

## **L'UGAB/AGBU ferme le collège Tamar & Vatché Manoukian à Pasadena , Californie**

L'UGAB (AGBU aux USA) écrit qu'il veut en faire un centre culturel .& communautaire.



"Dear AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian High School Parents, Students and Community,

After extensive consideration of a number of factors and, most importantly, thinking about the best interests of our students, we have decided to combine the AGBU Vatche and Tamar Manoukian High School (MHS) with our sister AGBU Manoogian-Demirjian School (MDS) on the Canoga Park campus at the end of this school year.

We understand your initial concern upon receiving this news. Please rest assured that we are working diligently to ensure a smooth transition for your child. We will provide ample opportunity for questions and further conversations, but wanted to use this electronic letter to share the following:

- the numerous factors that led to this decision, including declining enrollment and increasing deficits;
- the educational and developmental benefits of a combined campus; and
- information about tuition subsidies and transportation for students attending MDS.

Despite the best efforts of the MHS community, the school has seen stagnant with declining enrollment for several years. We are very thankful to our administration, faculty and staff for their dedication and devotion to the school. Even with concentrated marketing, we have had disappointing results, reflecting a lower community demand, overall, for full-time private Armenian education.

Since its inception, regardless of enrollment numbers, the school has been heavily subsidized by AGBU and the Manoukian Foundation. Those subsidies have grown significantly every year, nearing almost \$2 million this past year, alone. With its policy of keeping tuition affordable, the \$7,980 tuition covers only about a third of the \$20,000 per student cost. AGBU and the Manoukian Foundation have been subsidizing each student between \$10,000 and \$13,000, annually. There has also been a steadily increasing demand for financial aid. Given its commitment to maintaining high academic standards and attracting the best quality teachers, MHS is facing a financial reality that has become untenable.

After careful review, we concluded that we can conscientiously deploy these resources to meet two significantly important AGBU and Foundation principles:

1. Continue to provide excellent education to our MHS students at no additional cost to them.
2. Invest resources in a way that is most responsive to the needs and interests of our local community, and that will help our community grow and thrive.

We respect the strong attachment to MHS and the school community, and all it has offered your children. We truly believe MDS will continue to offer these same values and cultural traditions. With an even more robust and excellent educational experience, MDS offers a dynamic learning environment, a significantly larger student body population, many of whom are friends with MHS students, and considerably more resources for students than MHS. MDS, which has the physical capacity to accommodate both schools' students, is committed to opening new classes and classrooms, and dedicated to maintaining small class sizes. MDS will provide more AP and Honors courses, and offers a wider range of elective options. MDS also has a track record of having strong success in college acceptances, with students being admitted to UCLA, USC, UC Berkeley, Stanford and many other prestigious universities. We have spoken at length with the MDS board and administration and know they can and will enthusiastically accommodate all our current 9th, 10th and 11th graders. Moreover, we are hopeful that some current MHS administrative and teaching staff will join the MDS staff, which will help significantly with the transition of our students to MDS.

We are committed to supporting our MHS students and families during this time of transition, and will subsidize the difference in tuition for all currently enrolled MHS students who meet academic and behavioral standards. We are also looking into providing transportation free of charge between MHS and MDS. We understand some families may choose to send their children to another Armenian high school; possible subsidies for those students who meet the same standards will also be considered.

Recognizing that this development will have the greatest implication for current 11th graders, we will provide further support by offering current MHS juniors SAT/ACT Prep courses and individualized college counseling services at no cost to families.

While we also acknowledge the distance between the two schools, we know it isn't uncommon for students to commute about 45 minutes to an hour for an excellent school. We are looking into providing comfortable transportation for the commute between Pasadena and Canoga Park. Based on considerable research, the commute time to MDS meets reasonable guidelines in this arena. Recent changes to California education law mean a potentially later start time beginning in the Fall 2020, which is being discussed with MDS to potentially provide additional relief.

In addition to being available to speak with any parents over the coming weeks, MHS board members and administrators will hold a School Placement Fair on Tuesday, November 5th following the scheduled Parent Teacher Conferences, where families can meet with representatives of MDS and a number of other high schools. Further details will follow in a separate correspondence.

AGBU and the Manoukian Foundation remain committed to providing members of the broader Los Angeles community enhanced opportunities to learn and celebrate our beautiful culture. Combining our two schools allows the Canoga Park campus to focus on excellent traditional education, and creates an opportunity to convert the Pasadena campus into a community and cultural center, anchored by the recently completed state of the art Performing Arts Center, which can be used by the entire community, especially our young people. The process of redesigning and eventually reconstructing this state of the art cultural hub will be undertaken with the community's direct input and underwritten by AGBU and the Manoukian Foundation. AGBU has had such centers for generations in countries across the globe, and it is imperative for Los Angeles to have such a center, as well. Among the ideas for what the center can offer are programs in information technology, robotics and engineering classes, music, dance, art, and cooking, in addition to continuing the community sports programs and creating meeting and event spaces. We will continue to keep you informed on the developments of this project.

We fully expect you and your children to have questions both now and in the coming weeks. We invite you to contact the school office to schedule an appointment to speak with an MHS board member and Principal Gohar Stambolyan to help answer your questions, address your individual concerns, and lend the guidance and support you need to better guide your family through this transition.

Your children continue to be our top priority. We appreciate the impact of this news and want to reassure you that we are committed to helping every single student successfully transition to their new school.

Sincerely yours,

AGBU

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