonathan@prcollective.com](mailto:jonathan@prcollective.com)) and the Hermosa Beach City Elementary School District. Exhibit #1. **The agreement was made for the duration of the Yes on S bond campaign; March 1, 2016 to June 30, 2016.**
3. **Nature of contribution:** According to the HBCSD Board of Education Recommendation of April 13, 2016 (B-51-15/16) Exhibit 2: *"A district communication plan to maximize the effective distribution of information to the community in a compelling, efficient and accessible way."*

According to the Agreement for Educational Consultant Services contract Exhibit 1: *"The creation and execution of a communication program on behalf of the district which includes social media, website, e-newsletter, community/media relations. Key messaging and information will be disseminated to the community and to specific target groups that focuses on facility needs, financial reports/state funding, instructional programs and other relevant information about the Hermosa Beach City School District, through a variety of media channels and community flyers."*

In HBCSD's own words (Exhibit #3: HBCSD May 9, 2018 Consultant Agreement Renewal for Public Relations Services (B-83-17/18) ) "Since March 2016, TPRC Communications has successfully implemented a communications plan that focused on social media, website, newsletters, press releases and communications systems to disseminate information about the district and ***specifically facilities bond Measure S.***"

HBCSD desired to demolish and completely rebuild a current grand-fathered in campus at North School at a cost of approximately \$32M. However, HBCSD (and the community) also had the options to either exercise their valid contractual right to use classrooms, office and storage space at the Community Center (aka Pier Avenue School) at minimal taxpayer cost OR to renovate North School for approximately \$7M. Both the options of using classrooms at Pier Avenue School or renovate North School would have been quicker and cheaper than rebuilding North School. HBCSD wished to discredit both valid facility options in order to pass a \$59M facilities bond that would completely rebuild North School. The information given by HBCSD through TPRC Communications manipulation of social media avenues was purposely biased in order to pass Measure S. In addition, information that would have supported the district's other valid and less expensive options was purposely withheld from the community. (Exhibit 4: Examples of HBCSD Facebook posts during Measure S bond campaign.)

4. HBCSD Superintendent received an email from Jonathan Zaleski of TPRC Communications after the district failed to pass a \$54M bond Measure Q in November 2014. Exhibit 5: Email from Jonathan Zaleski to Michelle Meraz (assistant to Superintendent Pat Escalante) dated November 25, 2014 and forwarded to Superintendent Escalante on December 9, 2014.

In the email Mr. Zaleski states:

***"... had I been involved as a consultant to pilot the district's social media efforts; Measure Q would have easily passed on Election Day."***

5. **Behest Contribution:** The Committee to Improve Hermosa Schools (aka Yes on S) was controlled by Michael Collins who is the husband of HBCSD School Board president Mary Campbell. Michael Collins home and work addresses and phone number were given on CA Form 410 and forms 460 as the principal officer information.

The Yes on S committee treasurer was John Friberg who is the spouse of HBCSD School Board member Maggie Bove LaMonica. John Friberg and Maggie Bove LaMonica's home address and personal phone number were given on CA Form 410 as the contact mailing address for the Yes on S committee.

Michael Collins was in constant contact with HBCSD Superintendent Pat Escalante during the bond campaign. In addition, both Michael Collin's wife and John Friberg's wife were in constant contact with Superintendent Pat Escalante during the bond campaign.

6. The Hermosa Beach City School District used it's taxpayer paid website to support the Yes on S Committee stance by omitting information favorable to the No on S stance and by not presenting a fair and impartial presentation of the relevant facts to aid voters in reaching an informed judgement regarding facilities Bond Measure S a violation of California Education Code 7054(2).
  - a. Dates of Benefit: Fall 2015 to June 2016
  - b. See FPPC Submission from Miyo Prassas dated May 18, 2020 entitled: *The Hermosa Beach City School District June 7, 2016 facilities bond Measure S illegal use of taxpayer paid website in order to benefit the Yes on S campaign.*

7. I have personal knowledge of this violation because I examined and made print copies of several pages from the HBCSD website. I have been involved with, attended meetings and have researched the Hermosa Beach City School District and the California Department of Education and the Department of General Services, Office of Public School Construction and the Department of State Architects rules and regulations and findings regarding our school district facilities since 2002.

8. Names and address of witnesses:

1. Howard Longacre, 2715 El Oeste Blvd, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254
2. Chris Miller, 528 W. Maple Ave., El Segundo, CA 90245
3. Jackie and Jim Hausle, 1824 Valley Park Avenue, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254
4. Blair and Sally Smith, 316 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254
5. Cassandra Bates, Hermosa Beach, CA 90254

I, the undersigned, do hereby swear, certify and affirm that:

I am over the age of 18 and am a resident of the State of California. I have personal knowledge of the facts herein.

Sincerely,



Miyo Prassas  
1753 Valley Park Ave.  
Hermosa Beach, CA 90254  
[jwprassas@yahoo.com](mailto:jwprassas@yahoo.com)  
310-977-6293

EXHIBIT 1

# Agreement for Educational Consultant Services

This agreement is made this (March 1, 2016) between (TPRC Communications) (Consultant) and the Hermosa Beach City School District (District) of Los Angeles County for the time period of (March 1, 2016) to (June 30, 2016) The Consultant agrees to perform the following services for the District:

- The creation and execution of a communications program on behalf of the district which includes social media, website, e-newsletter, and community/media relations. Key messaging and information will be disseminated to the community and to specific target groups that focuses on facilities needs, financial reports/state funding, instructional programs, and other relevant information about the Hermosa Beach City School District, through a variety of media channels and community flyers.

The time and place of these services is to be designated by (Superintendent Escalante). The District agrees to pay the Consultant at the rate (\$2000) per month not to exceed a total of (\$25,000). All expenses (travel, meals, etc.) are included in the consultant fee.

Payment for services will be made in full upon receipt of an invoice for time worked. The invoice shall include dates and number of hours of service. The District shall make payment no later than thirty days after verification of services for which the District has been invoiced.

It is expressly understood and agreed to by both parties hereto that the Consultant, while engaged in carrying out and complying with the terms and conditions of this contract, is an independent contractor and is not an officer, agent or employee of the aforesaid District.

The Consultant agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the District, its offices, agents, employees and volunteers from all loss, costs, and expense arising out of any liability or claim of liability for personal injury, bodily injury to persons, contractual liability and damage to property sustained or claimed to have been sustained arising of activities of the Consultant or those of any of its officers, agents, or employees, whether such act is authorized by this Agreement or not; and the Consultant will pay for any and all damage to property of the District, or loss or theft of such property, done or caused by such persons. The District assumes no responsibility whatsoever for any property placed on premises. The Consultant further agrees to waive all rights of subrogation against District. The provisions of the Article do not apply to any damages or losses caused solely by the negligence of the District or any of its agents or employees.

The Consultant acknowledges that the Consultant is not an employee of the District and therefore not entitled to Worker's Compensation benefits established by Statute.

**CONSULTANT**

**DISTRICT**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**TPRC Communications**  
Jonathan Zaleski, President  
[jonathan@tprccommunications.com](mailto:jonathan@tprccommunications.com)  
310-569-0153

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Patricia Escalante**  
Superintendent

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

EXHIBIT 2

## HERMOSA BEACH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: Board of Education

FROM: Patricia Escalante  
District Superintendent

DATE: April 13, 2016

SUBJECT: CONSULTANT AGREEMENT FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES

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### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of Education ratify the consultant agreement with TPRC Communications to provide public relations services.

### BACKGROUND

At the March 9, 2016 School Board Meeting, the Board received information on proposal for a District Communication Plan to maximize the effective distribution of information to the community in a compelling, efficient and accessible way. The Board approved a budget of \$25,000 to be used toward a Communication Plan with contracts to be presented at the April 13, 2016 School Board Meeting.

EXHIBIT 3



## HERMOSA BEACH CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

TO: Patricia Escalante  
District Superintendent

FROM: Angela M. Jones  
Business Manager

DATE: May 9, 2018

SUBJECT: CONSULTANT AGREEMENT RENEWAL FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES

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### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve the Consultant Agreement Renewal with TPRC Communications to provide public relations services.

### BACKGROUND

Since March 2016, TPRC Communications has successfully implemented a communications plan that focused on social media, website, newsletters, press releases and communication systems to disseminate information about the district and specifically facilities bond Measure S.

Mr. Zaleski, owner of TPRC Communications, has made numerous presentations to the Board to share communication data showing a considerable increase in the number of ways and the number of users that accessed information regarding the school district. Mr. Zaleski will focus on an expansion of his oversight of the District website and alignment of all of all duties with board policy and administrative regulations. As a resident of Hermosa Beach, Mr. Zaleski has the unique understanding of what types of information is relevant and meaningful to the community and he delivers it in a timely manner.

Funding for the consultant agreement will be taken from the General Fund.



# Agreement for Educational Consultant Services

This agreement is made this May 9, 2018 between TPRC Communications (Consultant) and the Hermosa Beach City School District (District) of Los Angeles County for the time period of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. The Consultant agrees to perform the following services for the District:

- Utilization of non-digital methods of communication
- Social Media management and postings on all District social media channels
- Maintain/Update District Website including formatting and posting of documents
- Produce and manage District e-Newsletter
- Dissemination of District information to relevant journalists/media
- Accumulate video and photo library to support social media and website
- Consult on developing/maintaining and effective District communications plan and community outreach

The time and place of these services is to be designated by Superintendent Escalante. The District agrees to pay the Consultant at the rate \$2,000 per month not to exceed a total of \$24,000. All expenses (travel, meals, etc.) are included in the consultant fee.

Payment for services will be made in full upon receipt of an invoice for time worked. The invoice shall include dates and number of hours of service. The District shall make payment no later than thirty days after verification of services for which the District has been invoiced.

It is expressly understood and agreed to by both parties hereto that the Consultant, while engaged in carrying out and complying with the terms and conditions of this contract, is an independent contractor and is not an officer, agent or employee of the aforesaid District.

The Consultant agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the District, its offices, agents, employees and volunteers from all loss, costs, and expense arising out of any liability or claim of liability for personal injury, bodily injury to persons, contractual liability and damage to property sustained or claimed to have been sustained arising of activities of the Consultant or those of any of its officers, agents, or employees, whether such act is authorized by this Agreement or not; and the Consultant will pay for any and all damage to property of the District, or loss or theft of such property, done or caused by such persons. The District assumes no responsibility whatsoever for any property placed on premises. The Consultant further agrees to waive all rights of subrogation against District. The provisions of the Article do not apply to any damages or losses caused solely by the negligence of the District or any of its agents or employees.

The Consultant acknowledges that the Consultant is not an employee of the District and therefore not entitled to Worker's Compensation benefits established by Statute.

**CONSULTANT**

**DISTRICT**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Jonathan Zaleski**  
President  
TPRC Communications  
1209 Manhattan Avenue #12  
Manhattan Beach, CA 90266  
310-569-0153

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Patricia Escalante**  
Superintendent  
Hermosa Beach City School District  
1645 Valley Drive  
Hermosa Beach, CA 90254  
(310) 937-5877


Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

EXHIBIT 4

<https://www.facebook.com/HBCSD/>

**Hermosa Beach City School District**



**Hermosa Beach City School District**

Home About Photos Events Reviews Likes Videos Posts [Create a Page](#)

We have added information and images to our website about some of the things that could be improved if Measure S were to pass on June 7th. Take a look <http://hbcso.org/District20159/limited.html>

**Benefits of Measure S to Hermosa Schools**

Like Comment Share

27 Shares

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 Elementary Schools in Hermosa Beach, California

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Chat (Off)


12:49 AM 9/6/2016



<https://www.facebook.com/HBCSD/>

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**Hermosa Beach City School District**



**Hermosa Beach City School District**

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**Minimal tax increase, negligible traffic impact, more state funds, and a potential boost in home values for Hermosa Beach. That's the Measure S truth.**



Like Comment Share

Write a comment

15

**Hermosa Beach South ... Community**

Like

Elementary Schools in Hermosa Beach, California

**LIKED BY THIS PAGE**

**Hermosa Valley & View...**

Like

**Patch**

Like

**Hermosa Beach Police ...**

Like

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More · Facebook © 2015

Chat (Off)

New notifications

4:53 PM 9/3/2015

Care and Connect...

CA Codes (gov)...

Embas

Hermosa Beach Co...

In California, assume anything.



Facebook interface showing the profile of Hermosa Beach City School District. The page includes a navigation menu with options like Home, About, Photos, Events, Reviews, Likes, Videos, and Posts. A post from Hermosa Beach City School District is visible, featuring a photo of a row of colorful surfboards and a video player. The post text reads: "Hermosa Beach has the smallest amount of funding per pupil when compared to all neighboring cities in the South Bay." The browser's address bar shows the URL: https://www.facebook.com/HBCSD/?ref=ts. The bottom of the screen displays the Windows taskbar with various application icons and the system clock showing 3:57 PM on 9/3/2016.




<https://www.facebook.com/HermosaBeachCitySchoolDistrict/>

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**Hermosa Beach City School District**

There are currently 16 portable classrooms in use at Valley and View. Many of these are taking up valuable parking and play areas. Measure S is about more than just North School. It's a district-wide plan to tackle our overcrowded, outdated, and underfunded schools.

Like Comment Share

63

**PEOPLE ALSO LIKE**

- 
**City of Hermosa Beach**
- 
**Easy Reader News**
- 
**Hermosa Beach South**
- 
**Elementary Schools in Hermosa Beach, California**
- 
**Hermosa Valley & View**
- 
**Hermosa Beach Patch**
- 
**Hermosa Beach Police**

LIKED BY THIS PAGE

Chat (Off)

4:29 PM 9/5/2016



Facebook interface showing the profile of Hermosa Beach City School District. The page includes a navigation menu with links for Home, Photos, Events, Reviews, Likes, Videos, and Posts. A featured post from July 19, 2016, is titled "Vote on Measure S • Hermosa Beach City School District" and features a photograph of a school building. The post text reads: "The countdown is on to Tuesday's mega-important vote on School Bond Measure S. Brush up on the facts about this comprehensive plan to address our overcrowded, underfunded, and outdated schools." Below the post, there are several "LIKED BY THIS PAGE" entries, including "Easy Reader News", "Hermosa Beach South ...", "Elementary Schools in Hermosa Beach, California", "Hermosa Valley & View...", "Hermosa Beach Patch", and "Hermosa Beach Police ...". The browser's address bar shows the URL "https://www.facebook.com/HBCSD/likes". The system tray at the bottom indicates the time is 4:02 PM on 9/5/2016.



**Hermosa Beach City School District**  
@HBCSD

- Home
- About
- PHOTOS
- Events
- Reviews
- LIKES
- VIDEOS
- Posts

**Hermosa Beach City School District**

The countdown is on to Tuesday's mega-important vote on School Bond Measure S. Brush up on the facts about this comprehensive plan to address our overcrowded, underfunded, and outdated schools.  
[www.VoteMeasureS.com](http://www.VoteMeasureS.com)



**Vote on Measure S • Hermosa Beach City School District**  
Get the real facts on the School District's plans to re-open North School and re-vitalize Valley and West schools.

Like Comment Share

- LIKED BY THIS PAGE
- Easy Reader News
  - Hermosa Beach South ...
  - Elementary Schools in Hermosa Beach, California
  - Hermosa Valley & View...
  - Hermosa Beach Patch
  - Hermosa Beach Police ...

Chat (Off)



Facebook browser interface showing the Hermosa Beach City School District page.

**Page Header:** Hermosa Beach City School District | Home 2 | Government Organization

**Navigation Menu:** Home, About, Photos, Events, Reviews, Likes, Videos, Posts

**Post 1:** Hermosa Beach City School District  
 Don't forget to cast an informed Measure S vote on Tuesday. Get all the details at [www.hbcsd.org/measure-s](http://www.hbcsd.org/measure-s)

**Post 2:** Measure S Information - Hermosa Beach City School District  
 Get the facts on Measure S before voting on Tuesday, June 7.

**Related Pages:** Easy Reader News, Hermosa Beach South Community, Elementary Schools in Hermosa Beach, California, Hermosa Valley & View..., Hermosa Beach Patch, Hermosa Beach Police...

**Footer:** Hermosa Beach City School District | © Hermosa Beach City School District 2018

EXHIBIT 5



Pat Escalante &lt;pescalante@hbcasd.org&gt;

## Bond measure marketing person -Fwd: Social media pro and HB resident you spoke to...

1 message

**Michelle Meraz** <mmeraz@hbcasd.org>  
To: Patricia Escalante <pescalante@hbcasd.org>

Tue, Dec 9, 2014 at 11:26 AM

Possible marketing manager for another upcoming bond measure. Please read below HB resident. Let me know if you would like me to direct him to someone else or if you want me to set up an interview for January.

Michelle Meraz | executive assistant |  
Hermosa Beach City School District |  
1645 Valley Drive | Hermosa Beach, California | 90254 |  
310.937.5877 ext. 258 |  
www.hbcasd.org |  
Catch the Wave |

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Jonathan Zaleski** <jonathan@prcollective.com>  
Date: Tue, Nov 25, 2014 at 1:11 PM  
Subject: Social media pro and HB resident you spoke to...  
To: mmeraz@hbcasd.org

Thanks for taking the time to chat on Friday. As discussed, had I been involved as a consultant to pilot the district's social media efforts, Measure Q would have easily passed on Election Day.

Besides being a Hermosa Beach resident and homeowner, I have 20 years of public relations and social media experience that I currently provide to a handful of clients through my private practice. I am very interested in having a conversation about firing up your social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter as a consultant. Besides better positioning the district to prevail in any future measures, the result will be a better sense of community and a more informed public.

The ultra tight vote count for measure Q, last minute closures last week at area high schools, and a host of other recent South Bay issues attest to the value of having an engaging and effective tool in place for communicating with all facets of the community.

Your assistance would be greatly appreciated in helping set up a meeting with Ms. Escalante to explain more about what I can do and answer her questions? After that initial conversation I would then put a proposal together to highlight the specific services I can offer and the costs involved to deliver them.

Please drop me a line or a note about setting that conversation up. In the meantime you can explore my slightly outdated websites, which are being replaced shortly.

Thanks again.

**Jonathan Zaleski**  
*President*  
TPRC Communications  
310-569-0153

www.PRcollective.com (Los Angeles)  
www.TPRCcommunications.com (Nationwide)

# Complaint Submitted

Thank you! Your complaint id is COM-05192020-00966