

# School News

## Belmont – Redwood Shores School District

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[www.belmont.k12.ca.us](http://www.belmont.k12.ca.us)

### Superintendent's Letter . . .

Dear Students, Parents and Friends,

I would like to begin my letter with a focus on our high quality teachers and re-emphasize how much our district—the administrators, the School Board, and the community—appreciate and value our teachers. They are the best in the business: skilled, dedicated, hard working, resourceful, and creative. We are indeed fortunate to have such outstanding teachers.

Many of you are probably anxious to learn how our negotiations with the teachers union are progressing; we met all day March 8, 2006 for our first mediation session and have another date scheduled in April. I am optimistic that we will have an agreement soon. Because we are in mediation with the teachers union all information on progress is confidential as imposed by the mediator.

I have provided some information about district finances on our website: [www.belmont.k12.ca.us](http://www.belmont.k12.ca.us) You may click on "Second Interim Report" or the "Measure G Parcel Tax Income & Expenses 2005-2006" pie chart as well as a School-Force pie chart.

As you will see, the detail in the two pie charts (see page 2) illustrates the need for both revenue sources working together to fund all of the programs detailed in our promise to the voters in the "Measure G" ballot language. As always, please contact me if you have questions. My email address is [jmcintosh@belmont.k12.ca.us](mailto:jmcintosh@belmont.k12.ca.us).

After 6 months of a nation wide search for a Director of Business Services and Operations the District will soon be welcoming our new Business Manager, Laurie Harden! Laurie will be relocating from the Templeton Unified School District in San Luis Obispo County after the first of June. Laurie has 16 years of experience as a school district Chief Business Official (CBO) in California. Laurie will be directly involved with the entire process of building the new Shores elementary school and working with the New Shores School Advisory Committee.

Welcome Laurie!

We also continue to make progress toward the construction of a new elementary school in Redwood Shores. The School Board has established an advisory committee, the New Shores School



Superintendent John McIntosh and Assistant Superintendent Jeannie Bosley

Advisory Committee, which will meet monthly for the next year or so to review and recommend a school site, review and recommend an architect or a design build team, and review and recommend a school design. The first meeting of the Advisory Committee was March 29 with the next meeting scheduled for April 27. All meetings begin at 6:00pm with the business meeting starting at 6:30pm; most meetings will be held in the Sandpiper Elementary School library. The meetings are open to the public and are facilitated by Dr. Cecil Reeves.

I'd like to thank everyone who recently volunteered to help with the School-Force Annual Giving Campaign. More than 30 volunteers planned and staffed the event at the District Office. At last count, the campaign had brought in about \$81,000 for our schools. We are grateful for the awesome support of School-Force and for the school community members—parents, teachers, board members, staff, and administrators—who contribute to its ongoing success.

I'd also like to thank Oracle, Corp., for its recent grant of \$50,000 to help English-language learners use the cutting-edge technology at Ralston Middle School. The grant will be used to partially fund a teacher for this purpose.

More thanks to Electronic Arts for \$15,000 to fund a grant for Applied Academics at Ralston Middle School. The grant will go to upgrade the Industrial Technology and Animation programs at

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Superintendent's Letter continued . . .

Ralston. Congratulations to Ms O'Reilly and her staff.

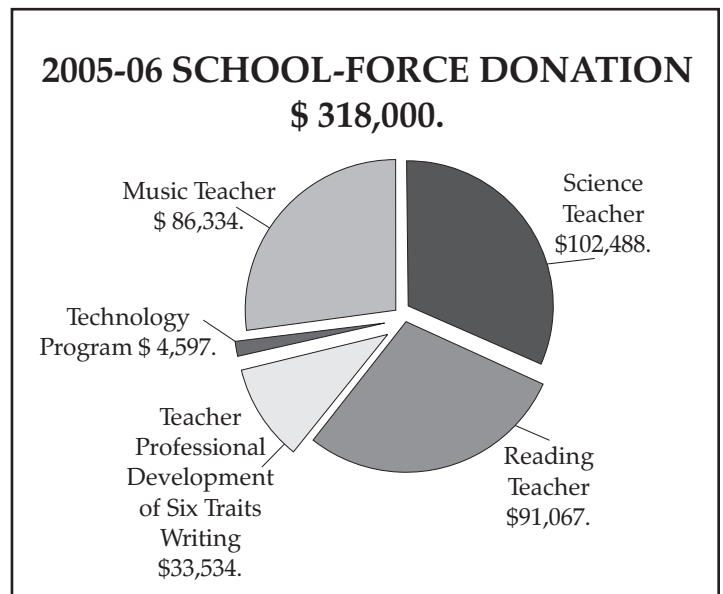
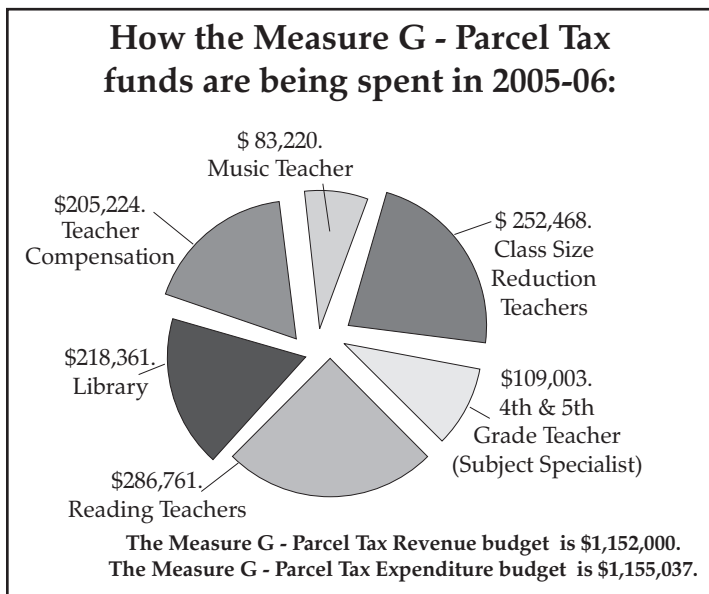
The District has hired the California School Boards Association (CSBA) to lead the search for the next superintendent. CSBA has met with many community members and school staff to receive input on the desired qualities, abilities and characteristics of the new superintendent. As in the past, a community committee will interview the most highly qualified candidates who will recommend the top candidates to the Board for additional interviews. The timeline established by the School Board will allow for a new superintendent to be hired by July 1, 2006.

In closing, I want to sincerely thank you for your kind words of understanding about my decision to retire as superintendent of your school district. This was not an easy decision for me or my family, but it is a necessary one for health reasons. I will continue to serve you and our schools until the new superintendent is working in the district; anticipated to be August 1, 2006.

—John McIntosh



Ralston principal Maggie O'Reilly and Assistant Principal Schrag have been presenting orientations for the 5th grade students on the changes that they will experience in the move to the 6th grade.



School-Force April Update . . .By Andrea Burfield

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT – Annual Campaign

We are in the midst of our annual giving campaign. As of mid-March we have reached \$195,000! If you have not already donated this year, we ask you for your support by making a family donation of \$333. Investing in our public schools will help provide the excellent education that we want for our children. Please send in your check by June 30<sup>th</sup> to School Force, PO Box 5196, Belmont, CA 94002. **Just a reminder that your donation is fully tax deductible.**

Reading Power, March 10-24th, 2006

As this article is written, Reading Power is underway. It was kicked off at each of the 5 elementary schools on March 10<sup>th</sup>. The kids all seem so excited about reading. We want to thank all the students, teachers and principals for their support of this important event.



School-Force is the volunteer-run Belmont-Redwood Shores nonprofit educational foundation that benefits children attending our K through 8 public schools. Decisions on funding allocations are made by the School District's Board. Donations to School-Force, a 501(c)(3) organization, are deductible as charitable contributions (Tax ID #91-2159650). Contact [www.schoolforce.org](http://www.schoolforce.org) or [info@school-force.org](mailto:info@school-force.org). Address for donations: P.O. Box 5196, Belmont, CA 94002.

Save the Music 2006

Save the Music will once again be taking place in the fall of 2006. The planning team is now being put together and they are looking for several committee volunteers. If you would like to give some time to an incredible event, please contact Alan Sarver, STM chairperson, at 592-6192. Thank you!

Join School-Force!

Bring your talents, and join the School-Force Board for 2006-07. We have Board openings for our **fundraising programs, and for a Board Secretary.** We also have openings for **school ambassadors**, a non-board position. We hope to hear from you! Contact Colleen Devlin – 592-5903 or [coldev@pacbell.net](mailto:coldev@pacbell.net)

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## School Board President's Letter ...

Happy Spring! Congratulations to our administrators, teachers, staff and students who work so hard to make our schools great! The State released the 2005 Academic Performance Index Base Scores on March 21 and all of our schools increased their statewide rankings. While these numbers are helpful for assessment purposes, the real evidence of our success can be seen in the classrooms of our schools and on the faces of our children. In every classroom I visited, I saw dedicated, patient, and caring teachers working with students to motivate them to be creative, critical thinkers – and all while ensuring that State standards were being covered, too!

Other evidence of our District's commitment to excellence can be seen in our music program. We were well represented at the annual Carlmont High School Combined Concert in early March. Over 80 students from Ralston joined with students from Tierra Linda and Central Middle Schools in San Carlos to perform with the high school orchestra and bands. They sounded terrific and helped to remind us why "Save the Music" is such an important event each year.

In other news, the Board has begun the search process for a new superintendent to replace Mr. McIntosh who is retiring. The process will take us through the end of this school year. We plan to interview candidates in June and have someone in place to open the 2006-07 school year. We will miss Mr. McIntosh and thank him for his leadership during his tenure with our District.

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### Ralston musicians off to Disneyland

As you read this many of our Ralston students are performing with the school bands at Disneyland! This is a huge undertaking and our thanks go out to Mr. John DaBaldo, Mr. Peter Thielen and all the Music Booster volunteers that pulled together to organize this trip.

There are approximately 160 students taking part - the Honors Band, Symphonic Band, Orchestra and Chorus - they will travel to Disney in 4 buses leaving Ralston after lunch on Wednesday April 5th. Going along to help are 21 chaperones. They will be working long hours - up at 6:30am and to bed around 11pm with a very full schedule in between. They will be staying in 54 hotel rooms for three nights, doing workshops, performing on stage and when they



Mr. Peter Thielen puts the Symphonic Band through their paces in preparation for their Disneyland trip

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## Encouraging Our Young Writers ... by Jeannie Bosley

The Belmont-Redwood Shores School District Strategic Plan calls for a district-wide focus on the improvement of student writing. Teachers and administrators are working together to build a strong classroom writing program. Recognizing the important role that parents can play in motivating and supporting their student writers, the district is eager to involve parents in our efforts.

Ralph Fletcher, a noted children's book author and teacher educator, offers parents tips on how they might encourage their young writers. His tips include:

1. Let your child see you write. Demonstrate both real world writing as well as writing for fun.
2. Look for comfortable, low-pressure "writing occasions" where both you and your child can write and share.
3. Get materials (notebook, blank paper, markers, pre-made booklets) to make writing enjoyable.
4. For our youngest writers, remember that much of the meaning in their writing is carried in their drawing. Show real interest in their drawing as well as the written words. Think of emergent writing as you thought of early attempts to talk-full of approximations and errors we can delight in. These are necessary.
5. When responding to a young person's writing:
  - React first as a reader. Show how the writing affects you by responding to the meaning: "This is funny" or "I didn't know that." Don't fixate on spelling or grammatical errors
  - Be positive. Build on strengths. Find specific things to praise in the writing or the drawing.
  - Respect the child's ownership of the writing.
  - Suggest another reader, or a real-world purpose for the writing, "I bet Grandma would love to read that."
6. Keep reading to your child-even when he or she gets older.

7. Remember that writers of every age break easily. Be gentle.

Visit Ralph Fletcher's website at [www.ralphfletcher.com](http://www.ralphfletcher.com)

During this school year, the work on writing improvement is focused on implementing the 6 traits instruction and assessment model in each of our schools.

Because we are eager to have parents understand this model and the ways in which they can use it to encourage their student writers, each of the schools will offer a parent education event on the 6 Traits approach.

Parents will receive information about these learning opportunities from their child's school.

We look forward to seeing parents at these events!

have some free time they will be enjoying the rides and other attractions in the area such as the Medieval Times Show and dinner on Friday night. They return around 10pm on Saturday night – a phone tree will give accurate arrival times.

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Central's Second Grade performs for the guests at Grandparent's Day on March 22nd.

### 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

### April

4th . . . . . 9am . . . PTA Coord. Council Mtg at DO  
4th . . . . . 3:30pm . District Cabinet Mtg at DistOffice  
5th . . . . . 7pm . . . Central Discovery Day, Family Read  
6th . . . . . 7pm . . . School Dist. Board Meeting  
7th . . . . . Central assembly – Wildlife  
**10th – 16th. . Spring Break – Have a great week!**  
11th. . . . . 3:45pm . BRS Faculty Assoc. Mtg at Central  
12th . . . . . Fox and Nesbit PTA Mtgs.  
17th – 21st. . . . . Cipriani Outdoor Ed week  
18th. . . . . 9am . . . District Cabinet Mtg at Sandpiper  
**19th . . . . . 7pm . . Sandpiper Open House**  
20th. . . . . Central PTA Mtg, / Ralston Awards Assembly  
**22nd . . . . . Ralston Walk Against Drugs**  
. . . . . 7pm . . . Fox Fiesta at Hyatt, Burlingame  
. . . . . Contact Shelly Modesitt at 207-2012  
**24th–May 5th. . . . . STAR Testing**  
25th. . . . . 7pm . . . Sandpiper PTA Mtg  
**26th . . . . . District wide Disaster Drill**  
. . . . . Central Assembly–Caught Being GOOD  
**27th . . . . . 12 noon Sandpiper Founder's Day**  
**29th . . . . . Ralston Multi-Cultural Fair**  
. . . . . 6–11pm. Cipriani Luau Dinner & Auction

### May

**1st–5th . . . . . STAR Testing**  
2nd . . . . . 3:30pm . District Cabinet Mtg at DistOffice  
3rd . . . . . 7pm . . . Central Kindergarten Orientation  
4th . . . . . 7pm . . . School Dist. Board Meeting  
8th . . . . . 3:45pm . Sandpiper Site Council Mtg.

9th . . . . . 9am . . . PTA Coordinating Council Mtg at DO  
9th . . . . . 3:45pm . BRS Faculty Assoc. Mtg. at Central  
**10th . . . . . 7pm . . . Cipriani Open House.**  
10th. . . . . 7pm . . . Fox, Nesbit PTA Mtgs. Central Family Read  
11th. . . . . 3:15pm . Cipriani Site Council Mtg.  
. . . . . 6pm . . . Fox Kindergarten Orientation  
. . . . . **7pm . . . Fox Open House**  
16th. . . . . 9am . . . District Cabinet Mtg at Central  
**17th . . . . . 7pm . . . Central Open House**  
18th. . . . . 7pm . . . Sandpiper 1st Grade Orientation  
. . . . . 7pm . . . District Board study session  
22nd . . . . . 3:15pm . Central Site Council Mtg.  
23rd . . . . . 7pm . . . Sandpiper PTA Mtg.  
24th . . . . . District wide Writing Scoring  
. . . . . Central Camp Read-a-Lot  
**25th . . . . . 7pm . . . Nesbit Open House**  
**29th . . . . . Memorial Day Holiday**  
30th. . . . . 3:45pm . Staff Dev. Day–Electronic Arts  
31st . . . . . 1:45–3:15 Scoring District Writing Assesment  
. . . . . Central Assembly–Being Caught GOOD

### June

1st . . . . . 7pm . . . School Dist. Board Meeting  
6th . . . . . 3:30pm . Cabinet Mtg at DO, /Sandpiper PTA 7pm  
12th. . . . . 3:45pm . Sandpiper Site Council Mtg.  
13th. . . . . 9am PTA Coord. Council Mtg at DO, /BRSFA Brd 3:45  
14th. . . . . 7pm . . . Fox and Nesbit PTA Mtgs.  
15th. . . . . 10:30am Fox Promotion Ceremony.  
. . . . . 7pm . . . School Dist. Board study session  
**16th . . . . . Last Day of School!! Enjoy your Summer!!**  
20th. . . . . 9am . . . District Cabinet Mtg at DistOffice