

# 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 October 27, 2008

## Budget Reductions Redux

Dear Members of the Mt. Diablo USD community,  
The state budget passed in September is simply not going to provide Mt. Diablo, nor most other school districts, with enough revenue to meet expenses over the next two years. In order to maintain a balanced budget and also try to free up money to settle employee contracts, we must go through the process of budget reductions once again. At its meeting tomorrow, Tuesday, October 28, the Board of Education will begin discussing the structure and criteria to be used in this round of reductions.

The complete agenda for tomorrow's meeting is posted on the District web site: [www.mdusd.k12.ca.us](http://www.mdusd.k12.ca.us). Click on "Board of Education," then "Agenda for Current Meeting." The topic of budget reductions is agenda item 10.3. The docket includes the following information:

1. Amount reduced in 2003-04, 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2007-08.
2. Programs and services impacted.
3. Budget reduction criteria used in the past.
4. Multi-year projection for 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11.
5. Summary expense budget to actual by fund report. These are budgeted amounts in specific programs. It includes restricted and unrestricted program budgets. We can only reduce unrestricted budgets. Restricted budgets, with the exception of special education, are developed based on actual funding received.
6. Summary of positions districtwide. This report shows the number of positions by bargaining unit or association at schools and at the central office.
7. Items for consideration. Most of these items were left over from the original list. I hope to develop a list with recommendations from Board members, committee members, staff and parents.

I encourage everyone in the Mt. Diablo education community to participate in the discussions about budget reductions. As we've done in the past, District administrators will hold meetings throughout the District over the next two months to hear ideas not just for reducing expenses but also for generating new revenue. I welcome your comments and suggestions.

Respectfully,  
Gary McHenry  
Superintendent

## Rumor Control: Financing political campaigns

It has come to our attention that parents are being given confusing messages about funding related to Proposition 8. In several school districts parents were told to keep their students home from school for a day to protest the use of "educational funding" to support the "No on Proposition 8" campaign. Today in our district a few parents have called to say they heard districts are using funds received for student attendance to support the "Yes on Proposition 8" campaign. Our response: It is illegal for public school districts to engage in political campaigns. We cannot use District funds for them, even if the issue is a bond measure or parcel tax to improve facilities or programs. Employees cannot use District resources or their work time to promote a political point of view. The California Teachers Association, an independent labor organization for educators, can engage in politics. It is sponsoring ads that oppose Proposition 8. No public school district funds can be, or are being, used in that campaign.

## Correction

In the last issue of the *Monday Memo*, Silverwood Elementary's Academic Performance Index (API) score for 2007 was incorrect. Silverwood students increased their achievement score from 764 in 2007 to 781 in 2008, a 17-point gain. Congratulations to students, teachers, staff, and parents at Silverwood for this accomplishment.

## Employees collecting food for homeless students

During the holiday season last year employees responded enthusiastically to the call from the District's Homeless Outreach Program for Education (HOPE) for donations of non-perishable food and \$10 gift cards for homeless students and families. Since then, several people at the MDUSD Dent Center have been working with James Wogan, administrator of school linked services, to extend that effort year round.

After much planning, the effort begins this week. A group of volunteers recently cleared a space at the Dent Center for donations to be dropped off and packaged throughout the year. They and others will spend time during their lunch hour and after work to box and sort the donated food. Anyone wishing to contribute to the families HOPE serves may bring their donations of food and gift cards to the Dent Center. Those who wish to have a food drive at a school site may contact Lori Amenta at [amental@mdusd.k12.ca.us](mailto:amental@mdusd.k12.ca.us) or 925-682-8000, ext. 4002.

This program is not intended to discourage anyone from supporting the Contra Costa Food Bank or any other charitable organization. It is simply a direct way to help the District's homeless students and their families. The number of homeless students in MDUSD has more than doubled in three years, from 128 in 2005-6 to 322 in 2007-8.

**In others' words . . . on politics**

*"You campaign in poetry. You govern in prose."*--Mario Cuomo, Governor of New York, 1983-1994

*"The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace in a continual state of alarm (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by menacing them with an endless series of hobgoblins, all of them imaginary."*--H. L. Mencken, American journalist, essayist

*"To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right."*--Confucius, philosopher

**Gary McHenry  
Superintendent**

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