

## It Happened Wednesday....

It Happened Wednesday is a summary of the latest meeting of our Board of Trustees. Last week Trustees addressed several critical issues within the district. As is often the case in our business, issues appear almost predictably in a cyclical fashion. However, each time an issue cycles through, different variables affect the focus of the conversation. Two of these issues in our district include the current state budget crisis and school facilities.

### 2008-09 Budget Development

The district is currently proposing about \$230,000 worth of reductions beginning July 2008. Most of these reductions are to materials, supplies and contracts. We are doing our best to avoid cuts to student programs. In the budget crisis of 2002, there were approximately the same amount of cuts, but with a smaller budget, they were more apparent. This year, thanks to our local revenues (CMLSF, Parcel Tax, Leases and PTA's), improved budget controls, and an inclusive budget development process, the reductions, while noteworthy, are less impacting to the educational program.

There is much still unknown regarding the state budget, however, and it is likely we will not have answers until late August. Depending on the outcome, more or fewer reductions in our spending will take place. For more information about how to help and be involved in local or state campaigns against cuts to education check out the county website at <http://saveourschools.marinschools.org/>.

### Strategic Priorities

On April 30, two workshops with a focus on district priorities and goals for the 2008-10 school years will be held from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. in the Community Room of the Larkspur Parks and Recreation Department, and 7:00 p.m. in the Library at Hall Middle School. All members of our school community are invited to attend to give input to the Trustees in the areas of continuous improvement and growth. Please attend and contribute to this important planning process! We want your feedback and ideas.

### Facilities

Trustees received an update on the work of the Facilities Committee. The Committee has reviewed enrollment and modernization needs for district classrooms and will be making recommendations to the school board in the form of a master plan for facilities for the next 5-10 years. The report should be presented to the board in May. Enrollment projections indicate that the district will need 6-8 new classrooms. The Facilities Committee is discussing a general plan to accomplish both the upgrades and additional space. The need for bond funding was discussed and the Superintendent was charged with bringing additional

information to the board regarding timelines and activities for getting a bond measure on the ballot.

## STARS

In fall 2006, the Larkspur School District and Youth-in-Arts began developing a comprehensive model arts education program that will provide students with arts learning experiences building from grade level to grade level and connecting with California state standards for Visual and Performing Arts. The effort is currently funded using the CMLSF Youth-In-Arts budget, arts money from the state, and some seed money from the Marin Community Foundation.

This program is now known as STARS - Sequential Thematic Arts Reaching all Schools. We (Larkspur School District, Youth-in-Arts and CMLSF) have recently received notice from the Marin Community Foundation that our grant to develop a K-8 integrated arts education program has been funded, beginning in the 2008-09 school year! This partnership means we will be able to continue enhancing the arts in our schools--building sustainable thematic units, providing professional development for staff, coordinating parent volunteers and providing appropriate art supplies and materials for our students. We look forward to implementing this 3-5 year project and developing a program that is replicable across other K-8 schools. This effort was a collaborative response to requests from our staff and parents for more art! Thank you, everyone, for your support!

### Upcoming Dates of Interest

Superintendent/Board Coffee Chats (all at Il Fornaio):

April 16 - 5:30 p.m.

April 18 - 8:30 a.m.

Facilities Master Plan Committee Meetings (all at 5:30 p.m. in the Hall Library)

April 14 and April 28

School Board Meetings (all at 6:00 p.m. in the Hall Library):

April 23 and May 28

Strategic Priorities Workshop - April 30 - 8:30 a.m. in the Community Room and again at 7:00 p.m. in the Hall Library

Valerie