

Educationally Speaking

January 2012

Due to declining enrollment and inadequate state funding, the Fallbrook Union High School District is again in the position of reducing programs and services that support students. While this unfortunate reality is not unique to our District, the impact will be.

One of the major factors adding to our challenge is the increasing expectations about our schools responsibilities to our students. When public schools originated back in 1640, they were established to teach basic reading, some writing, and arithmetic skills, and cultivate values that serve a democratic society. According to Jamie Vollmer, in his publication "The Ever Increasing Burden on America's Public Schools," since 1900 the curriculum expectations and additional duties required of public schools have expanded significantly. The following highlights some of the major shifts of responsibility to public schools:

1900 -1910	Nutrition and Immunization
1910-1930	Physical Education, Vocational Education, Home Economics
1940s	School lunch programs
1950s	Expanded math, science, music, foreign language, and art education. Added safety and driver's education
1960s	Consumer Education, Career Education
1970s	Special Education, Character Education, Drug and Alcohol Abuse Education
1980s	Multicultural/Ethnic Education, Bilingual Education, Global Education, Computer Education
1990s	HIV/AIDS Education, Conflict Resolution, At-Risk and Dropout Prevention, Service Learning
2000s	No Child Left Behind; Anti-Harassment Policies, Health and Wellness Programs
2010s	Race to the Top

The above is not an exhaustive list. Just this school year alone, the District was expected to ensure whooping cough immunizations for all students along with new curriculum expectations.

What should we conclude? First, schools cannot do it all. There is not enough time. Over the past century, though these expectations have increased, the typical length of the school year and length of school day remain the same. Second, schools cannot do it all. There is not enough money. Money provides staff and resources to meet the myriad of expectations.

During the next few months, due to reduced education funding and declining enrollment, the Board of Trustees will need to reduce programs and services in order to align expenses with income. These decisions will not be easy. The Board is interested in public input regarding both priorities for continued implementation and those areas the public is receptive to program/service reduction and/or elimination. Input can be provided during regular Board meetings or through communications directly to the Superintendent's office at dmitchell@fuhisd.net. Please consider providing your ideas to us as the District wrestles with these issues.

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Superintendent