



1895 - 2016

# SAUSALITO MARIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Superintendent:*  
*Board of Trustees:*

*Will McCoy*  
*Joshua Barrow, Ida Green, Thomas Newmeyer,*  
*Caroline Van Alst (President) and William J. Ziegler*

November 3, 2016

Bayside MLK Parents and Community,

Let me begin by thanking you for sending your child(ren) to Bayside MLK and taking a moment to acknowledge the many parents and community members that work and volunteer in our school each day. Our entire community values your contributions toward positive solutions and outcomes.

We have a great deal of work to do to ensure that all students at Bayside MLK will be successful, and I want to assure you that I am fully committed to that goal. That is why I'm here. The organizers of today's rally at Bayside MLK are concerned citizens and parents who want more for their children. They are tired of failed academic results. They expect action and results. So do I – and that, too, is why I'm here.

To that end, I encourage you to attend our next Board of Education meeting on November 15, 2016 to learn more about the comprehensive student education plan I have developed and which has been my singular focus since arriving here. This plan sets forth the tangible action steps our District must take and speaks to how we are and must continue to augment instruction and learning for each and every student here at Bayside MLK.

If you are participating in – or following – the rally, please also keep several important facts in mind:

- The Board's agreement with Willow Creek Charter School has been in place for several years. It provides Willow Creek with less than half the funding per student (\$8,000) that is provided to Bayside MLK to support students. (\$20,000)
- Bayside MLK does have a vacancy for a full-time math teacher, and we are actively seeking a replacement. The low enrollment of the middle school program does not justify the cost of a full-time science or history teacher. As such, the District has chosen to apportion limited resources by hiring a part-time science teacher, and the current full-time teacher at the middle school is teaching the middle school students both Language Arts and History.
- Bayside MLK does not have a foreign language program at this time. It is unusual in California for a middle school of our size to have a dedicated foreign language instructor, especially at a site as small as Bayside MLK.
- Bayside MLK operates with one full-time teacher, and there are additional part-time teachers that serve our middle school students in science, art, music, P.E. and drama. Again, this represents a necessary balance that's been struck given enrollment and fixed resources.

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- With regard to teacher support, we are working with our classified bargaining unit to increase the presence of paraprofessionals in the classrooms. While we do not have full-time support in every classroom, our levels of staffing far exceed what is typically seen throughout the State of California.
- Bayside MLK has only ten 4th grade students. Because of this very low enrollment, this group has been divided between the 3rd and 5th grade classes to create combination classes. This is a common practice in larger districts and accommodates the needs of our small school.
- Parents raised concerns about some missing textbooks at the start of this school as any parent would. What we learned was that textbooks for one content area were misplaced. However, the books were quickly located and distributed within two days. All other textbooks were in place.
- Some parents believe Bayside MLK middle school students are not being properly prepared for high school. This is our largest concern as a district, and one that will take months of hard work to address. That work includes professional development for our entire staff, raising expectations for student performance and measuring it regularly, and enlisting the numerous community organizations that are reaching out to the school to help.
- These parents also claim that the Board and Superintendent have failed to approve and implement a plan to correct the above shortcomings. As I've said since my arrival this past summer, nothing is more important than changing our current course of action and improving outcomes for students. To that end, I'd urge you to review our action steps so far. They started with the critical LCAP meetings and plan last year, and have continued with our collaboration with the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) and Impact Education Consultants (IEC). The drafting of a cohesive and thorough plan has taken significant effort and will be presented to the Board for approval at the November 15th Board meeting. Again, I urge you to attend and participate in that meeting.
- I know some parents have claimed that the District's actions amount to "negligence". I cannot account for actions that were taken prior to my arrival in August, but I want to assure you that the steps I have taken with this Board have all been directed at restoring, not dismantling, programs that were previously cut. There are more programs in place for students at this time than were planned to be in place for the current year. These additional programs in music, art, drama and P.E. represent additions to the school's offerings, and are in response to community input regarding programming needs at the school.

I have also heard the concern that our actions are helping to widen, as opposed to closing, the achievement gap between Bayside MLK students and students in the Willow Creek Charter School and those enrolled in other public schools in Marin. Both schools, like most schools statewide and nationally, are experiencing achievement gap issues. This is of great concern to all of us, and should remain a primary focus until all students are achieving at high levels. However, this is not an issue that is solved with quick fixes, but with system wide change over time. I have committed the next phase of my career to doing exactly that.

As a Superintendent (and as a parent myself), I know full well the frustration parents experience when change in their children's education is slow in coming. I also understand that the system itself can be limiting and challenging to navigate. My job is to listen to all input, however critical, and to work with

collaborative individuals and groups each day to make things better. We currently have more than twenty organizations that are helping at Bayside MLK, or would like to help in the near future. We have dozens of volunteers and many more signing up each week.

Together, we will solve the problems that face the school. I continue to welcome your thoughts and, more importantly, your efforts to help us get the work done.

Respectfully,

Will McCoy, Superintendent