

# The Morgan Hill Teacher

## Morgan Hill Federation of Teachers

CFT / AFT / AFL-CIO / Local 2022

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September 29, 2015

### Group Seeks to Recall MHUSD Board President David Gerard

The leadership of the Morgan Hill Federation of Teachers (MHFT) finds it alarming that a small group would initiate a recall petition for an election that would cost our school district half a million dollars. This use of taxpayer dollars seems especially frivolous considering that the recall election would probably be held in early 2016, less than a year before MHUSD Board President, Bob Benevento faces re-election.

The recall notice cites Trustee Benevento's "blatant disregard for parent input" regarding the inclusion of 6th graders in our middle schools as a reason to remove him from office. However, MHFT has known him to be a board member who regularly seeks input from diverse groups throughout the District. When Benevento was first appointed to his seat during the recession, he was part of a board that continually weighed varying opinions from staff, teachers, classified employees and parents to make difficult decisions. Recently, he has insisted that parents and community members be included in the District's Local Control Accountability Plan. In fact, Benevento voted to approve a series of community information meetings on 6-8 middle schools last Spring, and two additional community meetings this year.

The wording of the notice indicates that the Board heard only opposition to 6-8 middle schools at board and community meetings. Our president, Gemma Abels, spoke to the change at the August 18 school board meeting, saying, "It is an exciting opportunity for both elementary schools and middle schools to look carefully at their programs and see where these new configurations might lead." Additionally, parents on the 6th Grade Configuration Committee and several parents who attended this year's community meetings expressed strong support for the 6-8 middle schools.

MHFT leadership attends every board meeting. We believe the incidents cited in the recall notice are examples of a general hostility that has permeated recent board meetings around several controversial issues, and are not a reflection of one board member. We have seen the civility and public decorum expected at board meetings devolve into an exchange of rhetoric both in public comment and in board "discussions," and we don't feel that it is appropriate to target one board member through a recall drive.

The Morgan Hill Federation of Teachers does not believe that any school district funds, meant for our students' education, should be diverted to a recall election that will result in more posturing and division. Instead, we hope that the adults in this community will find a way to respect diverse opinions, participate in productive dialogue, and, finally, make decisions that are centered on students.

### SCCOE Teacher of the Year Celebration

Morgan Hill's Teacher of the Year, Lori Ross, will be honored along with other honorees from throughout the county this Thursday at a special ceremony. If you would like to attend, there is no need to RSVP.

Thursday, October 1st

6:15 pm

Campbell Heritage Theater

1 W. Campbell Ave.

Campbell

Congratulations, Lori! And thank you for all that you have done for our district's students.

### 6th Grade Reconfiguration

Parents gave input/concerns at two district meetings, and now teachers are being asked at curriculum council meetings to give their input. A new task force is also being formed, and all teachers are invited to join. Human Resources will be sending out a survey in October to see how many teachers are interested in transferring to our middle schools. Contact Glen Webb if you are interested in the 6th Grade Configuration Task Force.

### News from the Last School Board Meeting

The Paradise Valley staff is proposing to become an Engineering Academy. The Board granted approval for the staff to move forward with research and planning.

The Board approved redistricting Map 1. This will retain a 7-member board, but each trustee will be elected only by voters who reside within given geographical boundaries within the school district. The intent of this change is to ensure that various neighborhoods within the school district have a better chance of being represented.

### **Benefits Open Enrollment Reminder**

Open enrollment for benefits for all employees is September 14 through October 9. Once this period has ended, changes (other than cancellation) to your benefits can only be processed if you have a “qualifying life event.” Please contact Elizabeth Burgon at 201-6019 if you have any questions.

### **South Bay Labor Council Delegate Needed**

The South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council represents 93 unions and over 100,000 union members in Santa Clara and San Benito counties. For over 50 years the Labor Council has championed the cause of working families in the South Bay.

The Labor Council’s primary goal is to advance candidates, causes, and policies that benefit working families. They achieve this objective through a combination of activities, including community organizing, leadership training, campaigning, and issues advocacy. The Labor Council proudly runs the largest, most sophisticated, grassroots political campaign operation in the South Bay.

Due to our AFL-CIO affiliation, MHFT is entitled to two delegates to the South Bay Labor Council. JoAnne Markowska (Live Oak) is one of our delegates. If you are interested in applying for the other position, please contact the Federation office.

Meetings are the 3rd Monday of each month (2nd if the first falls on a holiday, as in December), 6:00 - ~7:30pm, at the Labor Temple (off Hwy 87 at Curtner, Almaden Road in San Jose).

This is a great opportunity to learn a tremendous amount, to get involved in politics, and meet a lot of wonderful people. Also, the position is stipended.

### **Taste of Morgan Hill**

Thank you to all who showed up to work a shift in the MHFT booth this past weekend. It is so important that we continue to be visible in the community, and available to answer questions and reassure parents about our schools.

### **Helpful Hints for IEPs**

In accordance with state law, it is important that general education teachers stay at IEP meetings for their durations. The SPED team should set a time frame for the meeting. If the general ed teacher has a conflict with this time frame, he or she should notify the SPED team early enough for them to either find a replacement or work with the teacher’s schedule. At the start of the meeting, all of those in attendance should be reminded of the time frame, and someone should be designated to monitor the clock. If the meeting needs to end before it is completed, a follow-up meeting must be scheduled and all those in attendance will need to return, so it is also important that the meeting facilitator attempt to keep everyone following the agenda. Please contact your Building Rep or MHFT office staff if you have any questions or concerns.

### **Translator Still Needed**

We are still looking for an MHFT member to serve as translator to work with the office on community outreach and engagement. A stipend is available. Hours are flexible. If you are able to help us out, please contact the Federation Office.

### **Teachers at the Mic:**

#### **Building Strong Learning Environments**

If you would like to participate in your site’s presentation, please contact your Building Rep. Otherwise, please plan to attend and support your colleagues.

Thank you to Live Oak for a great video presentation!

Next up:

Sobrato	October 6th
Britton	October 20

