

# MDUSD MONDAY MEMO

A Weekly Update of District Activities and Education-related Issues  
from the Superintendent's Office, Mt. Diablo Unified School District

Week of February 16, 2009

## Board takes steps toward a parcel tax initiative

At its meeting on Tuesday, February 10, the Board of Education unanimously adopted a resolution to place the following proposition before the voters in June:

"To provide all students with a quality education, including reading, writing, math and science; ensure reliable, local funding to protect against harmful state budget cuts; attract and retain quality teachers; maintain vital college and work force preparation programs; and enhance classroom technology; shall the Mount Diablo Unified School District be authorized to levy \$99 per parcel annually, with no funding for district office administrator salaries, an exemption for seniors and strict monitoring by an independent citizen oversight committee?"

This resolution and the full text of the "School Quality Protection Measure of 2009" are posted on the District web site, [www.mdusd.k12.ca.us](http://www.mdusd.k12.ca.us) in the box entitled "Budget Emergency."

The idea of asking voters in the Mt. Diablo USD to support a parcel tax initiative has been under discussion for more than a year. Reductions in state funding for education led to the Board's cutting \$14 million from the District's 2008-09 budget in actions taken last spring and more than \$6 million from its 2009-10 budget in actions taken this winter. Every proposal currently being debated in the State Legislature to address the state budget crisis calls for more cuts in education funding. As Board President Gary Eberhart has stated, revenue from a parcel tax would provide a stable source of funding that can be used for programs and services the District community believes necessary.

The Board's action on February 10 officially initiates a political campaign that is--and must be--separate from and independent of the school district. Leading that campaign is a committee, Citizens United for Excellent Schools (CUES), formed nearly a year ago by a group of parents who saw the need for such an initiative and began making some plans. That group, expanded to include other supporters, has hired a consulting firm and manager to organize and coordinate the campaign.

No District funds or resources of any kind may be allocated to the campaign, though informational materials may be disseminated. Guidelines explaining what the District and its employees may and may not do during a political campaign are posted on the MDUSD web page, [www.mdusd.k12.ca.us](http://www.mdusd.k12.ca.us) and available in the Superintendent's Office.

## Employee Recognition: Dates on the Horizon

Spring is the time the education community takes time to honor the people who serve students. The following dates should help with planning:

- March 2-6..... Week of the School Administrator
- March 9-13..... California Adult Education Week
- May 6..... National School Nurse Day
- May 13..... California Day of the Teacher
- May 18-22..... Classified School Employees Week

Also recognized each spring is public education. April is Public Schools Month. This year's theme is "Education is Building for a Better Tomorrow."

### **Board continues work on budget reductions**

At its meeting on Tuesday, February 10, the Board of Education nearly reached its goal of cutting \$6.6 million from the District's budget for this and the next two years. The total amount of the reductions approved to date is \$6.2 million. The list of proposed budget reductions, the action taken on them, and information on the state budget can be accessed on the District web site, [www.mdusd.k12.ca.us](http://www.mdusd.k12.ca.us), in the box titled "Budget Emergency."

Reductions approved at the February 10 meeting are as follows (vote was 5-0-0 except as noted):

- Item 4(a) Eliminate vacant Custodial Supervisor position at Loma Vista Adult Education. Fiscal Impact: \$73,000.
- Item 19(a) Reduce 2.9 FTE Instructional Media Assistants at elementary schools. Fiscal Impact: \$153,741. (Whitmarsh, no)
- Item 81 Reduce one (1) Site Technology Technician funded out of Routine Restricted Maintenance. Fiscal Impact: \$78,000 (Whitmarsh, no)
- Item 83 Increase elementary school staffing ratios: Kindergarten, from 30 to 31 students per teacher; Grade 4/5, from 31 to 32. Fiscal Impact: \$217,716. (4 positions)
- Item 84 Increase middle school staffing ratios: Delta View, from 29 to 30 students per teacher; all others, from 30 to 31. Fiscal Impact: \$381,003 (7 positions)
- Item 85 Increase high school staffing ratios from 31 to 32 students per teacher. Fiscal Impact: \$544,290. (10 positions)

### **Student and Staff Successes**

### **Nueva Vista senior earns Comcast scholarship**

**Azen Eunice Aguilar**, a senior at Nueva Vista Necessary Small High School, has been named a recipient of the 2009-2010 Comcast Leaders and Achievers® Scholarship. Funded through The Comcast Foundation, this \$1,000 award recognizes high school seniors for their commitment to community service, academic achievement, and demonstrated leadership. Azen serves on the Nueva Vista Site Council, teaches Bible studies for younger children at her church, and writes a Blog evaluating cosmetic products sent to her by manufacturers. She is a straight A student this year while also taking classes at DVC.

### **Food and Nutrition Services provides extra helpings**

- √ Last year Mt. Diablo Food and Nutrition staff served 2.4 million lunches and 864,000 breakfasts, a 10.6% increase in breakfast participation over prior year. Much of this increase was due to implementing a "second chance" breakfast at recess at several schools. According to Cambridge Elementary School Principal Marie Schirmer, "The second chance breakfast made such a difference with our test scores."
- √ 35.76% of the District's enrollment is eligible for free and reduced price meals.
- √ Lunch trays are now biodegradable, made from bagasse, a residue from sugarcane, rather than from the ubiquitous Styrofoam.
- √ MDUSD was the foundation district for the original SHAPE pilot that started in 1989. This program was California's groundbreaking movement that collaboratively developed techniques to improve student health from a nutrition perspective (nutrient standard menu planning, parent involvement, nutrition education, etc.) Some of these techniques like nutrient standard menu planning have been instituted in districts nationwide. In California SHAPE membership has expanded to more than 90 districts.

### **In others' words. . . *George Washington: Feb. 22, 1732-Dec. 4, 1799***

"If the freedom of speech is taken away then dumb and silent we may be led, like sheep to the slaughter."

"Let your heart feel for the afflictions and distress of everyone, and let your hand give in proportion to your purse."

"I hope I shall possess firmness and virtue enough to maintain what I consider the most enviable of all titles, the character of an honest man."

**Dick Nicoll**  
**Interim Superintendent**  
**Mt. Diablo Unified School District**  
**Web Site: [www.mdusd.k12.ca.us](http://www.mdusd.k12.ca.us)**

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