

AUSD Reserves Disseminated Among Employees

OLIVIA CHEUNG
Editor in Chief
DIANA LI
News Editor

After years of frugal practices through program and personnel cuts, the Alhambra School Board recently gave a one-time bonus totaling \$9 million to all Alhambra Unified School District (AUSD) employees, teachers and administrators.

However, the Alhambra school board members are exempt from this bonus because they are considered elected officials, not employees of the district.

This bonus—equaling 10 percent of the respective staff member's salary—was a result of AUSD's reserve amount totaling \$38 million at the end of the fiscal year.

According to the Star News, AUSD Board President Jane Anderson explained that the 10 percent is actually a two percent cost-of-living increase multiplied by the last five years.

"Because of the financial uncertainty of the state, we kept more than we needed to in our reserves for unperceived circumstances," Anderson said. "Now that things have evened out [...] we found that our funding is a lot more stable."

Superintendent Laura Tellez-Gagliano stated that the district had reserved ap-

proximately 23 percent of the state's allotted funding, exceeding the 15 percent they were advised to have by the district's Assistant Superintendent of Financial Services, Denise Jaramillo.

"Reserves [...] help buffer difficult times. It is very important for this district to maintain a reserve level well beyond the minimum state requirement," Jaramillo said. "Without a solid reserve base, the District will not be able to respond to financial uncertainties that may come our way."

The Legislative Analyst's Office, California's Nonpartisan Fiscal and Policy Advisor, states that California school districts

The pay bonus reduced AUSD's 23 percent reserves to about 19 percent, or \$29 million.

"We need to evaluate which positions or programs should be brought back," Tellez-Gagliano said. "We have restored a health assistant at the high schools who will support the nurse. We are looking at other positions also."

Although the district decided to fund employee bonuses, decisions are still being made in regards to funding for new materials, technology, teacher training, and personnel needs. By fall of the 2014 school year, new materials, such as textbooks, is expected by the district.

Some teachers agree that there should be money distributed toward school campuses.

"I think [money] should be allocated for district-wide improvements on campuses. There needs to be updated technology, school resources and campus beautification," finance teacher Thomas Jelsma said.

Regardless of where the remaining reserve money is designated, others still agree that AUSD employees, particularly teachers, deserve monetary compensation.

"The teachers do a lot of work [and] buy classroom supplies without reimbursement, so [the raise] should be their reward for their constant dedication," sophomore Natalie Monterroza said.

“Because of the financial uncertainty of the state, we kept more than we needed to in our reserves [...].”

-Jane Anderson

are expected to have reserves of at least one to five percent, depending on the district's size, with smaller districts having higher reserves. AUSD must have a minimum of three percent of the state's general funding, although it can exceed that amount.

Furthermore, public school funding is currently in the process of changing.

"We are leaving a funding system that was established 40 years ago and entering into a new system called Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) [...]. A solid ending fund balance is necessary as the state adjusts to the new funding methodology," Jaramillo said.

ASB Introduces Senate System

REBECCA ZENG
Staff Writer

As the students and staff of AHS adjust to the new school year and class representatives are chosen, the ASB has decided to change the representation system. Last year, the system consisted of classroom spokespersons going over Constituion revisions. This year, however, the system is a Senate, where students will work together in order to fix any problems at school.

"This year's representation system will lean more toward a constructive workshop rather than an ordinary meeting. Each student will work collaboratively with one another to create propositions that could potentially better our school," Commissioner of Student Relations Daniel Olmeda said.

Some differences between the old class representatives system and the new Senate system include an increase in student involvement, meeting notices and encouragement for representatives to speak up about their ideas.

"My assistant and I are both optimistic about the representatives we met during our first meeting! Although we anticipated a lot more bodies, we feel that this year's class is engaging and really looking forward to making a change on our campus," Olmeda said.

Ultimately, this change indicates more opportunities for students to participate and to be part of the school community.

Recent Resurgence of Food Fair

DENISE TIEU
News Editor

On Sept. 17, AHS' Quad was filled with the noise of hundreds of students searching around for food to buy and students advertising their clubs' food products. The aforementioned scene was the Food Fair which made its first appearance of the year this month.

Food Fair consists of participating registered AHS clubs, who fundraise by selling ASB-approved food. Clubs were able to choose what they would sell based on a raffling system. Once a food product was chosen, no other club would be able to sell it. This arrangement was established to prevent any competitive conflicts from arising.

Typically, Food Fair is held later on in the school year; however, with the two minimum days added to the school schedule on Sept. 16 and Sept. 17 due to a required professional development for teachers, ASB was able to set up a Food Fair after school from 12:10 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.

"[The] shortened days meant

that the Food Fair wouldn't compete against our school's cafeteria as much as it would [have] if the food fair was during lunchtime on a normal school day. Plus, it's a great opportunity for clubs to introduce themselves to freshmen and new students," ASB Vice President Diana Ly said.

Some foods that made an appearance at Food Fair included nachos, Thai tea, In-N-Out burgers and spam musubi. There were conflicting responses to Food Fair.

"After a year of not having Food Fair [having] it again this year is really great! Especially for all the clubs, [since it helps for their funding]. Not only that, but [the] fact that everyone was enjoying and having a blast with all the various stands and foods was spectacular," senior Kathy Castro said.

Other students commented that the products sold at Food Fair were not as filling as they thought they would be.

"There wasn't enough variety in the food at the fair. There were a lot of snacks [and] drinks, which I personally don't want to



Serving from the Heart: Alhambra ASB and clubs collaborate to renew the Moor Food Fair tradition. MOOR photo and montage by YIBEI LIU

eat after school on a minimum day. I haven't had lunch, [so] I want filling food!" junior Mony-ing Dominguez said.

Though there was a mixed response in terms of the outcome

of the Food Fair, ASB still hopes for successful Food Fairs in the future.

"Hopefully, ASB can hold more Food Fairs throughout the year and in the coming years, too.

Nothing is set in stone, but ASB hopes that everyone can see how positive and wonderful a food fair can be so that there's a better chance of it happening again!" Ly said.