

## School Board News! Highlights from the April 27, 2011 Board Meeting

by June Monach, Board of Education Trustee

### Summary:

- Progress on District-wide Efforts Reviewed:
  - Update on Action Plan for 2010-11 District Goals
  - Tentative Agreement Between PUSD and California School Employees' Association (CSEA)
  - Recommended Reduction of Classified Staff Services
- Board Decisions Made – Board Voted:
  - 5-0 to Approve New Honor English Course for PHS Juniors
  - 5-0 to Adopt Resolution to Increase Levy Amount of Parcel Tax Measure B by 5%
  - 5-0 to Adopt Resolution to Levy Parcel Tax Measure E at same rate
  - 5-0 to Contract with Cahill Construction Co. for Beach Construction Project
  - 5-0 to Increase Guaranteed Maximum Price to Overaa for Wildwood Construction Project
  - 4-0 to Approve Enrollment Capacity Guidelines
  - 4-0 to Adopt Resolution Approving & Ratifying MOU Between Agencies that Provide Mental Health Services Including Residential Treatment, Counseling, Room & Board to Special Ed Students
- Board Discussion:
  - Possible Board Policy Change for Inter-district Transfers (for grandchildren of grandparents in Piedmont)
- Other Business:
  - \$10 Million Competitive Sale of Qualified School Construction Bonds (QSCBs) Completed
  - Art Hecht Volunteer of the Year Award – Andrea Swenson
  - Lois Blair Rawlings Foundation Recipients – Stephanie Konle, Patti Lowe Stevenson, Robin Ludmer, Neil Rothenberg & Corey Reich
  - Board discussion on District Goals postponed to a future meeting

**Update on Action Plan for 2010-11 District Goals** – Major progress has been made this year in addressing the District's Goals. Here are some key highlights from the update provided by Superintendent Constance Hubbard:

- We have been conducting a District-wide review of the English Language Arts curriculum and sharing and discussing findings at School Site Council and Curriculum Forum meetings.
- As part of negotiations this year, an Evaluation Committee has been working to review and develop an evaluation tool that supports teachers in the classroom.
- Programs and student leadership opportunities that promote respect, resilience, school community and personal responsibility continue to thrive in the schools.
- The Diversity and Respect Task Force developed a mission statement, climate survey, and continued research about social development programs at the elementary level.
- Major strides are being made this year with the installation of technology infrastructure to report and monitor student activity (eg., attendance, grades, discipline) and academic progress (eg., student assessment data).
- In response to the State budget crisis, the District is working collaboratively with all employee groups, support groups, parents, and the community to minimize employee lay-offs and reductions in student programs, and to close a \$4 million funding gap. A major portion of the gap has been closed to-date through a negotiated settlement with the Association of Piedmont Teachers.
- We have closed out the highest priority seismic safety projects (Maintenance Facility, Havens, Ellen Driscoll Theatre, PHS Quad/Library Building, PHS Student Center), and anticipate completing Wildwood this summer. The seismic safety work continues on time and within the total \$69 million program budget.

Superintendent Hubbard thanked the entire staff for their part in accomplishing so much this year on behalf of all students. Board Member Martha Jones expressed appreciation to staff for participating in individual professional development in spite of the budget situation and diminishing financial resources. Board President Roy Tolles said he appreciated the detailed progress report and said, "It's been getting better every year!"

For details, please read pp 1-14 at: <http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/042711packet1.pdf>

**New Honors English Course for PHS Juniors** - The Board approved a recommendation from PHS Principal, Mr. Randall Booker to adopt this course for the 2011-12 school year. The recommendation was made after a thorough review and discussion by the members of the English Department and PHS Site Council. Similar high schools in the Bay Area (Acalanes, Miramonte, Campolindo, Gunn, Monte Vista, Mission San Jose, and Saratoga High Schools) provide the honors option to high school juniors. Parent and Site Council Member Mary Kelly commended Principal Randall Booker and Assistant Superintendent David Roth for their leadership in facilitating the conversations that led to this decision. Principal Booker noted that "Parents, students, and staff were both supportive and influential" in helping him make this decision on behalf of the school. Board Member Ray Gadbois expressed hope that students would consider carefully whether they were up to the rigors and demands of the course, and not motivated by the drive to increase one's grade point average given the competitive forces at work in the college admission process. There was unanimous support from the Board for the new course.

See pp 15-27 at: <http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/042711packet1.pdf>

**Tentative Agreement Between PUSD and California School Employees' Association (CSEA) Reached** – CSEA members fill a variety of vital support positions across the District including administrative assistants, general and special education paraprofessionals, library aides, groundskeepers, custodians, technology and data managers, and maintenance workers. The agreement was voted on by the CSEA membership on April 19th. Assistant Superintendent David Roth thanked the negotiating team for "stepping up as responsible partners" and engaging in a difficult negotiation this year. He expressed respect for the concessions made, acknowledging their affect on people's livelihoods. CSEA President and lead negotiator Terra Salazar, thanked fellow negotiators and noted, "Interest-based bargaining really works." She acknowledged that the contingency of additional furlough days may continue in future agreements through 2013-14. Board Member Rick Raushenbush thanked the negotiators for their hard work, and said that although the agreement does not address some of the scenarios we may face, "We've taken a huge step forward." The cumulative 3-year financial impact of the tentative agreement is \$618,000. Combined with the settlement agreement with the Association of Piedmont Teachers, the cumulative 3-year impact is over \$3.7 million. A second public hearing will be held on May 11, 2011, after which the Board will take action to approve the agreement. For a summary of the agreement go to:

[http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/new\\_csea\\_info\\_042711.pdf](http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/new_csea_info_042711.pdf)

**Recommended Reduction in Classified Services for 2011-12** – Superintendent Hubbard framed this agenda item by reviewing where we are in the budget development process. In spite of the significant uncertainties generated by the State, she recommended that we "stay the course" in building our reserve levels and continuing to work in close collaboration with support groups to help maintain as much of our core program as possible over the multi-year planning horizon. The Board reviewed a draft resolution proposing the reduction of four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) classified positions: PHS Attendance Secretary (1.0 FTE), PHS Counseling Secretary (1.0 FTE), PMS Library Aide (1.0 FTE), and PHS Library Aide (1.0 FTE). Superintendent Constance Hubbard noted that "because of the approval of CSEA to contract provisions that result in significant savings, and due to retirements, fewer CSEA members would need to be laid off." She explained that all four individuals who currently fill the positions will be retiring. The administrative team has recommended that the two library aide positions not be replaced, and that the high school counseling secretary and attendance secretary positions be reconfigured to help address current operating and data systems support needs at the school. PMS teacher Gina McKuen described what impact the loss of library aides would have on her as a Core 7 teacher. PMS teacher librarians Carolyn White and Jennifer Gulassa, asked the Board to consider carefully what impact the loss of the library aide will have on the services offered to students and staff. They noted that, "A retirement or cut does not make the work go away." Parent Jon Elliott continued to urge the Board to take action now in planning for the worst, while suggesting that program reductions could be "bought back" later. Board Member June Monach expressed her support for continuing to take a measured approach in addressing the budget situation by being driven by student needs first, and expecting the best from the staff to serve all students; and entrusting the Board with the responsibility of being driven by the financial circumstances, and planning for the range of worst case scenarios. The Board supported the resolution as drafted.

See pp 48-60 at: <http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/042711packet1.pdf>

**Levying of Parcel Tax Measures B & E** - The Board held a final public hearing on levying Parcel Tax Measures B and E, and unanimously approved levying both measures. Measure B will be increased by 5 percent in the amount of \$406,555

bringing total net proceeds from the measure to \$8,537,663. This amount will be placed in the Parcel Tax Fund for the voter approved purpose: "to maintain Piedmont's excellent quality of public education by attracting and retaining qualified teachers, maintaining small class sizes and protecting instructional programs and services, including art and music, foreign language, advanced placement, school libraries, classroom technology and student counseling." Measure E net proceeds total \$941,017 and will be placed in the Parcel Tax Fund for the voter approved purpose: "to avoid teacher and staff layoffs, protect programs and services including music, foreign language, library and counseling, and prevent other cuts to core academic programs and services." The Measure E levy will remain at the same rate as last year. Community Member George Childs reiterated his recommendation to levy Measure E because the trigger conditions had been met, and to not increase Measure B by 5%, respecting the financial circumstances of those in the community who live on fixed incomes. Community member Mary Hancock shared with the Board that the Acalanes and Lafayette school districts offer senior exemptions on school parcel taxes. She encouraged the Board to consider offering an exemption to seniors in Piedmont. In response to Ms. Hancock's input, Board Member Jones explained that given the demographics of our community and the high median income level of seniors, she would support a low income exemption, but not a senior exemption. Board Member Gadbois explained that the time to suggest a senior exemption would be in planning for the next parcel tax in 2013. Board President Tolles summarized past Board discussion supporting levying both measures, including a 5% increase of Measure B. See pp 63-66 at: <http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/042711packet1.pdf>

**Beach Construction Project** – The Board authorized Superintendent Hubbard to enter into negotiations with the lowest of three pre-qualified bidders, Cahill Construction Co. The estimated/budgeted construction value for the work is \$6.48 million, with construction to begin in July 2011. A seven member committee consisting of Board President Roy Tolles, Bond Program Citizens' Oversight Committee Members Grier Graff and Bill Drum, Architect John Nelson, Pete Palmer and Rich Vila of Vila Construction, and Assistant Superintendent Michael Brady, reviewed the materials submitted and recommended the selection of Cahill Construction as the developer for the final seismic safety project. Assistant Superintendent Brady noted that all three proposals exceeded the estimated budget. Part of the reason for the difference was because roughly \$200,000 in projected abatement costs was not included in all bids. Assistant Superintendent Brady assured the Board that we will follow past practice and work with the construction management team and developer to make adjustments to the project in order to complete the work within currently available funding. As has been done with all projects to-date, the construction management team will work with the developer to prioritize and phase the work to be done within the identified budget. All seismic and modernization work will be completed first. Value engineering will be done in order to find ways to accomplish the work at less cost. Finally, cosmetic work will be postponed until funds are available. The retaining wall on Linda, for example, is not a collapse hazard and could therefore be postponed for a later date. The Board clarified that developer financing would be included as a separate part of the developer contract. This financing would be included in the lease payments made by the District to the developer over a period of time after construction was complete. See pp 61-62 at: <http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/042711packet1.pdf>

**Enrollment Capacity** – According to Assistant Superintendent Roth, each year, the District must make determinations about the capacity of its schools for purposes of student placement and staffing, and in order to make decisions about inter-district transfers. The Board reviewed the 2011-12 Guidelines for Enrollment Capacity. Enrollment capacity in our District is guided by three factors: 1) Participation in the States K-3 Class Size Reduction program; 2) Current and historic class size trends; and 3) Parcel tax support for "smaller class sizes". Under special circumstances, the District accepts inter-district transfers. Most frequently, the District accepts students of school and city employees per current Board Policy. New requirements have emerged where the District is responsible for considering admitting inter-district transfers that fall under the State's new Open Enrollment Act. Under this law, a percentage of students enrolled in low performing schools may apply to transfer to high performing schools. Capacity limits impact the acceptance and/or placement of these inter-district transfers. Dr. Roth suggested that the guidelines would need to be approved no later than August 2011. The administration will provide enrollment capacity guidelines each year to the Board. The Board approved the guidelines and asked the administrative team to develop associated board policy and administrative regulations to be used for Open Enrollment Act inter-district transfer requests. See pp. 69-71 at: <http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/042711packet1.pdf>

**Possible Board Policy Change re: Inter-district Transfers** – Under special circumstances, the District accepts inter-district transfers. Most frequently, they are students of school and city employees. The Board discussed whether to consider revising its current policy to permit grandchildren of Piedmont residents to be included in the criteria for eligibility to attend Piedmont schools. This is an idea that has been raised by community members and also discussed in the Budget Advisory Committee as a revenue enhancement option given flat/declining projected enrollment trends. Community Members Bill Drum, George Childs, and Kay Cheatham expressed appreciation to the Board for considering the issue. All expressed support for the idea. Mr. Drum suggested that reaching out to this group would be a positive symbolic gesture, and potentially would increase participation in the fundraising efforts of the local Grandparents Club. Mr. Childs wondered what impact this sort of policy change would have on the enrollment and the variety of ways it might be implemented. Ms. Cheatham, a resident since 1969 (and past Board Member) was glad to learn the Board was discussing the idea. She noted that “Piedmont is a great place for kids” and thought it would wonderful to be closer to her grandchildren in this way. Ms. Cheatham’s daughter, Ms. Ann Rojas Cheatham, a graduate of the Piedmont Schools, and living in Berkeley said that this would have a very positive influence on the relationships between her children and their grandparents – strengthening “family closeness.” The Board was unanimous in its support for continuing to explore this idea and discussed possible next steps: to get a better sense of the degree of community interest; to learn from other communities that might have a similar policy; how the idea might be piloted; and what the policy revision and administrative regulations might look like. Assistant Superintendent Roth agreed to outline for the Board possible next steps to be presented at a future Board meeting.

#### **Other Business:**

- The Board approved and ratified a Memorandum of Understanding between the County of Alameda Health Care Services Agency, Behavioral Health Care Services, County of Alameda Social Services Agency, and the PUSD Special Education Local Plan Area. The MOU clarifies financial commitments for the various organizations that provide mental health services to Special Education students, including residential treatment, counseling, and room and board costs that are identified on students’ Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).  
See pp 72-87 at: <http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/042711packet1.pdf>
- The Board approved increasing the Guaranteed Maximum Price for the Wildwood project by \$170,862 to address change order requests related to project scope, unforeseen conditions, and conditions uncovered that were not on the original construction plans. The project remains on time and on budget. The construction budget is \$5,314,493. The project management team expects one more adjustment to the final GMP, anticipated to be less than \$100,000. Increases will be funded from the project’s contingency fund.  
See pp. 67-68 at: <http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/042711packet1.pdf>
- Superintendent Hubbard reported the successful sale of \$10 million in Qualified School Construction Bonds on April 20, 2011. The District received seven bids, and the winning bidder was Citigroup with an interest rate of 5.75% and an underwriter’s discount of \$54,000. Moody’s issued an Aa2 rating.  
See pp 90-95 for the summary of sale, final numbers report, and the Moody’s rating report on the District.
- Ms. Andrea Swenson has been selected as the 2011 Arthur Hecht Volunteer of the Year. The Board will recognize her on May 11, 2011 at its regular meeting. Congratulations, Andrea!
- Stephanie Konle (Havens Teacher), Robin Ludmer (Beach Teacher-Librarian), Neil Rothenberg & Corey Reich (PHS Tennis Coach & Assistant Coach), and Patti Lowe Stevenson (Beach Resource Specialist) were this year’s recipients of the Lois Blair Rawlings Educational Inspiration Award. A community celebration will be held in the Guild Hall at the Piedmont Community Church on Wednesday May 4<sup>th</sup> (reception 3:00 p.m., ceremony 4:00 p.m.) Since the event is being catered, attendees should RSVP to [LBRFoundation@gmail.com](mailto:LBRFoundation@gmail.com) or to Maureen Rhodin at 510-547-5640. Congratulations to the Honorees!