

Student's forum

Skechers Donates to MBEF



SKECHERS President Michael Greenberg presents checks for funds raised in the recent Pier to Pier Friendship Walk to local school foundations including: MBEF, PEF, HBEF and ESEF. From left: MBEF Susan Warshaw, Executive Director, Rabbi Yossi Mintz, SKECHERS President Michael Greenberg, and MBEF's Nina Patel, VP of Fundraising. Photo provided by Dinah Erasmus.

This Week's Question:

Where are the best local surf spots?

Last Week's Question:

Who is your favorite musician?

Green Day because their lyrics are relatable and Miley Cyrus because she has really upbeat music.

A.W.

Lady Gaga because her image is edgy and one of a kind. She has interesting music videos.

A.W.

Taylor Swift because her lyrics has a message for all of us girls to relate.

D.A.

I like Adam Lambert because he dances and sings at the same time.

L.R.

Send all submissions to students@heraldpublications.com



Education Continues to Take the Brunt Of The Budget Crisis

By Darren Sepanek

The California budget crisis is far from over and the ramification for K-12 education looms ever more uncertain. During strenuous battles over creating the 2009-10 State budget, lawmakers adjusted the voter-approved school-funding guarantee known as Proposition 98 so the State could cut billions of dollars from school funding in order to help balance its books. According to Prop 98, these cuts to school funding must be restored when the economy rebounds. But at what point will we see full restoration?

At a news conference on November 10, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger indicated that the current fiscal year's budget is \$5 billion to \$7 billion in the red. This is on top of the \$7.4 billion deficit projected by his administration for the coming fiscal year. With roughly 40 percent of the State's general revenue fund spent on K-12 education, this is certain to mean that more cuts are coming for education. "I think there will be across-the-board cuts again," said Schwarzenegger at a news conference in San Jose. "We are not going to go and pick and choose between programs. I think that we always have to go and cut across the board."

Per-pupil spending in California ranks

among the lowest in the nation. Although the actual ranking differs slightly depending on the study and the year, the consensus is the same—California spends inadequately on its public K-12 education system. Compounding low levels of funding is the issue that these funds are provided with a litany of regulations, stipulations and limitations.

Let's review where California school funding comes from: (These percentages vary plus/minus one to two percent)

--Roughly 60 percent is from the State General Fund (primarily income, sales, corporate, and capital gains taxes).

--Roughly 23 percent comes from property taxes. The State determines how to allocate them.

--10 percent is from the federal government and is generally only categorical funding (money earmarked for specific purposes).

--One to two percent is from the State lottery.

The remainder comes from miscellaneous sources and varies district to district. These local sources include special taxes, parcel taxes, fees on commercial and residential construction, interest from school district investments, and private donations.

In general, California allocates funds in

two classifications--the "revenue limit" or general funds and categorical funds. The revenue limit was established in the 1971 ruling Serrano vs. Priest and provides equity in funding across districts regardless of their local economic status. Roughly 69 percent of Manhattan Beach Unified School District (MBUSD) revenue comes from the revenue limit (calculated based on a per-pupil amount multiplied by the number of students in attendance each day). Only 15 percent of MBUSD revenue is from categorical aid, which is based on categories of children, such as students with disabilities, low-income families, or programs such as class size reduction (CSR). Some of these programs are voluntary, such as CSR for grades K-3, or mandatory, like Special Education. Other districts may receive a lot more total revenue because they are entitled to higher levels of categorical aid than MBUSD.

A new federal program called Race to the Top may provide cash-strapped states like California with some much-needed assistance in 2010. Although California could receive anywhere from \$350 million to \$700 million in federal grants, it will not come close to alleviating the \$11 billion cut from public education since 2008. California will

also be competing for these Federal dollars with every other state looking to shore up education shortfalls. Even if California were to meet the qualifications to receive any of these funds, they are short-term funds intended to promote education reform. They can not be considered an answer to the K-12 school funding issues in California. And of course, there's nothing to say that MBUSD would receive a dime of these special federal dollars.

Faced with a litany of limitations and constraints, the Manhattan Beach School Board and District administrators have done a commendable job of managing finances during these tough economic times. However, the top-rated education MBUSD provides students would not be possible if not for the unflinching support of the local community in private donations to the Manhattan Beach Education Foundation (MBEF).

With very little local control over school funds, communities tend to disengage from their public schools. But the State imposes almost no limitations over private funds provided to public schools. As the budget crisis at the State level grows more dismal, it becomes more important to support MBEF and bring back some local control over the local school system. •

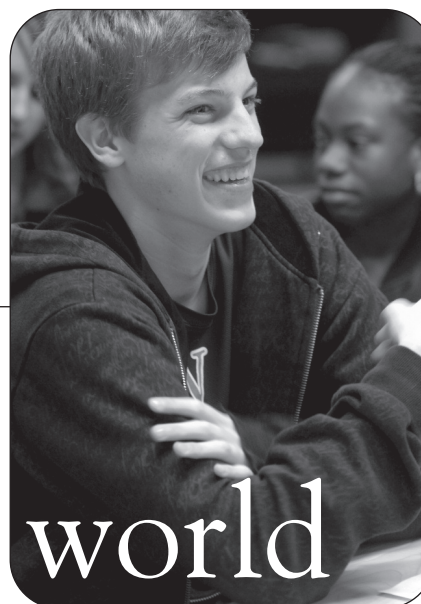
open houses

- Saturday, December 12
10:00am-12:00pm
- Saturday, January 9 (2010)
10:00am-12:00pm
- Thursday, January 21 (2010)
6:30-8:00pm

Reservations requested.
Check in begins 15 minutes prior to program.

ISEE Test Site

At Vistamar School, high school students build a solid foundation of academic skills, along with the historical, ethical and cultural frameworks that lead to a deeper understanding of themselves and the world. In small and interactive classes, students become creative and reflective learners prepared for success in college and life.



be at home in the world



737 Hawaii Street
El Segundo, CA 90245

vistamarschool.org
310.643.7377