



PASADENA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

October 19, 2018

Dear PUSD Community:

Pasadena Unified Student Achievement Makes Steady Growth

I am pleased to share with you that student achievement in the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD) continues to move in the right direction, with student achievement making steady upward progress.

Since 2015, the percentage of PUSD students who met or exceeded standards has increased by 8% in English Language Arts (ELA) and 6% in Math on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). The largest gains are in early grade levels where the percentage of students meeting grade level standards increased about 13% and 14% in third and fourth grade in ELA, respectively. In math, third grade increased by 9% and fourth grade increased 12% over the same period. In 2018, student achievement rose by 2% in both ELA and Math.

Although we still have work ahead to address the achievement gap, the proportion of socio-economically disadvantaged students who met or exceeded standards has increased by 7% percent in ELA and 5% in Math. The proportion of students with disabilities who met or exceeded grade level standards has increased by approximately 6% in both ELA and Math.

Tough financial choices will test our resolve to maintain progress

This steady improvement affirms the strength of our academic programs and our district's ability to stay focused on teaching and learning during difficult budgetary times.

This week, the Board of Education will begin consideration of a list of options to reduce our operating budget for 2020-21 by at least \$10 million. Increasing costs and decreasing revenue from the state combine to create very difficult choices in the months ahead. With a drop in enrollment of approximately 500 students this year, we will lose an estimated \$5.4 million in state funding by 2020-21. Accordingly, we must keep our budget balanced and achieve the savings we need in order to live within our means each year. Like a family budget, we can't pay for ongoing costs with one-time funds or reserves.

The Board of Education is exploring ways to increase efficiency, cut overhead, maximize instructional support, and restructure our schools. We can no longer afford to maintain smaller schools. Cuts are painful and they will impact every sector of our budget.

However, the Board and management team are committed to making cuts as far away from our core instructional programs as possible. Everything is on the table but nothing is final yet. We are actively seeking input and suggestions from all stakeholders, including staff and parents, as we make decisions in the best interests of all of our students.

Working together, PUSD has made significant and steady progress

Although no single assessment can measure the quality of a school, the progress we've made on state tests is exciting and affirming.

The progress of our students is possible because of the work of the remarkable and talented teachers of PUSD, and I am grateful for their passion and commitment to our classrooms every day. Working together, the faculty, administrators, school and district staff, families and the community of PUSD are addressing challenges and creating unparalleled educational opportunities for children in our community.

We are facing some very difficult budgetary decisions in the immediate future, but I know that the strong and resilient community of Pasadena Unified will come together to make the best possible decisions to strengthen and build on this success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian McDonald", with a horizontal line underneath.

Brian McDonald
Superintendent