

School Board News! Highlights from the November 10, 2010 Meeting
by June Monach, Board Member

We began our meeting with very heavy hearts. We joined Board President Roy Tolles in a moment of silence in memory of Sam Raushenbush. We extend our deepest sympathies to the family - parents Rick Raushenbush and Barbara Giuffre, Sam's older brother Nick, and his younger sister Genevieve.

Schools Report on Plans to Support Growth in Student Achievement: Representatives from the School Site Councils (SSC) presented highlights from their respective 2010-11 Single Plans for Student Achievement. After reviewing the plans, the Board expressed appreciation and thanks to all the SSC members for their hard work in crafting plans to support individual student learning and growth. Goals and actions to assess and enhance the English Language Arts curriculum; look at student performance data to monitor progress and inform instruction; develop common assessments for students by grade level; and promote safe school climates, were some of the key focus areas shared with the Board. Assistant Superintendent David Roth credited elementary principals Carol Cramer, Tery Susman, and Julie Valdez for supporting new tri-school conversations this year, in an effort to coordinate and work on goals together across the three elementary schools. Havens parent Marianne Mitosinka identified the major benefits of the tri-school effort as being: 1) introducing consistencies into the curriculum and 2) providing more opportunities to share best practices. PMS Principal Jeanne Donovan and parent Leisha Manley highlighted details from the PMS plan which focused on using data management tools and professional development to support differentiated instruction for students; developing common language and measures to assess student writing; and assessing how support services can promote a safe school climate at PMS and learning from other middle schools what approaches are effective. PHS Principal Randall Booker shared that the SSC was wrestling with the issue of student engagement and wanting to better understand PHS's academic program by including more student voices in SSC conversations. MHS Principal Karen Gnusti expressed hope that the SSC will become more representative of the good work happening in the school by providing a place for students, staff, and parents to engage with one another. Teacher Richard Meyers conveyed how proud he is that MHS offers instruction tailored to each student's needs, which then cultivates students who develop meaningful relationships with MHS staff and positive experiences in school. Individual plans may be viewed by going to the link below and clicking on the school report for the November 10, 2010 meeting:

<http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/board-of-education/meeting-materials>

Draft Proposal of Pilot Program for Expanded Sunday Use of Witter: Since 1997 when the athletic complex was last renovated, the use and access policy of the fields has periodically been reviewed and revised. Fields for youth sports are currently in short supply; neighbors have expressed concerns that unauthorized organized use is on the rise; and police enforcement is difficult when a school district representative is not on site to authorize requests for citations to be made against unauthorized users. In response to this nexus of conditions, at our last meeting, the Board requested District staff to develop a draft proposal to expand Sunday use of the Witter Fields. Staff took into consideration input from the youth sports groups, and requests from neighbors to mitigate traffic safety and congestion and to improve the monitoring of unauthorized use. The proposal includes the hiring of a Sunday monitor to manage permitted use, and to serve as the District's representative to work with the Piedmont Police Department to enforce authorized use. After discussion, the Board suggested that hours of operation be from 9 am (for practices/warm-ups) or 10 am (for games) until 5 pm (or dusk if earlier than 5 pm), with the El Cerrito gate into Witter Field to continue to be closed and locked on Saturday evenings at 9 pm

and not opened until Monday mornings at 6 am. Revenues and costs will be tracked closely to ensure that the District breaks even with the proposed pilot. Piedmont Soccer Club (PSC) President Mark Landheer reported that directions to the field have been changed on the website to encourage access from Wildwood Avenue and not El Cerrito. He mentioned plans to raise an idea with the PSC board of implementing 'Silent Saturdays and Sundays' where coaches and spectators are to be silent during game play as a way to mitigate noise levels for Witter neighbors. The Board supported the pilot program concept with certain modifications to the draft proposal, and will hold a public hearing on December 8, 2010 before taking action at that meeting. Sports groups, those who live within a 500 foot radius of Witter, and neighbors on the current e-mail distribution list will receive a copy of the proposed pilot and notice of the public hearing. For background information, please read pp 9-11 at the link below and note that the draft proposal was revised with regard to hours of operation and gate closure after Board discussion this evening.

<http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/111010packet.pdf>

Budget Development for 2011-12 & Beyond: Assistant Superintendent Michael Brady presented a revised multi-year projection reflecting the potential impacts of the recently adopted State Budget. Based on the most recent available information, the estimated shortfall by 2012-13 has been revised downward from \$5 million to approximately \$4 million, due to \$430,000 in one-time federal funds and an additional \$600,000 in estimated ongoing State revenues beginning next fiscal year. The Board noted that although the estimated short-fall has been revised that the multi-year projections indicate a continued pattern of deficit spending of approximately \$2 million in 2011-12 and approximately \$3.8 million in 2012-13. The Alameda County Office of Education cautions that, "school district budgets should be managed with a great degree of conservatism over the next few years. In these times of great economic and budgetary uncertainty, school districts need reserves that are much greater than the minimum," and that districts "continue to focus on a multi-year strategy when recommending decisions and obtaining agreements." In keeping with the Board's guiding principle to reduce the District's dependence on growing levels of local support, current financial estimates assume no significant increases in the pattern of local support to PUSD, and assume there will be changes in program delivery that may require making budget cuts. Given current projections for a very slow economic recovery rate in our State, the Board conveyed its appreciation to all staff, students, parents, and community members for working together to share the burden over time, and pursuing sustainable ways to preserve as much of our educational program as possible. Superintendent Constance Hubbard concluded by thanking the employee associations for their continued support and timeliness in working together to identify ways for expenditures to be reduced through contract agreements. She hopes to have a better idea by January 2011 in reporting on progress made in negotiations with all groups. See pp 24-30 for details on the budget at:

<http://www.piedmont.k12.ca.us/aboutpusd/agenda.minutes/111010packet.pdf>

Parcel Tax Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC): This committee was established as part of parcel tax Measures B and E, approved by voters on June 2, 2009. There are three openings on the CAC as a result of resignations submitted in September. Board President Tolles suggested that we take the opportunity to learn from our experience to-date and clarify our expectations of the committee with regard to its charge. The Board approved recommendations made by the Board Liaisons for clarifications to the language in the original charge as follows: 1) Limit the scope of work to advice on whether and to what extent to levy emergency parcel tax Measure E, and to what extent to levy the core tax, Measure B as set forth in the original charge; 2) If the Board wishes to expand the Committee's charge to consider other items, the Board should do so by majority vote; and 3) The Board also confirmed that it would like the committee to continue to develop and update key metrics to be included in its annual report to be submitted to the Board

by its last meeting in January. These recommendations along with suggested edits from individual Board members will be incorporated into the charter document and brought before the Board for final approval on a future Consent Calendar. The Board suggested that the application process be changed to include an interview by the Board Liaisons of potential candidates, to ensure the committee has balanced representation and that each candidate understands the Board's expectations of the advisory committee. The Board suggested that 2 to 3 new members be added, bringing the total membership back to at least 9 members. Community member Mr. George Childs asked whether the Board envisioned the CAC to be a permanent ongoing committee. The Board stated that the CAC is in place for the term of each parcel tax, and that future Boards would need to assess whether the CAC would be a part of future parcel tax measures. The Board also clarified that it expected the Committee to make its recommendations based upon impacts to the current program. Recommending changes to the District's educational program were viewed to be outside the scope and capabilities of the Committee.

Other Business: The school wish list of donor opportunities for the seismic renovation program was updated to include tables and chairs for the PHS Student Center. We reviewed the projected enrollment figures by grade and by school for next year. Our application for Qualified School Construction Bonds was submitted on November 5, 2010. We accepted \$16,000 in donations for use by PHS for tables and chairs in the newly retrofitted Student Center.