



EFO Stands Firmly Behind Orinda Schools

By Gabriele Mozee, Educational Foundation of Orinda

The first EFO meeting of the New Year, held early January at OIS, was a sobering opportunity for school superintendents, principals and board members to express their concerns as to what may happen at the state and federal levels in terms of a budget for education. It's important and reassuring to point out that no matter what happens the only thing that seems to remain unchanged is EFO's commitment to Orinda's schools and excellence. Elections and recessions come and go and so do the politics of education, while EFO continues to fund the daily staff, materials and support needed for all Orinda students to receive one of the best well-rounded educations in the nation under the roof of "free public education."

Acalanes Sup. Jim Negri shared at this meeting that he wasn't sure what the effects of the proposed budget cuts will be for the High School district. Monies promised through Prop. 98 will likely be reduced and he will work closely with parents, employees and the Governing Board so that students and employees are

treated fairly. The harsh reality is that everyone will feel the effects in some way but we won't know the extent until June, leaving us all wondering what is in store for community and students.

At OIS this same day Associate Principals Jeanne Cusack and Ron Langer gave EFO members tours of some of the classes supported by EFO pledges: Drama 1 and 2, where students begin by learning use of space, facial expressions, games, improvisation, pantomime, scripted sketches, speaking and directing. Eventually with experience, they do the above with creativity, confidence and appreciation for dramatic artistry. They advance as they learn how to analyze scenery, sometimes choosing comedy and the opportunity to work with the local CAL Shakespeare Theatre. OIS Drama Teacher Terry Eubanks calls her classes, a "human laboratory."

Ninety (90%) of the library services at OIS are covered by EFO, which pays the salaries of the librarian and assistant. They teach power-point to teachers and students, research techniques,

technology training with document cameras and more. The library is always open and welcoming to students during brunch and lunch.

In all, one thousand (1,000) students at OIS enjoy one or more elective classes funded by EFO. These classes offer the critical advantage to Orinda students in today's challenging educational environment. Through the support of parents and the community, EFO remains one reliable source of financial stability for our schools. As we discovered on our tour, school is an exciting and optimistic place to be as a student in Orinda. EFO is committed to maintaining that optimism.



Orinda Intermediate School students Katie Marino and Kimberly Mendoza enjoy an EFO-funded art class

Photo provided