

**November, 2013
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DAVIS DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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Big Changes Underway in the Davis Joint Unified School District

by Sheila Allen and Susan Lovenburg

The passage of Proposition 30 last November, as well as voter approval of local Measure E, has finally brought a period of relative financial stability to the Davis Joint Unified School District following five years of economic turmoil. Don't take too long to catch your breath, though, because major public education reforms currently underway spell another period of change for DJUSD.

Local Control Funding Formula

Under Governor Jerry Brown's leadership, California is changing the way it finances schools. While the local funding base remains

the same, still generated from the schools' portion of property tax and dedicated tax measures, the state will now take into account the number of low socio-economic students, children in foster care and English Language learners when allocating their portion of funding.

State policy now reflects the reality that some students are more expensive to educate than others. Districts will receive a base grant for each student, an additional apportionment for at-risk students, and a further apportionment when the concentration of at-risk students exceeds 55% of district enrollment.

The Local Control Funding Formula, or LCFF, will be phased in over 8 years; at that time all districts will be restored to at least 2007-08 funding levels. The LCFF also includes provision for lowering K-3 class sizes to 24:1. DJUSD began lowering class sizes this school year.

The "local control" part of the change is that many of the categorical programs that required spending on particular programs are now gone so that local school boards can make decisions on how to spend most of their state funding allocation.

For more information on the LCFF, visit the California Dept. of Education website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/lcffoverview.asp>.

Common Core

Education standards describe what students will learn at each grade level. Given state responsibility for education, standards have long varied across the country. Together, the National Governors Association (<http://www.nga.org>) and the Council of Chief School Officers (<http://www.ccsso.org/>) launched an effort to identify and adopt common standards. Forty-five states, including California, have now adopted the Common Core standards for English and math.

How do Common Core standards differ from previous standards? The Common Core website (<http://www.corestandards.org>) offers this explanation: **(Continued p. 2)**

(Ed. Note: The September DDC Newsletter featured a California Education Update by Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. As a follow-up, we feature this Davis Schools Update by DJUSD Trustees (and DDC members) Susan Lovenburg and Sheila Allen.



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(Continued p. 3)

Calendar of Events & Campaign Activities

Tuesday, November 5, 7:00 pm, regular DDC Board business meeting. Club members and the public are welcome; Pres. Sen and Secretary Yamagata draft the agenda. Davis Library on 14th Street.

Sunday, October 27, 3:00-5:00 pm, Celebrate Ten Years in Public Office, Assembly Member Mariko Yamada. Monticello Seasonal Cuisine, 630 G St, Davis. For RSVP and price information, phone 916-706-1404.

Saturday, December 7 6:00 pm, Annual Holiday Party, International House, Davis. Enjoy fellowship, cheer and a great buffet provided by the DDC Board. You are also invited to share your favorite Holiday Recipe.

Big Changes...(cont'd p. 1) "The Common Core State Standards were written by building on the best and highest state standards in existence in the U.S., examining the expectations of other high performing countries around the world, and careful study of the research and literature available on what students need to know and be able to do to be successful in college and careers. No state in the country was asked to lower their expectations for their students in adopting the Common Core. The standards are evidence-based, aligned with college and work expectations, include rigorous content and skills, and are informed by other top performing countries. They were developed in consultation with teachers and parents from across the country so they are also realistic and practical for the classroom."

(Citation: <http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>)

Davis teachers are well into implementation of the Common Core as part of their professional learning communities and classroom practice, and the feedback from teachers is that they are re-invigorated as educators and are excited to provide education that grows life-long learners with a decreased emphasis on standardized testing.

On October 3, Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill 484 suspending STAR assessments for 2014, and paving the way for the implementation of Smarter Balance computer-based assessments aligned with the Common Core. Rather than multiple-choice, these new assessments require critical thinking and problem solving essays. For more information on the Common Core, check out this video: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=9lGD9oLofks).

Strategic Planning

And while the face of public education is transforming around us, the Davis Joint Unified School District is taking our future into our own hands. A strategic planning process is now underway to receive input from the community and staff that will enable the district to make long-range recommendations to the Board of Education on:

What is most important in terms of educational focus

- ✦ How resources should be best allocated
- ✦ How we should organize the structure of the district

The Strategic Planning Committee, composed of 26 staff and community members, began their work on September 26th. Action Teams will be formed and complete recommendations to the Board in early Spring. Follow the process in detail on the district's website: http://www.djUSD.net/cms/page_view?d=x&pid=&vpid=1376900174186

We would love your participation and input during this planning process. If you would like to join an action team, follow the instructions on the website or contact the superintendent.

If you have questions about any of these issues or any other school district issue, feel free to contact us via email at sallen@djUSD.net or slovenburg@djUSD.net.

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Empowering the Next Generation by Joshua Copitch

The Democratic Central Committee Coalition is excited to announce the kick-off of the Coalition Empowerment Project's Fall Internship Program in Yolo County next week with the goal of empowering young people from the University of California, Davis and the Woodland Community College to promoting civic engagement throughout Yolo County!

Over the next 10 weeks, 17 college students from UC Davis will join over 50 college students from Solano Community College, Yuba Community College and Woodland Community College in an internship program called the Coalition Empowerment Project with the mission: 1) to create a pipeline of young people for Democratic & Labor politics, 2) to increase civic engagement within the Latino community and 3) to implement a field program based upon the best practices of Organizing for America, Congressman John Garamendi's congressional campaign and the labor movement.

For more information, please contact Apurva Behal ([530-993-3427](tel:530-993-3427)) or Joshua Copitch ([530-604-5566](tel:530-604-5566)).

DDC Board supports Rep. Garamendi's Leadership

Dear Representative Garamendi,

The Davis Democratic Club of Davis offers you our support and encouragement for your efforts to bring transparency to the extent of our government's electronic surveillance programs (as reported in the *Davis Enterprise*).

We believe that our civil liberties, especially those covered in the 1st, 4th and 5th Amendments, must be respected and guaranteed and that this is not possible if our security programs are so secret that not only the American people but most of our elected Representatives have not been well-informed. We need to know the full extent of these surveillance programs.

We are fully aware that, in the course of maintaining national security, some secrecy is necessary. However, it is clear that the current level of secrecy exceeds our constitutional guarantees of free speech including freedom of the press, protection from illegal search and seizure and the rights of habeas corpus. We feel that our national security can be maintained without infringing on the liberties guaranteed to us by the Constitution of the United States.

We thank you for your courageous acts in publicly bring this problem to the people. Please support House actions in this pursuit.

Sincerely,

Arun Sen, President, Davis Democratic Club

Ed. Note: The DDC Board unanimously endorsed sending this letter to Rep. Garamendi.

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Democratic Newsletter

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The Holiday Party
6 pm, Sat.,
December 7
I-House, Davis

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See the website photo
gallery:

www.davisdemocraticclub.org

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