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Sent: Saturday, June 2, 2018 1:34 PM
Subject: Superintendent message to Malibu staff

*****Email on behalf of Superintendent Dr. Drati*****

Dear Malibu families, staff and community members,

As you know, we have been exploring ways to realign the Malibu Pathway schools. My goal is to increase the learning potential for our children and to enhance and expand positive and stimulating educational experiences, always with an eye toward preparing our students for optimal college and career readiness. With all this in mind, I believe it is time that we adapt our Malibu schools to better support expanded collaborative inquiry and project-based experiences; fully embracing 21st-century learning.

I am excited to be moving forward with changes that address many of the opportunities for improvement that have long been discussed. Many of you have attended the information sessions we hosted in Malibu in April and I appreciate the strong showing by the Malibu community for attending the May 3rd School Board meeting to express support for our plans.

I am writing you today to update you on the current status of the realignment of our Malibu schools:

- Because of the small populations at Point Dume and Juan Cabrillo Elementary Schools, both schools face challenges such as reduced collaboration for teachers among grade levels, split classes, limited program offerings and inefficient budgets. On May 3rd, the SMMUSD School Board unanimously agreed to combine Juan Cabrillo Elementary School and Point Dume Marine Science School on the current campus of Point Dume Marine Science School beginning in the 2019-20 school year. Dr. Pam Herkner, current Cabrillo principal, will be the supervising principal for both schools starting July 1, 2018. Both campuses will have full time administrative leadership in the 2018-19 school year, building toward the physical merger in August of 2019. We recognize that this expansion of enrollment has implications for the broader Point Dume community and we are fully committed to carrying out these changes as good neighbors.
- Malibu Middle School students currently attend Malibu High School as part of the 6-12 grade Malibu High School. These students would benefit from attending their own school, a middle school designed with the specific needs of 6-8 grade students in the forefront. To this end, I will be hiring a Malibu Middle School principal no later than August 2019. In addition, our forthcoming campus plan for the sites currently occupied by MHS and Cabrillo Elementary will specifically incorporate independent middle school and high school facilities, allowing for both continued collaboration and appropriate geographic and educational independence.
- There is general agreement that Malibu High School is in much need of facilities improvement and replacement due to the age and inefficiency of the current facilities and because of the need for facilities that better support modern learning modalities. On May 3rd, and including consideration of a unanimous recommendation from the Malibu Facilities Advisory Committee (M-FDAC), the school board unanimously supported the reconstruction of Malibu High School. To prevent costly remediation of buildings designated for imminent replacement, the

school board has suspended the MHS “Windows, Paint, Floors, and Doors” upgrades and hazardous material abatement project. This change in plans will postpone our intended remediation schedule and thus we are in consultation with America Unites and plan to soon announce a mutually agreed expanded set of protocols and standards.

- Finally, these facility changes at the Malibu campuses will require major funding. The school board unanimously agreed on a resolution forming a Malibu School Facilities Improvement District (SFID) that would be funded through a school bond that could be placed on the November 2018 ballot. A bond issued through this SFID would be for Malibu exclusively — every single dollar raised by this SFID must be spent in Malibu. Although the SMMUSD board has yet to vote for a district wide SFID or a Santa Monica and Malibu only SFID’s, the potential for both is now available to the district. The board also approved the hiring of an architecture firm to conduct an educational specifications study and to design the conceptual framework for the new Malibu High School and Malibu Middle School campuses on the current sites of MHS and Cabrillo Elementary. We will be developing a community process to ensure that we get feedback and input from each of our Malibu parents and staff, as well as the community at large. The process will include open hearings and public discussion at board meetings.

We welcome your suggestions and feedback. We have created a web portal (Let’s Talk) so that you can email your thoughts and ideas.

As we move forward, we will continue to engage with the Malibu community to make sure that the changes reflect the needs of the children, teachers and our Malibu families. We welcome your input and guidance and deeply appreciate your support and patience during this period of transition.

As I look forward, I am deeply committed to ensuring that our students, parents, teachers and staff are afforded the best education possible. To this end, the board also unanimously agreed to hire Isaac Burgess as director of Malibu Pathway, a newly created position to oversee district functions in Malibu, support Malibu school sites, and serve as a liaison to the superintendent and district departments for the needs of Malibu-area schools. Mr. Burgess will begin his new position on July 1, 2018.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ben Drati
Superintendent, SMMUSD

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