

Measure E Funds Lamorinda High School Improvements

By Diana LaScala-Grunewald

A new science classroom at Campolindo and a new pool at Acalanes are just two of dozens of upgrades completed or in progress at Lamorinda high schools this year.

In a time of economic downturn, where is the funding for these projects coming from? The answer is Measure E, passed in 2008 to improve instructional classroom technology and school facilities.

One exciting example of a Measure E-funded project is the new science classroom currently under construction at Campolindo High School (Campo), where many students take four years of science classes, and some even take multiple science classes in a year.

In the past, science teachers at Campo have had to switch classrooms throughout the day due to limited space. Accommodating the demand for adequate space has been extremely difficult; it has been especially challenging for teachers to teach lab classes when they only have the passing period to set up.

The new classroom will improve the situation by allowing more teachers their own classrooms, said Campolindo principal Carol Kitchens.

It should benefit students of all

ages, and improve the quality of the labs in the high school biology and chemistry classes. It may also be used to supplement Campo's geology, physics, physiology and environmental science classes. The classroom will have a mounted LCD projector, and eight new lab tables, each with two integrated computers. Additionally, Campo has acquired Vernier probeware, meaning new lab equip-

ment and software that Campo teachers will be incorporating into their regular lab work.

"We are extremely grateful for the continued support of the community," says Amanda Renno, the Science Department chair at Campo. "We know we wouldn't be able to expand our science offerings without it." The new science classroom is scheduled to be completed on December 12th, 2011.

Measure E has funded a wide variety of projects in Lamorinda high schools, including but limited to the following:

Acalanes High School—The new, larger pool is in use; the 3D Art Room (room 506) has been renovated. In the next few months, the small gymnasium floor will be renovated. All of the renovations at Acalanes are projected to use about 13 million dollars of Measure E funding.

Campolindo High School—the digital photo classroom and video classroom have been completed. In the next few months, the new science classroom will be completed. All of the renovations at Campo are projected to use about 22 million dollars of Measure E funding.

Miramonte High School—a new special needs classroom has been completed; a new culinary arts classroom will be ready soon; the small gymnasium will be updated this year. All of the renovations at Miramonte are projected to use about 12 million dollars of Measure E funding.

An independent citizens' oversight committee reviews the use of all Measure E funds.

College Shopping for Students with Learning Differences

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

Although all college bound students should do careful research in order to decide which schools to send an application, this advice is especially important for students with Learning Differences (LD). A visit to each college is even more important for LD and ADHD students. Once the list of colleges is well researched and narrowed down, these students should visit each campus and make a beeline for the Learning Support Center and other offices that provide services for students with special needs.

LD students should start their research with inquiries to the Learning Support Center at each school. (The name of these centers varies a bit from-school-to-school, but every school provides support to LD students). Although colleges are required by law to offer support services, the level of support and types of accommodations vary widely. A phone call to the Learning Support Center is an opportunity to ask about the availability of support and accommodations. The objective is to find the right match between the student and the type and quality of support services offered; accomplishing this objective will help to ensure the student's success in college. Ideally, the support services offered in combination with student's motivation and ability to use these services will put the student on a level playing field with peers.

LD students and their families should be prepared to ask questions that will help them make informed decisions about colleges that are potentially a good match. The following are general questions that can serve as a starting point:

1. Is the Learning Support Center staffed by a Director? What is the administrative structure of the Center? (This information should be available in writing along with staff contact information.)
2. How long has the Center's program been in existence? How has it evolved over time? What kinds of services are currently provided?
3. What type of testing and documentation is required for accommodations? How current must the student's testing be to apply for accommodations?

4. What percent of the undergraduate student body use these services?
5. Is there an additional fee for services?
6. Is the staff specialized in instructional work with LD and ADHD? What Assistive Technology (AT) services do you offer? Do they have an AT expert on staff?
7. What is the procedure for getting extended time for exams and/or projects? How do students arrange for this extended time? Where do students take exams and who proctors?
8. Do the students have counselors that are from the Center's program? How many full-time and part-time counselors are on staff? What is the caseload?
9. Does the student have an academic counselor as well as a counselor in the Learning Support Center? If so, how do the two counselors work together?
10. How are conflicts or disputes resolved? (for example, if a professor is not in compliance with a student's accommodations)
11. What are the most difficult majors or areas of concentration for students with learning challenges to manage successfully at the college?
12. What is the four year graduation rate for students with learning challenges? Is any information provided about success after graduation?
13. Are there students who are currently in the program available to interview?

Answers to these questions will be helpful in the initial stages of screening colleges for students with LD.

In addition, there are students who have learning challenges related to other conditions like anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, depression and bipolar disorders. These students may also benefit from services provided by Learning Support Centers. The Centers are good places to start your research, but also check out the Student Counseling Center (often housed within Student Health Services) since professionals at these facilities may also provide necessary therapeutic, medical and/or pharmacological support.

Each student is unique and so students and their families must prepare

to modify general guidelines and questions in order to obtain the information needed. This is often done best using the help of qualified professionals who can lend support in their respective areas of expertise. The proper input, direction and support helps students with special needs discover which colleges provide the best fit, so they can go on to pursue their goals and aspirations in happy and productive ways.



Elizabeth LaScala Ph.D. guides college, transfer and graduate school applicants through the complex world of admissions. She develops best match college lists, offers personalized interview and essay coaching, and tools and strategies to help students tackle each step of the admissions process with confidence and success. Elizabeth helps students from all backgrounds, including visual and performing arts students and athletes, to maximize financial aid awards. Contact her @ (925) 891-4491 or elizabeth@doingcollege.com.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Acalanes Union
High School District
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette
Wednesday, September 7, 7:30 p.m.

Orinda Union School District
OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
Monday, September 12, 6 p.m.

Lafayette School District
LAFSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
Wednesday, September 14, 7 p.m.

Moraga School District
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
Tuesday, September 13, 7:30 p.m.

MEF and PTA Donations Save Programs, Jobs

Submitted by Erica Zeidenberg

Moraga School District and Campolindo High School will be reinstating programs and teachers for the new school year as a result of the over \$1.5 million donated to Moraga Education Foundation (MEF) and the district's Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) through June 30. Total donations to MEF for the 2011-2012 year came to \$1,519,994 with \$1,430,000 being contributed to the Moraga schools.

At the Moraga School District Governing Board meeting on August 8, the Board approved rescission of layoff notices and reduction-of-hour notices for the coming school year given the success of both organizations' fund raising campaigns.

The additional MEF funds raised during the May Campaign allowed for the reinstatement of the following to elementary schools and middle school:

- elementary physical education teachers restored to 1.6 full-time equivalent for K-5
- librarians restored to 3.2 full-time equivalent for K-8
- reading tutors for K-3

The additional PTA donations provided:

- reinstatement of the Kids Connect program
- K-5 teachers, .23 of a full-time equivalent
- Technology coordinator, .73 full-time equivalent
- Reading tutor substitutes
- Reinstatement of the math boost program
- Support for JM electives
- Support for student programs at JM

MSD Superintendent Bruce Burns said in an email to parents, "On behalf of the Moraga School District, I wish to thank you, the Moraga Education Foundation leadership and contributors, our PTA presidents and their members, and the Moraga community for their donations. Your contributions result in the continuation of the weekly K-5 PE program, all libraries remaining open four days a week, counseling support at all schools, a fully supported elementary Reading Tutor

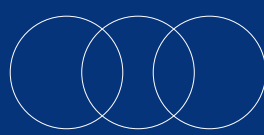
program, and 4th-8th math intervention classes. Whether you made a donation or offered your time and energy to our fund raising efforts, I hope you take great satisfaction in knowing you made a difference for this year's 1,762 students."

Campolindo High School

For Campolindo High School, MEF will contribute \$400,000. Based on district priorities, Campolindo principal Carol Kitchens came up with a list of funding requests for Campolindo. The funds will be split with \$126,000 going to department grants, \$46,000 in classroom lab supplies and \$228,000 to maintaining smaller class sizes, staff development, counseling, tutoring and technology. Some specific areas being supported by MEF's donations are:

- Smaller 9th grade classes and electives
 - Art, Auto technology, computer programming, world language curriculum enhancements
 - Digital photography, drama, instrumental music materials, video production, wood technology
 - Counseling and support services such as the support counselor, peer tutor trainer and coordinator, staff development programs, math tutoring center
 - Classroom technology and curriculum tech coordinator
- The Campolindo Parents Club is contributing \$116,600 to a range of programs and services including:**
- Support services such as English and tutoring centers
 - Classroom technology
 - Staff development
 - Student programs including Model UN, mock trial, robotics, etc.
 - Other curriculum enhancements including social studies, special education, PE/health and more

Mrs. Kitchens said, "The reason Campolindo is ranked among the top high schools in California and the country is directly linked to the incredible amount of support our students and teachers receive from MEF and Parent Club. Thanks for all you do for Campo and look forward to working with you again this year."



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