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DID THE TUSD GOVERNING BOARD APPROVE AN OVERRIDE ELECTION?

As we were producing this newsletter, the TUSD Governing Board, at a regularly scheduled board meeting on May 13, was scheduled to vote on whether to conduct a budget override election. The additional money an override would provide to the district would be used specifically for three things: to reduce class sizes in K-2 and in middle school math classes; to expand the OMA program to all 93 elementary and middle schools; and to provide incentives for hard-to-fill teaching positions, such as math, science and exceptional education, especially in middle schools.

Holding an override election was the recommendation of the 27-member TUSD Override Exploratory Committee, headed by Dr. Mary Belle McCorkle and composed of community

people and TUSD staff. The committee has been studying the feasibility of an override since November. Influencing the committee's recommendation to the Governing Board was the results a survey, conducted by a local independent research and polling company, that showed strong public support for an override.

Deadlines and production times have created a serious time crunch in providing up-to-the-minute information in this newsletter. Because we had to write it before the governing board voted, by the time you receive it, the board already will have made its decision. If the board approved the override election, we will post that information on the OMA Foundation website at: www.omaprogramaz.org. It also is likely this decision will be covered by our local media. ■

'BEST EVER' OMA SHOWCASE WOWS THE AUDIENCE!

The fourth annual OMA Showcase held March 8 played to an enthusiastic house in Rincon/University High School's auditorium. An appreciative audience of parents, students and supporters of the arts packed the auditorium for a Showcase that many declared to be the "best ever." Mindy Blake, KOLD-TV 13 news anchor, was the mistress of ceremonies.

The Showcase honored Superintendent Roger Pfeuffer and Deputy Superintendent Dr. Patti Lopez. The two career educators received awards from Governor Janet Napolitano, Mayor Bob Walkup and the Tucson City Council, and the OMA Foundation.

The program highlighted the talents of over 150 OMA students from 10 OMA schools and their teaching artists in opera, dance, theater and music. Their talents and excitement provided an inspiring demonstration of how integrating the arts into the core curriculum



contributes to the students' overall enjoyment of school and success in the classroom. Impressive, too, was the OMA Honor Choir, conducted by Dr. David Ashcraft. The Honor Choir sang a moving number from *Oliver*.

A "Meet the Artists" reception followed the performance, with food donated by Blue House Catering. Plans for next year's Showcase already are underway. ■

NEWS BRIEFS

- **THE OMA NETWORK** of over 150 principals, arts integration specialists and teaching artists met for their biannual Collaboration Meeting on March 28 to hear preliminary reports on a five-year strategic plan. Donn Poll, the owner of his consulting firm, New North Strategies, is preparing for the OMA Program. Donn recently relocated from Minneapolis to Tucson. Donn emphasized that each member of an OMA school must fully participate in delivering the OMA Program in order to make the OMA model effective. He also presented and worked with the Collaboration participants on an interactive self-assessment instrument to identify the standards of excellence that need to be met to maintain the quality of the OMA Program.

- **NEW FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBER.** The foundation is pleased to announce that Ruth Jones, wife of Gene Jones, was elected to the foundation's board of directors at its March 2008 board meeting.

- **THE FINE ARTS (FASI) AND TEACHING ARTIST (TASI) SUMMER INSTITUTE** is the cornerstone of the OMA Professional Development Program. Held two times a year, this one-week intensive, hands-on training in arts integration practice and strategies is for classroom teachers, arts teachers, teaching artists,

arts integration specialists and administrative staff. FASI's goal is to advance students' achievement and the joy of learning through the arts.

FASI will hold two sessions this summer:

Session I:
Tuesday, May 27 thru
Saturday, May 31.

Session II:
Monday, May 31 thru
Friday, August 1.



Both sessions will be held at Booth-Fickett Magnet School.

Cost for FASI for TUSD participants is \$75 and for non-TUSD participants is \$250.

Cost for TASI is \$100 for each participant.

Interested participants can register on the OMA website at www.omaprogramaz.org/fasi or www.omaprogramaz.org/tasi or call the TUSD Fine Arts Department for more information: 225-4900. ■

Our Thanks for Another Successful School Year

OUR PROFOUND THANKS TO OUR OVER 400 CONTRIBUTORS AND GRANTORS IN 2007-2008.

The OMA Foundation cannot adequately state its gratitude to the individuals, businesses, organizations and foundations that helped make it possible to provide the OMA Program to 19,000 children in 44 TUSD elementary and middle schools this year. The children – as well as their teachers and parents – will feel the positive impact of these contributions for the rest of their lives. In this newsletter we will recognize only one contributor, Gene Jones, whose donations every year since OMA began in 1999, have provided the majority of the funds the foundation has received.

THANKS TO THE OMA PROGRAM STAFF. The OMA Program would not be as valued, effective and have earned a national reputation for excellence without the talent and dedication of Dr. Joan Ashcraft, all the principals, design team, arts integration specialists, teachers, artists and the program staff who deliver the program throughout the year and in the summer. We are deeply indebted to all of them.

AND TO TUSD'S Governing Board, Superintendent Roger Pfeuffer and Deputy Superintendent Dr. Patti Lopez we send thanks for their recognizing the importance of having the arts be a central part of children's overall education and for causing the OMA Program to have grown and flourished.

A Parent Sends an OMA Success Story

Recently we received an email from Dana Booth, the mother of a kindergarten student at Ft. Lowell Elementary School. She provided strong evidence of OMA's impact. Ms. Booth's story follows in her own words:

When we were leaving for our trip this past Thanksgiving, my son Anthony asked me what was on my iPod. I recited all sorts of music including folk, rock, Irish, and kid's music. When I was done he was upset because I didn't have Mozart! I told him I also had Gershwin, but he really wanted Mozart so I loaded some Mozart onto it before we left!

Another thing just happened yesterday, too. I was working with Anthony on improving his reading skills and was talking about the way sometimes letter sounds are drawn out and sometimes they're short, like the 't' sound in 'cat'. He interrupted briefly and said, "staccato."

How many kindergartener's do you know of that 1) would be upset there's no Mozart and 2) you would plead with them by saying you have Gershwin?

A few days later Ms. Booth added this comment: Anthony continues to be a walking OMA advertisement. Today, he pointed to two parking curbs angled toward each other and said, "Crescendo!" ■

Welcome, Dr. Elizabeth Celania-Fagen

Dear Dr. Fagen:

All of us in the OMA Foundation and OMA Program send our congratulations and best wishes to you on your being selected our new superintendent for TUSD. We look forward to working with you and to helping make your transition into our district smooth, enjoyable and quick. We wholeheartedly believe you will be coming to a district that has the most talented and dedicated employees in our city and a community that is striving to make TUSD 1, just that: first in excellence in education. With your leadership, that will happen!

OMA Foundation Board of Directors



YES, I WANT MY TAX CREDIT CONTRIBUTION TO GO TO AN OMA SCHOOL

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Contribution Amount \$ _____

Name of School _____

Please clip this form, make out your check to an OMA school of your choice, write "OMA" in the memo and return it to: **Dr. Joan Ashcraft, 2025 E. Winsett Street, Tucson, AZ 85719**. When we receive your check, we'll quickly mail you a tax receipt.



OPENING MINDS
THROUGH THE
ARTS

OPENING MINDS THROUGH
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The People Who Are the Foundation: This Year's Board of Directors

For the past few years we haven't included in our newsletter a list of the people who constantly are making the foundation sustainable: our board of directors. It's time.

- Damien Alameda
- Laura Baldasano
- Julia Barwell
- Renee Downing, Secretary
- Dan Eckstrom
- Dr. George Garcia
- Dr. Marilyn Heins
- James Hensley
- H. Eugene Jones, Past-President
- Ruth Jones
- Carolyn Kemmeries, President-Elect
- Kelly Langford
- Dr. Mary Belle McCorkle, President
- Judith Meyer
- Norma Patrick
- Elaine Rice
- Carroll Rinehart
- Dr. Julia Strand
- Dr. Leslie Tolbert
- Sally Trattner
- Jan Vesely
- Dr. Rex Woods
- Jason Zeider

"Let us not be content to wait and see what will happen, but to give us the determination to make the right things happen."

... Horace Mann

Have a wonderful summer.



Please Consider a Tax Deductible Contribution to the OMA Foundation

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name (s) _____

Address _____

Zip Code _____ Phone Number _____

Please make check out to: Opening Minds Through The Arts Foundation

We will send you a receipt acknowledging your donation.

Send donation to: **Opening Minds Through The Arts Foundation**
2025 E. Winsett Street, Tucson, AZ 85719