

REACH

A Creative Arts Magnet Program
Brook Haven Middle School, Sebastopol, California

Friday, February 27, 2009

A Bi-Weekly Newsletter from the REACH Parent Foundation

Critical Update

A summary of the recent letter from Judi Scherrer, RPF President

by Judi Scherrer, RPF President/Treasurer

As the uncertainty around the state budget mess is finally coming to an end, it is clear that our local schools are facing devastating cuts. SUSD has been prepping for this for the last few months as all financial advice has been to be conservative and impose a spending freeze. The district is doing all it can to ensure that they will continue to be able to provide our children with a quality education, and to keep the money flowing to the most important asset they have for teaching our kids: the teachers.

REACH is a parent inspired "school" within a public school. Brook Haven has welcomed us and our kids. We've learned that not all school cultures welcome that – some are better suited than others. Sebastopol Union truly is a school district that understands the intent of our program, the need for committed teachers and a director to lead it.

So where does REACH come in? We are new to Brook Haven and so are our teachers. The challenge for REACH is that our teachers are at the core of giving the education that we, as parents, have chosen as part of REACH. We highly value our teachers, and the success and sustainability of the program depends on our being able to retain those teachers who wish to continue to commit to the mission and vision of the REACH Program.

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DO NOT MISS THIS MEETING!

March 4 at 6:30 in the Brook Haven Library.

All REACH parents are needed to sign the REACH application for charter status (see Critical Update above). This is of utmost importance! If you cannot attend, please contact one of the board members listed at the end of the above article to make arrangements to sign the application.



www.reach-program.com

Mark Your Calendar

Friday, March 6

6th grade to Wells Fargo Center for performance of *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*; depart school 8:50am, return before noon

Wednesday, March 11

7th/8th grades to Wells Fargo Center for Ailey II dance performance; depart school 8:50am, return before noon

Thursday, March 12

SUSD School board meeting and public meeting regarding Charter petition.

Wednesday, March 18

6:30 p.m., pre-trip meeting for all 7th and 8th grade parents and their students to get ready for the Yosemite trip, March 30-April 3.

Wednesday, March 18

6:30 p.m., pre-trip meeting for all 6th grade parents and their students to get ready for the Marin Headlands trip, March 31-April 3.

Thursday, March 19

Analy High School Eighth Grade Parents Night to meet the Analy High School administration and the Freshman Counselor. 6:30 to 7:30 at the Brook Haven Library. (There are two other sessions 3/12 5:30 to 6:30 Hillcrest Gym and 3/12 7:00 to 8:00 at Twin Hills Gym.)

The initial reports this winter indicated that 4.3 teachers would have to be let go this spring. Teachers are members of the union SETA, and SETA protects teachers with clear regulations regarding hiring, firing and layoffs based upon seniority, retirements and unique training/certification requirements (i.e., special education teachers or speech therapists).

The goal of RPF is to ensure that quality, REACH-centered instruction drives our hiring processes and allows the retention of our wonderful teaching staff. It is clear to us that our current situation will not allow us to meet this goal, but we are intently pursuing each of the options outlined in my letter to all of the parents: a revised Memorandum of Understanding with SUSD and SETA, Magnet School, and Charter. In order to stay within the timeline, and thus keep a Charter as a viable option for the 2009/10 school year, we need each of you to read the letter and understand all of the options and to attend the REACH parent meeting on March 4 to review and sign the charter petition. The next steps in the charter process will be approval of the SUSD Board of Trustees. As parents, our role is to be present and demonstrate to the Board that we value the REACH program, and we would like them to work with us to ensure its sustainability.

As parents of students in the REACH program, we are all committed to doing whatever we can to promote the mission and vision of the program. The reward of all this work is the knowledge that our children are receiving a quality education in a supportive social environment that readies them for the rigors of high school. RPF is working to do all it can to ensure the sustainability of this wonderful program, and we are excited about the possibilities for the future. We value ideas, comments, thoughts, and other input from parents so, as always, please do not hesitate to contact any RPF board member. We look forward to hearing from you, and we will do our best to answer any questions or concerns you may have about the current situation.

Attention 6,7,8 Grade Parents!

Wednesday, March 18 pre-trip meetings for the late March Marin Headlands and Yosemite field trips. 6:30 in the classrooms.

Each family should have at least one parent and their student at the meetings. A packet will be emailed to all 7th and 8th grade parents before the meeting with forms that will need to be turned in at the meeting.



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Enrollment Calendar

If you know of people who want to enroll in REACH for the 09-10 year, give them these deadlines:

February 10: Applications are available in the Brook Haven office or online.

March 16: Parent Information Night Monday, at 6:00 Brook Haven Library

April 10: Deadline for the first round of applications

April through May: Student shadow days TBA

May 1: Deadline for the second round of applications

Late May: REACH Parent Meeting for new and continuing parents