

District Dialogue

AEEDS Publication

“SUPT’S ON”

April 14 – May 30, 2008

SUPERINTENDENT’S OFFICE

by Melinda Hennes



Greetings from the Superintendent!

As you are all well aware, these are extremely challenging times for our District as we prepare for the 2008-2009 budget year. With a significant loss in revenue due to declining enrollment and the Governor’s proposed budget deficit, we are compelled to reduce our budget by a significant amount.

At their April 1st meeting, the Board of Trustees considered the suggestions contributed by our staff, parents and community members regarding either the reduction of services or elimination of services. The Board heard the third session of public input regarding the potential budget reductions and then, with heavy hearts, took action. Though none of the cuts to the budget are “good”, failure on the part of the Board to make significant reductions may have placed the District in a position of “negative certification”. A negative certification would indicate that the District may not be able to meet its fiscal obligations for the current year or the two subsequent years.

Because budgets change as time passes, the Board will establish a prioritized list of services that will be funded as money again becomes available. The District budget is based upon “assumptions”: how many students are enrolled, how many expenses the District is obligated to support and the revenue received. Again, the District must budget based upon a “worst case scenario” which we all hope will not come to pass.

A Third Interim Report will be presented to the Board at the May meeting. This report will provide the Board members with the information needed to determine their course of action.

So, at the middle of April, we are watching Sacramento politics very closely as we await the Governor’s May Revise and the establishment of the State’s 2007-2008 budget. Let’s keep our fingers crossed as we focus our energies on student academic progress while we continue to search for strategies to make our district “whole” again.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

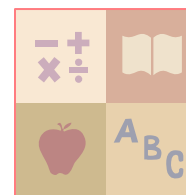
by Michele McCabe

Educational Services

This is such an overwhelming time of year. We are anxious about testing; we are busy working on end-of-the-year tasks; and we are excited about the summer months to come. At times we are exhausted and at other times we are refreshed by the thought of a break and a chance to start anew. It often seems like an emotional tug-of-war. Then we look at how far our students have come and we realize that what we do matters in the lives of children.

Math Adoption

A dedicated group of teachers are working together this year to determine which math materials should be recommended to the Board for adoption. The process has been similar to the previous adoptions: data was examined and critical elements of a program were identified. A smaller subcommittee looked at materials and the choices were narrowed to the top two candidates. These programs have been or are currently being piloted. The goal is to take the committee’s recommendation to the Board in June. Barring unforeseen circumstances, all materials should be available before school begins.



2008-09 Instructional Materials

- OCR Decodables and workbooks will be ordered and delivered to school sites before school gets out in June.
- History and science consumable workbooks will be replaced. We will be sending out choices to teachers in late April or early May. The consumables should be delivered to school sites before school begins in August.
- Principals will be completing a request to replace Holt consumables for grades 7 and 8.
- As stated above, new math materials should be available when teachers return in August.

Staff Development Opportunities

We are currently working on staff development for this summer and the 2008-09 school year. We will definitely have training for the new math adoption programs. We are also looking at how we can build upon what we have been doing this school year. If you have any requests for staff development that you would like us to consider, please email me or let your C & I Council representative know.

Library Media and Technology

The fiber project is proceeding! The City of Atwater has issued the necessary building permits to AT&T so that they can start pulling fiber throughout the District to all school sites. This fiber will improve connectivity throughout the District. Access to resources such as the e-mail server, Moodle, Destiny (the new library software), and Renaissance Place will greatly improve. The target date to start bringing schools up on the fiber is the beginning of May.

Destiny, the new library management software, is up and running. Destiny offers easy web-based access to each site's library collection across the entire District. Students and staff will be able to look at the collection 24/7 from any Internet connected computer. There are four methods to search the collection:

1. **Basic** provides a quick way to search based on keyword, title, author, subject, or series.
2. **Power** provides a way to perform a more granular search.
3. **Visual** is great for younger students to search using clip-art icons.
4. **Copy Categories** provides a means to search through pre-built categories.

HUMAN RESOURCES

by David Diaz Duran

Staff

The District has vacancies on an ongoing basis for classified employees and it fills them regularly. The hiring process for Accounting Technician (two positions), Senior Mechanic, and Lead Maintenance has been in progress for some time now and is nearing completion. These vacancies occurred due to the departure of **Cheryl Kelly** from Payroll/Benefits, and the promotion of **Brandon**



Blackwood (Supervisor of Transportation), and **Larry Folkner** (Supervisor of Maintenance and Operations).

Mrs. **Jennie Avina**, Assistant Principal at Peggy Heller School, transferred to Bellevue School to serve as Assistant Principal, due to the long term illness of **Dr. Jim Rice**, Principal of Bellevue School. Mrs. Avina is teaming with Mrs. **RaeAnn Jimenez** as Bellevue School site administrators until the end of the school year.

Given the severe State budget crisis, the District has taken emergency measures to reduce its operating budget by 1.6 million dollars for the 2008-09 school year. At the April 1st meeting, the Board of Trustees acted to eliminate an additional three teaching positions, bringing the total number of classroom positions eliminated to ten. Three administrative positions were eliminated, along with two music positions, a librarian position, athletic stipends, and Board member stipends. A number of classified positions were either reduced or eliminated, effecting a significant number of custodial, maintenance, clerical, library specialist, campus supervisor, and bus operator positions. If financial relief is not forthcoming, it will clearly not be business as usual at AESD.

Employees receiving a notice of lay off are placed on a reemployment list for a period of 39 months. ***Employees on the reemployment list are eligible to be rehired based on seniority. The most senior employee in a classification would be rehired first and the least senior employee would be rehired last.***

The District must serve notices by May 15 to certificated employees who will be laid off for the 2008-2009 school year. Classified employees who will be laid off must be notified within 45 days of the date of Board action to authorize layoffs. The



District will be working with legal counsel and the employee associations to process all legal notices and to negotiate the effects of lay off with them as required by the Educational Employment Relations Act (EERA).

Bargaining

The AESD and CSEA Chapter # 846 are engaged in bargaining for what is called a Successor Agreement between the parties. Bargaining will continue until the parties reach

agreement on matters such as wages, health and welfare benefits, reclassification, and term of the Agreement.

Due to the State's budget crisis, bargaining between AETA and the District has not occurred. The parties worked cooperatively through the initial steps to Reduce or Eliminate a Particular Kind of Service affecting 19 bargaining unit members. The parties are receiving and studying carefully information regarding the State Budget and may exchange initial proposals for re-openers in the immediate future. The parties have developed a school calendar for 2008-2009 and will likely forward it to the Board for final adoption at the May meeting.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

by Marisa Ploog

Business Services

We would like to congratulate **Terri Foote** and her family on the upcoming wedding for her daughter Lisa. What a wonderful occasion and a perfect excuse for a beautiful vacation in Hawaii.

Although we were allowed to keep **Cheryl Kelley** for 30 extra days, she really will be leaving our District, as May 1st will be her last day. Again, we congratulate Cheryl and wish her a fond farewell.

Please join us in congratulating **Julie Garcia** and **Kay McKee** as we welcome them into our business office. Julie and Kay have been selected for the two Payroll/Accounting Technician positions that will assume Cheryl's duties.

Please keep in mind that Cheryl spent more than 17 years serving our district and a detailed wealth of history is leaving with her. There will be quite a learning curve for our new teammates, as payroll and benefits management is a very complex world. Gone are the days of dropping in for a quick question. During our period of adjustment, we would appreciate your contacting Pam Williams to schedule an appointment should you need consultation related to your paycheck or benefits.

**Please remember our Purchase Order
Cutoff date is April 18th!**

Transportation

Things are progressing well in transportation. **Brandon Blackwood** and the entire staff of this department are all working together to ensure a harmonious transition. Congratulations are extended to drivers **Anna Howe** and **Sandy Meadows**, whose grandson/nephew, Michael Stucky, will be graduating from the Marine Corps

Boot Camp in San Diego. Michael was a graduate of Buhach Colony High School. While our days may each seem filled to the brim, it is very important that we all remember those who serve our country to protect our freedom.



Support Our Troops!!!!

Maintenance, Operations & Facilities

Our sincere condolences go out to **Anthony Guaglianone** and his family as they mourn the loss of his father. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

In the area of facilities, we continue to wrap up the final items of both the Thomas Oleata and Shaffer projects and work on the initial stages of obtaining and placing our preschool portables.

We would like to remind everyone that now, more than ever, it is important to be aware of your energy consumption. Energy saving activities include all of the following:

- ◆ Do not block classroom air supply and return grills with furniture or displays
- ◆ Keep classroom doors and windows shut when heat or air conditioning is on
- ◆ Close all windows and doors when leaving the classroom at the end of the day and turn off all machinery and lights
- ◆ Do not cover or block thermostats
- ◆ Report faulty thermostats and other equipment that may be malfunctioning
- ◆ Wear warmer clothes in cold weather and cooler clothes in hot weather – encourage students to do the same
- ◆ Involve students in monitoring energy usage
- ◆ Turn off lights when leaving room
- ◆ Turn off lights in unused spaces

Nutrition Services

Our Food Services department recently underwent a Federal audit of the District's food service program. This audit occurs every five years and is a comprehensive review of our food service program.

As in any audit, there were findings and recommendations on how to better conduct our program. Most were minor changes in the mechanics of serving and counting the student meals. Listening to the guidance from the CDE Child Nutrition Consultant, I realized just how complex this program truly is.

Scott Hoyle and **Jolene Loewen** from Nutrition Services are working on any areas at sites that needed to be addressed. Some of the comments shared by the State representative included:



"The AESD program is a wonderful example of the National School Lunch Program. Students have more choices of entrees than I see as I travel throughout the Valley and State. The Salad Bars were stocked with a tremendous variety of fresh fruits and vegetables and students seem to truly enjoy the meals they received."

"I was pleased to see the brightly decorated serving areas displaying nutrition information. The staff has also demonstrated a commitment to teaching nutrition to students and reaching the community with a positive wellness message."

This was a great example of the commitment and hard work of our classified staff and leadership in the Food Services department. As the "site of review", please join me in congratulating the Aileen Colburn Food Services staff, **Michelle Howeth**, **Gail Cloutier** and **Blanca Alcaez** for the wonderful job they did. We also recognize the hard work and commitment of our entire Food Service staff. Thank you for your hard work each and every day!



During the months of January and February, reclassification meetings are held at all school sites to reclassify English Language Learners to fluent English proficient status. Reclassification is the goal for all of our English Language Learners. We

had a total of **206** students meet the criteria to be reclassified during the 2007-2008 school year! This was an increase of 37 English Language Learners from the previous school year. To celebrate, we will be taking these newly reclassified students on a tour of UC Merced and presenting each one with a certificate to acknowledge their success. A huge **THANK YOU** to **EVERYONE** for your dedication and hard work with English Language Learners. **TOGETHER** we can make a difference!

The Mitchell Senior 7th and 8th grade girls' basketball team would like to thank **Carol Longobardi** for getting entry fees for two basketball tournaments together at the last minute. Carol's quick work in writing the checks and getting the proper signatures made it possible for the girls to participate in these tournaments.

BITS & PIECES

Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired, and success achieved.

– Helen Keller (1880-1968)

