

## Shifren for LAUSD District 4

Rabbi Shifren looks at why Dorsey High School officials rejected former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan's offer to help the troubled inner-city school with financial and moral support.

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**Rabbi Shifren**

Congratulations Mayor Riordan!

You've been inducted in the LAUSD Hall of the Abused. But you're lucky. You don't have to live with the nightmare that many inner-city teachers have as a daily reality.

You are faced with the awesome and frightening fact: some schools are part of a culture that is racist and anti-American. Let's look at what happened to your offer, giving your "heart and soul" to Dorsey High.

- your monumental offer of perhaps millions of dollars was rejected by Dorsey High.
- your "no-strings-attached" pledge was rejected by Dorsey High.
- your offer to not replace the staff while making improvements at Dorsey was rejected.

In other words, in a world of acute financial stress, where schools are throttled with shrinking budgets and increasingly dwindling resources--at a time when most schools would rejoice at such an infusion of financial aid, mega-talent from well-known celebrities, and immeasurable increases in staff support--Dorsey says, "No thanks, keep your money!"

The question is: why?

Here is a school that has a 50% dropout rate and where only 16% of the students are reading at grade level. So the rebuff to Mayor Riordan is not due to an existing reality of academic excellence. No, it's simple really. No matter how you analyze the absurdity of Dorsey, it all comes down to race. Let's assume that Riordan were Magic Johnson or Bobby Bonds--would the assistance be rejected?

Dorsey pays lip service to "diversity", "multiculturalism!" Is Riordan's ethnic background so detestable as to have him marginalized in the African American community? Is this the legacy of Martin Luther King's admonition about prejudice toward different skin color?

My former colleague, Noah Lippe Klein, was quoted in the "Times" article as saying that Dorsey rejects those outsiders meddling into their affairs. I recall sharing my shock and hurt with Mr. Klein after my classroom was burnt to the ground by Dorsey students, after receiving several death threats. His total indifference to one of the most outrageous instances of racism directed at a teacher speaks volumes about just how much racial tolerance the culture at Dorsey can process...

So where are the embattled parents, climbing the barricades in protest, laying down the gauntlet in this latest District flap designed to keep kids dumbed down and mired in the self-imposed Dorsey "hood?" Where are the voices (voice?) of reason in a community beset by gangs, dysfunctional families, and an army of students with self-esteem issues that the "Times" so often bemoans in reams of articles dripping with victimization?

Mayor Riordan, go figure.....

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