

REPORTER

SPECIAL EDITION

A Newsletter for Parents and Community

April 2010



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The Sulphur Springs District
Office is located at 27000 Weyerhaeuser
Way, Canyon Country, CA 91351-4947.
Board of Trustees Meetings are held on the
2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month
at 7:30 P.M.

The Public is invited!
Visit our Web Page at
www.sssd.k12.ca.us

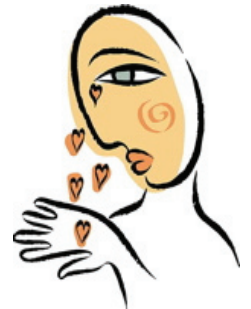
Potential Layoffs Looming

On February 26th 100 teachers in the Sulphur Springs School District received a pink slip or preliminary layoff notice for the 2010-2011 school year. In this group of teachers were 55 current classroom teachers, teachers on a temporary contract, and those exempt due to hard to hire credentials or certificates (such as administrators, psychologists, directors and nurses). The state requires districts to notify certificated staff by March 15th of any potential layoff action. Statewide 26,590 teachers received a potential layoff notice prior to March 15th. This number has increased significantly over the 10,000 notices given out last year.

Many teachers included in this year's notification received a notice last year and were hired back prior to the start of the current school year. As one teacher who received her notice shared, "I know times are bad but I have wanted to teach since I was little. It is so discouraging to get a notice. Everything you hear about California's budget is terrible and this year it seems even more serious."

Classified staff will be notified if they are not returning 45 days before the last day of school. The district is looking at the possible layoff of instructional assistants, bus drivers, library assistants and reading assistants. Sulphur Springs School District laid off bus drivers this school year due to a reduction in bus routes. Fair Oaks Ranch and Golden Oak Schools no longer have bus service. Noon supervisors also were laid off due to teachers now taking on the supervision of students before school and at recess.

These potential layoffs are due to the state budget crisis and the predictions for the 2010-2011 school year proposed by Governor Schwarzenegger in January of this year. Budgets cuts come on top of several years of reduced financial support for education. California is currently 47th in per pupil spending before the current cuts --- keep in mind there are only 50 states!



We are often asked about what parents and staff can do to attempt to influence the legislative process. Here is a web site for a grass roots parents' group that created a web site that makes this very easy. They have sample letters to legislators and an easy way to identify your state assembly member and senator — just put in your zip code and they will provide you the information with a hot e-mail link.

<http://supportcakids.com>

Then, follow this link and follow the simple instructions to send off a letter to our legislators.

Fiscal Responsibility – Today and Tomorrow

When you think about “school” immediately thoughts of children, teachers, books and classrooms pop into one’s head. After all, that is what education and schools are all about. Sometimes we forget that it takes a considerable budget to fund education. The annual budget to run the Sulphur Springs School District is \$48 million dollars.



Education funding is one area that has not been stable or reliable in the past few years across our nation but particularly in the state of California. The state has reduced the K-12 Education Budget \$12.5 billion dollars since the 2007-2008 school year. The Governor has proposed in his 2010-2011 budget reducing K-12 education an additional 1.7 billion dollars. This translates into a loss of \$4.4 million dollars from 2007-08 to the 2009-10 school year for the Sulphur Springs School District. The proposed budget for 2010-2011 will create an additional loss of \$.4 million dollars for a total loss of \$4.8 million dollars since the 2007-2008 school year! If the district had been fully funded it would have gained nearly \$18 million dollars in additional dollars to spend for the education of our students.

Recently there is no turning on the TV or radio without hearing about the financial problems and difficulties in California. The state has withheld 25% of the school’s allocations of money deferring it into the next school year. This makes it difficult to develop a budget for the next year. These are challenging times and all school districts including the Sulphur Springs School District must meet the challenge in order to meet the needs of our students.

Sulphur Springs School District is committed to the efficient use of our limited resources to provide an outstanding education for all students. It is the goal of the district staff to minimize the impact of these budget cuts on our students.

Steps The District Has Taken

Under the leadership of the Board of Trustees the District has taken a conservative fiscal approach with an entrepreneurial focus, which has helped the Sulphur Springs School District to remain financially stable. This stability has come by significantly tightening the belt, cutting costs, looking at different ways to generate income other than what has been guaranteed by the state while trying to keep the cuts as far away from classrooms as possible.

Over the last twenty-five plus years, the district has formed many partnerships to bring in additional sources of revenue. The Concept Center, which includes the Canyon Country Regal Theater, restaurants, and small businesses in Canyon Country, is one example. The Sulphur Springs School District is a 67% partner in the center, which once housed the old Soledad Elementary School.

Another partnership has been formed with the Newhall, Saugus and Castaic school districts to form the SCV Food Services Agency that prepares all the breakfasts and lunches for the children in the valley. This partnership has been profitable and successful. The SCV Food Services Agency supports itself. During these tough economic times many other food service programs are running in the red.

Additional ventures have been the conversion of the former District Office site on Sierra Highway back into a mall with retail spaces for lease. The district has also had a strong partnership with the Pardee Company who built Fair Oaks Ranch Community School and Golden Oak Community School without the use of district funds. Pardee will have the same arrangement with the district when development begins again in the Canyon Country area for the next two schools – Spring Canyon and Skyline Ranch with grading to begin as early as 2012-2013.



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Fiscal Responsibility – Today and Tomorrow - continued

Currently the districts in the valley including the Wm S. Hart High School District have joined together to explore the possibility of a purchasing co-op to provide services and supplies to all districts in the valley. The buying power leverage of 59,000 students would provide considerable cost savings for all the districts.

The district and its staff have been very forward thinking in looking for ways to save money around the district. The Board of Trustees has approved joining with Southern California Edison's summer plan, which will result in \$60,000 savings to the district. Security cameras were installed at all school sites, which have almost eliminated graffiti, vandalism and theft issues at the schools. The district saw a drop of over 80% in costs normally attributed to cleaning up after the graffiti and vandalism incidents.

Fiscal Transparency and Accountability

The Sulphur Springs School District remains fiscally solvent and every step of the budget planning process is shared with staff and community. "Transparency" is a key word used when discussing budgets and where the money goes. Sulphur Springs has always been "transparent" in its budget process.

The budget is extensively audited through an annual, in-depth audit conducted by an outside agency. By law, the lead auditor must change every three years to assure a fair and accurate audit. The budget is shared with the Board frequently throughout the year and Board members are well aware of the challenges presented by the state's reduction of educational funding. The district is proud to have had a balanced budget every year since 1967 when the county first kept record.

The budget is approved by the SSSD Board of Trustees each year. The budget approval process is open to the community. Budget information is shared with all key stakeholders from district personnel to parent groups such as the PTA and School Site Council leadership.



Challenges Now and in the Future

With the uncertainty of educational finance in California it is difficult for district personnel to provide in-depth and long-term budget planning. Each year in January the Governor announces his budget projections for the next year and then again in May he revises these earlier projections and often includes additional cuts to education.

Sulphur Springs School District has met the challenges of the decreased funding for education this year by cutting personnel including administration, custodial staff, office staff, yard supervision, eliminating transportation to two school sites, and increasing class size in the primary grades. Teachers have taken back the responsibility for supervising students during recess, before and after school. The only place left to cut is the classroom.

For the 2010-2011 school year the district is looking at the possibility of raising class sizes, thus requiring fewer teachers, further eliminating transportation, cutting administrative positions at the site and district and other personnel reductions. All district staff will have to take five unpaid furlough days next year, which will generate \$640,000 in cost savings. Not only is this a salary reduction but it is also a loss of five student

instructional days.

Sulphur Springs School District has weathered tough fiscal times in the past and will again with this storm. The children in the Sulphur Springs School District and throughout California are deserving of something better with more stable funding so that education is not always buffeted by outside influences when it comes to assuring future students an excellent education.

SSSD Goes All Day Kindergarten!!!

We are excited to announce that all schools in the Sulphur Springs School District will offer All Day Kindergarten!!! SSSD is the only district in the Santa Clarita Valley to offer an all day kindergarten program. So be sure to register your kindergartner during our Kindergarten Round-Up, May 3 – 7.

ALERTS!

To register a child for kindergarten, it will be necessary to have the following documentation:

- A birth certificate or other official document verifying the child's birth date. According to California State law, a child must have been born on or before December 2, 2005
- Immunizations: Proof of MMR (including proof of second MMR), Polio, D.P.T., and Hepatitis B, Varicella (Chicken Pox) and the results of a current Tuberculosis test (Mantoux), given since 8/1/08.
- Verification of residency (driver's license, utility bill, rent receipt)

Registration will be held at the school to which your address is currently assigned. Schools in the Sulphur Springs District include: Canyon Springs, Fair Oaks Ranch, Golden Oak, Leona Cox, Mint Canyon, Mitchell, Pinetree, Sulphur Springs and Valley View. At this time, schools included in the Sulphur Springs District operate on a Blended calendar.

SSSD is also having Open Enrollment, now through May 14, 2010 for all Intra and Inter District Transfers for the 2010/2011 school year. Notification of approval/denial will be mailed out on or before June 15, 2010.

Intra-District Transfers: If you currently reside within a school's attendance area and wish to enroll your child in another school within District boundaries, you may request to do so by completing an Intra-District Transfer Request. You may pick up a form from your home school or the District Office.

Inter-District Transfers: If you currently reside within Sulphur Springs School District boundaries and wish to enroll your child in another school outside of the District, you may do so by requesting an Inter-District Transfer Request form from the District Office. Completion of this form releases your child from our school District so that he/she may attend a school in another school district.

If you currently reside outside of Sulphur Springs School District boundaries and wish to enroll your child in to one of our schools, please contact your home school district office for details.

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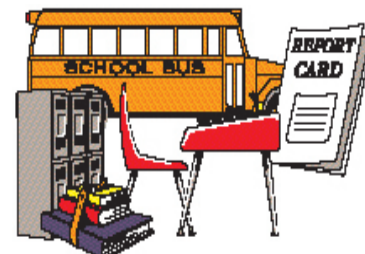
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Comment Card

Please mail this comment card to our District Office or simply fax to (661) 252-6849

The Sulphur Springs School District is very interested in knowing your thoughts regarding any of the topics we've covered in this newsletter or any other questions or ideas that you may have.



(Optional) Contact name: _____ Phone () _____