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Superintendent's Newsletter

October 2017

Dr. Michael D. Matthews, Superintendent

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We Are Stronger Together

The last month has been nothing less than mercurial. I have rarely seen such highs for our district, and we have never faced such challenges. The last month began with the success of the Aid Cleveland Now campaign. This was a campaign that went beyond all of our wildest wishes. It was a powerful example of what we can accomplish together. We have challenged other districts to do the same when communities are in need, and yesterday I received a phone call from a district in northern California wishing to help districts being ravaged by the fires. It's nice when our good will can spread.

Thank you also for gathering together at the vigil at the Manhattan Beach Pier last week to show solidarity, sympathy, and strength in the wake of the tragic events in Las Vegas. So many others have reached out in a variety of ways. I know that we powerfully and meaningfully honored the lives of Sandy Casey and of Rachael Parker and that we are also working hard to support all those who are grieving their losses. There is still a lot of pain in our community, but together we have shown how much we care.



For a list of resources available to you, click [here](#).

TEDxMB

TED^x ManhattanBeach
x = independently organized TED event



I am looking forward once again to attending the Manhattan Beach TEDx event on November 4. This is always an amazing event with powerful local and outside speakers. I love how people come together, learn together, and discourse together about all of the ideas that are being presented. I hope to see many of you there. For more information, click [here](#).

Achievement in MBUSD

This month, the state finally released the test scores from last spring's state testing. Manhattan Beach scores showed strong, steady improvement. I am most proud of the fact that our secondary math scores continue to improve. To see more details, you can see the [press release](#) we provided.

I am also incredibly proud of our progress with students taking Advanced Placement tests. In 2010 48% of our graduating seniors had passed at least one AP test during their time at Mira Costa. In the class of 2017, this number rose to 64.5%. That is great progress.

Here are my two strong opinions about Advanced Placement tests.

1. Every student planning to go to a 4-year college should take at least one AP course during their junior or senior year at Mira Costa. It exposes students to the rigor of college, and it gives them confidence.
2. Students should not take too many AP courses. In my opinion, students should not take more than three AP classes in one year. Research shows that there is no gain in performance in college after taking 5 AP classes during a high school career.

So yes, take one, but as with all good things, exercise moderation.

Congratulations to our teachers and our students for the spectacular increase in the numbers of students taking and passing Advanced Placement tests!

SBAC ELA/Literacy: 2-year Trend

	2015	2016	2017	2-year Change
Grade 3	84%	86%	83%	-1%
Grade 4	87%	88%	85%	-2%
Grade 5	84%	86%	88%	+4%
Grade 6	78%	82%	81%	+3%
Grade 7	76%	83%	86%	+10%
Grade 8	80%	78%	80%	0%
Grade 11	75%	74%	86%	+11%
Overall	81%	82%	84%	+3%

PARCEL TAX FUNDING

	Annual Parcel Tax Amount	Annual Parcel Tax Revenue	% of District Budget
LA CAÑADA	\$450	\$2,700,000	6%
MANHATTAN BEACH	\$0	\$0	0%
PALO ALTO	\$758	\$15,000,000	7%
PALOS VERDES	\$374	\$7,501,869	7%
PIEDMONT	\$2,406	\$9,600,000	25%
SAN MARINO	\$1,195	\$5,565,219	14%
SANTA MONICA-MALIBU	\$336	\$11,800,000	8%

Parcel Tax Potential

We have had two board discussions now about a possible parcel tax election in the near future. If you have looked at our adopted budget, you know that the state funding increases are grinding to a halt, while expenses continue to rise with inflation. While we had a small deficit last year, our deficit this year is projected to be larger, and our deficits in 2018-19 and 2019-20 are predicted to be over \$5 million. That is not sustainable. I strongly encourage you to learn more about how

we are funded and why these budget problems are coming. You can read the [Easy Reader article](#) or see the [presentation](#) by Farnaz Flechner of MBEF at our September 19 Board meeting.

Technology in MBUSD

In 2010, our district was a district with minimal technology, and what technology we had simply could not be counted upon. In 2017, we have a robust technology infrastructure, and technology is an everyday part of most of our classrooms. Our Board wants to look at where we stand with technology and where we are going with technology in the future. We are having a workshop to discuss this on Wednesday, October 18, at 4:30 pm. Workshops are settings where there is a great deal of interaction from the public, and the Board gets to hear from our stakeholders as we look to develop our future plans. I strongly encourage you to come and participate in this workshop - and, if you come, please bring your own technology device.



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Thank you for all you do to support our community,

Mike Matthews
MBUSD Superintendent