

March 17, 2016

More on Increasing Student Enrollment and our Budget; Thank You for Attending our Board Meetings

By Michael Futterman, TUHSD Board President

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Staff:

This update discusses the Board of Trustees budget workshop that will take place next week, and provides highlights from our well-attended Board meeting on March 8.

BOARD WORKSHOP – *The District Budget, 5:00 pm, Tuesday, 3/22/16*

The Board of Trustees will hold a special workshop next Tuesday focusing on the District budget. The workshop is designed to help the Trustees understand the rather byzantine structure of school funding in California, and its impact on our high schools. Our Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Facilities, Sally Swan, who has a gift for bringing clarity to this topic, will lead the discussion. The presentation will also delve into how we spend the taxpayers' money in our schools, with a specific focus on the 2015/16 fiscal year budget, as well as on projections for upcoming years. And the Board will receive a report from Superintendent Yoshihara's Budget Study Committee on its recommendations for District priorities in light of budgetary constraints.

As I mentioned in my most recent email to the community, demographic trends in Marin County, along with the deservedly excellent reputation of our public high schools, have attracted increasing numbers of students to our District. It may help to focus on a few key numbers.

In 2007/08, we had 3,867 students enrolled in our District. This year we have nearly 4,500 students, and projections indicate that we will have 5,444 students by 2020/21. This is a projected 41% increase since 07/08, and, a 22% increase over present levels. Property tax revenues, which generate the bulk of our funding, are *not* projected to keep pace with future growth. More students means we will need to hire more teachers. In fact, we currently anticipate that over the next five years we will need to recruit and hire approximately 55 more teachers and other “certificated” staff to meet the needs of our students. This should not be a surprise; fundamentally, teachers drive student learning. That is the core of what we do.

Bottom line is that enrollment growth means that we will have less money per student. This financial situation will impact, directly or indirectly, nearly every decision we make as a Board over the next several years, from teacher hiring to class size, from curricular offerings to facilities. As a Board, we will look at expenses and at potential revenues, always with the goal in mind of providing an excellent education for *all* of our students. We are committed to engaging in this process in a dedicated and diligent manner, and we will strive throughout to welcome input from parents, students, staff and other stakeholders.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM RECENT BOARD MEETING – *The District Budget; Student Wellness*

The Board of Trustees held a regular meeting on March 8, 2016. The two major items on the agenda were approval of the “Second Interim” report on the District budget, and a discussion on the progress of the Wellness Center at Redwood High School. It was useful to have both topics on the same agenda, as any discussion about District programs needs to take into account our financial situation. (Please see above.) Well over 100 members of the public attended the meeting. I’d like to say that the scintillating discussion among the

Trustees drew the crowd, but in reality the Wellness Center presentation was the big draw. There have been numerous articles about the Wellness Center in local media, including well-written pieces appearing in student media on our campuses. There is not sufficient space here to further that discussion. Suffice it to say that many students, parents and other members of the community spoke intelligently and eloquently about the importance of student wellness, and the desire to expand the Wellness Center, in some form, to Drake and Tam. The Board very much appreciates this public input, and thanks all those who have taken the time to attend our meetings and otherwise help inform our discussions. Any decisions with regard to the Wellness Center, and indeed any programs going forward, will necessarily be made in the context of broader discussions about enrollment growth, multi-year budget projections, and District priorities. At some point we will have to make choices. We will make better, more well-informed choices with continued public input.

Thank you for your continued support of our schools, and for helping us accomplish our mission of providing the best possible education for all of our students.