

More Than 1,100 District 1 Third Graders Visit City Hall

I first announced my desire to sponsor every District 1 third grade class on a field trip to San José City Hall in the February 2009 issue of our newsletter. (To read the original article, click here: <http://www.sjdistrict1.com/newsletter/NewsletterArticles/2009-February-3rdGraders.pdf>. I chose to host third graders because it is at this grade level that students begin to learn about politics and government. This way, students could see first-hand and up close how our local government operates. I identified some limited grant funds that are restricted to educational, recreational or cultural purposes to cover the cost of renting school buses to transport students, teachers and chaperones from their school to City Hall and back to school.

I am proud to say that by the close of this school year, 1,151 third graders throughout District 1 visited City Hall and had the opportunity to witness their local government in action. I extended invitations to every school in the district – a total of 17 including public, private and charter schools – and 12 schools accepted my offer. Country Lane Elementary School, whose students came to City Hall in December 2008, was our inaugural school visit. All of our other schools visited from March to June, and by the time we finished our last tour, we had hosted a total of 55 3rd grade classes. In a span of approximately three months we have welcomed 1,281 students, teachers and parent volunteers to San José City Hall. The total grant money awarded to fund transportation costs amounted to \$4,522, which I believe was money well spent.

Most importantly, the students had a great learning experience. Before participating in this field trip, most students had never been to City Hall and some had never even been downtown! During their visit and tour of City Hall, students learned about a variety of things including: the role of a councilmember, how the city council operates, how laws are made, and the history of City Hall. Students also enjoyed a lesson in science and nature, when learning about our resident peregrine falcons. I enjoyed quizzing students about who they thought my boss was, and most children were quick to point out that they thought that I worked for the Mayor. They were interested to learn that in fact their parents are my bosses –I work for you.

These field trips were a great success. I am committed to continuing this program for as long as I am in office. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting all of my new 3rd grade friends and am looking forward to welcoming even more during the next school year!



Country Lane Elementary 3rd graders enjoyed their visit to San José City Hall (pictured here with Councilmember Constant in Council Chambers).