

May Revise Softens the Blow to School Budgets—Just a Bit

By Andrea A. Firth



Teresa Gerringer

Photo Andrea A. Firth

The usual crowd of school administrators, teacher and classified employee representatives, school board members, and concerned parents gathered in the blistering heat on May 15th to listen to statements by several members of the Contra Costa County school system and their reaction to the Governor's May Revise to the state budget.

"The work that has been done in the community letting the legislature know of our dissatisfaction needs to continue," stated Joseph Owick, Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools. "The Governor's May Revise is moving in the right direction but it has a long way to go," he added.

Teresa Gerringer, a member of the Lafayette School District Governing Board, concurred. "While the May Revise is an improvement over the January budget, we can not become complacent," she stated. "We need to continue to write letters, send emails, make phone calls, and stand together to protect education funding," she implored.

In a subsequent communication to stakeholders of the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) about the impact of the May Revise on public school fund-

ing, Superintendent Jim Negri acknowledged that the Governor's decision to fully fund Proposition 98 is an improvement over the state's January budget. However, Negri noted that California public schools would receive \$4.2 billion less in state funds next year with no cost-of living-adjustment for employees and in the face of increased operating costs. Funding for categorical programs, such as class size reduction and counseling services, would be cut by 10%, although AUHSD would be able to absorb some of these cuts through parent club and foundation donations.

Negri found the Governor's plan to borrow against future lottery earnings troubling due to the proposed cap to the lottery revenues contributed to schools and due to the potential risk to education funding should lottery revenues be insufficient to repay the proposed loan. Negri also noted that the impact of the need for voter approval in November for the lottery proposal to be viable on the passage of the state budget this summer was unclear.

What seems to be clear is that more will transpire over the next several weeks as budget deliberations continue.