

## CURRENT WEATHER

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44F

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## COLUMNISTS

Ronna Adler

Judith Allender

Dr. Bill Atwood

Dwight Barnes

Daniel Blodgett MD

Cathie Campbell

Tom Elias

Jim Flanagan

Elizabeth Gabriel

Grace Grady-Barnes

Bryan Greeson

Mike Hackworth

Al Joyal

Tony Krizan

Ed Lyons

David Richards

Earlene Ward

## EDUCATION

### School meal prices to increase

By **Elizabeth Gabriel**

(Updated Friday, February 15, 2008, 5:13 PM)

The price of breakfast and lunch in the elementary schools of Yosemite Unified School District is going up by 25 cents starting March 1. Breakfast will cost \$1.25 and lunch will cost \$2.

Food services director Irene Keener told the school board Tuesday night that there was no choice.

"We have had some of the highest increases I have ever seen," she said.

She told a story of talking to a vendor who said "with a straight face" that a 21-pound case of grapes was going for \$75.

"I said 'Excuse me?' We just can't keep operating (at the old prices) with food going up at such a rate," Keener said.

District Superintendent Bill McCabe backed her 100 percent.

"It's time we made an adjustment," he said.

He added that the state, which funds part of the food service budget, is reducing some funds and withdrawing others, adding to the woes of serving balanced, healthy meals to the students.

Prices in the district last went up in August 2001.

The new increases will not affect students who receive free or reduced-price meals.

Board member John Reynolds asked the vote on the increase be put off.

"My concern is about parent notification," he said.

School is out next week for February break.

He said he would like to have parents come to the meeting and have a chance to speak on the increase.

He was assured by McCabe that the Connect-Ed automatic phone system will notify parents immediately.

"It's never a good time to raise prices," McCabe said, adding that food services operates in the red.

Keener said she expects a dip in the number of meals sold, but experience tells her the sales will go back up when parents and children either get tired of packing lunches or realize how much more expensive that can be.

Keener surveyed nearby districts and reported Clovis charges \$2.25 for lunch, Chawanakee is at \$2 and Bass Lake is at \$2.50.

In other action the board:

Set a special meeting for Feb. 26 to "deal with potential non-re-election of employees and/or layoffs." By law, teachers must be notified by March 15 if their contracts will not be renewed.

Adopted a revised attendance policy; heard a first reading on police concerning inter-district attendance and heard second reading of graduation requirements. The new policies will be in parent handbooks.

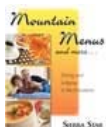
Agreed to apply for state funds for fixing up older buildings in the district.

Agreed to ask for \$5 million in tax revenue anticipated notes (TRANS) funds to help meet budget.

Heard a report that enrollment is steady, but to expect a downturn in two years, judging by the sizes of seventh-grade classes in the district. Enrollment is important because state funding is partly figured on the average daily attendance.



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