

Meaningful Information Kindling Enlightenment's Message #5 – Budget News

This message is longer than usual, but it's good news, and it's critical information, so I encourage you to take the time when you can to read it.

We are in the time of year when we start to develop the budget for 2011-12. In the past few years, this has been an extraordinarily difficult process for all of us. Many of our employees have received pink slips over the past few years, and even though many of those jobs were brought back thanks to donations from our community, the whole experience was a painful one.

The state budget this year is complex. Governor Brown has proposed two scenarios. If his extension of existing taxes gets on the ballot and passes in June, we will receive a slight decrease in funding – about \$130,000. That would be an excellent result. If the ballot does not pass, then the hit to our budget would be \$2.3 million. That would be a very negative result. Unfortunately, we have to plan for what we would do if we had to take a \$2.3 million hit to our district.

But thanks to the efforts of many, we may be able to make it through this negative possibility, at least for next year, without the extensive layoffs of the past few years. We received a significant amount of one-time funding from the federal government over the past two years, and although we have added some positions and added some new opportunities for our employees, we have reserved much of those funds. You have heard the phrase, “saving for a rainy day.” Well, the storm is coming, and I believe we are ready to face it.

We had a Board meeting last night and discussed our financial situation at length. You can find last night's board presentation at <http://tinyurl.com/2fyt8os>. The bottom line is that the Board has determined that next year, we will have slight reductions that will result in few and quite possibly zero layoff notices. I think that is spectacular! Our staff will be working very hard in the next month to secure grant funding for some new positions we added this year so we can keep those positions. The Board's goal is to have zero layoffs this year.

Here's why we are in the strong position of having a district that, in spite of many reductions, still has comparatively small class sizes, no furlough days or salary reductions, a full music program, open libraries, elementary science and so many other programs:

1. Great employees, teachers, staff and administrators, who work hard, are passionate about educating and caring for our students, and who have maintained an outstanding educational program despite the many reductions that have occurred over the past nine years.
2. A Board of Trustees that has made difficult choices to reduce staff in the past, minimized reductions that directly impact the classroom, conservatively budgeted and not overreacted to one-time monies from the

federal government, so that we are ready for a further worsening of the California budget.

3. An amazing community that supports us. MBEF, PTA and MBAF are all model organizations that tirelessly work for our students and our employees. In particular, we should be grateful for another great year of fundraising by MBEF. They have informed me that they now have over \$4 million in donations and pledges in the annual appeal. It is difficult to imagine what our schools would look like without their support.

I encourage you to understand our budget. Please check out the presentation to learn more about our current fiscal situation and our projected future. I urge you to educate yourself about the June 6 election and the potential extension of existing taxes that would positively impact funding to our schools. I invite your questions and if you would like me to talk with a group of you about this budget, please let me know. I'll be there.

As always, thanks for all you do for our students.

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