

## **Montecito Union School to Move Forward with Critical Safety Improvements** *Delays Action on Possible Bond to 2018 Election*

At Wednesday's Special Board meeting the Montecito Union School Board of Trustees discussed the school's urgent need to address life, health and safety needs, and voted to proceed with addressing the most critical safety issue to the school and the greater community: improving the roadway access and the pick-up and drop-off along San Ysidro Road.

"This is a big step forward," said Board President Mary Kirkhart. "After listening to the compelling urgency to protect our students and the public, the Board determined that this issue really cannot wait, and must be addressed now."

"Every day, traffic along San Ysidro Road backs up during drop-off and pick-up, which not only puts school children at risk, but can cause delays to first responders and inconvenience to the public," stated Superintendent Tammy Murphy. The Board has added additional crossing guards and approved funds for additional service from the California Highway Patrol to address these safety issues on a temporary basis.

The estimated cost of the roadway and traffic safety improvements is projected at \$2.5 million. The Board directed staff to proceed with discussions with the County on how to expedite the needed improvements.

Over the past five years, the Montecito Union School District has committed over \$4 million from reserves to develop a Facilities Master Plan and address immediate facility repairs, including water and sewer line breaks and improving student safety -- creating a secure perimeter, installing safety film on the historic windows, automated door locks and a surveillance system.

At the same meeting, the Board determined that they would not move forward with a bond election in November 2016 by rescinding an action taken at the May 3rd meeting. The Board wants to make a plan dedicating more time to listening to the community, sharing the school's facility needs and outlining the school's finances.

"We are continuing to move forward with the environmental review of the proposed improvements to the 60 and 90 year old buildings, including the safe removal of hazardous materials including asbestos and lead paint, and other possible enhancements to the learning environment. Knowing that things are moving forward, the Board was comfortable with delaying the decision on a potential bond measure, as the most urgent need for the roadway improvements could be addressed with existing funds," stated Kirkhart. "We want to hear more from the public and continue the dialogue about the very real needs of the school and our educational programs."

A meeting to discuss the scope of the environmental review of the potential life, health, safety and educational improvements, including the proposed traffic safety measures will be held on Thursday, June 2nd at 6 p.m. at the Montecito Union Elementary School Auditorium, 385 San Ysidro Road. The public has until June 24, 2016 to submit written comments regarding the scope of the environmental review. For more information please visit the school's website: [www.montecitou.org](http://www.montecitou.org).