

# LVEA TODAY



## District Investigating New Revenue Sources

LVUSD has once again contracted with CliffordMoss, a political strategy and communications company to advise on possible new revenue sources. They worked with our district on the successful renewal of our Proposition E Parcel Tax in 2015 that brings in \$2.3M per year to our general fund. Our community also passed the Measure G Bond over ten years ago which has paid for many infrastructure upgrades, like our two high school Performing Arts Education Centers, Yerba Buena Elementary, the Lindero Canyon Middle School remodel and many other improvements throughout our district. The remaining funds from Measure G are paying for the major remodel project which is in progress at Lupin Hill Elementary.

With two main election dates in 2020 (March 3 primary and Nov 3 general election), CliffordMoss is working with LVUSD to find new revenue sources by possibly putting a measure on the ballot for one of these dates: possibly another bond measure that could pay for upgrading our aging infrastructure (e.g. A/C, leaking roofs, deteriorated plumbing) or perhaps another parcel tax that could directly enhance our general fund to offset projected financial deficits or possibly even to lower class size! Is there truly a need? Will our community support a new measure? Is a new measure a meaningful way to increase revenue? CliffordMoss has been hired to answer these questions and help the district create a plan for 2020. We need to be cautious and not assume that every need will be filled. That said, this is an excellent opportunity to modernize the aging infrastructure at many of our sites and improve the learning environment for our staff and students.

No decisions have been made. CliffordMoss is currently meeting with principals who may reach out to your staff for input on what's needed regarding facility upgrades at your site. They are in a *listening* mode where they focus on determining the needs of our employees, students and community. They will then coordinate the polling of our community to gauge public support for either a new bond measure or parcel tax. They need to know what you think before our locally elected school board makes important decisions this winter. As LVEA and LVUSD have reported many times, California's educational funding model shifts a higher percentage of money to districts with lower socioeconomic demographics, leaving districts like LVUSD with less funding. The state's funding model means we have to be more creative and reach out to our local community for increased financial support to ensure the best and safest education possible for our students.

You are encouraged to provide input on the facility needs and other financial needs that are unique to your site – please contact your principal for more information on how you can share your ideas.

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## From Secondary Teachers in Support of our Counselors

As teachers, having larger class sizes obviously makes our jobs more challenging. A failing student (or two, or four) gets less attention. The occasional IEP or 504, becomes a deluge of paperwork in which we have to provide accurate feedback so kids can get the help they need. The student with a panic attack that sets in, right in front of 30 other kids, needs to be handled. Tough parents insist on knowing why their kid did not complete any homework for three months. Throughout the week any number of things can happen and working with students takes patience. Students are under stress, as are the teachers. If Student 360 is any indication, students are now more open and forthcoming with their concerns and issues. Teachers want to do as much as we can for our students but we can only do so much to assist them with their social emotional health in addition to our other teaching responsibilities.

Our counselors are the professionals trained to provide help to our students who are struggling. When students feel depressed, anxious, or overwhelmed, teachers may not be able to do enough to help them. Fortunately, we are able to ask for assistance from the counselors. They are there to help the kid through the anxiety, stress and depression that often comes with the pressures of school. They have the tools and skills to talk to kids on a different level than the teacher. Additionally, they are able to explain to a kid or a parent as to why a student is failing, and are able to offer solutions and suggestions. No one has been more helpful to our student's emotional and social needs than our counselling team.

In the era of Student 360, it seems backwards to decrease the onsite services where everyone is responsible for serving **all** students in an increasingly stressed world. But the message we are being told is that it will be best for our community to go from six counselors down to five, at both high schools. Imagine your caseload as a teacher, double it, and that is a counselor's current caseload. Reducing a counselor next year will increase their caseload with 80 more kids. This reduction in counselors will have a significant impact in the lives of our students. Students will have less day-to-day availability for social emotional support, there will be less focused attention to students on the D/F list, less ability to focus on seniors at risk for not graduating, and sadly other students will slip through the cracks. Understanding how each teacher runs their classroom and what new curriculum is getting taught will not be possible. Individualized letters of recommendation (that can make or break a kid's application for colleges) will have become more formulaic and less personalized. Most critical though are the real heartbreaking tragedies that counselors have to be a part of, the life-saving work that counselors are dealing with everyday. Sure, some of the support the district is providing will help, but the counselors are on the front lines. Last week, a kid went home, and the kid's friend was worried. The friend sent their counselor an email. The counselor was in meetings with students and parents and admin all day, and barely got time to check their email inbox, but fortunately the counselor did. Recognizing the big "red flag" the counselor called home, but there was no answer. The counselor escalated the issue to the police, for a wellness check. Thankfully, the police got there just in time, because the worried friend was right, the kid was going to hurt themselves. The frightening reality is that with another 80 kids on their caseload, the outcome for that student could have been different. Tragedy still happens, but we should address it with all the resources we can. Having fewer counselors is not the solution to any problem. When a student is overwhelmed by the pressure of school, feeling upset by their friends or family, or even in danger of hurting themselves, counselors can be the support a student needs. They can be the support that the teachers need. They can be the support a community needs.

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