

Flu Precautions

The district has already given special directions to custodial staff in a quick response to this serious issue. Still, although this is something we need to take seriously, this morning's news releases from the national Center for Disease Control points out that there are only 16 documented cases nationwide. The majority on the east coast. Let's remind ourselves and our students that frequent handwashing is the single best preventive practice. Anytime that you shake hands or touch objects that many others have touched washing the hands thoroughly with soap is recommended

Let's Write a Grant!

Over the years I have seen this idea pursued as a common response to funding cuts and shortfalls. We already have a large amount of grants, more than most adult schools of our size. We receive over funds for ESL, ABE/GED from the federal government. We have large grants for our Parent Ed programs. We have other grants from the Alliance for Aging and other community-organizations. However, in this economic climate, granting foundations are also struggling. The endowments for many non-profits have been hit very hard, and grants to public schools especially are sought to solve more problems with ever fewer dollars. But we are certainly continuing to pursue other funding: it looks like we may have support from the federal "Recovery" stimulus funds to have a teacher at the One Stop. We are reviewing a number of other grant proposals as well. We also now have plans to use one of the district's non-profit foundations to seek and receive donations. But it is important to remember that simply writing a grant that does not align with our goals and programs may actually stretch out resources, not add to them. Submit any ideas for grants or other leads for additional funding sources to your program coordinator so we can study the possible impact on and alignment to our instructional goals. One of the benefits of this crisis is this increased focus on how we coordinate and align funding and instructional goals.

Our Budget: Plans for Next Year's Classes

Adjusting to a cut of over a million dollars for next year's instructional program has been disrupting and difficult for our institution. All of our permanent teachers were given a layoff notice before a required March 15 deadline. The layoffs were given to buy time to respond to many variables, including whether the district would help us end this year and let us continue have all the adult education funds to operate programs. The district has been very supportive; we should remember that sometime in May we will run out of money, and the district is "lending" us money to finish out this year. This is an incredible commitment to our school and to our community.

This Tuesday our district's governing board will vote to rescind those layoff notices. We've been able to plan an instructional program to offer assignments to all of our permanent teachers. Several teachers will be offered assignments in new instructional programs and one teacher will have a reduced assignment; however many teachers will be limited to the 30 hours of their tenured level, in essence a reduction from current assignments. I am gratified that our permanent teachers have stayed positive for the most part, and continued to work hard to give our students what they need. Given the rescind notices will enable us begin to look forward to next year

This is hardly the final solution for our budget crisis, however. Beyond our permanent teachers we have over 120 temporary teachers who work for us every year. The number of temporary teachers that will be assigned next year is still unknown in part because the other variables of our non-instructional operational costs are also still unknown. How much we will be able to make cuts and look for cost-saving efficiencies outside of the classroom will determine how many more classes we can plan on offering. Our budget is cut by over 20%; I can't foresee us offering 80% of the classes we offer now. I think there will be the presumption that we will need to serve 80% of the students we serve now. How to serve 80% of the students with fewer than 80% of the classes will be a challenge. But one day at a time. Having the layoffs for this group of our teachers rescinded is unquestionably a positive step as we continue to try to build an effective adult education program for Salinas in the 2009-2010 school year.

Plans for our Salinas Adult School Week from May 18-22 also are very exciting. This will a great opportunity to underscore the importance of our school to our community, especially now.