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Reyes Gauna, Ed.D.
Superintendent



July 9, 2025

Dear Patterson Community,

On Monday, during our Board of Trustees meeting, I provided an important update regarding the construction of Almond Blossom Elementary School. I understand there may have been questions and concerns circulating about the use of Measure E bond funds and the progress of the associated long-awaited project. I want to take a moment to share a clear and transparent summary with you.

Two Key Developments

During the meeting, we discussed two significant updates:

1. **Postponement of Groundbreaking** – We have requested to delay the next phase of construction until after October 2025, giving us time to reassess our student enrollment.
2. **Withdrawal of Bond Issuance Request** – We removed the agenda item that would have initiated the issuance and sale of the next series of Measure E bond funds.

These decisions were not made lightly. However, they are essential steps to ensure our district remains fiscally responsible and eligible for critical State reimbursements that help fund our construction efforts.

Why the Delay?

Just days before the board agenda was finalized, our staff identified a potential issue that, if left unaddressed, could have jeopardized an estimated \$32 million in State reimbursements. According to current state guidelines, districts experiencing declining enrollment risk losing access to these reimbursements. Given the essential role these funds play in completing Almond Blossom Elementary, and potentially other future bond projects, we must proceed with caution.

While the passage of Measure E provided \$74 million to support projects that include the construction of Almond Blossom, the total cost of the project exceeds this amount. This is where negotiated developer fees and State reimbursements become critical. Securing these additional funds is essential to bringing the full vision of Measure E to life.

Understanding Enrollment Trends

Our community has seen significant residential development in recent years, and we recognize that many community members supported Measure E with the understanding that growth would increase student enrollment. However, despite the increase in housing, student enrollment has not followed suit. While we understand new families may have moved into our neighborhoods, We have not seen a growth in enrollment in our schools.

Board of Trustees

*Michele Bays * Martha Blanco-Arechiga * Kieran Carter * Carlos Fierros * Amanda Lozano * Lena Barrientos*



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To address this, we have been proactive in our efforts to encourage enrollment in our district. One such initiative is our Before School Program, piloted at Apricot Valley and Walnut Grove Elementary Schools. Designed to support working families who commute early, the program received interest from more than 100 families this summer alone. We hope these efforts help encourage more families to enroll in our district.

Fiscal Responsibility and Transparency

To further safeguard taxpayer interests, we chose to hold off on issuing the next series of bond funds. As a result, your property taxes will not reflect an increase from Series B bonds at this time. To date, we've only issued \$10 million from Series A (in 2023), which helped fund essential pre-construction efforts such as architectural designs, engineering studies, and site testing.

Additionally, we continue to maintain oversight by our Citizens' Bond Oversight Committee, which has reviewed and verified the proper use of Measure E funds thus far. Their annual report affirms that, until this recent development, our project remained fully on track and aligned with the intent of Measure E. You can access this report on our district's website under the "Community" tab.

What's Next?

Though the groundbreaking is temporarily delayed, our District is continuing the necessary work to keep the project prepared to quickly resume when ready. We are actively pursuing DSA (Division of the State Architect) approvals so that when enrollment data becomes available in October, and if trends are favorable, we can move forward without delay. We are also finalizing school design plans.

Please know that transparency, fiscal responsibility, and community trust are values we take seriously. We are committed to keeping you informed and ensuring that every dollar is spent with integrity, care, and in alignment with projects outlined in the Measure E bond.

As with any matter in our district, if you have questions or would like to speak with me directly about these updates, please do not hesitate to contact me at rgauna@patterson.k12.ca.us or (209)895-7700.

On behalf of myself and the Board of Trustees, we thank you for your continued support, patience, and understanding as we continue to work towards our PJUSD Promise of unlocking potential and empowering lives.

Sincerely,
Reyes Gauna, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Board of Trustees

*Michele Bays * Martha Blanco-Arechiga * Kieran Carter * Carlos Fierros * Amanda Lozano * Lena Barrientos*