



In the heart of the Redwoods

SPRING 2016-17

School News

Southern Humboldt Unified School District
Newsletter from Superintendent Catherine Scott



Catherine Scott

State Budgets Make It Tough To Maintain Programs

SHUSD WILL CONTINUE TO FIGHT FOR OUR STUDENTS

When you watch the news and hear that the governor has earmarked millions of dollars for education, it sounds great. The problem is that sound bites rarely tell the whole story.

A new funding formula was implemented in California in recent years and it penalizes small schools like ours. We must deal with the same challenges as many poor inner-city districts, but the state looks at the number of students we have compared to the number in Los Angeles, for example, and the money goes there and not here.

Unfortunately, this year things look even worse for education. Statewide increases in teacher and staff pension funds will likely exceed the amount of increased State funding school districts will receive. For the 2017-2018 fiscal year, SHUSD will receive \$185,000 less in Local Control Funding Formula monies because

of lowered attendance and fewer students signing up for free and reduced lunches. The increase to retirement (STRS and PERS) for SHUSD is \$137,000. Add that to our \$218,000 structural deficit and we come up with more than a half million dollar deficit for next year. If the State does not provide additional funding to address this deficit, our financial reserve will be depleted in a few years.

Another challenge is our “Necessary Small Schools” that are funded differently than larger schools. Small school funding is based on tiers with arbitrary attendance-level cut offs. The difference between these tiers amounts to approximately \$150,000, which means one missed day of attendance by one student can cost the district \$150,000. Because attendance has dropped in recent years, we have less money and therefore fewer teachers. It’s all about doing more with less.

I’m all for increased efficiency, but there are limits to what one human being can do and our teachers and staff are reaching (if not beyond) that limit.

While we need to change some things in education, I do not support the voucher system recommended by Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. It would gut public education, making the rich richer and the poor poorer.

When American children receive a public education, they are introduced to American values and taught to value our democracy. When children are exposed to classmates who do not think or believe or look as they do, they are often forced to find common ground, which is a vital skill. So while I am frustrated by this lack of funding, I will keep fighting because our kids deserve the key to unlocking their amazing futures: a good education.

GET IN TOUCH! Call me at (707) 943-1789 or email me at cscott@sohumusd.com. For information about your child’s school, visit us online at apps.humboldt.k12.ca.us/sohumwp and click on Schools

ALL STUDENTS WILL HAVE A SAFE, CLEAN LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Maintenance and Custodial Staff Help Keep Schools Safe and Clean

I am happy to report that we are able to fund two full-time maintenance employees who keep old equipment working far beyond expected expiration dates. For example, our schools are operating with old boilers that need to be replaced, but as you can imagine, new ones are terribly expensive. So when the boilers go down (typically on the coldest days of the year), our maintenance workers use the resources they have--skill, experience, tools, and sometimes a little luck--to get things up and running again.

The good news is that we plan to replace the high school boiler when we finish renovating the gym and music facilities in the coming months. We plan to replace Redway Elementary's boiler during the school's renovation this summer, and we have funding through Proposition 39 to replace Agnes Johnson Elementary's boiler within the year. That only leaves Whitethorn and Casterlin, which we're trying to figure out next.

While our maintenance crew keeps equipment safe, our custodial crew keeps schools clean. We currently have an opening for a full-time custodian. If you or someone you know is interested, please call us at (707) 943-1789.

WE SUPPORT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS

SHUSD Paid for All Sophomores to Take the PSAT

The Pre-Standardized Aptitude Test (PSAT) is a practice test for the Standardized Aptitude Test (SAT) college entry exam. SHUSD paid for the entire sophomore class to take the exam and made time during regular school hours so all students had the opportunity to do so. This experience familiarizes students with the material as well as experience of taking this type of test: having to provide identification information, adhering to strict guidelines and timelines, and accessing scores online. Now the students will have a better sense of what to expect when it's time to take the SAT. Plus, their PSAT scores will help them understand their strengths and weaknesses, and allow them learn from mistakes. Overall, results indicate a continuing need to focus on math. Big thanks to teachers who proctored the exam.

WE INVITE PARENTS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO PARTICIPATE IN DECISION MAKING

Positive Feedback Helps Hardworking Teachers and Staff

When many of us see problems, we feel the need to do something about them--we share them either because we're frustrated or because we want to bring about a positive change (or both). When we see good work being done, we don't feel an urgent need to share it. If things are going well, there's no pressing reason talk about it, right? Wrong! I'm here to ask you to share good news out loud: if you see a teacher, administrator, or other staff member doing good work, please mention it. Tell them you appreciate them. Write a note to their principal or supervisor and give a detailed description of the good work you witnessed. Most of us at SHUSD are here because we love kids and we believe in education. However, the challenges we face can be daunting, and sometimes we need to be reminded that our work is making a difference.

If you are the type of person that likes to give feedback, good or bad, please consider serving on the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) Parent Advisory Committee. For details, contact me at (707) 943-1789 or via email me at cscott@sohumusd.com.

DATES	June 9	Miranda Junior High 8th Grade Graduation at 7:00 pm with dance to follow	June 15	Agnes J. Johnson 6th Grade Promotion at 11:00 am
	June 14	Redway 6th Grade Promotion at 5:00 pm	June 15	Whitethorn End-of-Year Awards Ceremony at 11:00 am
	June 14	Casterlin 8th Grade Graduation at 7:00 pm	June 16	South Fork High School Graduation at 7:00 pm on the field