

**Cabrillo Education Foundation
Community Forum
The Future of Public Education in our Coastside Community
June 4, 2009**

Meeting Summary Notes and Next Steps

Overview

The Cabrillo Education Foundation (CEF) hosted a community forum and discussion on June 4, 2009 to discuss the funding forecast for our public schools and to obtain community input on how we might best support our schools in the years ahead. Approximately 85 members of the community attended the event, including representatives of the school board and CEF, the city of Half Moon Bay, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, several local business owners and staff, and parents and educators from all of the public schools.

After a brief introduction and an overview of the state of funding for public schools, participants broke into several discussion groups of 10-12 people to address the following questions:

1. *What is your reaction to the information about anticipated cuts to public education funding?*
2. *Do you have ideas about what we can do as a community to:*
 - a. *coordinate current efforts to raise funds for individual programs*
 - b. *maximize current fundraising results*
 - c. *educate the community about funding challenges facing our schools*
 - d. *provide funding to close the likely CUSD budget gap in the future?*
3. *What are the community strengths we can build on?*
4. *What are the barriers we will need to address?*
5. *What are you willing to do to help with this effort?*

Discussion Summary

CEF assigned a facilitator and note-taker to each of the discussion groups and compiled over 6 pages of typed notes based on participant input. Overall, the group discussions were very active and produced a wide-range of input. Certain common themes emerged, including:

- Participants generally expressed significant concern over the state of California's financial commitment to education. Sentiment was expressed that California was in many ways stripping public education down to the bare minimum, leaving local communities to fend for themselves to support the level of education they wanted for their community. While there is some anger over this, there also appeared to be a growing sentiment of acceptance and recognition that public education is no longer "free".

- A wide-range of ideas was expressed around how to raise funds for coastside public schools--from a parcel tax to large fundraising events (e.g. concert). Other creative ideas included formation of an assessment district, promoting voluntary tuition, and sharing fundraising experiences and opportunities across the schools. There was generally strong sentiment that we need to tap into the non-parent community much more, including both local residents and visitors. Several participants suggested we capitalize on the unique natural recreational opportunities of the coastside as a way to bring in new revenues for the schools.
- A common theme emerged around the strong sense of community that exists on the coastside, while at the same time we are a very diverse and idiosyncratic community. Many of the groups suggested we need to do a better job of reaching out and explaining the state of school funding and related needs, and that by doing so more people will come forward to support fund-raising efforts. There was also substantial input that all of the school fundraising events need to do a better job of reaching out to the community more broadly and attracting a larger, non-parent community. The need to reach out and better engage the Latino community was also identified.
- Another common theme emerged that we need to make a better connection between fundraising and where the dollars are spent. In other words, we need to clearly and specifically state how funds will be used and how they will benefit students.
- There was also considerable opinion expressed that we need to continue to increase our efforts to be vocal with the California legislature regarding some of the broader political reforms that are needed to provide better state support for public education. A number of initiatives are now underway and there was a strong sense that the coastside should join other communities across California in pushing for state-wide reform.
- Last, the participants indicated a strong desire to continue the conversation and engage in additional efforts to identify our best path forward, as well as to actively support future fundraising efforts. Many suggested we need to be increasingly strategic about this, and continue to work as proactively as possible. A number of groups suggested we make better use of technology and social networking. CEF was thanked for its leadership and urged to continue its efforts to bring the community together.

Next Steps

The meeting concluded with a short evaluation. The tabulated results show participants had a high level of appreciation for the agenda, discussion and format, and were very willing to continue to engage in an active dialogue. CEF is currently discussing plans to hold a second forum later this summer (or early fall), and will be reaching out to the community as we begin to develop the agenda and timeline for this effort.