



# SCHOOL BELL



## SHOWING KINDNESS

In January, every school participated in the #GreatKindnessChallenge, modeling kindness to all... Page 4

### Honoring Board President Janice Hector



Last December, the district honored retiring Board President Janice Hector for her 27 years of service to Union School District. Her immeasurable impact can be felt across the district, by students, by teachers and by the community. Her thoughtful leadership has shaped Union School District into a guiding force in the lives of thousands upon thousands of children.

During her service as a Board Member and as Board President, Janice oversaw countless initiatives, addressed difficult challenges facing the district, and always advocated for student success and well-being. Under her leadership, the Board of Trustees accomplished a great deal: supporting instruction and technology goals, ensuring fiscal accountability, and inspiring a culture of innovation that defines Union School District.

We thank Janice for her tireless service and for the impact her strong leadership and dedication has had on every student and every teacher.

### From the Superintendent



We recently passed the 100th day of school, marking the great accomplishments of the school year so far. We still have a few more months until the last day of school, and each of those months are full of important learning and exciting events.

I'd like to highlight our upcoming STEAM nights at each of our elementary school sites. These events are open to the community, so please join us for fun and hands-on STEAM activities. Information is available on the unionsd.org website.

## INSIDE

P1

Honoring Janice Hector

P2

Facing the Challenges of Inadequate State Funding

P3

Understanding the Local Control Funding Formula

P4

Celebrating Our Great Kindness Challenge

P6

Construction Update

## Facing the Challenges of Inadequate State Funding

School districts across Santa Clara County and the state of California are facing a challenging problem: rising costs of salaries, benefits, and retirement pensions while state funding lags severely behind. Districts are responding in different ways including reducing staff, closing schools, and eliminating programs. While Union School District continues to fund programs and has increased staff compensation, the district is projected to deficit spend in the 2017-2018 school year and subsequent years.

We have made the right investments in our staff by increasing salaries and our employer contributions to benefits and pensions.

Almost 82% of our budget is dedicated to personnel with 3% dedicated to books and supplies and approximately 13% to operating costs.

**Many school boards across the state are calling for full and fair funding for California public schools by state lawmakers.**

While Governor Brown's January budget proposal continues his commitment to the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and provides an increase in education funding, it does not address the significant underfunding of public schools in the state. In 2016, a California School Boards Association (CSBA) report, *California's Challenge: Adequately Funding Education in the 21st Century*, estimated an additional \$22 billion to \$40 billion annually would be required to provide all public school students with access to a high-quality education.

Union School District is one of the lowest state funded school districts in Santa Clara County.

The local control funding formula is based on "unduplicated students," students who are on Free and Reduced Lunch, English Language Learners, and Foster Youth. Because Union School District has a lower percentage of unduplicated students, increases in the Local Control Funding Formula are minimal. When looking at other school districts in the region, including those that are Basic Aid Districts (when a district's revenue from local property taxes exceeds what they would receive under the LCFF), Union receives approximately \$7,556 per student compared to a neighboring district that receives \$18,852.

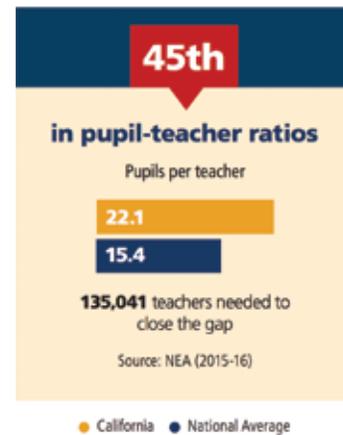
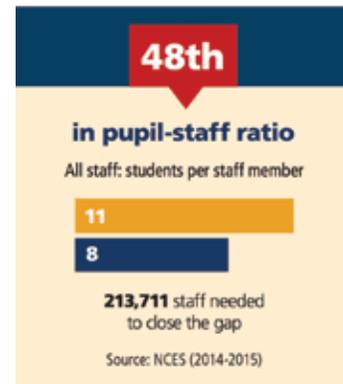
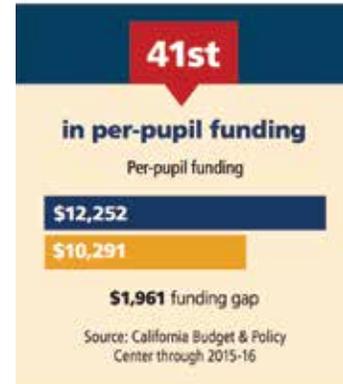
We are fortunate to have reserves that we are strategically using to fund our deficit spending, but we will have to align expenditures with revenues to remain fiscally solvent. Also, the state requires districts to maintain a 3% reserve, though this would only cover approximately two weeks of the district's salaries.

State budget negotiations will be ongoing in the Legislature throughout the spring, leading up to the May budget revision, which will be released on or before May 15. The Legislature will then have until June 15 to send the final agreed upon budget to Governor Brown, who will have until July 1 to sign it. Union School District will carefully monitor the State budget, work with the community to keep the district fiscally sound, and provide our students with a world-class education.

A CSBA resolution urging lawmakers to fully fund California schools was discussed by the Union School District Board of Trustees. The resolution is on the agenda for approval at the scheduled March Board Meeting.

## California Public School Funding

California ranks 45th nationally in the percentage of taxable income spent on education.



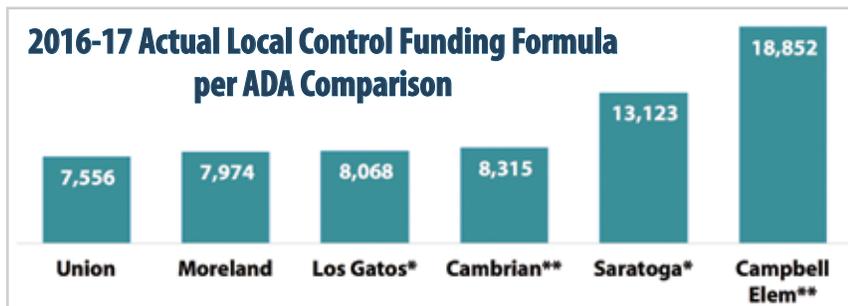
The problems with California's school funding levels are compounded by the high level of student need in the state.



## Understanding the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)

The advent of the state's LCFF funding mechanism for school districts and rising retirement costs have presented funding challenges for our district, ultimately creating the need for strategic spending and collaborative forecasting with employees and our community. Challenges include:

- Union School District is one of the lowest state funded school districts in Santa Clara County.
- School Districts like Union School District are funded by the state through what is called the "Local Control Funding Formula" (LCFF). LCFF funding is based largely on the number of "unduplicated" students, consisting of students receiving Free and Reduced Lunch benefits, English Language Learners and Foster Youth. Our District has a lower percentage of these students as compared to other regional districts. Some districts are "Basic Aid" districts, which means that their revenue from local property taxes exceeds what they would receive under the LCFF. Unfortunately, our District is not eligible for Basic Aid status and funding.



Source: CA Dept. of Education, 2016-17 P2 LCFF Snapshot (exclusive of charter schools)

\*Basic Aid District

\*\*Only District non-charter schools represented

- While districts will be "fully funded" under the new state LCFF model in 2018-2019, our district will still not achieve 2007-2008 state funding levels due to LCFF funding requirements and increased employee retirement costs passed down by the state to local school districts.
- School districts are not receiving additional resources to cover rising retirement costs. For example, the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) requires that districts pay 14.43% of each certificated staff member's salary to CalSTRS. This number has been going up rapidly and is projected to be 19.1% in the year 2020. Additionally, the CalPERS contribution rate has also increased and is projected to be 23.8% in the year 2020.
- For the 2017-18 school year, a cost increase of 1% of District salaries equals the addition of a \$400,000 expense to the budget. This cost increases annually due to retirement costs and other collective bargaining factors.
- Fortunately, and as a result of careful planning by the District to seek innovative means to generate revenue, each year the district receives lease revenue from district sites which is entirely spent each school year on current-year expenses.
- In order to cover the district's expenses each year, the district requires additional revenue and is projected to deficit spend in the 2017-2018 school year and subsequent years.
- The state requires the District to maintain 3% in reserves. However, the value of a 3% reserve would cover district expenses for approximately 2 weeks.

The vision and commitment of our district and community have catapulted these challenges and ongoing investments into areas of focus.



Visit our website at  
[www.unionsd.org](http://www.unionsd.org)



Follow us  
@USDUpdates



Like us on [facebook.com/UnionSchoolDistrict](https://www.facebook.com/UnionSchoolDistrict)

# Celebrating Our Great Kindness Challenge

## Spreading Kindness Across Union School District

Students at **Alta Vista Elementary** embraced the challenge to learn about and show kindness to others. Many students did acts of kindness for Alta Vista's custodian Mr. Manny, taking time to show him how much students and staff appreciate everything he does. Students also created and hung signs of positivity all around campus. Several classes did art and writing lessons exploring what kindness means to each person and how every individual can make a difference in others' lives by helping each other.

Every morning during the week at **Carlton Avenue School**, Expect Respect leaders welcomed students and parents with posters that had positive messages such as "I'm glad you're here." Kindness quotes were placed all around the campus to remind everyone to be kind. Students also completed kindness checklists to challenge themselves to do as many acts of kindness as they could, reflecting with their classmates at the end of the day. Students in fourth and fifth grade took their acts of kindness to a global level, with fourth grade collecting eyeglasses for people in need and fifth grade starting a collection drive for soccer shoes for children in Tanzania. The joy students felt during the week will surely motivate them to continue the acts of kindness for the rest of their lives.

Acts of kindness and goodwill were plentiful at **Dartmouth Middle** during Kindness Week. Students, staff, and the school community came together to showcase their Eagle Spirit by offering one another kind gestures. The amazing fire fighters at Fire Station 17 received baked treats and lots of cheers from students and parents while over thirty staff members ate lunch with students during our "No One Eats Alone" day. To cap off the festivities, the Dartmouth Choir and Band gave impromptu performances to unsuspecting staff members to help spread the joy. Anna Coursey received a touching singing telegram in her cafeteria kitchen and was overheard saying, "I couldn't hold back the tears. That was exactly what I needed!"

Students at **Guadalupe Elementary** celebrated The Great Kindness Challenge by participating in a wide variety of projects that shared their love for family, friends, folks in need, and the world. Kindergarten students kept track of their efforts on a hundred hearts, tying their good deeds to the hundredth day of school. Second graders made cards for the California Highway Patrol, 4th graders made dog tags for the Humane Society, and 5th graders wrote letters to "under appreciated adults" in their lives. Principal Dale Jones remarked that these and many other activities across the school helped students to focus outward, recognizing that so much is provided for them, and when they return that in acts of kindness it not only strengthens them, but also their families, friends, and the community.



## Celebrating Our Great Kindness Challenge... *(continued from page 4)*

The Great Kindness Challenge was a hit at **Lietz Elementary**. Kicking off the week, students, staff and other volunteers welcomed everyone walking onto campus with kind message posters bringing unexpected smiles to the faces of students and parents first thing in the morning. Throughout the week, the campus was flooded with acts of kindness, which included contributing to a sock drive, writing kind notes to others, spreading positive messages throughout the school, and special guests reading books on kindness to students. Everyone on campus came together at the end of the week to take an all-school picture to celebrate the wonderful acts of kindness given and received.

At **Noddin Elementary**, kindness was practiced at every grade level by every student. Primary students demonstrated kindness by reading books, sending notes and lending a helping hand. Upper grade students also sent notes to their peers and modeled kindness with their little buddies. Students felt inspired to continue their kindness beyond the week-long challenge. Miss Micciche said "kindness shouldn't just be something we talk about for a week, it should be reflected in our daily lives." The activities and acts of kindness Noddin students participated in during the challenge are sure to continue through the rest of the year and have an impact on the rest of their lives.

During the Great Kindness week at **Oster Elementary**, so many acts of kindness stood out. A teacher took over a colleague's yard duty because her friend had just returned back from a bad case of the flu. A second grade class wrote "thank you" letters to our local firefighters at Station #9. Mrs. Wooster, the READ 180 teacher, shared the following which expresses the meaning of kindness perfectly, "Kindness is turning caring thoughts and consideration for others into daily actions. When we treat others kindly, we empower and support our class communities, and give ourselves a tremendous gift...the gift of aligning our hearts and minds for our own betterment and personal growth. Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose!"



“Kindness is turning caring thoughts and consideration for others into daily actions. When we treat others kindly, we empower and support our class communities, and give ourselves a tremendous gift...”

As part of a unit on happiness (which students did in both their ELA8 and math classes), **Union Middle** school staff prepared and then read articles about how acts of kindness actually make us happier. Students tested this out, doing a bingo board with some kind options like having a friendly conversation with a sixth grader you don't know, leaving a positive post-it note for an acquaintance, and packing a lunch for someone in your family. Union students wrote reflections on how these decisions made them feel and used these thoughts as part of their how-to-be-happy infographics.

# News from Union School District

Non Profit Org  
US Postage  
PAID  
Oakland, CA  
Permit No. 810

Union School District  
5175 Union Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95124-5434



## Construction Update

Thanks to the support of the community for Measure J, the first half of the 2017-2018 school year saw the completion and continuation of several construction and school improvement projects.

### Completed Fall 2017

- Elementary Makerspaces (Noddin and Guadalupe)
- Solar Panels (Carlton, Dartmouth, Lietz, Noddin, Guadalupe, Oster & Union)
- Backpack Hooks (Carlton, Noddin, and Oster)
- Classroom Audio (Speakers and Student/Teacher Microphones at all schools)
- Outdoor Wireless (All schools)
- Security Cameras (Noddin)

### In Progress/Scheduled Projects

- Track (Union Middle)
- Elementary Makerspace (Carlton)
- Entryways (Carlton, Guadalupe, Lietz, Noddin, and Oster)
- Shade Structures (Carlton and Noddin)
- Fire Alarms (Alta Vista, Carlton, Lietz, Noddin, and Oster)
- Security Cameras (Remaining Sites)
- Media Center Modifications (Alta Vista, Carlton, Lietz, and Oster)

## Parcel Tax Information

Union School District greatly appreciates the community support that successfully passed Measure B.

For homeowners, there is an optional parcel tax exemption available for senior citizens, recipients of Supplemental Security Income for a disability, recipients of Social Security Disability Insurance benefits and for contiguous parcels. Parcel tax exemption applications are currently being accepted for the 2018-2019 property tax year. If you received a parcel tax exemption for the 2017-2018 property tax year, you will be automatically renewed for the remainder of the parcel tax term ending in 2026.

For additional information regarding parcel tax exemptions, please either: check our website at [www.unionsd.org](http://www.unionsd.org), call (408) 377-8010 ext. 44202 or email: [parceltax@unionsd.org](mailto:parceltax@unionsd.org).

## Important Dates Spring/Summer 2018

**March 8-16**

Elementary Conferences  
(Early Dismissal TK-5)

**March 12**

School Board Meeting

**March 23**

Staff Development Day  
(No School for Students)

**April 4**

Middle School Open House

**April 9-13**

Spring Break (No School)

**April 23**

School Board Meeting

**May 14**

School Board Meeting

**May 16**

Elementary Open House

**May 28**

Memorial Day Holiday  
(No School)

**June 4**

School Board Meeting

**June 7**

Last Day of School

The Union School District's eight schools serve more than 5,800 Pre-K to Grade 8 students.

### Board of Trustees

Sheila Billings  
Vickie Brown  
Doug Evans  
Jennifer Petroff  
Thomas E. Rossmeissl

### Superintendent

Denise Clay

SCHOOL BELL  
is produced  
by the Union School  
District as a service to the  
community.

If you have a question  
or topic you would like  
addressed, feel free to  
contact us at:  
5175 Union Ave.  
San Jose, CA  
95124  
(408) 377-8010  
[www.unionsd.org](http://www.unionsd.org)

