

MDUSD (MONDAY) WEEKLY MEMO

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

Week of April 6, 2009

APRIL 7 BOARD MEETING: Reduced Summer Program Approved

At last night's meeting each Board member expressed dismay after casting a vote none wanted to make. The state's financial crisis, which is impacting programs and services offered during the school year, has compelled the Board to eliminate a significant part of this year's summer program.

Grade K-8 general education classes will not be offered and high school classes will be available only to students who need to make up credits for graduation. The Mt. Diablo Adult Education program will offer courses for original credit in U.S. History, World History, Government, and Economics. The Extended Year Program serving students with special needs will continue as usual. More information is available on the District website, www.mdusd.org Click on the "PARENTS" button on the home page and then on "Summer School" under "School Information."

The Board has been having to make major cuts to the District budget for nearly two years in response to the state's ongoing fiscal crisis. Despite cutting \$14 million from this school year's budget last Spring, the Board faced an additional \$7 million revenue shortfall after the state budget was finally adopted last September. In December, in the first of many reductions in areas throughout the District, the Board eliminated the General Purpose contribution of \$369,462 from the Supplemental Instruction (Spring/Summer Intervention) Program.

Undaunted, District staff began preparing a somewhat reduced summer program, but one that would serve all grade levels. Then, in February, the State Legislature and Governor approved a revised budget that included even less funding for education. The MDUSD Board faced another \$8 million in cuts, which it made on March 3. As a result, it is simply not feasible to offer a K-8 regular education summer program in summer 2009. Parents who want their children to participate in enrichment activities are advised to check the programs offered by their local parks and recreation district.

Student and Staff Successes

District students venture on an *Odyssey of the Mind*

Student teams from **El Dorado** and **Foothill** middle schools took their imaginations and problem-solving skills to a high level on April 4. They competed against teams from throughout California in the state *Odyssey of the Mind* tournament. Foothill earned 6th place in the Shock Waves, Division II, category; El Dorado, a 10th place in Teach Yer Creature, Division II. They'd qualified for the state competition during a San Francisco Bay Area Regional tournament on February 28. Student teams from **Westwood** and **Valle Verde** elementary schools also participated in that event.

Odyssey of the Mind (OM) is a creative exercise that encourages students to analyze a situation, imagine all the possibilities, and combine the best qualities of their ideas into a workable solution. It is a hands-on program for students, a hands-off one for coaches and parents. Participants learn team building skills, cooperation, and problem solving strategies. Forming a team in the fall, they work under the guidance of a coach to solve problems that range from building mechanical devices to presenting their own interpretation of literary classics.

Upcoming Meetings of Interest

Teachers invited to consider National Board Certification

Liane Cismowski, one of the first MDUSD teachers to earn National Board Certification, will be encouraging others to do the same at an informational meeting on May 8 at Olympic High, where Liane teaches.

National Board Certified Teachers and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards advance the quality of teaching and learning by:

- Maintaining high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do
- Providing a national voluntary system certifying teachers who meet these standards
- Advocating related education reforms to integrate National Board Certification in American education and to capitalize on the expertise of National Board Certified Teachers

The meeting will be held from 3:45 to 5 p.m. in Room 16 at Olympic High, 2730 Salvio Street, Concord.

"Cyber Safety": How to Keep Kids Safe Online

At an afternoon workshop on Wednesday, April 29, parents, teachers and service providers will learn about ways to protect children from dangers they may encounter on the Internet. Sponsored by the Contra Costa County Violence Prevention Coalition in partnership with Community Violence Solutions, the "Cyber Safety workshop will include:

- Clips of videos on Internet safety
- Statistics and facts related to cyber bullying and online solicitation
- Popular acronyms
- Use patterns
- Offender profiles
- Media vignettes
- Social networking sites including information on how to dismantle profiles
- Tips and resolutions
- Panel discussion with invited guests from law enforcement, from SAGE (Standing Against Global Exploitation) in San Francisco, a teen and a parent

The event will be held at Heald College, 5130 Commercial Circle, Concord, from 12:30 to 4 p.m. The registration deadline is April 15; the fee is \$10. For more information, contact Juliana Granzotto at 925-335-1092 or Jgran@cao.cccounty.us.

Panel to discuss Foster Care Opportunities

Today more than 75,000 children in California are in foster care. The number of MDUSD students in foster care has grown to record numbers. At Mt Diablo High School on Tuesday, April 21, an expert panel of service providers, community organizations,

volunteers will discuss "Foster Care Opportunities" at a public meeting from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The emphasis will be on emancipated youth and forming transitional communities to answer their needs. Invited or confirmed speakers include Susan Bonilla, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors; Don Graves, Independent Living Skills; Jeff Middleton, MDUSD Foster Care Youth Services; Barbara Droher Klein, Lutheran Social Services.

Reminder: 2009-10 and 2010-11 School Year Calendars Approved

Employees, parents, students, and anyone else who need to know when school starts, takes breaks, and ends, not just next year but the one after, can find out at the click of a button on the District website, www.mdusd.org. A click on the "Calendar" button, located on the lefthand column of the homepage, will open a window to a list of District calendars, including the ones for school year 2009-10 and 2010-11 that the Board approved at its meeting on Tuesday, March 24.

In others' words . . . on the occasion of Baseball's Opening Day

"That's the true harbinger of spring, not crocuses or swallows returning to Capistrano, but the sound of a bat on a ball."~Bill Veeck, baseball team owner

"It breaks your heart. It is designed to break your heart. The game begins in spring, when everything else begins again, and it blossoms in the summer, filling the afternoons and evenings, and then as soon as the chill rains come, it stops and leaves you to face the fall alone."~A. Bartlett Giamatti, late Commissioner of Baseball

"No matter how good you are, you're going to lose one-third of your games. No matter how bad you are you're going to win one-third of your games. It's the other third that makes the difference."~Tommy Lasorda, former manager, L.A. Dodgers

"Poets are like baseball pitchers. Both have their moments. The intervals are the tough things."~Robert Frost

**Dick Nicoll
Interim Superintendent
Mt. Diablo Unified School District
Web Site:www.mdusd.org**

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