

President's Report - January 22, 2016

Contra Costa Taxpayers Association hosted another capacity crowd at its monthly board meeting in Concord. Membership continues to grow as CoCoTax addresses the myriad issues that impact taxpayers, their businesses and families throughout the county.

The speaker today was Steve Chamberlin, co-founder of the Chamberlin Family Foundation. CFF is dedicated to improving educational opportunities for children in the west county area. The model CFF employs is to build school facilities and lease them - under stringent leasing contracts - to non-profit charter school companies with a demonstrated record of academic success. Among the conditions the charters must meet are:

- Fund their programs only with the public school revenues the local district receives and passes on;*
- Serve a student population that mirrors the demographics of their serving area;*
- Establish high academic goals and meet or surpass them, for ALL students enrolled, and*
- Ensure the curriculum is teacher-driven, student-focused, and results oriented.*

The results are - simply put - amazing. Steve compared educational results and operational costs to those of the West Contra Costa Unified School district, and the facial expressions and follow-up questions and comments from attendees showed how deeply impressed they were by Steve's presentation.

Ironically, Steve's presentation preceded a report by the CoCoTax president of a breakthrough in WCCUSD, where the board of education just passed a resolution approving the second phase of a forensic audit of the district's school bond program. Allegations of gross mismanagement by the district have received major attention in the media, and the district is under investigation by the FBI and SEC. CoCoTax members have monitored and exposed many instances of misconduct and violations of the state's laws, and the internal investigation will continue. Standby for future disclosures, and - hopefully - the recovery of potentially tens of millions of taxpayer dollars.

CFF's efforts directly support CoCoTa's mission: Good government at affordable cost. Good government can only occur when voters are equipped with the knowledge and judgement necessary for informed citizenship, and high quality public services must be provided at a cost taxpayers can afford. The CFF model certainly sets a standard for all schools to attain.

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