

Foothill PFA Meeting March 11, 2009

Attendees:

Maria Kopf, Barbara Amacker, Vicki Fraser, Monica Fitzgerald, Mary Hain, Gail Markham, Gladys Moore, Kathy Frattini, Patty Cochrane, Pam Lundgren, Kim Harris, Lori Abele, Janet Sheehy, Sonia Roscoe, Linda Law, Linda Hutcherson, Tom Dial, Mary Phalon

The March PFA meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm. Vicki Fraser asked if there were any questions or objections to the January or February meeting minutes. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Monica Fitzgerald and was seconded by Mary Phalon. The motion passed.

President's Report: Vicki Fraser

Last week Vicki spoke to the incoming 6th grade parents. After the parent meeting she was approached by the Creek asking for assistance to repair the fire alarm panel. The Creek is a private non-profit organization that provides after school care for Foothill students. Their building is on district property; however, they are responsible for maintenance. They have provided \$10,000 in financial aid to students who attend their program. The total cost of the repair is \$940 and The Creek would like assistance from the PFA. A motion was made by Monica Fitzgerald and seconded by Mary Phalon to pay for the repairs. The motion passed. There was some discussion as to whether or not the PFA should pay the entire cost. A decision was made to pay for half the cost of the repair because we do not know what the final impact of the budget cuts will be. A motion was made to amend the first motion and was made by Mary Phalon and seconded by Lori Abele. The amended motion passed.

Vicki announced that the President position is open for next year. We have 16 returning board members, 32 vacancies, and 6 unknown. Barbara Amacker, Vice President, is moving out of state. Vicki thanked her for her service. Vicki announced that Maria Kopf will be the Vice President as well as the Secretary for the remainder of the year. A VP is needed to co-sign checks and to fill in for Vicki if needed. Vicki asked for a motion to approve Maria taking over as VP as of March 11 and for the remainder of the year. A motion was made by Monica Fitzgerald and seconded by Lori Abele. The motion passed.

Principal's Report: Ms. Hutcherson

Ms. Hutcherson thanks all of the parents for the letter of support after her knee surgery. She is happy to be back at work. She said that she and the staff are moving full speed ahead for planning the 2009-10 school year. The week of February 23-27 she visited the Foothill feeder schools to meet with the 5th graders. Last week she met with the incoming 6th grade parents and the turn out was great, there were over 300 parents.

They are looking at the budget reductions and the staffing needs for the coming school year. The projected enrollment for 2009-10 is 1,079 students. The ratio for students to teachers is 30:1. Based on the current budget cuts Foothill will be reducing their staff by

three teachers. By March 1, teachers have their teaching assignments for the new school year. Pink slips are issued based on credentialing, seniority, and staffing needs. Just because a teacher received a pink slip it doesn't mean that it's permanent. Pink slipped teachers get first priority for any openings that a district may have. This may mean pink slipped teachers end up at a different site. Ms. Hutcherson urged parents not to panic as there are a lot of unknowns right now and we won't know for the next 6 weeks.

The school site visit for becoming a Distinguished School went very well.

As of March 1 we have not received any funding for Site Council for the current school year from the state. The budget this year is 15% less than last year. Site Council pays for part of the Site Intern's salary who works under the Site Psychologist. The district cut two psychologist positions and the remaining psychologists will fill in the gaps. As part of the budget cuts from the City of Walnut Creek, three independent contractors' positions will be pink slipped. Two of these are the school's Crisis Counselors. Ms. Hutcherson will be having conversations with them. She does anticipate that they will be back. A parent said that with the increase in students the Crisis Counselors are seeing this year, we need to make sure they do come back to Foothill. Please write to the Walnut Creek City Council to voice your concern.

Librarians are going to be cut in half and we are not sure of the impact to schools and the openings of libraries. A parent asked if parent volunteers could back fill for librarians. There are issues around not having certificated people working in a library during class sessions.

A parent asked if the PFA could endorse Measure D. There aren't any rules against it. A motion was made by Janet Sheehy to endorse Measure D and it was seconded by Monica Fitzgerald. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Smith, an 8th grade math teacher, resigned from the District. Mrs. Kremenliev will be staying the rest of the year.

There was an incident last week where a student brought alcohol on campus concealed in an Arizona iced tea can. A very small group of students were involved in this incident. Parents were notified and disciplinary action was taken.

A parent asked Ms. Hutcherson about allowing 6th grade students to use the lockers in the A wing during lunch. Ms. Hutcherson said that students have adequate time between classes (5 minutes) to access their lockers and retrieve needed books or lunch.

Treasurer's Report: Kathy Frattini

Kathy reviewed the balance sheet. The budget for the PFA is where it should be. We may not make the projected \$7900 for Scrip. We are still receiving checks for Matching Funds. Our expenses come in at the end of the year and we will have carry over for next year. We will be getting \$4400 back from the Fall Proposals, \$10,000 from the Outdoor

Theater, and \$5600 from the money budgeted for the laptops. This \$20,000 will be moved to spring funding.

PAC Meeting: Janet Sheehy

Foothill is the largest of the MDUSD middle schools and we will not be impacted by the cutting of the Vice Principal's positions. There was mention that the funds from Measure D could not be used to bring back school sports because the wording of the measure had been submitted prior to school sports being cut. The state has five other budget measures on the May ballot and if they do not pass, there could be even further cuts. The campaign for Measure D has set up an office in Concord and they need volunteers to man the phone banks, stuffing envelopes, etc. In order for Measure D to pass, we must receive 2/3 of the vote. Please see the attachments provided by Janet Sheehy for further information on how you can help with this campaign.

The meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm. The next PFA Meeting is April 8.

Parents Advisory Committee meeting report March 2009

The previous evening the Board of Education had cut \$8.385 million from the budget (49 line items), including four middle school vice principals (not at Foothill), three high school vice principals (Northgate will lose one) and fourth grade instrumental music. They also eliminated the GATE summer school, reduced funding for librarians district-wide by the amount of funds currently used to pay middle school librarians (elementary will still get full-time librarians, middle and high schools have to work out how to spread the remaining funds), and completely stopped funding for high school athletics. We spent the entire evening discussing the impact of these losses to the district and the current status of the parcel tax, now known as Measure D. We also talked about the large number of “pink slips” that are going out to teachers, administrators and certificated personnel this month. Due to legal restrictions the District has to notify potential lay-off folks by mid-March or else they are obligated to employ them the following school year, therefore they “over notice” in March and then make actual personnel decisions as they get closer to summer, and then again in August.

One area of great concern during the meeting was the elimination of high school athletics. Neither the District nor the Board member present had answers yet to questions of the “what now” nature. Restoring sports is not listed in Measure D, and while two Board members have assured me they hope to bring sports back, there are of course, no guarantees. I have asked the Board and Dr. Nicoll to get back to the parent community this month with what our options are for next year for high school athletics.

Beyond sports, Measure D’s success would generate money for some of the areas that have hit Foothill and our surrounding community. The big unknown is what further cuts the state would ask of us during the May Revise of the state budget. If more cuts are required they would need to be considered as beneficiaries of Measure D funds, should Measure D pass. There are other budget measures on the state ballot, all of them need to pass in order for Measure D to meet the identified needs within the District. Currently our District is presenting a budget that does meet legal requirements so we are still in “good standing” financially with the County Board of Education, which is important to keeping oversight of our District local.

The language for the parcel tax is very specific and funds generated by the parcel tax must be used only for the items listed in the ballot measure. The proposition before voters in June will be:

"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?"

The full text of Measure D can be found on the District web site at:

<http://www.mdusd.org/NewsRoom/Pages/BoardApprovesParcelTaxResolution.aspx>

Key points made during the evening:

- Measure D money can only go to specific purposes outlined in the language of the ballot measure.
- The Parcel Tax group now has office space and needs time and money contributions. The web site for that group is “protectourlocalschools.org”, you can volunteer or donate on their site.
- The track record for wise stewardship of Measure C money is extraordinarily good and should be reassuring to folks nervous about giving money to the District given the news stories about our budget and finance problems.
- There are strict rules about what District employees can and cannot say or do regarding the election campaign. We are asking for any rules that govern what parents can or cannot do on school grounds.

The State Emergency Spending Plan cuts are unprecedented. The threat to the quality education of our children is very real.

WHAT CAN BE DONE NOW?

Over the past five years, the state budget crisis has forced the Mt. Diablo Unified School District to cut close to **\$30 million dollars** from its budget, **\$8 million** this year...and there is more to come. The Emergency Spending Plan signed by the Governor in February 2009 will require reductions of **another \$8.1 million more through 2011** from our local classrooms before March 15, 2009. It may get worse. The failure of any one of five ballot items on the May 19th statewide election and the subsequent May Revise budget adjustments (delayed to May 26th) for 2009-2010 year will require even more reductions.

We know many of you already make a major difference by volunteering your time or contributing to fundraisers at your local schools, but we believe that more will be needed long term to ensure that our children continue to receive an excellent education in our community.

Local Funding Measure Would Support High-Quality Instruction and Student Success

In order to maintain and improve the high-quality education in our local schools and prevent further budget cuts that will affect programs and teachers, the Mt. Diablo Unified School District Board of Education has placed an education funding measure before voters that would:

- Maintain and restore existing district programs and services to ensure all students continue to receive a quality education including reading, writing, math and science.
- Attract and retain high-quality teachers and staff
- Maintain vital college and workforce preparation programs to prepare students for the 21st century
- Support after school programs to help students with reading, writing, math and other activities
- Enhance classroom technology
- Provide a well-rounded curriculum including arts and music
- Provide additional training to staff, including K-12 teachers and paraprofessionals;
- Expand and enhance the Teacher Support Program and increase teacher support and accountability;
- Maintain reduced class sizes for kindergarten through third grade and 9th grade; and
- Maintain school librarians

The local education funding measure would assure we could continue to provide our children a well-rounded curriculum that is essential to building a strong academic foundation. The Board has approved a \$99 per year parcel—that is \$8.25 per month. This measure would provide a stable source of funding for our local schools during this time of budgetary turmoil.

Accountable to Taxpayers

All funds from the proposed ballot measure would be used here in our local elementary, middle and high schools to support student achievement and build a strong academic foundation for our children. The state could not take a single dime.

- Independent citizen oversight and mandatory annual audits would ensure funds are spent as promised
- No funds could be spent on central office administrator salaries
- The measure would expire in 5 years and could not be renewed without voter approval
- An exemption would be available for seniors

The Measure will be voted on at the Special State Election on May 19th. If the Measure passes, the funds will be available to the school district for the 2009-10 school year.

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