

# NUSD NEWS

*"The foundation of every state is the education of its youth"* - Diogenes Laertius

Volume VII, Issue 1

**NOVEMBER 2009**

## Novato Unified School District

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**WWW.NUSD.ORG**

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Nov 3

Election Day

7 pm Board Meeting

### Nov 10

Board Meeting – District Office – 6:00PM

### Nov 11

Veterans Day Holiday – No School

### Nov 14

2 pm NHS vs SMHS Football Game

### Nov 16-20

Elementary Parent Conferences – Minimum Days

### Nov 17

7 pm Board Recognition and Meeting

### Nov 23-27

Thanksgiving Break

### Dec 1

7 pm Board Meeting

### Dec 5

School Fuel - Matt & Jeff's Holiday Boutique & \$100,000 Donation Milestone Celebration

### Dec 15

7 pm Board Meeting

### Dec 17

6 pm Adult Education Graduation

### Dec 21 – Jan 1

Winter Break

### Jan 4

First day back to school

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Dr. Jan La Torre-Derby, Superintendent

Dear Parents, Colleagues and Novato Community,

On October 27, 2009, the NUSD Board of Trustees met to discuss allowable expenditures for the state reimbursement funds generated by bond projects. The total reimbursements from the \$107 million bond shall be used according to Section 1859.90.1 of the California Code of Regulations, as presented by John Hartenstein, NUSD's bond counsel as follows:

1. Toward retiring the local bonds; and/or
2. Toward uses permitted by the local bond, or
3. For any high priority capital outlay expenditure in the district as permitted in Education Code Section 17070.63(c)

In order to begin a facilities discussion, trustees shared the results of their October 18, 2009, visioning workshop. They discussed many areas of facility needs to expand and enhance student learning.

1. Emphasize technology integration and support.
2. Provide adequate instructional environments for specialized learning, and instructional practice and programs.
3. Promote equity of facilities among NUSD schools.

Our next step will be to determine how to utilize the remaining state reimbursement for bond projects. Each school has submitted a list of needs as priorities for use of the bond funds that align with the bond language. In addition, the facilities master plan education specification section listed on the NUSD website lists additional facility needs. Please feel free to review the site requests located in the TSS final Facilities Master Plan at <http://do.nusd.org/business/bond.html>.

(Continued)

## SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

Dr. Jan La Torre-Derby, Superintendent

Once the use of the bond funds is determined, Trustees will begin reviewing options and funding sources for program and facilities development. Use of current facilities, consolidating use of Hamilton Property 1B, conveyance of 1A, revisiting the 22 acre San Andreas property, and completion of the Hamilton modernization and joint gym project are all areas for an in depth discussion.

Please check the website for facilities updates. Our next facilities focused board meeting is scheduled for November 10, 2009, at 6 pm.

Respectfully,  
Dr. Jan La Torre-Derby

## INSTRUCTION DIVISION

*Ishwara Ryaru, Director of Educational Assessment, Accountability and Specialized Programs*

On September 15, 2009, the California Department of Education (CDE) released to the public the Accountability Progress Reporting (APR) results. The APR includes school and district results for the state Academic Performance Index (API), the federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria and Program Improvement (PI) status where applicable. Districts and schools that receive Title I funds, which do not meet AYP criteria *in the same content area* for two consecutive years, will enter PI status. The recent APR results indicate that the following entities are in PI status:

- Novato Unified School District
- Lynwood Elementary School
- Hill Middle School
- San Jose Middle School

Lynwood Elementary met all AYP criteria in 2008-2009. However, it takes two consecutive years of meeting AYP to exit PI status. If Lynwood meets all AYP criteria in 2009-2010, the school will exit PI status in 2010-2011.

Three days after the API/AYP results were released, NUSD received notification from the California Department of Education explaining that the results are still tentative. The State Board of Education (SBE) has not yet finalized the proficiency levels for the California Modified Assessment (CMA), which is incorporated into the final AYP results. The CDE indicated that final CMA results and final PI status should be available in November, 2009. The CDE further indicated that PI requirements, including parent notification, should be postponed until November. In November, if the District, Hill and/or San Jose are confirmed to be in PI status, all federal PI requirements will be followed.



### NUSD Kindergarten Registration Begins at Your Neighborhood School

November 2, 2009, is the official kickoff day at your local elementary schools for kindergarten registration. Each elementary school will have registration packets available to fill out at the school or to take home and return later. Please bring a birth certificate, record of immunizations, and two proofs of residency. NUSD is encouraging early registration to ensure your child's placement at their neighborhood school. For more information, please visit [www.nusd.org](http://www.nusd.org).

# INSTRUCTION DIVISION/STUDENT SERVICES

*Kathy Marshall, Executive Director/Raquel Rose, Director*

## What is RTI<sup>2</sup>: Response to Instruction and Intervention?

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>) is a general education approach to closing the achievement gap. RTI<sup>2</sup> methods build on the successful Response to Intervention (RTI) model that was offered as an option for schools under the 2004 reauthorization of the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#). RTI, and the now-expanded RTI<sup>2</sup>, are based on over 17 years of practice that has refined “continuous progress monitoring” as a strategy for keeping students on a path toward success.

A successful RTI<sup>2</sup> program integrates resources from general education, categorical programs, and special education into a comprehensive system of instruction and intervention to meet the needs of all students.

Our focus at NUSD is the individual student and what will best help each student learn. Strong leadership and resources from our schools, the district, and our community will be harnessed to make this an effective instructional method. For example, NUSD administrators and teachers are working together to implement a common articulated assessment system to closely monitor individual student progress. Staff is collaborating to analyze results and develop action plans to support student learning based on assessment results.

Novato Unified School District has utilized the pyramid below to ensure that all students receive the type of instruction needed to ensure college readiness.

- 1. Core Curriculum:** The K-12 core curriculum is standards based and offers the requisite knowledge and skills for all students to be prepared for college upon graduation from high school.
- 2. Core + Strategic Intervention:** At the first sign that a student is not meeting grade level and/or content-specific standards, the classroom teacher provides immediate, strategic intervention.
- 3. Intervention Outside Core:** If a student requires additional support (must be based on standardized assessment data), to meet grade level or content-specific standards **after** the classroom teacher has provided multiple interventions, the student is referred for intensive intervention outside the core. This intervention is provided only for the time required to ensure the student reaches proficiency on applicable standards. New courses for intervention such as Language! and Algebra Readiness are embedded in the regular school day master schedules this year.
- 4. Special Education:** If through the intervention process there is evidence that a student exhibits signs of learning disabilities; the student is assessed for Special Education Services.



## H1N1 Update...What is NUSD doing?

NUSD is working in close collaboration with the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services and the Marin County Office of Education to follow proper protocols and procedures for student and staff safety and wellness. Raquel Rose, Director of Student Services, is NUSD's liaison and contact for H1N1 and is working closely with all school administrators on this critical health issue.

One area being immediately addressed is the monitoring of student and staff absences. Absences are closely screened for flu-like symptoms. Staff informs the Student Services Department of any presumed or confirmed H1N1 cases and a log is maintained to ensure the District is well aware of cases in our community.

The Marin County Department of Health and Human Services has taken an active role in influenza planning and prevention in Marin, and is coordinating the H1N1 flu response. Their website, [www.marinflu.org](http://www.marinflu.org), offers up-to-date, critical information on local H1N1 flu planning.

## School Fuel Presents to the NUSD Board of Trustees on November 3

On November 3, School Fuel will be making a presentation to the NUSD Board of Trustees outlining its annual contribution and the organization's activities for the coming year. School Fuel has now raised over one million dollars for Novato Schools since 2003! For the 2009-10 academic year, School Fuel will be contributing \$138,536 to the NUSD operating budget to pay for the following programs: a full-time elementary music teacher, a section of visual or performing arts at each middle and high school, instructional technology at the high schools, and enrichment grants to Marin Oaks and NOVA.



**Novato Foundation for Public Education**

[WWW.NOVATOSCHOOLFUEL.ORG](http://WWW.NOVATOSCHOOLFUEL.ORG)

## NUSD BUDGET & FINANCE

*Marla Blackledge, Chief Financial Officer*

The Novato Unified School District has received or expects to receive one-time American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds in the following areas:

- IDEA – Special Education \$1.4 million
- Title I, Part A, Basic Grant \$0.2 million
- State Fiscal Stabilization Funds (SFSF) \$2.6 million
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Grant \$0.02 million
- Child Nutrition Equipment Assistance Grant \$0.018 million

All of the grants, except for SFSF, are very restricted in nature. Staff is currently working on expenditure plans for the IDEA and Title I funds. The McKinney-Vento and Equipment grants are competitive grants, and the expenditures must follow the budget that was submitted with the grant.

The purpose of the SFSF grant is to replace State funds cut from the district's revenue allocation. At the time that the district's 2009/2010 budget was adopted, the NUSD Board of Trustees approved a spending plan to use these funds to retain positions that would have otherwise been eliminated. All ARRA funds must be spent by September 30, 2011.

## FACILITIES

*John Silverstrini, Executive Director*

### Bond Summer Construction Projects, 2009

This summer, the bond construction program was focused at two campuses: Hill Middle School and the Meadow Park area of Hamilton Elementary. The final phase of the Hill modernization program (Phase 3) was completed. The Hill project involved four wings. The project included the modernization of the B, C, G, and H wings. Highlights of the project included the present band room being modernized into the leadership classroom, including a school store from which the students can sell items for fundraising. The old shop classroom became the new band room, accommodating that program in a much larger setting including specialized band storage cabinets. The former home economics classroom, which had been trying to be a science classroom for many years, was upgraded to be a proper science classroom. And the locker room building was freshened with redone student toilet rooms and ADA accessible coach's offices.

The project at Hamilton Elementary involved paving the courtyard at the Meadow Park end of the campus. This concrete paving project expands the use of the small multi-purpose room to the exterior and increases the use of the courtyard during wet weather. Lighting was added to the courtyard making it usable into the twilight hours.