



# SCHOOL BELL



## SOLAR ECLIPSE

On August 21, students, teachers, and staff put on their eclipse glasses and experienced a phenomenon together... Page 2

### From the Superintendent

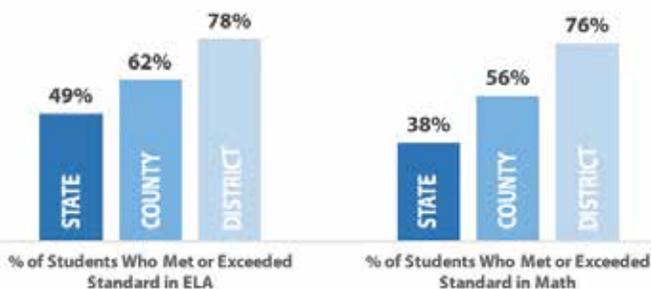


We hope everyone had a wonderful summer break with friends and family and are excited as we begin our adventure together this year. Our teachers, classified staff and administrators have worked hard to prepare our classrooms to welcome students, and already, after only the first two months of school, we have seen the innovative results of that hard work.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the staff of Union School District, I wish our community, parents, students and staff a successful start to the 2017-2018 school year.

### CA Assessment of Student Performance & Progress

2017 CAASPP State/County/District Comparison



Recently released 2016-2017 CAASPP results show Union School District continuing a strong academic performance in both English Language Arts and Mathematics... Page 2

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## Experiencing the Eclipse

On August 21, teachers, students and staff had an opportunity to start off the school year with excitement as we all observed the partial solar eclipse with the nation. Teachers recognized the incredible learning experience that this rare astronomical event presented and planned a multitude of eclipse-related activities in every grade level and subject. We saw creative art projects and installations, scientific predictions and experiments about the path of the eclipse, and interactive sessions with scientists.

All of the learning and preparation culminated in everyone stepping outside on Monday morning, in clear weather and eclipse glasses in hand, and observing with awe the amazing phenomenon of the eclipse. Staff and students are still talking about this amazing day.

*Cover photo by John Funk, Union Middle School*

*Photo on right by Heather Haggerty*



## Union School District Continues Strong Academic Performance

In the 2016-2017 school year, students across California participated in the third operational year of the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). At the end of September, the California Department of Education released the results to the public.

The CAASPP Assessment:

- Is aligned with California's updated content standards for English Language Arts and mathematics.
- Reflects the critical thinking and problem solving skills that students will need to be ready for college and the 21st century job market.
- Is taken on chromebooks and is adaptive (the questions adjust as the student progresses through the assessment, becoming more or less difficult based on student performance).
- Provides many additional supports for students who need them, including for students learning English and students with disabilities.
- Results can be found on the CDE website at [caaspp.cde.ca.gov](http://caaspp.cde.ca.gov).

Union School District students continue to outperform their peers in Santa Clara County and the State of California. The district has maintained a very high rate of 78% of students meeting or exceeding standards in English Language Arts and increased the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards in Mathematics to 76%.



### Teacher of the Year 2016-17 Megan Mullaly

This dynamic 6th grade teacher from Dartmouth Middle School masterfully creates a learning environment where students eagerly take academic and interpersonal risks. The payoff is a constant flow of vibrant collaboration, complex thinking, and vivid creativity. Her humanities and video journalism classes showcase 21st Century Learning at its best. Technology seamlessly infuses extended opportunities for student engagement and expression. Their experiences are richly and proudly documented through interactive and reflective communication. Megan's loving and dedicated efforts as a teacher provide her students with invaluable skills for higher learning and beyond. Congratulations Megan!



### Classified Employee of the Year 2016-17 Nancy Durrett

Nancy Durrett, Administrative Assistant at Dartmouth Middle School is the district's Classified Employee of the Year. When asking students what they like most about Mrs. Durrett, students say, "she always helps me"; "she is nice and always smiles" and "if I forget my lunch money, she will make sure I get a lunch". As is evident by these statements, Mrs. Durrett is kind, friendly, and loves students. Staff and parents appreciate her sense of humor, her willingness to listen and most of all her ability to help their children. Congratulations Nancy!



## Welcome New Certificated Employees

**First row left to right:** Carol Zafiroopoulos, UMS 6-8; Julianna Ferguson, Oster 4th; Melissa Grant, Oster 4th; Brandon Baza, Noddin K; Yolanda Puga, BCBA.

**Second row left to right:** Jeena Kim, Guadalupe SLP; Amy Lee, School Psychologist; Charity Bolanos, Carlton Reading Intervention Support; Ashleigh Brendlen, Guadalupe SDC; Alyssa Micciche, Noddin 4th; Katherine Barbin, Lietz 2nd; Mikayla Schott, Alta Vista 4th; Malavi Murthy, School Psychologist; Alana McKee, UMS 6-8.

**Third row left to right:** Jennifer Catuna, Carlton 4th; Cameron Rodriguez, DMS SDC; Taylor Maia, Noddin 2nd; Elizabeth Plane, Alta Vista 2nd; Megan Ostiller, Guadalupe SDC; Brandon Wallace, Noddin 5th; Christie Allen, Lietz 4th; Andrea Kippes, Guadalupe SLP; Emma Polden, Noddin 5th; Leslie Sherrett, UMS 6-8.

**Not Pictured:** Kari Hansen, Alta Vista RSP Teacher; Tanya Nefdt, Alta Vista 1st; Celeste Llovera, Carlton 2nd; Shannon Tavernier, Carlton TK; Joulyana Khamis, DMS 6th; Robynne Bump, BCBA; Denise Shenefiel, Guadalupe 5th; Mary Martin, UMS 8th; Rama Nemani, UMS 6-8; Jennifer Norton, UMS 6-8.



## New Administrative Roles & Assignments

**From left to right:** Sandya Lopez, Principal, Lietz; Kate Adams, Program Specialist; Larry Thomas, Principal, Alta Vista; Genevieve Pacada, Program Specialist; Heather Haggerty, Director, Information & Instructional Technology; Joe Ayala, Director of Operations; Lauren van Herk, Communications & Data Support Supervisor; Michael Stock, Coordinator, Learning & Innovation; Steve Burrell, Director, Human Resources.

**Not Pictured:** Mary Katayama, Principal, Carlton; Danielle Metz, Administrator on Special Assignment.

# Union School District: Priorities & Spending

At our very core, all of us at Union School District believe in the mission of enriching our community through learning. We are dedicated to children: to involve the community, to anticipate challenges; to take advantage of opportunities; and to guarantee vital skills for all our children to pursue lifelong learning and become productive citizens.

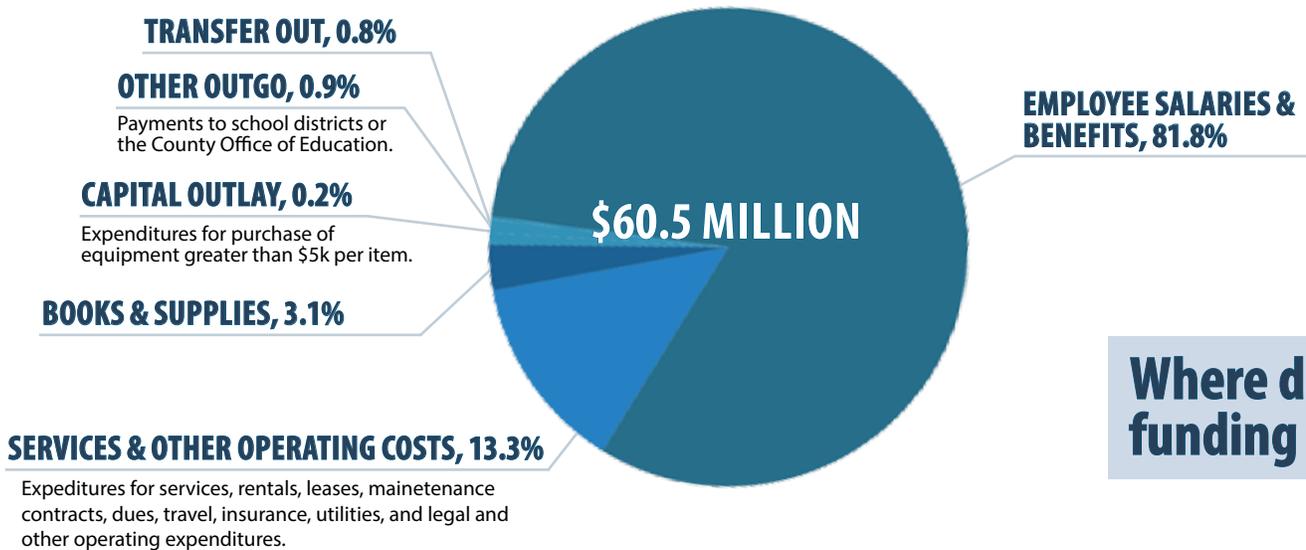
The following overview provides an inside look into the District’s key areas of focus and metrics. For us, a mission is only worthwhile if we carry it out. Here’s a look at our mission in action through numbers and success stories.

## At a Glance

**8**  
SCHOOLS

**5,808**  
STUDENTS

**307** CERTIFICATED STAFF  
**168** CLASSIFIED STAFF  
**25** MANAGEMENT/SUPERVISORY



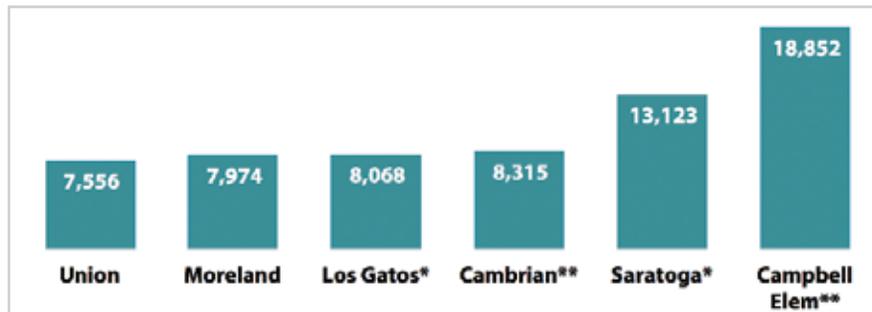
The **Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)** outlines the district’s plan to reach academic growth targets for specific student sub-groups and describes how the district plans to expend funds in order to reach these goals. An important part of the process for creating the LCAP includes input from teachers, principals, school personnel, students, bargaining units, parents and district advisory committees. Largely due to this shared collaboration, a few examples of success stories include:

-  In 2016-17, 100% of parents surveyed on the district’s spring parent survey indicated that they are happy with home to school communication and feel welcome at their children’s schools.
-  Performance levels of district students overall on state assessment indicators on the California Dashboard increased between 2014-15 and 2015-16 and recorded a “very high” status.
-  100% of certificated staff hired by Union School District are highly qualified according to state and federal requirements based on a review of teacher assignments and credentials.
-  100% of our students have access to a mobile, Internet-connected device.

## 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 and receive funding directly from local property tax revenues. 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 school represented

- When districts are "fully funded" under the new state LCFF model in approximately 2020-2021, 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.
- A cost increase of 1% of District salaries equals the addition of a \$400,000 expense to the budget.
- 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 deficit spending approximately \$2 million. Based upon current expense projections, the fund that is covering this deficit spending is anticipated to be depleted in approximately six years unless the District generates additional revenue and reduces expenditures.
- 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.



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San Jose, CA 95124-5434



## Thank You

The points below highlight some of the district's major educational investments designed to support teachers and staff, and ultimately, our students. For the 2016-2017 school year, we:

**INCREASED** the District's contribution to teacher and classified benefits by \$3,300 - \$4,000. As a result, the District now contributes on behalf of each employee UP TO \$20,400 each year toward the cost of family medical coverage.

**ADDED** a 28th step to the teachers' 2016-17 salary schedule. Now, teachers with the most experience in the District receive an annual salary of \$103,500.

**INCREASED** each teacher's salary by \$7,166 to retain and attract highly qualified teachers.

**INCREASED** the salaries of all classified employees by 9.5% in order to retain and attract our talented pool of support staff.

**RESTORED** our commitment to supporting new teachers through the Silicon Valley New Teacher Project and three Teachers on Special Assignment.

Our core commitment has always been to meet and exceed all obligations, including providing excellent student opportunities and support our employees in a variety of ways. The success and well-being of Union School District hinges greatly on the involvement and shared vision of our district leaders, teachers, staff, parents, community members and students. We thank you for your continued trust and commitment, and we look forward to furthering our mission and another rewarding year together.

## 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 Fall/Winter 2017

**November 9**  
Staff Development Day  
(No School for Students)

**November 10**  
Veteran's Day Observed  
(No School)

**November 13**  
School Board Meeting

**November 20-24**  
Thanksgiving Break (No School)

**December 11**  
School Board Meeting

**December 25-January 5**  
Winter Break (No School)

**January 8**  
School Resumes

**January 15**  
Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday  
(No School)

**January 22**  
School Board Meeting

**February 12**  
School Board Meeting

**February 19-23**  
President's Week (No School)

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

**Board of Trustees**  
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Jennifer Petroff  
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**Superintendent**  
Denise Clay

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District as a service to the  
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