

MDUSD MONDAY MEMO

A Weekly Update of District Activities and Education-related Issues

from the Superintendent's Office, Mt. Diablo Unified School District

Wednesday, September 10, 2008

Message from the Superintendent

The first two weeks of the 2008-9 school year are behind us. I know many of you were happy to start this week with the temperatures a bit cooler. For all of you who have served our students in rooms and offices without air conditioning during this recent heat wave, I extend a sincere "thank you."

For the most part the year has started off on a positive note. Those of us from the District Office who visited school sites on opening day were impressed with the preparation and enthusiasm we saw from teachers, administrators, and support staff throughout the District. Parent volunteers were also critical to helping students, families, and staff navigate pre-school registration and the first day of class.

That positive spirit has continued each day even as we work to adjust classes and staffing to accommodate the number of students who have enrolled in our schools and programs so far this year. As of Monday, September 8, the enrollment figures for regular education classes are as follows:

<u>Grade Level</u>	<u># Enrolled</u>	<u># Projected</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Elementary	15,259	14,942	317
Middle	7,668	7,684	-16
High	<u>9,923</u>	<u>10,130</u>	<u>-207</u>
Total	32,850	32,756	94

In addition, enrollments in special programs are as follows:

Eagle Peak Charter	185
Alternative Ed.	726
Special Ed.	1,622
Non-public Schools	<u>173</u>
Total	2,706

We do not project enrollments for these programs. Last year at this time 2,342 students in these programs.

We are 317 students over projections at elementary school, 16 under projections at middle school and 207 under projections at high school. Balancing classes is a challenge for everyone. We may need to hire more elementary school teachers, particularly at the kindergarten level. If past patterns hold, we can expect about 100 more students to enroll in our secondary schools between now and December.

As we expected, the budget cuts we had to make last spring in response to the state fiscal crisis are being felt. Parents and staff have voiced concerns, particularly about the reductions in clerical positions at the high schools and vice principal positions at the elementary schools, the increases in class sizes, and the delays in assigning interdistrict transfer students to schools.

I appreciate everyone's patience and support as students and staff get settled for the year ahead.

Respectfully
Gary McHenry
Superintendent

Thursday, September 11: Patriot's Day--Flags at half staff

A Proclamation by the President of the United States of America

By a joint resolution approved December 18, 2001 (Public Law 107-89), the Congress has designated September 11 of each year as "Patriot Day."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim September 11, 2008, as Patriot Day. I call upon the Governors of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as well as appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag be flown at half-staff on Patriot Day. I also call upon the people of the United States to observe Patriot Day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and remembrance services, to display the flag at half-staff from their homes on that day, and to observe a moment of silence beginning at 8:46 a.m. eastern daylight time to honor the innocent Americans and people from around the world who lost their lives as a result of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of September, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-third.

GEORGE W. BUSH

Politically Speaking . . . What can public employees, parent clubs do?

This being an election year, it is important to review the guidelines for what public agencies (the District and schools) and non-profit organizations (PTAs and school-affiliated parent clubs that have 501(c)(3) status) can and cannot do in regard to political campaigns. As November nears site administrators and parent club/PTA presidents may be asked to include candidate endorsements in publications and/or on web sites and to provide an opportunity for a candidate or two to speak at a school or parent club meeting.

MDUSD Board Policies 1160 and 1325 restrict political activity in the school district, at school sites, and in the communications we produce as public employees. Basically, we cannot endorse nor oppose a candidate or ballot measure during our work hours or using District or school (i.e. publicly funded) resources. The Board policies can be viewed on the District web site, www.mdusd.k12.ca.us. Click on the

GAMUT box on the home page and use the logon information provided.

Non-profit parent groups must follow IRS guidelines, printed below and available at www.irs.gov/charities/charitable/article/0,,id=163395,00.html

"Under the Internal Revenue Code, all section 501(c)(3) organizations are absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office. Contributions to political campaign funds or public statements of position (verbal or written) made on behalf of the organization in favor of or in opposition to any candidate for public office clearly violate the prohibition against political campaign activity. Violating this prohibition may result in denial or revocation of tax-exempt status and the imposition of certain excise taxes.

"Certain activities or expenditures may not be prohibited depending on the facts and circumstances. For example, certain voter education activities (including presenting public forums and publishing voter education guides) conducted in a non-partisan manner do not constitute prohibited political campaign activity. In addition, other activities intended to encourage people to participate in the electoral process, such as voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives, would not be prohibited political campaign activity if conducted in a non-partisan manner.

"On the other hand, voter education or registration activities with evidence of bias that (a) would favor one candidate over another; (b) oppose a candidate in some manner; or (c) have the effect of favoring a candidate or group of candidates, will constitute prohibited participation or intervention.

"The Internal Revenue Service provides resources to exempt organizations and the public to help them understand the prohibition. As part of its examination program, the IRS also monitors whether organizations are complying with the prohibition."
Updated: April 17, 2008

In others' words . . . *on striving for the best*

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit."
~ Aristotle

"The secret of joy in work is contained in one word--excellence. To know how to do something well is to enjoy it." ~ Pearl S. Buck

"You have achieved excellence as a leader when people will follow you anywhere, if only out of curiosity." ~ Colin Powell

**Gary McHenry
Superintendent**

**Mt. Diablo Unified School District
website:www.mdusd.k12.ca.us**

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