

School News

Belmont – Redwood Shores School District

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Superintendent's Letter . . .

Dear Parents, Staff
and Community Members:

I am pleased to provide the year end report and update you on the latest events in the district.

2005-06 Strategic Plan and Goals:

We have been very busy striving to achieve our district's 2005-06 Strategic Plan and Goals. We have four specific areas of focus: Student Learning, Resources, Communication, and Disaster Preparedness.

A priority in the area of Student Learning at both the district and school sites has been on providing support for individual students and sub-groups of students who have not yet met grade level performance standards. The analysis of data from both local common assessments and the STAR test has guided each school's efforts. K-5 students have taken district assessments in reading, math and writing. The student achievement data collected over the course of the year through these assessments has been used to plan targeted classroom instruction, determine the need for school-wide programs to support students who are struggling and to evaluate and monitor each student's progress toward meeting or exceeding grade level performance standards. Work began this year at Ralston Middle School on the development of common assessments in mathematics, language arts, science and social studies. This work will continue next year. Additionally, we have worked toward the development of a system of strategies to support all students in meeting grade-level standards.

The *Single Plan for Student Achievement* developed by the School Site Council and the staff at each school addresses the needs of students who have not yet met grade level standards and details the strategies in place at the school to support students' progress towards standards. Within this work, there has been focused effort across the district to work on the improvement of student writing. Professional development has been provided to teachers in the Six Traits Writing model, materials have been purchased to support classroom instruction using this model and the Six Traits rubric has been used to score student writing on the district writing assessment bringing greater equity and validity to writing instruction and assessment. The District will continue to make student writing a priority in 2006-07 by providing teachers with further focused professional development and resources.

The strategic goals in the Resources area of focus include revenue enhancements through a parcel tax; supporting the work of our outstanding education foundation, School-Force; grants; shared services with other districts; and advocacy for funding of public education at the state and federal level. Our efforts have been successful as the 2006-07 District Budget is close to being balanced at this writing. Again, thanks to the voters who supported Measure G, and the parents, staff and community members who support School-Force, we will be able to continue the programs that were restored this year. We will have 1.5 FTE fully funded 4th and 5th grade science specialists, reading specialists, 4th and 5th grade music, libraries



Jon Shulenberg has worked in the Belmont – Redwood Shores School District since 1971 – he was one of five retirees honored by the School District at a party in Twin Pines on May 19th – the others honored were –

John McIntosh – in our district for 2 ½ years – 26 years in education

Sallie Stalzer – in this district since 1972!

Marcia Cortopassi – in this district since 1972!

Pat Wodarczyk – in this district since 1986!

Congratulations! We wish you all happy trails and an enjoyable retirement.

staffed at pre-2002 levels, and continued class size reduction in grades K-3. At this writing, we are working diligently with the teachers' union to craft a fair and equitable compensation package for all teachers.

We have much to be thankful for as our children are receiving a well-rounded, high quality education.

Strategic goals in Communication are progressing, but we still have more work to do. However, we have

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Superintendent's Letter continued . . .

established regular meetings with the Belmont City Council and Redwood City Council, and with homeowners' associations in Redwood Shores. We have also held Board meetings at three of our schools, and held study sessions on the budget, enrollment, and our strategic goals. We are publishing the new School News quarterly, and we're submitting monthly articles in the Pilot. The Board has adopted a complete revised and updated set of Board policies, and it has launched Agenda Online, which allows the public to go to the District website at www.belmont.k12.ca.us/main/district/ and access the Board meeting agendas and minutes. We have the new Board policies online, which are updated regularly. We implemented a web-based communication system that allows the schools and the District to communicate electronically with parents and community members. We have attempted to improve our responsiveness to your questions and emails through the District Customer Service Center.

Progress was also made on Disaster Preparedness strategic goals; with the assistance of the Belmont Police Department, a district-wide disaster drill was conducted April 26, 2006. The Belmont PD provided oversight, critique and evaluation of the planning and response of each school site and the District Office. As a result, the principals and district staff revised and updated their specific disaster preparedness response and disaster plan.

As we look forward to 2006-07, there will be personnel changes in the district, budget adjustments and plans for a new school.

Superintendent Search:

A nationwide search is being conducted by the California School Boards Association for a new Superintendent. The process calls for interviews to be conducted June 1, 2 and 3. The following week the Board of Education will conduct a site visit of the finalist. The Board of Education will appoint the new Superintendent at the June 15, 2006 Board meeting.

CBO Search:

The district is still in the process of appointing a CBO by conducting a nationwide search which will enable the new Superintendent to select the new CBO.

District Budget:

Governor Schwarzenegger's budget has restored billions of dollars to education including over \$2 billion for 2006-2007. That being said, as the District continues the development of the budget for 2006-07, we recognize that the Governor's proposal regarding state aid to schools is of less consequence to the Belmont-Redwood Shores School District than most other districts in California. As a basic aid district whose principal funding source is property taxes, state funding is a smaller portion of the overall budget. However, property taxes, the major provision of revenue, will not increase



Shelly Modesitt, Charlene Mercadante and Fox Principal Chris Marchetti spent time 'In Jail' at the Fox Fiesta raising money for the PTA. The PTAs in the District are making a huge difference in the ability to maintain the standard of our children's education in spite of budget cuts.

at a rate as in past years. On the expenditure side, the District is looking at over \$3 million dollars encroachment on the District general fund due to unfunded costs in special education. These two factors will have a serious impact on our budget. These two elements alone will result in a projected \$600,000 shortfall on our 2006-07 Budget through increased expenditures and reduced revenues. Budget cuts and adjustments were made to balance the budget at the May 18, 2006 Board Study Session on the Budget. The Board also reviewed the Budget at the June 1, 2006 Board meeting. If you want to learn more, you may visit the District website at www.belmont.k12.ca.us to view the budget and attend the June 15, 2006 Board meeting when the 2006-2007 Budget will be adopted.

New School in the Shores:

A committee of ten Redwood Shores residents has been meeting with a facilitator, District staff members, and consultants to discuss the plan for the new school. This group, the New Shores School Advisory Committee, meets the second and fourth Thursday at 6:30pm at the San Mateo County Office of Education. The Committee is charged with making a recommendation to the Board on selecting a school site, selection of an architect/design build team, and the school design.

We have worked hard this year on some very difficult issues. That hard work, however, has created positive opportunities and long-term gains for our students, our staff, and our school community. As Superintendent I would like to personally thank each of you for your involvement and support in the process of making Belmont-Redwood Shores an outstanding school district.

I look forward to my retirement which will enable me to spend more time with our large family and tend to my health. As I leave our wonderful district I will continue to hold the honor and privilege of serving as your Superintendent as the most outstanding professional experience of my career in education. I will miss the children, the relationships with the teachers, staff, parents, the Board and community.
John McIntosh



The second annual Irma Perez "Walk for Life" sponsored by the NFL Alumni drug prevention program ended at Ralston on Saturday May 20th.



Imelda Perez warns students of the dangers of illegal drugs.

Ralston Musicians Perform at Disneyland

One hundred and fifty two 7th and 8th grade Ralston musicians and singers along with Mr. DaBaldo, Mr. Thielen and twenty one parent chaperones recently went on a 4 day excursion to Disneyland. The Advanced Orchestra, Chorus, Symphonic Band and Honors Band each performed



Mr. John DaBaldo conducts the Ralston Honors Band at Carnation Plaza, Disneyland.



Ralston students performed in "Once Upon a Mattress" at the Notre Dame Theater on May 6th and 7th.



Bo Lotti, Jenise Spiteri and Gabe Marx



Members of Ralston's Advanced Orchestra perform at Disneyland

concerts in Disneyland Park on the Plaza Gardens stage. They also had music recording workshops under the direction of Mr. Dave Warble on the Disneyland back lot and recorded their own soundtracks to parts of their favorite Disney movies. The chorus recorded a CD. Everyone had a great time.

The Ralston music department has been doing this tour every other year for the past 14 years and it has grown over that time from one to four performing groups. Each group must audition and meet Disneyland's high standards in order to be able to perform in the park.

The students also had time to enjoy the rides in Disneyland and California Adventure Park and were able to connect with their friends from Namur, Belgium who were making their return visit to America. After the day in Disneyland they enjoyed dinner together and the show at Medieval Times. Forty-one Ralston musicians went to Namur, Belgium last school year as part of a sister-city exchange program with the city of Namur. Ralston musicians are hoping to make a second visit in 2007.



Mr. George Metropulos' third grade class from Central spent half a day in March at Carlmont learning about scientific techniques from their Carlmont student tutors. The visit was so successful they plan to make it an annual event.

School-Force May Update . . .By Andrea Burfield

Time's Running Out!

Make your Annual Donation before summer vacation!

School-Force is raising money to continue and strengthen valued educational programs for this coming school year — 2006-07.

\$400K

Goal by 6/06

\$275K

As of 5/06

Technology & support

Elementary science

Reading & literacy

Instrumental music



Please donate to:
School-Force,
P.O. Box 5196,
Belmont CA 94002
Thank You!

The deadline is:
June 30th!

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Ralston students display their 'Awards of Excellence' for Academic Achievement

BELMONT-REDWOOD SHORES SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

President
 Karen Clancy

Vice President
 Cathy Wright

Clerk
 Jeni Benelli

Member
 Eric Shrader

Member
 William "Bill" Davidovich

Coming Events

June

- 6th 3:30pm . . District Cabinet Mtg at DistOffice
- 6th 7pm Sandpiper PTA
- 7th 7pm Central Spring Music Concert
- 7th 7pm Ralston 8th Grade Awards Night
- 12th 3:45pm . . Sandpiper Site Council Mtg.
- 13th 3:45pm . . BRS Faculty Assoc. Mtg at Central
- 12:30pm . . Cipriani 5th Grade Luncheon
- 14th 7 pm PTA Mtg. – Fox, Nesbit
- 15th 10:30am . . Fox Promotion Ceremony
- Ralston 8th Grade to Great America
- 7pm School Board Meeting
- Selection of new Superintendent
- 16th Last Day of School – Minimum Day**
- 20th 9:00am . . District Cabinet Mtg at DistOffice
- 26th Summer School starts

August

- 22nd, 23rd New Teacher Orientation
- 24th Floating work day 7pm
- 25th, 26th Teacher Work Days
- 29th First Day for Students**

September

- 4th Labour Day Holiday



Ralston's Multi Cultural Fair was held on April 29th