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## BASE Students' Plea to Board

By Marcus Tolero

Officials and nearly 100 students from Bay Area School of Enterprise (BASE) charter school were in attendance at Tuesday night's school board meeting to address board members on the issue of non-payment of funds from the Measure A parcel tax revenues.

According to BASE officials, the payments, which were due to the school in December of 2002, were never received and now exceed \$25,000.

Gail Greely, chief operating officer at Alternatives in Action, Inc., which is a California public benefit corporation associated with BASE, said that the hold-up "wasn't part of the original deal at all."

"I'm getting this feeling of delay and avoidance," Greely said of the district. "There is a lack of continuity."

According to BASE officials, the agreement approved by AUSD in June of 2001 was supposed to provide a per student share of Measure A parcel tax revenues at approximately \$180.

In December 2002, AUSD received its first parcel tax revenue from the state and under the terms of agreement, payments were due to BASE in that month.

Greely (who once served on the school board) said that she understands that reduced funding by the state can put the district in a bind but receiving the monies due "shouldn't take 16 months."

"This particular piece was made in 2001. It's only \$25,000. It should have been budgeted and money should have been set aside," Greely said. "Now we (BASE) have a \$25,000 hole in our budget."

BASE students present at the meeting also said that they were unhappy with the board's inaction, especially after students from BASE helped out in the campaigning of Measure A in 2001.

"I walked door to door distributing flyers about Measure A, convinc-

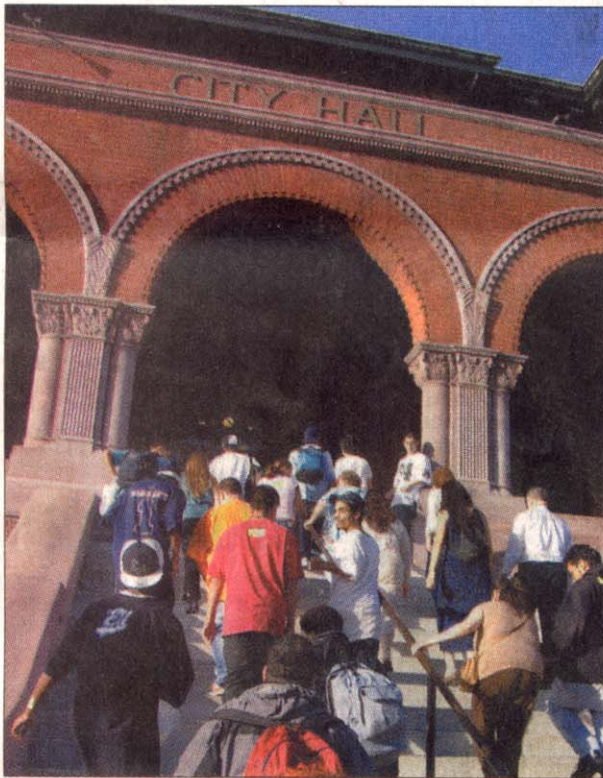


Photo by Marcus Tolero

BASE students march up the steps of City Hall to attend Tuesday night's School Board meeting.

ing Alameda voters to support our public schools," BASE junior Jossie Adame said. "Now the District won't pay my school its fair share."

BASE proposed that the district pay the full amount of parcel tax revenues due from the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 fiscal years.

The board was unable to respond during the meeting because the item was not on the agenda.



Board members also received the latest budget developments from Sacramento at Tuesday's meeting. According to Chief Financial Officer Lorenzo Legaspi,

some of the news was positive.

Legaspi said that because of the April tax collections and signs of the economy turning around, the 1.84 percent cost of living adjustment (COLA) Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger proposed earlier this year may stand.

"It is my expectation that the economy is steady enough for the 1.84 percent COLA," Legaspi said.

But Legaspi also said that while there are some positive signs now in the economy, "Our ship (the school district) is still going through the storm."

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## OPINION

### Letters to the Editor

#### Will school funding reach kids?

Editor:

Recent elections have demonstrated voter support for our schools. However, I wonder if the funding approved will ever reach the children. Two Alameda charter schools, BASE (Bay Area School of Enterprise) and ACLC (Alameda Community Learning Center), have tried for more than 16 months to collect amounts due to them from voter-approved funding.

At issue is an agreement made by the Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) in June 2001 to pay BASE a per-"Average Daily Attendance" share of parcel tax revenue. Under the terms of that agreement, the first payment of parcel tax revenues came due in December 2002. Having received no funds, BASE and ACLC pursued the issue. In March 2003 the AUSD General Counsel stated, "...BASE is entitled to a share of the proceeds...consistent with the purposes for which the parcel tax was approved."

But with requests for funds ignored, BASE asked to present before the Measure A oversight committee. Those requests were ignored. BASE resorted to mediation, and in March 2004, the district reversed their position stating that BASE is entitled to no parcel tax revenues because the Measure A authorizing resolution doesn't specifically mention charter schools.

Somehow the district decided to exclude certain public school students from public funding. This is clearly not what the voters intended. ACLC has had similar response from the board.

BASE students are taught civic involvement and many worked hard to pass Measure A. When these students were recently informed of AUSD changing positions, and of Superintendent Nishino's request to "bring it on," they responded. I would like to thank the board for a yet another education opportunity for these students as they work with the board in resolving this issue.

A great deal of effort has been spent by BASE and ACLC staff in holding the AUSD board accountable. To date, their efforts were reasonable and methodical. I urge the board to follow through on the payment of funds to both BASE and ACLC as the voters intended, and as the board agreed in June 2001. The school staff has better things to do than to hold the AUSD board accountable for what they already should be doing.

— Mark Moran

President, BASE Community Organization