

District Update

December 14, 2009

News from Superintendent General Davie Jr.

NTA agrees to furlough days, shortened school year

The Natomas Teachers Association has voted to ratify a Tentative Agreement with the NUSD to take five furlough days in 2009-10, and six furlough days in 2010-11, for a combined budget savings of \$2.2 million.

With trustees having previously voted to shorten this school year by five days because of the budget crisis, this ratification now allows the District to implement that decision. The NTA contract calls for this school year to end on May 27, 2010, for our modified traditional schools, and for each track at our year-round schools to be shortened by one week.

The impacts on high school graduations are being reviewed now with our site administrators, student representatives and PTAs. There are no plans at this time to change the announced graduation dates but there will be further information available by Dec. 30 on our district website on how graduation activities may be impacted by the shortened school year.

Superintendent's Report to the Board

At Wednesday's Board of Trustees meeting, I made my first Superintendent's Report as your new superintendent and outlined the direction I have received from trustees for my seven-month term here:

- Balance the budget and have a fiscally sound school district by June
- Focus on strengthening the instructional program
- Work as a team with the Board of Trustees
- Promote open and honest communication

My first official day was Dec. 1, and I've been meeting lots of our staff, parents and community members. I appreciate the spirit of problem-solving in our school district, and vow to keep the lines of communication open.

As evidence of that new commitment to improved communication, I am forming a Parent Advisory Committee of two parents from each school that will begin meeting in January. Notes of my Cabinet meetings also are being emailed to the Board of Trustees and District Leadership Team and shared with stakeholders in an effort to further open the lines of communication.

I don't want the Education Center to be seen as a fortress but rather as a place of open doors and open ideas.

Budget Recovery Plan/community forums

The second of two community budget forums will be held Wednesday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Inderkum High School to share with our staff and community our plans for solving our budget crisis. Our first forum was held last Saturday at Natomas High and was quite well-received by our staff and parents.

The PowerPoint for those forums and a Frequently Asked Questions budget information sheets have been posted on the district website at www.natomas.k12.ca.us, along with a comment section you can use. Here is the latest on our

budget:

- Trustees in November approved a 2009-10 budget that calls for \$5.4 million in deficit spending. Trustees on Wednesday approved a 2009-10 First Interim Budget Report that is in “negative certification” status because it is not in balance.
- A multi-year Budget Recovery Plan will be brought to the board in January that addresses a potential cumulative budget gap of \$19.7 million by 2012-13.
- In our latest round of reductions made in September, a \$5 million package of cuts was approved for 2010-11 that calls for more increases in class sizes; elimination of many counseling, administrative and classified support positions; more reductions in spending for athletics; and elimination of all non-special education busing.
- The goal of the Budget Recovery Plan is to make more cuts from Central Administration, promote academic excellence, potentially restore cut counseling and vice principal positions and restore trust with our community.
- The NTA ratification of 11 furlough days over two years will help our budget bottom line by \$2.2 million. The CSEA contract concessions are saving us \$1.3 million and the management concessions are saving \$519,000. Our total savings from employee concessions now totals \$4 million over two years.

In other matters, trustees:

- Elected Board officers for 2009-10, selecting B. Teri Burns to serve a second consecutive term as Board President and Dr. Susan Heredia to serve a second consecutive term as vice president. The new Board Clerk is Jules Tran.
- Approved in concept the addition of three requirements for prequalification of general contractors for NUSD projects: use of registered apprentices from specified programs; provision of medical insurance to contractor employees; and preference for employment of local firms and employees.
- Set Jan. 19 for interviewing executive search firms who will conduct the nationwide search for a permanent superintendent.
- Approved the adoption of Elementary School Closure Evaluation Criteria as presented by the Elementary School Closure Criteria Committee. Trustees are scheduled to decide by March which elementary school will be closed in 2010-11 as part of the budget-cutting process.
- Under “Celebrations,” accepted a \$3,000 donation from Wells Fargo Bank to Bannon Creek Elementary and Natomas Middle schools.
- Under “Communications,” acknowledged parent Sachiko Konatsu of the Leroy F. Greene Middle PTA for her award of certificates of appreciation to administrators Howard Kornblum and Ken Whittemore and trustees Jules Tran and Bruce Roberts for their recent assistance with a Thanksgiving dinner for parents at the school.

What’s ahead

- **Dec. 16**, Community Budget Forum, Inderkum High School, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- **Dec. 17**, Open House for future Fire Station No. 43, 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Witter Ranch Elementary
- **Jan. 9**, North Natomas Library Grand Opening/Open House, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., 4660 Via Ingoglia.
- **Jan. 12**, Board of Trustees special meeting on budget, 6 p.m. at the Education Center.
- **Jan. 13**, Board of Trustees regular meeting, 6:30 p.m. at the Education Center.
- **Jan. 19**, Board of Trustees workshop, 6 p.m. at the Education Center.
- **Jan. 27**, Board of Trustees workshop and adoption of Budget Recovery Plan, 6 p.m. at the Education Center.

The District Update is produced by the Natomas Unified School District Public Information Office. Contact Public Information Officer Heidi Van Zant at hvanzant@natomas.k12.ca.us or at 561.5253.