



**Volume 1**  
**September 10, 2009**

**Upcoming Dates:**

- Sept. 8 - Registration for After School Enrichment Classes Begins
- Sept. 10 - Back to School Night for Grades 1-6. Schedule: grades 1-3 from 6:00-6:45 p.m., information fair in multi from 6:45-7:15 p.m., grades 4-6 from 7:15-8:00 p.m. Sixth grade outdoor education program 8:05-8:45 p.m.
- Sept. 17, 10:00 a.m. - Author Jim LaMarche for Grades 1-3
- Sept. 11 - TB Test Reading, Redwood Room, District Office, 2:30-3:30
- Sept. 25, 6:30 p.m. - Ice Cream Social
- Sept. 28 - After School Enrichment Classes Begin
- Oct 3, 9:00a.m-12:00 Noon - Garden Work Day and Potluck

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# McNear

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## Newsletter

[www.mcnearelementary.org](http://www.mcnearelementary.org)

### Principal's Message

What an exciting start we are off to this year. Although things didn't unfold quite as any of us expected, I have truly enjoyed becoming part of the learning community at McNear Elementary. I have met many students in their classrooms and on the playground. Parents have talked with me in the office, the hallway, or at meetings. The past 4 weeks of work with our staff has been amazing. I have quickly realized that McNear Elementary is a wonderful and exciting place to be.

The past three weeks have been full of energy, emotion, and concern, but they were also full of commitment and renewal. We were forced to say goodbye to a valued teacher last week as Mr. Boyce's class was reconfigured. We faced some hard decisions as a learning community. Yet in the midst of huge challenges, we saw our community pull together. The support we gave to students as parents and as teachers through a hard transition should encourage us all. It is rare and unique to see a community galvanize itself into action so quickly. We should be proud of the community response to advocate for our students at a site and a district level. However, what most impressed me was the shift towards working with the school to support our students as the changes drew near. I feel fortunate to work with parents and teachers that can draw together so tightly to press through such a challenging time.

One of the many lessons I learned through this process is the importance of communication. We will continue our efforts to be honest, open, and timely in our communication home. In addition to notes and letters, we will publish our bi-monthly newsletter. Most of this communication will also be shared through our website as well. Our school website, [mcnearelementary.org](http://mcnearelementary.org), provides current updates, calendar and other information. I strongly encourage all families with internet access to join the McNear School e-list through the link on the bottom left of our webpage. Most letters home from our office will also be posted on this e-list. So if you worry about letters actually making the journey from the school to your hand, we do have a back-up in place. If you have a need to communicate with the office or your classroom teacher, you can always call. However, email is often more effective and the address for each staff member can be found on our website as well.

Please join us for Back to School Night this evening, September 10, 2009. Primary grades (1-3) will meet from 6:00 - 6:45. From 6:45 - 7:15 the PTA is sponsoring an "information fair" in the Multi. Stop by to learn about activities and services that are available this year at McNear and see how you can become involved! From 7:15-8:00, upper grade classes will meet. At the end of the evening, from 8:05-8:45 p.m., sixth grade parents are invited to remain for a discussion of the sixth grade outdoor education program. Attending Back to School Night is a unique opportunity to discuss curriculum and classroom details with your child's teacher that you don't want to miss. Although your teacher would love to discuss individual concerns with you, tonight is not the night. Feel free to schedule another time to meet with the teacher where they can sit down and give the discussion the attention it deserves.

As we move forward, the outlook is incredibly bright. We will work together to continue the things that have been successful and to find new ways to reach the needs of our children. We can look expectantly to this year as we prepare our children to move boldly into their future.

Jason Sutter  
 Principal

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## **WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL FAMILIES!**

It is again my joy to be at McNear Elementary school as a full time counselor, serving you and your children. I'd like to provide an outline of what some of the years activities will be so that you can understand the scope of services here, and access me on behalf of your child as needed.

**Group Counseling Services:** With signed parent permission students can participate in groups. Most groups will meet weekly for 30- 45 minutes, and will last 6-10 weeks. Groups are put together by grade level and need. Scheduling of groups is done in coordination with teachers and as much as possible will not interfere with basic academic curriculum. Here is a listing of some of the groups that are planned already.

**Girls Circle:** Supportive 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade group for girls around friendships, peer issues, and self esteem building.

**Friendship Groups:** Groups designed to assist kids in building those skills that they need to make and retain friends, communicate in healthy ways, resolve peer conflicts. Often we play together, practicing our skills in real time.

**Family Transitions:** Assists students to successfully deal with emotions around divorce. Sharing stories with other's helps to normalize feelings, gain support and process loss. May help reduce anger or outbursts at home.

**Stress Busters:** A group that reduces the symptoms of anxiety. We learn to recognize stress, our body's reactions to stress, and practice stress reduction techniques. Great for those kids who are afraid of making mistakes, have separation anxiety or worry too much.

**Anger Management:** For kids who express regular bouts of anger and have a difficult time soothing themselves. Teaches healthy communication, and safe ways to release energy.

**Kindergarten Groups:** Boosts those skills needed to thrive in the school environment like sharing, taking turns, being flexible, reaching out to others, accepting differences in others, identifying and expressing emotions, and being proud of your own strengths.

**Individual Counseling Services:** On a limited basis individual counseling services are available. Determination for individual counseling will be done in coordination with parents.

**Parent consultations & referrals to outside services:** Schedule a confidential meeting with me to discuss your concerns about your child. I'd be happy to assist you to manage problem behaviors or improve your parenting confidence. Resources are given to assist families to locate quality supportive services outside the school environment.

**Parenting Classes:** Parenting classes will be offered in two formats. In the fall, and in coordination with Grant School, we will again be offering Parent Expectations Support Achievement (PESA). This was a successful 6-week class that focused on parent-child interactions to increase family bonding, improve children's self esteem and support critical thinking skills. We had excellent feedback from participants who attended the last session, and who really valued the conversations and support they received from other parents.

I also will be offering monthly parenting topic talks in which parents could attend a one night meeting to get tips and receive support to address such things as homework habits, courtesy, increasing parent-child communication, sibling relationships, and more!

**Positive School Environment:** I am coordinating closely with Janis Phillips, our Student Advisor, to encourage healthy and safe behaviors on the playground.

**Recess Buddies:** Students who would benefit from peer support towards increased confidence, joining in to play, or meeting others may be paired with a peer volunteer at intermittent recesses.

**School wide campaigns:** Student leaders will assist Janis and I in implementing awareness campaigns. These campaigns will be designed to increase positive behaviors among students and will encourage such things as standing up for others, positive self talk, giving appreciations, or valuing individuality and differences.

**Falcon Feathers:** A positive reward system in which individual students are recognized monthly for exceptional efforts to be safe, be respectful or be responsible.

If you are interested in these services, or have questions for me please contact me at the school number or by cell phone at (707) 249-3134.

Warmly,

Nicole Renae, Guidance Counselor

### **Welcome Back From Janet Hayes, Reading Specialist**

Welcome back to school. I know that everyone is excited to be here and ready to start a fresh new school year. Now is the time to put into place strong reading habits that will help throughout the year. Reading is a fun way to pass the time, but it is also essential for school success. So, let's look at a few ways to help our children be successful and have fun in the process.

Remember the fun you had with your little ones as they curled up in your lap as you read them their favorite book? Your children remember it, too. We are never too old to enjoy being read to and it is a wonderful way to expose your children to stories that they may not be able to read on their own, but would love to hear you read. Taking time to read aloud to children builds vocabulary, stimulates their imagination and helps build background knowledge that will help them in their school studies. If you do not have time to read aloud, think about going to the library and getting some books on tape. Driving time can now become story time.

Set aside twenty minutes each day to read with your child. As you listen to your child read, try to think about things they are doing right. It is always tempting to correct their mistakes, but it is more important for the child to learn to correct themselves. Point out what your child did right, such as: they noticed the word started with "cl" when they said "clap" for "click". You might say something like, "That word starts like 'clap', but it has a different ending sound. What sound do you hear at the end?"

Help your child make connections to the things they are reading by asking questions. Most readers will enjoy books and stories that they can relate to their own life experiences. The connections can be personal, where the story has many similar characteristics to the reader's life. Or, the connection may be that the story makes them think of other books they have read with similar ideas or themes. This can lead to discussions about how things are similar and different. A third connection is to something that the child may have experienced in school or in life. Perhaps they are reading about a place with lots of snow and they remember a discussion in school that no two snowflakes are alike. When students make connections they are bridging their knowledge. The more this is done, the easier it becomes to read and understand new material.

I hope everyone has a wonderful school year reading new books and learning new information. Please feel free to come in and talk to me with any questions your have about how to help your child with their reading.

Janet Hayes, Reading Specialist

## eScrip

Would you like to raise money for our school? McNear Elementary can benefit from things that you already do!

**“What is eScrip?”** eScrip is a California-based corporation that helps us raise money for our school. School supporters register their existing grocery cards (i.e. Safeway Club Card), debit, ATM, and credit cards to receive a monthly contribution to their designated school’s account based on purchases.

**“How do I do that?”** Visit [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) to get started! Also send your extended family and friends to sign up to benefit McNear Elementary. The Safeway Club Card is the only card that needs to be renewed at this site every year. Did you know that by going to the eScrip website and launching the website for your favorite online shopping merchants (think Amazon, Macy’s, and Nordstrom’s!) our school could automatically earn 18% cash back?!? Check it out!!

**“What other programs help support our schools by shopping at my favorite grocery stores?”** If you shop at Raley’s...Stop by the school office to pick up your free Raley’s “Quality of Life card.” Activate your card by visiting [www.raleys.com](http://www.raleys.com) and searching for “Quality of Life card.” Scan this card when you check-out at the market.

If you shop at Lucky’s...Stop by the school office and pick up a free “S.H.A.R.E.S. Card.” Scan this card when you check-out at the market.

Do you have (or want to have) a Target RED Card credit card? Apply for this at any Target and simply specify McNear as the school beneficiary.

Please contact me if you have any questions on how to get started, OR with ideas that have worked for you supporting any of these programs?

Don’t forget to check our [www.mcnearelementary.org](http://www.mcnearelementary.org). Click on the blue “Support McNear!” button.

Have a wonderful school year!

Jennifer Mattox, McNear Elementary eScrip Coordinator  
[jjmattox@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jjmattox@sbcglobal.net) Phone 782-0599

## Recycle Empty Printer Cartridges

Attention all parents!! Don’t throw away that empty cartridge! Bring it to school!

Our school has launched a fundraising project with the help of an inject recycling company, Empties4Cash. Empty inkjet cartridges can be recycled and manufactured. Our school will receive up to \$4.00 for each cartridge turned in. This will directly benefit our school and the students, not to mention it is great for the environment.

You can help! Any inkjet cartridge with a print head can be recycled, regardless of brand or type. Do you have an HP, Lexmark, Xerox, Compaq, Brother, Dell, Canon, or Apple printer? Bring in your empty OEM inkjet cartridges (placed in the original box that you would have thrown away to keep it safe from spills and damages, or a Ziploc bag) to the school. (Note: Epson cartridges cannot be recycled - they don't have a print head.)

Drop off cartridges in bin inside the school office lobby. Thank you for your support.

Contact Wendy Barton at [asp\\_coder@comcast.net](mailto:asp_coder@comcast.net) or 707-778-8490.

## **Recycle Cell Phones and Raise Money for McNear!**

Wondering what to do with your old cell phones? You can help earn money for our school! McNear has signed up to be part of Race to Recycle; it's a program in which we collect old intact cell phones and turn them in to Motorola for payment by check. We can collect up to \$21,000 per calendar year!

### **Here's how you can help:**

- ◆ Find old cell phones at home
- ◆ Hold collections at your workplace\*
- ◆ Ask your friends, neighbors and relatives to donate their old cell phones

The school office lobby has a drop-off box, simply place the cell phones in the box!

For more information on this program, please visit [www.racetorecycle.com](http://www.racetorecycle.com). Or contact Wendy Barton (McNear's coordinator of this fundraising effort) at [asp\\_coder@comcast.net](mailto:asp_coder@comcast.net), phone 707-778-8490. \*Printable downloads that you can post at your workplace are available here: <http://www.racetorecycle.com/posters.html>

**Please note:** We no longer are able to accept batteries for recycling. Thank you.

## **Art Docent Program**

Do you love art and like to work with children? Absolutely no art experience is necessary - we give it all to you (detailed instruction and training, materials and teaching partner, too!) Volunteer time is flexible and training time is minimal. Contact Alyse Breece for more information at 778-4958, or [abreece@pet.k12.ca.us](mailto:abreece@pet.k12.ca.us).

## **After School Enrichment**

Are you looking for ways to sneak a bit more education into your child's school day? Want your child to flex her creative talents or explore an interest? Or do you simply need an extra hour before pickup? Look no further than After School Enrichment (ASE)! ASE offers children unique and stimulating opportunities to expand their knowledge across a range of topics under the guidance of teachers and experienced parent educators.

Our fall line up includes art studio, yoga, Lego-inspired engineering, ceramics, Science Adventures®, cooking, heirloom crafts, and computer science. For a minimal fee your child will have a fun and rewarding experience right here on campus. Be on the lookout for the highly-anticipated ASE fall schedule in your child's backpack starting September 8th. All classes are booked on a first-come first-served basis.

Additionally, we are actively seeking parents with unique skill sets or areas of expertise to share with our students. Please send your ideas and inquiries to Anne Digges ([digges@comcast.net](mailto:digges@comcast.net)) or Susan Cook ([cobyandsue@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cobyandsue@sbcglobal.net)) for this paid teaching opportunity.

## Welcome Back From Janis Phillips, Student Advisor

I hope you all had as fabulous a summer as I did. I had the fantastic opportunity to work all summer at the Petaluma Bounty Educational Farm with a group of at risk teens for the Summer Youth Ecology Corps. What an amazing experience at a beautiful place. If you haven't been to the farm yet, I recommend going to check it out.

This year is already shaping up to be fabulous as well. I have been hearing about all of the trips that everyone took as well as all the relaxing family time spent close to home. Everyone is so refreshed!

I started in the classrooms on September 1<sup>st</sup>. We have been reviewing the playground rules and discussing what is the same and different about all the students new classrooms. I am really excited about having a full year with all the students. I know it will help us all get started on the right foot.

Just one reminder, when leaving the school through the staff parking lot please remember to use the sidewalk. It is for your safety as well as your students since many staff members leave campus in their vehicles at dismissal time.

To all the McNear families, new and returning, I say welcome back and look forward to seeing all of you throughout the year.

Janis Phillips  
Student Advisor

## Volunteer At McNear School

There are many different ways to volunteer here at McNear School, and any amount of time you can give is greatly appreciated. To volunteer in the classroom or as a room parent, please coordinate directly with your child's teacher. For all other volunteer opportunities, a **Volunteer Form** was distributed last week with each student identifying numerous areas for volunteer assistance. We recognize the busy lives of all families here at McNear School, and appreciate any amount of time that can be given inside or outside of the school to support our students and our school community. Be assured that you will not be taking on anything alone, but working together with other McNear parents to accomplish these important activities that help enrich the educational experience our children receive here at McNear.

In particular, we are still seeking a volunteer for these key positions:

**Dine and Donate Coordinator**

**McNear Schoolwear Sales**

**Fundraising Coordinator**

**ELAC Liaison**

Please contact Volunteer Coordinators, Brandi Gordon ([bgordonleno@aol.com](mailto:bgordonleno@aol.com), 781-7318) or Gary Hegenbart ([ghegenbart@gmail.com](mailto:ghegenbart@gmail.com), 338-0914) with any questions regarding volunteering for these or other roles. And, thank you for being an active participant in our children's education! It really does take a village...

## **Box Tops for Education**

Box top collection sheets have been sent home. Every sheet that is brought back to school with 10 box tops gives \$1 to the school. If every student brought in one sheet each month, that would be over \$400 each month for the school! Each sheet enters you into a drawing for a McNear Falcon sweatshirt or hat. The more collection sheets you bring in, the more chances you have to win!! The winner will be drawn on September 30th.

## **McNear Absence Line**

The McNear Absence Line number is 778-4859. This is an answering machine and is set to record messages 24 hours a day. Please call this number if your child is absent, or if you know your child will be late to school due to an appointment. Thank you.

If you need to pick up your child early, PLEASE come to the office - don't go directly to the classroom - and we will call your child from his/her class. Thank you.

## **Medications at School**

Please be advised that ALL medications brought to school (prescription medication, over-the-counter medications, aspirin, Tylenol, cough drops, eye drops, vitamins, etc.) MUST be kept in the office and MUST (NO EXCEPTIONS!) have a doctor's approval (forms are available in the office). This form must be completed by the physician, detailing the medication (time to take, amount, etc.) and signed by both the physician and the parent. This is a STATE LAW and we must abide by it. We appreciate your understanding and adhering to these very important requirements.

If your child had medication at school last year and will do so again this year (inhaler, Epi pen, aspirin, etc.), we must have a new form completed by the physician and the parent. This must be done each year. Please stop by the office to pick up a form. If you have any questions, please call us at 778-4752.

## **Please Sign In/Out at Office**

Anytime you come on campus, either to work in a classroom or pick up your child, you MUST sign in/out in the office. If you are going to be working in a classroom, we will have you sign in and wear a Volunteer/Visitor nametag. Our students know to look for nametags on adults who are on campus; they know that any adult wearing a nametag has signed in at the office and that they are a "safe" visitor.

## **BIENVENIDOS AL AÑO ESCOLAR 2009-2010**

*Por Superintendente Greta Viguie*

Bienvenidos al año escolar 2009-2010. La escuela y el personal del distrito están cometidos a apoyar a los estudiantes para que tengan una buena experiencia este año escolar. Padres/guardianes y miembros de la comunidad tienen un papel crítico apoyando el éxito de las escuelas. A medida que transcurre el comienzo del año escolar, le pedimos que considere hacer un tiempo libre para involucrarse en una o más de las escuelas del distrito trabajando como voluntario en el salón de clase, mentor de programas, ofrecer una presentación, o proveer programas para aprendices a través de negocios locales. Cuando los padres y la comunidad se involucran los estudiantes son quienes se benefician. Estudios han comprobado que cuando los padres y la comunidad se involucran en la educación de los estudiantes aumentan los logros de los estudiantes en la escuela. Entonces, ¡llame a uno de nuestros directores y pregunte como puede empezar a involucrarse a partir de hoy!

Como habrá leído, los distritos escolares han sido significadamente impactados por la crisis fiscal estatal. Al reducirse los ingresos monetarios del Estado, tuvo como resultado para las Escuelas de Petaluma la eliminación de la escuela de verano, reducciones en maestros, personal de administración y de apoyo en las escuelas y a nivel del distrito, eliminación de tres días de desarrollo del personal que resultan en una disminución del 1.62% en el salario para todos los empleados del distrito, reducción de consejeros y personal clasificado, y aumento de estudiantes en las clases. La proyección del presupuesto del Distrito se equipara la presupuesto pasado por la legislatura de nuestro estado y aprobado por el Gobernador, entonces, por ahora no necesitaremos hacer más cortes. Como el Presupuesto Estatal que fue aprobado todavía tiene un déficit significativo esta la posibilidad de que el Estado nuevamente haga cortes a mitad del año, durante el invierno.

Los estándares y expectativas del Estado para nuestros estudiantes están entre las más altas de la nación y sin embargo California está casi último en la cantidad que gasta por estudiante. Simplemente, esto no es aceptable. Ahora más que nunca es el momento para que los ciudadanos aboguen por la educación pública y hagan que sus voces sean escuchadas en Sacramento.

Se determinó que la escuela preparatoria Petaluma High School era el recinto escolar con más necesidades, por lo cual durante el verano se completó un número de proyectos de mantenimiento, incluyendo pintura, techos y pavimentación. Estos proyectos se hicieron a través de una combinación de fondos del Estado y del distrito que están restringidos a proyectos de construcción.

Se completaron dos proyectos importantes en los recintos de las dos escuelas preparatorias. En el recinto escolar de Petaluma High School, se completó un área de ocho salones de Arte, Media y Entretenimiento (AME) Este proyecto se pagó con una combinación de fondos para Fondos de Educación del Estado para Carreras Tecnológicas y Honorarios de Urbanización del Distrito. Este proyecto reemplaza los salones portables que estaban localizados en el lote del estacionamiento y los portables que estaban en el Ala-E En los recintos de Casa Grande, se completaron un nuevo salón de drama y expansión del edificio de música y la adición a la biblioteca de un lab de computación. El salón de drama va a reemplazar al salón portable del frente de la escuela y está sustentado a través de Honorarios de Urbanización del Distrito, Bonos Estatales y Fondos de Bonos del Distrito.

Estoy encantada de presentar a Jason Sutter, el Nuevo Director de la escuela McNear Elementary School. Jason ha estado en la educación por los pasados 12 años, comenzando en Napa como maestro de quinto año y terminando como maestro de K/1. Del salón de clase, pasó a trabajar a las Oficinas del Condado de Educación en Alameda, Napa, y Solano junto a una organización llamada California Technology Assistance Project, trabajando con los maestros para integrar la tecnología al salón de clase y con los distritos para planear y escribir becas para obtener mas tecnología para los salones de clase.

Para apoyar el éxito de todos los estudiantes, maestros y administradores a través del distrito están trabajando en colaboración para identificar las necesidades de aprendizaje de los estudiantes y diseñar oportunidades de aprendizaje para atender estas necesidades diversas. La colaboración de los maestros es esencial para apoyar este trabajo. En Petaluma, somos muy afortunados de que tanto la Junta Directiva como la comunidad de los padres apoyen la salida de clases mas temprano los miércoles, con el propósito de que los maestros colaboren entre si.

Con el apoyo del Consejo del Plan de Estudios de K-12 maestros y administradores continuarán reuniéndose en comunidades de aprendizaje profesional usando el proceso de investigación y datos del estudiante para identificar prácticas efectivas y guías de instrucción.

Además, bajo la dirección del Comité del Plan de Estudios de K-12, a medida que el nuevo año comienza, usaremos nuestro Propios Estándares corrientes. Esos estándares se han publicado en el sitio de la Red del distrito. Los planes para actividades de primaria y secundaria se describen a continuación.

Al nivel de primaria, el trabajo del comité del Distrito incluirá: un plan piloto de forma de reporte basada en estándares, y Evaluación de Escritura de Primaria. En adición se ofrecerá desarrollo profesional relacionado a los nuevos materiales adoptados para matemáticas y ciencias para los maestros de primaria.

Al nivel de secundaria, el Comité de K-12 tiene planes de continuar la identificación y aprobación de evaluaciones departamentales comunes que reflejan las prioridades de nuestros Propios Estándares. De cada escuela para 7-12, representantes de cada departamento colaborarán para refinar o desarrollar rubricas para medir el progreso de los estudiantes. Las rubricas de evaluación de escritura del distrito son uno de los primeros productos del trabajo en colaboración. Además, maestros y administradores continuaran usando un programa llamado Edusoft como herramienta para desarrollar evaluaciones y monitorear resultados analizando el trabajo y progreso individual del estudiante.

Casa Grande High y Petaluma High continúan enfocándose en las metas de identificación de la comunidad y el personal de la escuela para (1) Conexión Familia & Escuela, (2) Personalización, y (3) Plan de Estudio Auténtico. Usted puede ayudar a que la conexión entre Familia y Escuela sea mas fuerte al involucrarse en actividades como ser mentor de estudiantes dar una presentación en una clase como invitado, y proveyendo oportunidades para los estudiantes para aplicar lo que aprenden en la escuela en los negocios e industrias locales. Por favor, llame a su Director o a Ellen Lewis, Empresaria de la Comunidad, 778-4702, y pregunte en que forma puede involucrarse.

Si quiere aprender más sobre nuestro Distrito, mire nuestra página de la Red [www.petalumacityschools.org](http://www.petalumacityschools.org). En nuestra página de la Red encontrará un libreto informativo titulado *About our Schools*.

Agradecemos su apoyo y involucramiento en nuestras escuelas. Sabemos que solos no podemos lograrlo. Al trabajar juntos compartiendo recursos, conocimiento, y habilidades educamos mejor a nuestros estudiantes. Espero mirarlos en los eventos y reuniones de nuestras escuelas a través del año

Sinceramente,

Greta Viguie, Ed.D.  
Superintendente



## **WELCOME TO THE 2009-2010 SCHOOL YEAR**

*By Superintendent Greta Viguie*

Welcome to the 2009-2010 school year. The school and district staffs are looking forward to supporting students to experience a meaningful and productive school year. Parents/guardians and community members play a critical role in supporting school success. As the school year begins, please consider making time to get involved with one or more of the districts' schools through volunteering in the classroom, mentor programs, being a guest speaker, or providing internships through local businesses. Students benefit greatly from parent and community involvement. Research has proven that parent and community involvement in students' education does increase student achievement at school. So, call a principal and ask how you can get involved today!

As you have read, school districts have been significantly impacted by the state fiscal crisis. Reduced revenue from the state to Petaluma City Schools has resulted in the elimination of summer school, reductions in teachers, administration and support staff at the site and district levels, elimination of the three staff development days that has resulted in a 1.62% decrease in salary for all district employees, reductions in counselors and classified staff, and increased class size. The District budget projections matched the budget that was passed by our state legislature and approved by the Governor so, for now we will not need to make more cuts. Because the State Budget that was approved still has a significant deficit, there is the likelihood that the State will again make mid-year cuts this winter.

The State's standards and expectations for our students are among the highest in the nation yet California is near last in the nation in the amount that it spends per student. This simply is not acceptable. Now more than ever is the time for citizens to be advocates for public education and to let your voice be heard in Sacramento.

Petaluma High School was determined to be the campus of greatest need and over the summer the school had a number of deferred maintenance projects completed including painting, roofing and paving. These projects were done through a combination of state and district funds that are restricted to construction projects.

Two major projects were completed on the two comprehensive high school campuses. On the Petaluma High School Campus, an eight classroom Art, Media and Entertainment (AME) facility is complete. The facility is being paid for with a combination of State Career Tech Education Funds and District Developer Fees. This facility replaces the leased portables that have been located in the parking lot and the old E-Wing portables. On the Casa Grande campus, a new

drama classroom and expansion to the music building and an addition of a computer lab to the library have been completed. The drama class will replace a leased portable in the front of the campus and is being funded through a combination of District Developer Fees and State Bond and District Bond Funds.

I am pleased to introduce Jason Sutter, the new Principal at McNear Elementary School. Jason has been in education for the past 12 years, beginning in Napa as a fifth grade teacher and finishing as a K/1 teacher. From the classroom he moved to work for the County Offices of Education in Alameda, Napa, and Solano with an organization called the California Technology Assistance Project, where he worked with teachers to integrate technology in the classroom and with districts to plan and write grants for getting technology into classrooms.

To support greater success of all of our students, teachers and administrators across the district are working collaboratively to identify students' learning needs and design learning opportunities to meet these identified diverse needs. Teacher collaboration is essential for supporting this work. In Petaluma, we are very fortunate that our Board and parent community support early release Wednesdays for the purposes of teacher collaboration.

With the support of the K-12 Curriculum Council, teachers and administrators will continue to meet in professional learning communities and use the inquiry process and student data to identify effective practice and guide instruction. Also under the direction of the K-12 Curriculum Committee, as the new school year begins, we will use of our common Power Standards. Those standards have been posted on the district website. Plans for elementary and secondary activities are described below.

At the elementary level, District committee work will include: pilot of a standards-based reporting form, and the Elementary Writing Assessment. In addition professional development related to the newly adopted math and science materials will be provided for elementary teachers.

At the secondary level, the K-12 Committee has plans to continue the identification and approval of common departmental assessments that reflect the priorities of the Power Standards. From each 7-12 site, department representatives will collaborate to refine or develop rubrics for use in measuring student progress. The district writing assessment rubrics are some of the first products from the collaboration. Also, teachers and administrators will continue to use software called Edusoft as a tool to develop assessments and monitor results by analyzing individual student work and progress.

Casa Grande High and Petaluma High are continuing to focus on the community and school staffs' identified goals of (1) Family & School Connections, (2) Personalization, and (3) Authentic Curriculum. You can help strengthen the family and school connections by becoming involved in activities such as mentoring students, being a guest speaker in classrooms, and providing

opportunities for students to apply what they are learning in schools through internships in local business and industry. Please call your principal or Ellen Lewis, Community Entrepreneur, 778-4702, and ask how you can become involved.

To learn more about the District, checkout the District web site at [www.petalumacityschools.org](http://www.petalumacityschools.org). An informative booklet about our schools is on our web site under the heading, *About our Schools*.

Thank you for your support and involvement in our schools. We know that we cannot do it alone. By working together sharing resources, knowledge, and skills we will better educate our students. I look forward to seeing you at school site events and meetings throughout the year.

Sincerely,

Greta Viguie, Ed.D.  
Superintendent