

POLICY CALENDAR ITEM #7A: Maintain Open Dialogue with the San Mateo-Foster City School District and Monitor Their Response to the Issue of Increasing School Enrollment and School Overcrowding.

STATUS: Last year during a Planning Commission public hearing on the proposed housing in the Pilgrim/Triton redevelopment project, a representative of the San Mateo-Foster City School District indicated that the District was currently dealing with an issue of increased enrollment and how to accommodate all Foster City students in the existing Foster City elementary schools; therefore, students from new development would add to this challenge. This was the first time that the City became aware of the issue of increased enrollment and potential school overcrowding. Subsequently during the spring and summer of 2008, there was a dramatic increase in enrollment for the 2008-2009 school year that caused the School District to add several portable classrooms to all three K-5 schools in Foster City. The City Council received numerous emails and phone calls from parents and residents regarding their concerns ranging from not being able to have their child attend a school in Foster City to having too many children at any given school, from traffic impacts in the neighborhood to overcrowded school computer labs and libraries, and from the timeliness of notifications to the parents to the last-minute scramble to add portable classrooms.

Therefore, Pam Frisella (the Mayor at the time) and Linda Koelling (the Council liaison to the Education Committee), along with the City Manager, Assistant City Manager and Community Development Director met with representatives of the District Board and staff to open a dialogue regarding the issue of increasing school enrollment and school overcrowding. We have had three meetings to date and we have also attended some of the District Board meetings when relevant agenda items were being discussed.

At the meeting held in early January, the District representatives indicated that the attached letter had just gone out to all Foster City residents (targeting those who will have children who will enter Kindergarten in the next few years). This letter explains that during the month of January, a number of Focus Groups will be held to inform the public about the issues, including enrollment trends and various options to address the increased enrollment. It is projected that 7-9 additional classrooms will be needed for the 2009-2010 school year, an additional 5 classrooms for the 2010-2011 school year and an additional 4 classrooms for the 2012-2013 school year for a cumulative total of 16-18 classrooms. It should be noted that the Pilgrim/Triton area IS in the Audubon School Attendance Boundary but the potential students from the housing portion of this proposed development are NOT included in the above enrollment projections. It should also be noted that Foster City School is undergoing a scheduled modernization of the permanent classrooms/facilities and this project has an impact on the District's short-term abilities to accommodate students at this location.

Finally, the District is following a similar process for the Baywood School in San Mateo which is also at capacity. While all the schools in the San Mateo-Foster City School District have seen increased enrollment, these four schools (Audubon, Brewer Island, Foster City and Baywood) are the impacted schools in that the actual enrollment, as well

as the projected enrollment, has exceeded their classroom capacity that existed during the 2007-2008 school year; hence, the need to take some immediate actions (e.g., add portable classrooms) to accommodate these new students for the 2008-2009 school year.

Per the attached letter, the District Board hopes to receive staff/consultant recommendations at their February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting with action to be taken at the February 19<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. The District has already delayed until March the registration for new students for Audubon, Brewer Island and Foster City Schools. Also, there needs to be sufficient lead time to implement both short-term and long-term options, especially if additional classrooms need to be added or other physical modifications need to be made to the school sites.

It is important to recognize that the San Mateo-Foster City School District Board has the legal, financial and administrative responsibility to provide for the education of the students in the District. It is also important to understand that the District's decisions have an impact on the City itself (e.g., physical site issues like traffic, real estate values that translates into property tax revenues, joint use agreements, recreational programs at school sites, etc.). Also, the District Board needs to reconcile its policy preference for smaller schools with the residents' expectations of being able to attend a neighborhood school within their own community and to have smaller class sizes (20 students or less) in grades kindergarten through third grade.

OUTSTANDING ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED: None at this time.

PROCESS/STRATEGY/TIMING TO ACCOMPLISH THIS ITEM: It is proposed that the City Council maintain an open dialogue with the School District and monitor their response to the issue of increasing school enrollment and school overcrowding.

Attachment: Letter from Pendery Clark, Superintendent of the San Mateo-Foster City School District Dated December 16, 2008 and Received January 8, 2009



December 16, 2008

**SAN MATEO -  
FOSTER CITY  
SCHOOL  
DISTRICT**

Current Resident  
620 Foster City Blvd  
Foster City, CA 94404

**Attn: Residents of Foster City who have children who will enter Kindergarten in the next few years**

During the last few years, enrollment at the District's three K-5 schools in Foster City (Audubon, Brewer Island, and Foster City) has increased by nearly 7% and recent projections are that it will continue to increase over the next five years. While we are very heartened by the community's recognition of these schools' outstanding educational programs, the increased enrollment has resulted in the need for additional classrooms. Several portables have been added over the past few years and the District's architects are currently studying how much additional capacity can be added to the sites.

While that study is being conducted, the District needs to make decisions about dealing with increasing enrollment from Foster City for the upcoming and future school years. Even if it is determined that the schools' capacities could be increased to accommodate the projected enrollment, it would take 2.5-3 years for the development of architectural specifications and plans, completion of the State approval process, advertising for bids and actually completing the construction.

Before making a recommendation to the Board of Trustees about what course to pursue, I would like to gather feedback from parents in the Foster City community who have children who will be entering Kindergarten in the next few years. An Enrollment Committee comprised of staff and parents worked last year to analyze possibilities. The Board received information on the Enrollment Committee's analysis a few months ago and also asked that a formalized process for community input be developed. The District has contracted with Tish Busselle to conduct a series of Focus Group meetings. Ms. Busselle is a former Assistant Superintendent in the District whose responsibilities included facilities and enrollment, as well as community relations.

The purpose of the Focus Groups will be to provide the community with information on enrollment trends for the City of Foster City and with information about various options including their impact, advantages and disadvantages. There will be an opportunity for dialogue and individual opinions will be sought about each option.

The Focus Groups will be held on the following dates:

- Wednesday, January 14 1:00-2:30pm
- Thursday, January 15 1:00-2:30pm
- Friday, January 16 9:30-11:00am
- Friday, January 16 1:00-2:30pm
- Wednesday, January 21 9:30-11:00am
- Wednesday, January 21 6:30-8:00pm
- Monday, January 26 6:30-8:00pm

**Board of Trustees**  
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Colleen Sullivan

**Superintendent**  
Pendery A Clark Ed.D.

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**JAN 08 2009**

**CITY MANAGER**

**San Mateo-Foster City School District**

**1170 Chess Drive • Foster City, CA 94404 • (650) 312-7700 • FAX: (650) 312-7779 • [www.smfc.k12.ca.us](http://www.smfc.k12.ca.us)**

**SAN MATEO -  
FOSTER CITY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

There will be additional Focus Groups scheduled if needed to accommodate all who wish to attend. All Focus Group meetings will be held in the Administrative Offices of the San Mateo-Foster City School District, 1170 Chess Drive, Foster City, 94404.

Pre-registration is required to attend a Focus Group so that the groups are sized for participation. The process will be the same at all focus groups so please sign up for only one. To register, please call (650) 312-7777 ext. 5578 and follow the directions on the voicemail. Please have your first and second choices of Focus Group dates ready when you call along with your contact information. Once again, additional Focus Groups will be scheduled as needed. The District staff will send you a confirmation of your Focus Group date and time.

Our goal is to complete the Focus Group process in January. On February 5, the Board will receive my recommendations regarding plans for the increasing enrollments in Foster City with any action to be taken at the Board meeting on February 19. We will be informing stakeholders regarding the recommendations prior to the Board Meeting. After Board action, there will be a Kindergarten and New Student Parent Information meeting on February 23 at 7:00pm to explain the registration process and the enrollment of students (more information will follow on the location of this meeting). As a result of these important deliberations, we have delayed the registration for new students for Audubon, Brewer Island and Foster City Schools until March.

I encourage your participation if you have children that you plan to enroll in Audubon, Brewer Island, or Foster City Schools in the next few years.

Sincerely,

Pendery Clark, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

Cc: Board of Trustees  
Joan Rosas, Assistant Superintendent  
Rick Giannotti, Audubon Elementary Principal  
Alice Wycke, Brewer Island Principal  
Susan Glines, Foster City Principal  
Tish Busselle, Facilitator  
Amber Farinha, Coordinator of Community Services

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