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## *Davis Schools Should Reflect and Celebrate Our Diversity*

By Madhavi Sunder\*



Public school is the engine that makes our country the land of opportunity. Public school gives every child, regardless of background, an opportunity to explore, learn, and reach her full potential. It allows children of first generation immigrants, or non-English speakers to build a foundation that allows them to go on to college—even to become the president of the United States. We must ensure that the Davis Joint Unified School District maintains its leading position in advancing the education of all our town’s children, from migrant children to the children of PhDs.

Our schools should reflect and celebrate our diversity. A diversity of student needs calls for a diversity of programs so that every student in our district can thrive. One size does not fit all. Our new two-way bilingual immersion program at Montgomery Elementary allows non-native speakers to learn English while native speakers learn Spanish. Two-way bilingual immersion allows Spanish speakers to learn to read in their first language, giving confidence to English language learners and helping instill in them a love of reading. The program integrates students from diverse backgrounds and fosters

learning from one another. Two-way bilingual immersion also encourages engagement from English and Spanish speaking parents, a vital component for student success.

Additional DJUSD programs cater to diverse needs and offer a dazzling array of options, from Montessori elementary education at Birch Lane, to Spanish immersion at Chavez, and farm-based learning at Fairfield Elementary. The project-based learning programs at Da Vinci Jr. High School and Da Vinci High School offer smaller learning communities for students. We are proud of our full inclusion program for special education children. The AIM program and the Davis School for Independent Studies (DSIS) help our district support all children. King High School has been named a model continuation program in the state, with state evaluators concluding that “King is a symbol of excellence” for the “magic” that take place in its classrooms: “excellent teaching, miracle-working and students who know they are personally cared for.” Indeed, this year a handful of our Davis schools – including both special programs and neighborhood programs – have been honored as California “Distinguished Schools” for their innovative approaches to public education.

We are at a critical moment of change for K-12 public education in the state and the nation. We are moving away from more than a decade of No Child Left Behind and adopting a new Common Core program, which emphasizes critical thinking skills. Educators recognize that success for all students requires emphasizing not just traditional subjects, like math and language arts, but also science and STEM-based programs, music and art. Our schools must support and nurture the whole child, and create opportunities to develop multiple talents.

While we have many programs, however, we must not lose our identity as one district with a single-minded goal: that each child should learn and thrive. We must nurture a culture that believes that “If there’s a child in our district who is thriving in any one of our programs, that makes me happy, even if it’s not my child.” And we must each be worried when any one of our children is struggling, even if it’s not our child. Both our neighborhood programs and our special programs must be excellent, supported, and respected.

We are in the most challenging period for public education our state has ever seen. California has gone from first to worst in the country in terms of resources spent per child and academic outcomes for each child. In Davis, our citizens have picked up the pieces with parcel taxes, fundraisers, and volunteerism. Our teachers and administrators have done more with less with pure grit. Davis is a place where we have the human resources and the community values to successfully meet even the biggest challenges of our time – from the persistent achievement gap to the problem of securing financial resources to support opportunities for students. [continued p. 3]

# Democratic News

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## Davis Democratic Club Board

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## Calendar of Events & Campaign Activities

**Tuesday, July 1, 7:00 pm, Regularly Scheduled Board Meeting.** The Board conducts planning and routine Club business. All Club members are invited to attend. Davis Library.

**Sunday, June 22, 11:30-2:00 pm, Champagne Brunch.** Hosted by Bill Julian and Robin Kulakow at their home, 43556 Almond Lane. Meet and hear Democratic candidates and local elected officials including as our **Special Guest of Honor, State Sen. Betty Yee.** The Board hosts the Brunch but please share your favorite dish.

**Friday, July 4, 2:00-8:30, pm July 4th Celebration, Community Park .**The Club hosts an information booth greeting the public, distributing information and registering voters. Volunteer for one or two hours having fun while celebrating Democracy; contact Carl <cwschmid@comcast.net>.

## Reporting His Thanks to You and Great Concern By Bob Schelen, YCDC Chair

I thank you, the members of the Davis Democratic Club, for contributing funds to our coordinated campaign for the 2014 primary. The Club's support enabled the Yolo County Democratic Party to distribute a slate card for endorsed candidates and have a Davis HQ office for the primary. The financial and volunteer support of the Davis Democratic Club, (including the use of Bob Bockwinkel's house for volunteer staging and other events) was crucial for the primary and will be crucial for a successful election in November. There has always been a healthy relationship between the YCDP and the DDC and I am so happy to see it continue with your newly elected President Stephen Souza and Board. Our goals have always been the same, the election of Democrats in Yolo County who will bring the values, platform and mission of the Democratic Party to their decisions in office. I know that our successful partnership will continue throughout this election year.

Kudos to our endorsed candidates. You went through an arduous process to earn the endorsement and support of the YCDP. I congratulate and thank each candidate who offered his/her service by running for office. You're all winners. You believed that you could make our communities better and moved out of your comfort zone to try to make that happen.

While these candidates and you, as DDC members, have each chosen to assist the political process, others have not, resulting in one of the lowest primary election turnouts in California history. We must remind people of the importance of voting and its direct influence on their lives.

**Has voting become an obsolete?** Has it gone the way of wringer washers, the rotary phone and 8-track tapes? To the people who say we are losing our constitutional rights, are they being "taken away" or are we throwing them away? For those that do not vote ... there is a person somewhere else that is being denied the right to vote.

The demographics are striking; voters, tend to be elderly. I applaud them for voting, but am shocked by the low number of voters who are too young to collect Social Security. When asked about voting, seniors say, "We always vote" or as one octogenarian couple replied "Voting is our duty." However, where are the voters younger than 40, the ones who will deal with the shortage of clean air and water, those who need higher-paying jobs, people who require an adequate infrastructure? All have the opportunity to vote by mail so that a lack of time on election day is no excuse.

My hope is that nonvoters will heed the thoughts by some of my friends: "*No one can call themselves a patriot or claim to love this city, state or country if they are unwilling to participate in the foundational task of casting a vote.*" "*I think it should be illegal for people to complain about their government if they don't vote! If I hear people complain in the future, I'm going to ask if they voted. Shame on you if you didn't vote in our local primary.*" [continued p. 3]

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**[Davis Schools continued from p.1]** This November there will be four open seats on the Davis School Board. This is the most important table in our community, where we determine opportunities for 8,500 children in our community – our nation’s future. We must develop new partnerships opportunities with the world-renowned university in our backyard to obtain financial and human resources that would benefit all of our students. Davis children deserve nothing less.

\*Madhavi Sunder has been a Professor of Law at UC Davis since 1999 and is a candidate for a 4-year seat on the Davis School Board in November 2014. To learn more about her campaign, please visit [www.sunderforschools.org](http://www.sunderforschools.org). [Ed. Note: *The DDC has not yet endorsed candidates for the School Board. In future essays, additional Club members will outline their visions for our schools.*]

**[YCDP Report continued from p.2]** The YCDP will confer with the state party and national groups at the California Democratic Party Executive Board in July on how we can best ensure the election of Democrats in November. We want the US Senate to retain its Democratic majority, the House to achieve a Democratic majority and the California Legislature to maintain its two-thirds Democratic majority. After examining the upcoming election, the Executive Board will create a coordinated plan for the summer and fall. Following that Board Meeting, I will report to you in a future Newsletter how we intend to accomplish our goals. However, I know that we will examine ways to increase the vote. Additionally, having a Davis HQ Office was important for the primary, and I am certain that we will have an office in Davis for the fall election.

There are important issues to be considered: The environment, social justice, minimum wage, support for working people, a belief in working together, fracking regulations, the very existence of our species. It matters who is in office. That is why we do this work.

**New Voter Citizen Registration** Each month, there is



a swearing-in ceremony for new citizens usually on Wednesday in either Sacramento or West Sac. The YCDCC under Chris Allen’s (wearing the “Forward” t-shirt) di-

rection has registered new voters following each of these monthly ceremonies. If you wish to volunteer to help, contact Chris <[communications@yolodems.org](mailto:communications@yolodems.org)>. The registrants are recent immigrants making fluency in Spanish and Slavic languages particularly helpful. At this event {photo l.-r.}, Chris was being assisted by Jim Brewer of the River City DC, Tim Fenton of the DDC, Marlene Bell of the West Yolo DC, and Newsletter Photographer Luba Schmid {opposite the lens}.

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**Democratic Newsletter**

**Champagne Brunch  
Sunday, June 22  
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