

Superintendent Rick Schmitt's Monthly Update

May 2015

Superintendent Schmitt regularly updates the greater San Dieguito Union High School District community through our local media with a monthly update. Topics will include curriculum, facilities, budget, enrollment, safety, and other specific and special interest topics. Today's topics: our 2nd Prop AA bond issuance, a HS enrollment survey, and celebrating staff.

Prop AA 2nd Bond Issuance

This summer will see the start of our next round of major school construction projects funded by Proposition AA. Projects include demolition and reconstruction of Earl Warren Middle School, building new math and science classrooms at San Dieguito HS Academy, science classroom renovations and technology upgrades throughout Torrey Pines High School, as well as media center enhancements and other site improvements at Oak Crest Middle School. The first classroom buildings at our newest school, Pacific Trails Middle School, will also be completed over the summer to prepare for opening day this fall.

We recently issued \$117 million in bonds to fund building projects for the next three years. The strength of the property values in our community and the District's history of cautious financial management led to a credit rating upgrade for this sale. We issued only current interest bonds (no CABs) and limited the term to 25 years. This conservative strategy kept within our estimated tax rate of \$25 per \$100,000 of assessed value and resulted in a low payback ratio for the bonds of only 1.7 to 1, which is lower than many mortgages.

Finally, I would like to thank the Prop AA Independent Citizens Oversight Committee members who represent the community to ensure we spend bond funds cost effectively and only on projects promised to the voters. They recently completed their annual report which will be posted online at www.sduhsd.net/ICOC following Board acceptance on May 7th.

High School Enrollment

Our ongoing work around high school enrollment processes continues to progress. Since March we've hosted six public workshops designed to both educate and seek feedback from the community about enrollment processes and options. We had over 220 K-12 parents and community members attend these workshops which shared information about the history of high school enrollment in SDUHSD, outlined state law around school enrollment, discussed the role of demographics and community facilities districts (Mello-Roos) in school enrollment, and presented various enrollment options for feedback. Over the last two weeks, we also surveyed current 8th grade students and families regarding the factors that influenced their decision in choosing a high school for 2015-16 as this data informs our thinking around future high school enrollment options and programs at our high schools.

Our next steps will be to survey our community about various options for enrolling students in our high schools. We expect to send invitations to this online survey to families by mid-May. After receiving this feedback, we will compile the work of the High School Enrollment Study Group, the feedback from the public workshops, and the feedback from the surveys and present this information to our School Board and the community this summer, giving the Board time to review and discuss all of the information before making a decision about any changes in our practices or policy. If any changes occur, the earliest that would take place would be the 2016-17 school year.

Celebrate Employees

As Superintendent of our world class school district, it is important to me to recognize and celebrate our dedicated employees and the huge impact each and every one has on each student and their middle and high school experience. Those experiences include academics, extra- and co-curricular activities and school culture. Without our employees' tireless work and ability to adapt to our changing needs, we would not be the outstanding school district we are today.

By most any measure, a good educational experience includes staff partnering with parents to prepare students for the post-high school opportunities and challenges that may lie ahead. Every member of the SDUHSD's team is essential to delivering the high quality education our students deserve and our San Dieguito families expect. This includes teachers, secretaries, custodians, coaches, food services staff, network technicians, counselors, bus drivers, psychologists, administrators, campus supervisors, health techs, library techs, registrars, accountants, construction managers, and many more. SDUHSD has over one thousand part-time, full-time and seasonal employees. Hopefully you will have an opportunity to thank an employee before the year ends. Our employees are grateful for the opportunity to work with your/our children. I know I speak for all our employees when I say, "It truly is a privilege to work for the San Dieguito Union High School District."

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