

Welcome

Hello Peoria staff. I would like to take the opportunity to provide you with this superintendent's update. Certainly fall is in the air, and we have countless exciting activities going on for our young people. As recently as Friday, we had the Varsity Zone at both Peoria and Kellis high schools which created lots of enthusiasm across the District.

I'd also like to take a moment of time and thank you for the diligence for which you are working with students who have been out of class due to the H1N1 flu epidemic. We appreciate all that you are doing to support the families of students as we know that absenteeism is at a high level as a result of the flu virus. We also appreciate those of you who are working hard to make sure that proper hand-washing is taking place and that we are using good practices across the District. We are offering the flu vaccination at every one of our elementary schools before Thanksgiving, and we are exploring the potential of offering the vaccines for our high school students as well.

Legislative Update

I have had several of you ask about the impact that HB 2011 will have on PUSD. As you may know, this legislation was enacted at the close of the last legislative session, and that law actually goes into effect on November 24. So there are lots of questions about teacher tenure, about notification of the April 15 and May 15 deadline. Many of the things that have been in statute relative to teacher tenure have now been removed. I'd like all of you to know that I, and the Peoria Unified School District, value our experienced employees, and that we are taking a very close look at all of the ramifications of this legislation. I am having it reviewed by our legal counsel and we're also taking a look at what governing board policy changes may be imminent as a result of this legislation.

It behooves the PUSD to retain our talented staff. Part of that involves making sure that we have our employees under contract as soon as we possibly can and that we will continue to work in a manner that will allow our staff to be under contract as soon as possible. We will keep you apprised of our developments related to HB 2011.

M&O Override Election

I am sure that you are aware that last Tuesday our Maintenance and Operation Override Election was defeated. By a narrow margin, but defeated nonetheless. I want you to know that we did go out a year early, in our efforts to pass an M&O Override. As a result, we will have one more chance to pass the override before we have to begin reducing expenditures. That will be next November. Our governing board will have an opportunity to determine whether we will go back out and ask our voters one more time to extend our maintenance and operation budget. You are aware that this is a continuation and not a new tax. The impact of not being able to pass an override election next year will be significant. The total amount of budget reductions associated with that will be close to \$18 million.

I would like to personally thank each and every one of you who worked to support the override. I would also like to thank the committee who worked countless hours to get the good word out to the community on the positive things that happen in this District, as a result of longstanding community support for override elections.

Budget Update

Another topic that has been on everybody's list recently is the budget revision that we recently were able to take care of at a board meeting. Let me explain a little about that budget revision.

You are aware that the Governor vetoed the line item cuts to K-12 that the legislature had previously passed on to her. As a result of that veto, we were able to revise our budget upwardly in the amount of about \$12 million. That \$12 million can be used for maintenance and operation as well as soft capital and needs. We are also continuing to hear that the state is facing a \$2 billion deficit out of current year. We were also told that it is very certain that the Governor and legislature will have to reconvene to address that deficit, and that K-12 education will be part of the reductions that will be necessary to balance the budget.

At the current time, we do not know how much of a reduction we will have to absorb for the state to balance that \$2 billion. We are hearing that we need to be prepared to be able to reduce that budget by anywhere from six to nine percent. If it does go up to the higher end of that range, all of the budget revisions that we were just able to recapture will be lost, and then some. So, not having a crystal ball, I am reluctant to entertain any kinds of revenue enhancement opportunities for any of our employees until we know for sure what that budget number will be. We are committed to making sure that we take care of our employees to the degree that we can. As soon as we have a definitive number from the legislature and the Governor, we will begin exploring alternatives.

Celebrating Successes

As I mentioned at the beginning of this podcast, there are countless opportunities are going on across the District that have been fabulous for our students. We have many of our athletic teams that are involved in the state tournaments. In girls' volleyball, Centennial, Ironwood, Kellis, Sunrise Mountain, Liberty and Cactus will play. In boys' football, we have Centennial, Ironwood, Peoria, Kellis, Cactus and Liberty. Each of these teams will be involved in the state tournaments in the next week. We wish them luck.

Interestingly, Liberty High School, which has its first class of seniors this year, has taken a regional title in five of its six athletic teams this fall. So special congratulations go out to our newest high school.

This week, our elementary cross country teams participated in the District meet. This is one of the most popular events that our elementary students are involved in. It's always a tremendous success, thanks to those coaches who have made that a very terrific event for our students.

Lake Pleasant was formally dedicated recently, and hats off to that staff and community for getting that school off to a tremendous start.

I had a wonderful opportunity to visit Ms. Cunningham's kindergarten class at Frontier Elementary School and they were involved in reading. I got to read the *Panda and the Polar Bear* and I got some wonderful letters from those students and some very nice illustrations.

Staff Recognitions

In closing we have had a number of recognitions that have been bestowed on some of our finest. You have probably heard about Mr. Paul Bower recently returned from Washington, D.C. representing the state of Arizona in the National Distinguished Principal recognition. Congratulations to Paul. Also, Mr. Jim Davis has received national recognition when he was given the honor of the Milken Foundation Leadership Award. This is a very prestigious recognition. Congratulations to Jim and to Centennial High School.

We have two principals who are semi-finalists for the Rodel Leadership Award. Those principals are Ms. Robin Dahlman and Ms. Rae Conelley. Congratulations to those principals and best of luck.

We also have a teacher who received the Fulton Homes/KNIX Teacher of the Week. That teacher is Mr. Chris Howard from Ira A. Murphy.

As you can see, lots of wonderful things are going on across the District. Thanks to all of you for making this a special place for our students and for our community.

Veterans Day

Additionally, in honor of Veterans Day, many of our schools were offering a salute to the veterans who have so valiantly served our country. We appreciate those salutes and we always have a fabulous turn-out.

Thanks

Thanks for allowing me to take some time out of your busy day. Enjoy the rest of your week.