

August 1, 2015



Dear Parents and Community Members,

School begins in a few short weeks! We look forward to welcoming each child and family to our schools for the 2015-16 year. We consider it a privilege and honor to serve you and your child, working together to provide a solid foundation for continuous learning and growth.

The first day of school for students will be **Thursday, August 27**. The school offices will be open two weeks prior, if you would like to meet office personnel and receive a supply list ahead of time.

This has been a BUSY summer! We have been conducting interviews to hire the very best teachers, support staff, and administrators possible for our district. We have incredible staffs and teachers who love our students and families, are well versed in quality instructional practices of Common Core, and they are eager to partner with you in the education of your children.

An important letter/form will be coming to you in the mail in the very near future. It is a letter from our Food Services Department. We need EVERY single family to fill out the form and either return it to your child's school or to the district office. This completed form provides our district with local, state, and federal funding. The form is to determine what percentage of our families qualify for free or reduced lunch rates. Even if you do not want your child to participate in the meal program at their school, OR you know you will not qualify for free or reduced lunches, we ask that you return the form. If you know you will not qualify, you can simply state that you will not qualify. You do not need to put numbers on the form. When our district goes above 55% that qualify for free or reduced lunches, our district receives a significant increase in funding for those students after the 55%. This is VERY important for our district and we thank you ahead of time for your help and support in this endeavor. If you have questions, do not hesitate to contact me.

Our current Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) outlines our goals to ensure every student will meet or exceed state standards, as measured by the new CAASPP assessments given each spring. The Board and I have also met this summer to analyze how we are using our resources, and to establish initial priorities for the year. We will be seeking community and school family input as we develop a Strategic Plan, which will serve as the umbrella for our LCAP and lens through which all decisions will be made for our schools.

A couple of neat things happened this summer for two of our schools. First of all, community students had opportunity to participate in a "Summer Sounds" music program for 6 weeks at Sacred Church. The culminating event was a recital, showing off to family and friends all that had been accomplished. John Muir parents, Mr. and Mrs. Cannon, provided this opportunity for San Bruno children. Camp participants learned songs, drumming rhythms, kazoo playing, and piano. Because there were more John Muir students in this summer camp than from any other school, the Cannons donated \$700 toward John Muir's music program for next year. That is AWESOME. Way to go. The recital was great fun! Take a look at the picture below. First grade John Muir teacher, Terri Murphy, was there to accept the check, along with John Muir students participating in the camp.



The giant garage sale held at the city park at the end of July was prime time for Rollingwood School to run the snack bar! THANK YOU to Rollingwood School parents for taking time from busy summer schedules to provide this service and also earn money for your school.



Lastly, as we look ahead to the new school year, there is a simple, but important strategy you can practice with your child at home to help him/her navigate the rigor of Common Core, foster critical thinking, as well as verbal and written communication skills. ***Encourage your child to always respond in a complete sentence!*** That is it! You try it as well! Think about how many times we respond in a one or two word response. What are the implications? Well, year after year, if students hear and also utilize the short, incomplete response method, why would we be surprised if he/she struggles to form a complete thought, either orally or in writing? If short, incomplete responses are all we require, then that is all he/she will produce. An easy way to help your child, from age 5 on, to form a grammatically correct sentence is as follows:

*Ask your child a question with enough words in it that he/she can take some of the words from your question to formulate the complete response. For example: "What would you like for dinner tonight, Ben?" Ben could reply, "I would like spaghetti for dinner tonight, Mom." Usually, Ben might have just responded with "Spaghetti" or "Spaghetti sounds good" – both are incomplete! Another example might be, "Describe the most amazing animal you saw at the zoo yesterday." The child's response could be, "The most amazing animal I saw at the zoo yesterday was a giraffe because it was stretching its long neck*

*and tongue way up to the top of trees to eat the tender leaves. It looked cool!" Try it. Let's make this a focus. In my visits to classrooms I'll be watching for this strategy becoming natural for our students.*

Our teachers will continue working on this skill in class. If you partner with us at home, it will become second nature to our students, and their thinking, speaking, and writing skills will blossom.

Have a WONDERFUL rest of your summer. We look forward to meeting you and getting to know you as the school year progresses. Thank you for entrusting us with your precious children. We do not take this opportunity and responsibility lightly. We will provide your child with the very best well-rounded education possible.

Most Sincerely,

*Cheryl Olson*