

Spotlight on the Board

Notes from the District 15 School Board Meeting

June 8th, 2005

BOARD NOTES on the WEB: Check out the new Pleasant Hill PTA web site for current and past editions of "Spotlight on the Board": www.phpta.org

Budget

At the June Board meeting, the final 2005-2006 Budget was adopted, with a note at the budget can be modified after adoption.

ED/RED

Silverman (ED/RED representative) reported that the Early Retirement Option was extended 2 years by the State, which has an affect on our budget. ED RED dues are due on 7/1/2005. The Board will vote in August on paying ED RED dues. Keenan noted that ED-RED endorses things that are not necessarily in our best interest. ED-RED represents 100 districts in the State in lobbying the State government. McKanna said he thought ED-RED was very helpful for lobbying the State. D211 pays the dues and we are part of a joint D54/D15/D211 group for membership in ED-RED. Carlson noted that maybe we should look to State representatives for more direct support from the State.

Hearts of Gold/D15 Educational Foundation

Rowden reported there was a \$35k profit for the D15 Educational Foundation from the Hearts of Gold fundraiser. She said these funds could be used for mini-grants for teachers related to educational goals. She noted this was an opportunity to enhance technology in the classroom with electronic white boards, and similar systems. She invited teachers to apply for the mini-grants.

IASB Conference

Rowden attended a special conference for new Board members. She reported that it was a good opportunity to network with other school Board members, see how other Boards are doing things, and learn more about the current changes in public education and funding.

Ela Road Property

The Board voted to transfer funds from Working Cash to pay for the Ela Road Property purchase. Ela Road was purchased in 2000 from District 211 for \$3.2M with a 10% down payment and 5% interest per year, leaving \$2.88M due on July 1st, 2005. The Ela Road Property is an approximately 40 acre lot on Ela Road, between Algonquin and Palatine Roads, that could be a future site for an additional District 15 school.

The Board debated several options for dealing with the Ela Road property. The Board obtained a proposal from Harris Bank to further finance the Ela Road property and avoid purchasing the property out of this year's budget. That proposal, because of District 15's debt ceiling, required financing the property until 2020 at an interest rate of 4.5%. Keenan noted she would rather pay District 211 the money (any interest due to financing) than Harris Bank. Keenan was in favor of investigating further options with D211, including asking for a 1 year extension – Carlson agreed. Millar noted that it was difficult to decide what to do about buying/financing the Ela Road property without knowing what future uses we would have for the property. Bob Strand (Finance) noted that he did not think that the Administration of D211 saw any benefit to D211 in a 1 year extension, that they want the full payment to help with their revenue stream. Ultimately, the Board voted to transfer to funds to pay for the Ela Road property, with Keenan voting "no".

Citizens Address the Board

Drew and Kristin Polumbro – parents of a special ed student. Said budget cuts for special ed are too large (\$2M out of \$12 total cuts), and they are frustrated with the restoration of extra-curricular activities, but not special ed. They cited reductions in teacher's aides and CBT (Community Based Training), which are class trips to generalize learning in the classroom and are an important learning experience.

Sharon Worth – parent of a Down's Syndrome child. Said the district was not meeting the children's needs, and repeated the importance of teacher's aides and CBT's. Suggested getting business backing for CBT's. Carlson asked how much CBT's cost, she doesn't think they cost much. McKanna said he would bring back \$ numbers and rationale for the cuts, said he thought they may have been discontinued for reasons other than money. Rowden commented that CBT's are not just field trips, it is an adapted curriculum.

Ken Kruzlezcki – resident. Wants to have budget on the D15 website in an accessible form, available "30 days" in advance of Budget adoption/voting. He noted that D211 has financial information on their website.

Nonunion salaries frozen

The Board voted to freeze 350 nonunion salaries, including central office administrators, transportation, food service, technology, secretarial staff, as well as principals and assistant principals and the Superintendent (when his contract comes up again next March). Boucher said the Board, some teachers and selected administrators will be going through training sessions over the summer to learn about contract negotiations. Negotiations will begin in the Fall for the next teacher's contract, which is due June 2006.

Art in Elementary Schools

The Art program in the elementary schools will be reduced from 45 minutes per week to 30 minutes.

If you have questions for the Board, you can email them directly or email Superintendent McKanna (McKannaR@ccsd15.net), or you can present questions directly to the Board at the next Board meeting (August 10th, 2005, 7 pm at Sundling Jr. High). All emails sent to Dr. McKanna are automatically copied to the entire School Board.