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AUHSD Facilities Bond Passes Convincingly

By Andrea A. Firth

With 63.9% of voters in support, Measure E—the \$93 million Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) Facilities Bond—convincingly surpassed the 55% threshold for approval. “I was extremely pleased with the results,” reports Cheryl Knoll, a Campolindo parent who helped to spearhead the Measure E campaign. “The people in this community value what I consider is our most important asset—quality schools. I was happy to see that people wanted to continue to invest in our schools for this generation and those to come.”

Although bonds were sold within four months of approving the previous bond measure in 2002, Chris Learned, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services for AUHSD, is not sure that things will move as quickly this time around. “Because of what is going on in the bond market right now, timing will be important,” states Learned.

The District has planned to issue three series of bonds over a six to eight year period. The first series, originally estimated at \$50 million, may be smaller according to Learned. “If we sell bonds by March of next year, some of the work may start in the summer,” he explains. These would be smaller projects that do not require architectural approval by the State, which can take up to eight months. “We are going to be very prudent and careful on how we proceed,” says AUHSD Governing Board member Tom Mulvaney. “We are starting the planning process, and a preliminary project schedule will be presented at the next meeting of the Governing Board on November 19th.”

The District will start recruiting for a citizen’s oversight committee in December and appointments will be made by January. The committee will include a broad range of citizens representative of the community. “The oversight committee is key to the efficient administration of the program,” states Mulvaney. “We are looking for people who can provide a common sense approach to how to administer the funds for these projects.”

Budget Update

On Thursday, November 6, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proposed \$4.5 billion in spending reductions across state government and \$4.7 billion in revenue increases to help close the state’s budget shortfall; this would include \$2.5 billion in cuts to K-12 education.

Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) Superintendent Jim Negri stated, “Under the Governor’s proposed budget, the AUHSD would lose approximately \$300 per student on the revenue limit plus it would lose the minimal .68% increase cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in the current budget. These cuts translate into a \$2,100,000 loss of revenue this year. In order to adopt a balanced 2008-2009 budget last June, the district had to cut \$1,000,000 and ask the parent clubs and foundations for \$1,000,000. The proposed mid-year cuts are greater than what the district had to cut last June. The Governing Board and district staff will be carefully reviewing the Governor’s proposal and working to ensure that our students continue to receive the high quality education that they deserve.”

Reach the reporter at: andrea@lamorindaweekly.com

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