



750 College Avenue
Kentfield, CA 94904
(415) 458-5130
Fax (415) 458-5138
Liz Schott,
Superintendent
www.kentfieldschools.org

Board of Trustees

Davina Goldwasser
Sarah Killingsworth
Heather McPhail Sridharan
David Riedel
Quoc Tran

Bacich Elementary School

699 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.
Kentfield, CA 94904
Sally B. Peck, Principal
(415) 925-2220
Fax (415) 925-2226

Kent Middle School

800 College Avenue
Kentfield, CA 94904
Grant Althouse, Principal
(415) 458-5970
Fax (415) 458-5973

January 9, 2020

Dear Kentfield School District (KSD) Community,

Happy new year!

We have five timely updates we would like to share with you. As always, your feedback and involvement in any (or all) of these initiatives is valued and welcome.

1. January-February Finance Committee Meetings
2. Superintendent Search
3. New KSD Strategic Plan
4. College of Marin (COM) litigation
5. KSD construction completed on time and on budget

1. January-February Finance Committee Meetings

During our December 10th board meeting, our District Business Official Kirsten Starsiak presented the KSD's [first interim budget report](#). In the [presentation](#), **district administrative staff recommended that we can meet our financial obligations for the next three years only after reducing \$1 million in expenditures in the 2020-21 projected budget**. This was not unexpected since we knew that by giving a 2% salary increase for 2019-2020 and a 2.5% salary increase for 2020-2021 to our valued teachers and staff, we would need to make expenditure reductions for the 2020-2021 year.

Last spring, we listened to, and agreed with feedback from our teachers and community during negotiations with the KTA (our teachers' union) that giving all of our teachers/staff a raise is an important budget priority, even if it means making difficult decisions regarding reductions of programs and staff. The KTA has committed to being part of the collaborative process to help recommend the cuts necessary to balance our budget.

As board members, we take our fiduciary responsibility seriously to make prudent financial decisions for the short and long-term health of our district on behalf of all our students. We do not take this process lightly and remain committed to meet our community's expectations that KSD students have the highest quality teachers paid competitive salaries, and that retention of our amazing teachers/staff is a priority.

To this end, we have tasked our [Finance Committee](#) to meet weekly in January and early February in order to identify potential savings and recommendations for expenditure reductions. The Finance Committee's recommendations will be presented during our February 11th board meeting for consideration. Anyone with an interest in

contributing their time and expertise to this critical process is welcome. As with all of our Board Committees, the Finance Committee meetings are open to the public. Meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes for all our Committees are available in the [Board Committee](#) section of our website. We encourage participation in any of our committees, including our two newly formed Board Committees: Equity and Technology. No prior experience is necessary.

2. Superintendent Search

During our November 14th board meeting, we unanimously voted to engage the search firm, Leadership Associates, for a new [Superintendent Search](#). While the selection and hiring of a superintendent is the responsibility of the board, our goal is that the process will be open, inclusive, transparent, and will certainly include teacher, staff, parent, student, and community input.

We want to hear from you! Please fill out this online survey (available here in [English](#) and in [Spanish](#)) before January 23rd and tell us what qualities you want to see in our future Superintendent. We also invite you to come to our Community Meeting on January 21st at 5:30 p.m. in the Kent Library where you can provide feedback live in person with our search firm. We warmly welcome your participation and feedback in this important process.

3. New KSD Strategic Plan

On October 17-18, we assembled a diverse team of 40 committed stakeholders, including parents, teachers, staff, and community members, to work with us over two intense days to help create a new Strategic Plan. We reviewed past strategic goals; school and student data; community priorities; financial realities; and the current educational outlook to draft a new set of initiatives that will guide the district for the next several years. While our work is still in draft form, we look forward to sharing our new District Strategic Plan with our community in the months ahead.

In the meantime, feel free to learn more about our process, review the session notes, and see our guiding questions in the District [Strategic Plan](#) section of our website. If you are interested in hearing more about it, we will also be reviewing the latest written draft during our next board meeting on January 14th.

4. College of Marin (COM) litigation

As you may be aware, the KSD filed a [lawsuit](#) against College of Marin (COM) on October 30th regarding the maintenance and operations (M&O) building currently being constructed next to Kent Middle School. The lawsuit alleges COM failed to comply with [CEQA \(The California Environmental Quality Act\)](#) when it approved the M&O building.

We learned that the M&O building also will be used as a garbage transfer facility for the COM Kentfield campus – in other words, all trash for the Kentfield campus will be collected and stored at the M&O facility. Currently, the KSD is in settlement discussions with COM. Learn more in the [November 17th Marin IJ article](#).

5. KSD construction completed on time and on budget

After six years of work that began in 2014 with the development of a Facilities Master Plan and the successful passage of the Measure D Bond in 2015, our district construction projects at Kent and Bacich were completed on time and on budget. We celebrated this historic milestone at Bacich with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 26th in our new creative playspace with all students and staff counting down “3. . 2. . 1.” Missed the festivities? [See the video here.](#)

We are incredibly grateful to everyone in our community for your patience throughout construction, and most importantly, to Greenbrae and Kentfield voters for supporting our Measure D bond. In particular, we want to recognize the exceptional leadership of Superintendent Liz Schott who guided the process from its inception six years ago to its successful completion. We also feel proud that [Bacich was just recognized as the Top Real Estate Project in the North Bay Awards for 2019!](#)

Finally, rest assured that our board is eager to roll up our sleeves and focus on the hard work ahead that has to be done. Knowing that all district stakeholders will work with us and focus on the best interests of KSD students makes us feel confident in our efforts.

If you have any questions or comments about any of these topics, please feel free to contact our Board President, Heather McPhail Sridharan, at hmcphailsridharan@kentfieldschools.org.

You also are always invited to attend any of our monthly [board meetings](#) and provide feedback. Reading our [Board Meeting Highlights](#) is another great way to stay in the loop of what is happening in the district if you cannot make our monthly meetings.

With gratitude,

Davina Goldwasser
Sarah Killingsworth
Heather McPhail Sridharan
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The Board of Trustees,
Kentfield School District