

School Board News! Highlights from the January 12, 2011 Meeting  
by June Monach, Board Member

Happy New Year! After a well-deserved Winter recess, Piedmont students and staff resumed their studies and work in the schools. The main agenda topics for the Board meeting included:

- Contract Negotiations with the Classified Staff
- 2011-12 Instructional Calendar
- Annual Financial Audit Report for Fiscal Year 2009-10
- Budget Development Calendar for Fiscal Year 2011-12
- Budget Update & Governor’s Proposal

**Contract Negotiations with California School Employees Association (CSEA):** Assistant Superintendent Dr. David Roth expressed appreciation to the CSEA for working collaboratively with the District to prepare for upcoming negotiations. In turn, new CSEA President Terra Salazar acknowledged members of the negotiating team and expressed enthusiasm for continuing to use the Interest-Based Bargaining process to help address the State fiscal crisis and to sustain excellence in our school system. CSEA is comprised of important support staff in our school district (e.g., para-educators, such as classroom and special education aides, custodians, administrative assistants, business office support staff, and maintenance workers). Similar to how the negotiations process began with the teachers’ association in the Fall, the Board reviewed the parts of the 2011-14 contract that the District and CSEA would like to discuss. CSEA wants to discuss salaries, health benefits, contract duration, and reopeners for 2011/12 and 2012/13. CSEA also would like to negotiate a fair and equitable share of current and future State or Federal funds to preserve jobs in education. According to Dr. Roth, the District would like to open a larger number of sections in the contract in order to have flexibility in arriving at a mutually agreed upon multi-year contract. In addition to salaries (including furlough days) and health benefits, the District wants to discuss sections of the contract that address evaluations, allowances, leaves, longevity, the work day/week/year, legal and other holidays, vacations, retirements, the professional development appendix, and all memorandum of understandings. A public hearing was held to solicit public input. Parent and community member Jon Elliott expressed support for reviewing the broadest set of articles in the contract as possible. He also supported CSEA’s proposal to explicitly describe reopening “salary, health and welfare, plus one article selected by each party” in 2011/12 and 2012/13. There will be a second opportunity for public input at our next meeting on January 25, 2011, before the Board votes on whether to approve the proposals. Board members expressed support for the contract proposals presented, and thanked all staff for their hard work and commitment to the process. For negotiations with all employee groups, we have been using the Interest-Based Bargaining Process where each party focuses on interests rather than positions. We have found that the process fosters a positive working partnership, open communications, and long-term trust between the parties. Pages 1-4 at the link below provide details of the District and CSEA proposals:

<http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/011211packet.pdf>

**2011-12 Instructional Calendar:** The Board reviewed and unanimously adopted the school calendar (a negotiated item) that the Association of Piedmont Teachers (APT) voted for, over two other options presented to teachers. Superintendent Constance Hubbard thanked APT for working on developing the proposed calendar as early as possible, so the District could respond to a number of parent inquiries about next year’s schedule. She explained that the other two options considered started school later in exchange for shortened vacations during the school year. Here is how this year’s calendar compares to the approved calendar for next year:

	<u>This Year</u>	<u>Next Year</u>
1 <sup>st</sup> Day	Wed Sept 1	Wed Aug 24
Last Day	Thurs June 16	Wed June 13*
Thanksgiving Recess	Nov 22 – 26	Nov 21 – 25
President’s Day Recess	Long Weekend Feb 18 - 21	Full Week Feb 20 - 24
Spring Break	Full Week Apr 11 – 15	Full Week Apr 9 – 13

\*or Thurs June 14 if Furlough Days are not part of the negotiated agreement

In order to help families plan vacations and time off, APT voted on a calendar earlier in the year, even though negotiations are still in progress. Negotiated furlough days may be used next year like they were this year, to help reduce the budget shortfall. In the newly adopted calendar, two of the five days could be days when students and staff will be off (October 10, June 14) and three days would be professional development or teacher work day furloughs (February 23 & 24, and June 15). Board President Roy Tolles reviewed the

timeframe for public input in the context of the negotiations process, explaining that previously solicited input was used to develop the proposed instructional calendar along with the other options. Over a year and a half ago, with the help of the Association of Parents' Clubs of Piedmont (APCP) a survey was conducted to solicit extensive public input on the calendar. An educational forum reviewing the topic and survey results also was televised on KCOM. Although not necessary every year, Board Members agreed that it would be helpful if APCP worked with the District to administer another survey in the Spring to hear parent and high school student feedback on this year's calendar, including the changes to the minimum day schedule. The PHS student representative on the Board, Eric Huppert expressed support for the calendar and agreed that more frequent breaks throughout the year help high school students manage their time, studies, and rigorous work load. For future discussions, he also expressed interest in exploring the possibility of adjusting the schedule to end first semester before Winter break. The complete calendar is available on page 5 at the link below:

<http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/011211packet.pdf>

**Independent Auditor's Report for 2009-10 Annual Financial Report:** Great News. The District received "a clean" opinion from auditors after reviewing the 2009-10 financial statements. In accordance with generally accepted U.S. auditing standards, the District's independent auditor, Vavrinek, Trine, Day and Company, LLP, conducted its annual review of the District's financial statements to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are "free of material misstatement." The report concludes, "In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the Piedmont Unified School District, as of June 30, 2010 ..." The auditor identified one deficiency and recommended ways to improve upon internal controls for monitoring PHS's and MHS's ASB transactions. According to VTD Principal, Terry Montgomery, this finding and recommendation is found in 70% - 75% of school district audits since ASB funds are decentralized and seldom have dedicated staff to monitor the high volume of transactions. Assistant Superintendent Michael Brady, Director of Fiscal Services Michelle Nguyen, and Business Office staff were thanked for their professionalism in working with the auditing team, and managing and reporting the District's financials with thoroughness and accuracy. Board Member Ray Gadbois noted that on pages 33 and 34 there is a very good summary of the District's postemployment health care plan and other postemployment benefits (OPEB Obligation), and the District's annual OPEB costs and accrued liability. The complete report is available at the link below. Pages 48, 63, and 64 highlight the basis for the clean opinion issued by the audit team:

[http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/Audit\\_Report\\_June\\_2010.pdf](http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/Audit_Report_June_2010.pdf)

**Budget Development Calendar for FY 2011-12:** Assistant Superintendent Michael Brady reviewed the calendar and major milestones with the Board. The February 23<sup>rd</sup> Board meeting date was added to conduct a final review of the lay-off notification list. The Board discussed the need to provide direction to the staff on the magnitude and rate of making cuts in order to address the budget shortfall through 2013-14. Superintendent Hubbard said that she would be working closely with the employee associations to ensure timely communications of negotiations progress during the budget development process. Mr. Brady also suggested that the June election be added to the calendar, given the Governor's budget proposal. See pages 6 – 9 at the link below:

<http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/011211packet.pdf>

**Budget Update & Governor's Proposal:** Assistant Superintendent Michael Brady provided an update on the State budget situation given the recently released proposal from Governor Brown. The Governor's report proposes to close the \$25.4 billion budget gap with an even mix of spending cuts and revenues. As noted in the report, because education has assumed a disproportionate share of the cuts in recent years, the proposed budget would maintain program funding for schools at roughly the same level in 2011-12 as it is in 2010-11. Categorical spending flexibility would be extended. Maintaining the proposed funding level for schools would require an additional deferral of expenses into 2012-13 and also presumes voter approval of a 5-year extension of the temporary tax increases. The initiative will appear on the June 7, 2011 ballot. Assuming the tax initiative is approved, the information and assumptions made in developing the District's First Interim Report in December are not likely to change. The multi-year projections show that by 2012-13 the District's shortfall is anticipated to be approximately \$3.9 million. The previously estimated shortfall was revised downward from \$5 million due to an increase of over \$400,000 in one-time federal stimulus funding and over \$600,000 in presumed ongoing State revenues beginning next fiscal year. District representatives will learn more about the Governor's budget proposal at a conference in Sacramento this Friday. Clarifications will be sought from the County on Monday regarding the deferrals and their expected impact on the school district's cash flow.

**Other Business:** Parents and community members are invited to attend the Annual Celebration of the Life and Teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Monday, January 17, 2011 from 11:30 am – 4:00 pm at the Piedmont Community Hall. Our next Board meeting, January 25, 2011, will take place on a Tuesday so that Superintendent Hubbard can attend the Annual Statewide Superintendent's Symposium from January 26 - 28.