

Superintendent Rick Schmitt's Monthly Update

March 6, 2014

Superintendent Schmitt plans to update the greater San Dieguito Union High School District community through our local media with a monthly update. Topics covered will include curriculum, facilities, budget, safety, and other specific and special interest topics. Today's update focuses on school safety and our new middle school to be opened in Pacific Highlands Ranch neighborhood.

School Safety

The San Dieguito Union High School District (SDUHSD) has always been firmly committed to safeguarding our students and staff. In January 2013, SDUHSD administration along with our San Dieguito Faculty Association (SDFA) and our California School Employees Association (CSEA) outlined some additional measures and considerations the district was taking to heighten this commitment. In this month's message, I would like to share an update on the safety measures SDUHSD has taken since then to maintain our campuses as safe places to learn and work.

Safety measures in place or in progress:

- Installation of Lock Blok & School Safe door lockdown devices at all school sites (ensures doors can be locked from inside the classroom)
- Improved signage directing visitor traffic
- Improved visitor badging / identification
- Enhanced emergency supplies
- Window treatments and blind installation in classrooms not affected by Proposition AA construction
- Access points at school sites have been limited during school hours
- Regular & required "Safety Walks" by site administration & teacher representatives
- Additional staff trainings by local law enforcement & other agencies
- Revised & updated Site Safety Plans & all emergency procedures including lockdown drills

In the next few weeks, the team who identified the measures noted above will reconvene to consider our next steps. As the 2014-15 budget is developed, these new measures will be taken into account. Long term facility safety improvements have been added as part of our Prop AA Bond projects including ideal specifications district wide and unique features at each and all schools.

We recognize that the key to safer schools is a very long-term proposition and requires a commitment from SDUHSD, students and the community that goes beyond the physical facilities of a school site. In the interim, however, we will continue to limit access to our campuses during school hours; to require all visitors to check in at the office when they arrive at a school site; to remind everyone to be vigilant and report anything "out of the ordinary" that they witness or hear about at school.

As the issues of school security evolve, we encourage your input and cooperation while we work together to safeguard and protect our students. Nothing is more important than the physical and emotional health of the young people who come to us each day and the safety and emotional well-being of the staff in whose care they are entrusted.

San Dieguito Union High School District to Build New \$52 Million Middle School in Pacific Highlands Ranch

San Dieguito Union High School District is planning on opening a new middle school in the Pacific Highlands Ranch area in Fall, 2015. The new school, which has yet to be named, will open with a seventh-grade class of around 200-220 students in 2015 and then expand to both seventh & eighth grades in 2016 with an initial enrollment of 500 students.

The district plans to draw 500 students to the new school from the Carmel Valley Middle School attendance area which has an enrollment of over 1,500. A future construction phase will add capacity for another 500 students as Pacific Highlands Ranch develops for a total enrollment of about 1,000.

District staff are considering boundary options to present to the Board of Trustees later this year. The district has been working with both the Del Mar Union and Solana Beach Elementary school districts to align the middle school and elementary boundaries. Eric Dill, the district's associate superintendent of business, said the district wants to avoid splitting elementary boundaries so that all sixth graders would progress to the same middle school together.

The site is adjacent to the district's Canyon Crest Academy (CCA), but will operate as a separate school with set neighborhood boundaries. The new middle school is in the Torrey Pines High School attendance area, but students will be able to apply to attend CCA through the district's high school selection process.

The school site is currently being graded in preparation for construction, which will start this summer. The budget for the first phase of the middle school design, construction and land purchase is \$52.5 million.

Funding to build the new middle school is provided by Proposition AA, the district's \$449 million general obligation bond, which local voters approved in November, 2012. "We are grateful for the community's investment in our schools," said Dill. "The new middle school is our biggest project and is only possible because of the local funds raised by the bond measure."

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