

## School Days: Gilroy Unified School District

# Reordering Measure E Priorities

By Melanie Corona, Public Information Officer, Gilroy Unified School District

In 2016, Gilroy voters passed Measure E to upgrade our campus facilities, especially the two oldest middle schools, South Valley and Brownell, and to build a new elementary school. While a district wide increase in student population had been expected based on earlier demographic trends, current County birth data indicates a decline in the number of school-aged children over the next several years. This changing trend means our existing elementary schools will be able to accommodate the projected student population for the foreseeable future, and it has enabled us to reorder our Measure E priorities.

In 2008, voters passed Measure P, a \$150 million General Obligation Bond that the District was able to leverage into \$200 million with matching funds from the State of California. These funds were invested at every school site in the District. Highlights include: improved security safeguards at South Valley, Brownell, and Solorsano Middle Schools; safety fencing at Glen View, Luigi Aprea, and El Roble Elementary Schools; a new computer lab and library at Rod Kelley Elementary; a new multipurpose facility, library and other renovations at Rucker Elementary; extensive improvements at Mt. Madonna Continuation High School; campus expansion and reconfiguration at the Dr. Owens Gilroy Early College Academy (GECA); an extensive campus wide upgrade of Gilroy High School, including a new two-story, 20 classroom math building; and Phase II construction at Christopher High School. These projects would not have been possible without the support of the Gilroy community.

Currently, the District's priorities are our two oldest school sites: South Valley and Brownell Middle Schools. Many current Gilroy residents attended Brownell (circa 1940s) and South Valley (circa 1930s) during their youth. These facilities have remained largely unchanged in the intervening years.

The Board of Education has directed Staff to modernize these schools. Work on the Brownell campus has begun with the hiring of architects. Every building, except for the gymnasium and multi-purpose room, will be rebuilt and reconfigured. Project completion is targeted for 2020. The South Valley project will be even more extensive. The entire campus will be relocated to the Murray Avenue side of the existing property, redesigned, and rebuilt. We anticipate completion of this project in 2023.

Dr. Deborah A. Flores, GUSD Superintendent, expressed the District's gratitude to the voters who voted to pass Measure P on behalf of our students.

"I am excited to see how the modernization of the two schools that need it the most will positively impact our students' educational opportunities," Flores said. "We are investing in the future of Gilroy,



Chief Business Officer and Assistant Superintendent of Office Services Alvaro Mesa, Maintenance and Operations Manager Dan McAuliffe, and Director of Technology, Maribel Guizar.



GUSD Facilities Team: Construction Manager, Jenny Derry; Facilities Director, James Bombaci; and Construction Manager, Mike Rice.

giving students the opportunity to learn in state-of-the-art facilities at the very critical middle school age." She added that because of the community's continued faith in our schools, "our students will now have access to modern technology and facilities, and the best education possible, to prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow."

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY GUSD.