

PANTHER PRIDE

April 2010

Volume VI Issue 3

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SCHOOL CLOSED:
April 5 -12

School Resumes
April 13

Early Release Days:
April 26
May 10
May 24

Panther Afternoons

May 5
June 2

Junior/Senior Prom
April 17

Westward Ways Day (8th)
May 14
Medieval Day
May 14
Ancient Day
May 27

Day on the Green
May 26th

8th Grade Graduation
June 8 @ 6:30

H.S. breakfast
June 2 @ 8:00 AM
H.S. Awards Assembly
June 2 @ 9:00 AM

H.S. Graduation
June 10 @ 8:00 PM

**University
Preparatory School**
2200 Eureka Way
Redding, CA
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www.uprep.net

Superintendent/Principal's Corner... Erin Stuart

THE STATE BUDGET CRISIS AND HOW IT IMPACTS U-PREP

Many parents and some students have asked about funding for U-Prep for next year. In the wake of dire headlines about local schools, concern about our programs is natural. The answers to these questions lie in the priorities of our School Board. First and foremost, the Board has a responsibility to maintain fiscal viability. Of equal importance is the Board's commitment to sustaining quality programs. This includes the extra-curricular activities that are so important to the development of young people. So there are no plans to cut sports or fine arts. We will continue to offer music, dance, drama, and art classes, and we will field teams in all of our current sports. How is U-Prep able to do this when other schools are cutting programs and laying off teachers? The simple answer is that U-Prep is growing. More students means increased revenue from the state; more students also require more teachers, books, desks, and supplies. Because we anticipated increased enrollment, we had already purchased some of the books and supplies, already employed some of the necessary staff.

There are other factors that contribute to our positive finances. Where most public high school teachers have five classes, our teachers have six. Generally, we have a high attendance rate (although the flu hit us hard this year), which raises revenue. Also, we started this school without grants, so we are used to budgeting conservatively. Nevertheless, we will have to make changes (spend less money) in order to offset the loss of revenue. As some of you know, the School Board reduced the student calendar by three days; this will result in savings by reducing employee pay. (Parents indicated the calendar they preferred by voting at Open House or taking the online survey at our website.) Other ways to save funds include cutting back on replacement of technology and not purchasing extra sets of books or new athletic uniforms. We have already eliminated some paid assistant coaching positions. Furthermore, our faculty and staff will attend fewer conferences, which will save on conference and travel expenses as well as reduce the cost of substitutes. Our office staff will remain understaffed (currently 4-5 people doing the work of 8); we will likely eliminate some sections of study hall. Although teachers' assignments may change, they will continue to use high level curricula and innovative methods. The most important thing to remember is that none of these changes will affect the academic standards or culture at U-Prep. Class size will remain the same; no teachers will be laid off, and students will receive the same support that they currently enjoy. It is the goal of the Board, staff, and faculty of U-Prep that our students experience none of the repercussions of the loss of state revenue.

Here's some good news: you can help! Our limited resources make it more important than ever for our families to be involved at school. We are fortunate at U-Prep to have a community of families whose participation underscores a shared commitment to an academically rigorous, student-centered, educational experience. Most of you would prefer to participate in an area that directly benefits your child. Beginning this summer, you will be able to go to our website (www.uprep.net) and check on the upcoming projects, field trips, and wish lists of your student's teachers. This will give you an opportunity to plan your participation in events that interest you and work in your schedule. All of our parent organizations need your support, and this is a wonderful way to meet other parents and get involved. As always we are looking for ways to expand our community partnerships and bring in people to speak about their work to our students. Learning is powerful when students can see its relevance in the community. Thanks for your willingness to contribute your time, talents, and resources to U-Prep!

Safety First!

Every school day our families encounter the limitations and frustrations associated with dropping off and picking up their students. We are currently working with Caltrans and the City of Redding on traffic issues on Eureka Way. However, the issues that concern us most have to do with families who do not follow the procedures we've developed to make our parking lots safe for our students. Each year families initial the Student/Parent Handbook to indicate they have read the information below:

Students in Grade 6 will be dropped off in front of the school between 7:55 and 8:05 AM whenever possible; they will be picked up within 15 minutes of the end of their school day. Students in grades 7 and 8 will be dropped off and picked up in the parking lot behind the school. High School students may be dropped off or picked up on Eureka Way or in the lower parking lot.

If students were picked up at the assigned places, the traffic at the front of the school would be lessened and the conditions for the students would be safer. By choosing to pick up your older student in the front of the school or across the street at Ace Hardware, you are adding to an unsafe traffic situation. Whenever you pick up students out front, please follow the established pattern for pulling over to the curb, moving up when space becomes available, and then, after your child is in your car, pulling out to the line that will allow you to exit. The 1000+ children who attend school here and the 150 adults who work here need you to respect our safety instructions and designated pick up areas.

Families who meet at Ace Hardware for after school pick up are creating an unsafe environment for students. Young students crossing the Ace parking lot are frequently oblivious to vehicles pulling in and out. The managers at Ace Hardware have asked that our students and parents not park in their lot. The administration at U-Prep asks our families respect this request from our neighbors.

In the future, when Redding School of the Arts moves into their new facility, there will be fewer students to drop off and pick up. Also, with fewer adults on campus, there will be some additional parking. Still, insuring a safe environment around our school will always depend upon students and parents adhering to the procedures and designated areas for dropping off and picking up their students.

SCHOOL BOARD CHOOSES... 2010-2011 SCHOOL CALENDAR

Over the last few weeks, students, parents, and staff have voted on different versions of a 175 day calendar for next year. By reducing the student calendar by three days, the school will be able to save over \$30,000, which is important as we continue to seek ways to reduce expenditures. On the next page you will find the version chosen by the Board. The members of the Board looked at the results of the polls as well as a number of other factors before making its decision. Ultimately, they chose to eliminate the February break and have school end on Thursday, May 26, 2011 with high school graduation on Friday, May 27th. Listed below are the many reasons the Board

decided this choice served our students and families best.

The February break creates challenges for families with children in other schools. It is also difficult for working parents with younger children who must look for daycare.

The early STAR testing schedule makes it important to have the extra instructional time that is lost during the February break.

Not having the February break puts our calendar in closer alignment with SUHSD, which is better for the students who come from other schools.

By ending May 26th our graduations will not conflict with other local graduations.

Our older students will no longer have scheduling conflicts with college summer school classes and will be available for summer employment earlier.

Performances (spring play, concerts, and dance recitals) will benefit from not having their rehearsal schedules interrupted; this applies to sports practices as well.

Families with student athletes have to stay in town in February for league games and practices.

This calendar gives students a two and half month hiatus—plenty of opportunities for family time, vacations, “stay-cations,” volunteer work, gainful employment of teenagers, etc.

This calendar shortens the time between STAR and Advanced Placement testing and the end of the year (students tend to lose a little focus around May...).

Having high school graduation the Friday before Memorial Day weekend will be convenient for families who have relatives traveling to attend.

Next year will come with a long stretch between the winter and spring breaks, but every year won't be like that. Taking the long view, this calendar solves some problems for many of our families, gives our students scheduling advantages, and allows us to save some money while lengthening summer vacation. Thank you to everyone for your input. Soon you will have a chance to fill out a Satisfaction Survey, and we look forward to your feedback.