



SALINAS VALLEY
FEDERATION OF
T E A C H E R S

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Board Highlights

April 27, 2004

Construction funds prompt AHS worries

As trustees gave their seal of approval to a five-year plan that will provide the district with a new high school and middle school, old school concerns surfaced.

The five-year facilities plan passed by a 6-0 vote with Facilities Manager **Karen Luna** reminding trustees that Alisal and Salinas High will bear the brunt of an increasing student population until construction is complete. Each of the schools is to receive portables this year for expanding enrollment.

But most of the discussion centered on a plan to shift AHS funds from the 37-year-old East Salinas school to build an aquatic center and undertake stadium renovation at EAHS, the district's newest school. Initially, trustee **Phillip Tabera** brought up the topic, noting that members of the AHS community had raised questions about the funds.

According to Luna's report, AHS modernization work, already underway, is expected to come in \$1.9 million

Reported by Mariann Klinger

under budget. Much of the work actually scheduled for AHS is code required, such as the removal of asbestos, or cosmetic – painting, landscaping. Luna called for the money shift, saying the EAHS project is ready to go. It's important to spend the money in a certain timeframe, she told trustees. But **Hilario Lopez** of the Alisal Site Council complained that the aging school had many repair and updating projects that are going by the wayside. The money, he said, should remain at Alisal. Lopez suggested that AHS had a promise of a certain amount of funds and a ready list of needs. "Now," he added, "we are being told we are running out of time."

Luna argued that AHS did not really have a complaint. All of the projects on the Alisal modernization list are to be completed, she said. The bond-spending committee asked that the district stick to the list of projects and not include any new ones, she added.

"But the perception is that Alisal is being shortchanged," said Tabera. He

followed his statement by adding “I know we are not (shortchanging AHS).” Trustees, Luna and Associate Superintendent **James Earhart** framed the issue as one of timing, indicating they believed that Alisal community members were disenchanting because they were not seeing results as yet. “We’re doing the best we can, but there’s a long way to go,” said Earhart. “It (the school) looks rough, but there’s no way we can close the school” to complete the job. “We are moving as fast as we can go.”

Earhart acknowledged that AHS had at least one other project it was asked to sacrifice in the name of saving money. Alisal agreed to give up stadium restrooms for turf on the playing field, he said.

The Alisal savings, however, would go to put restrooms into the stadium at EAHS, according to the project plans. “We have done what we set out to do – modernize AHS. The money is there,” said Trustee **Art Gilbert**.

Soon-to-be Superintendent **Roger Anton** suggested the board consider a public relations campaign to correct misperceptions in the AHS community. But the AHS community talks about funding promises and overwhelming need, not timing. Following the meeting, **Pat Egan** said that AHS had been promised a combination of state and bond monies. Expecting the funds, the AHS community came out strong in support of the bond measure. “The money should stay here,” he said. Egan, who serves on the AHS site council on the bond-spending committee, said Alisal was told to shorten its list. It was believed that allotted money wouldn’t cover all that was needed. Now, the district plans to

use what it calls savings for another facility, he said.

The AHS student population is more than 95 percent Hispanic and 40 percent of those students are children of migrant farm workers, according to the school’s most recent profile.

Trustees praised for fiscal choices

Despite statewide budgeting problems, the district expects to maintain current funding levels and a seven percent reserve when its final budget is complete.

“We’re in good shape,” Earhart told trustees, crediting a “strong reserve” to their financial decisions.

Earhart said the district was in much better fiscal condition, than other districts in the state. The financial good health, he said, was boosted by tight staffing and continued student population growth.

The budget plan for the current year, according to Earhart, will allow district departments to remain at current funding levels, no enhancements. The maintenance funding calls for about a five percent cut, he added.

Gilbert noted that the district tended to cut the budget at the rate of five percent a year, avoiding the kind of extreme cuts many districts are currently experiencing.

CSEA blasts management job, pay boosts

Producing a multi-page report, CSEA President **Patty Saenz** opposed a plan to reclassify four management level positions before reviewing similar needs in its ranks.

In seeking the promotions and pay raises, Earhart told trustees that the district had been getting service in those positions “on the cheap” for a long time. Each of the posts included a significant increase in worker responsibility and was paid at a much higher rate in other districts, he said.

Review of the jobs and the pay scale for them in other districts led administration to put the item before the board for information, according to Earhart’s report. The report called for boosting the manager of planning facilities from a Range 65 to Range 72; replacing the transportation supervisor position by the manager of transportation services – Range 61 to 61M; elevating the director of research post from Range 20 to Range 27 and making the manager of food service post the manager of purchasing – food service Range 55M-D to 61M-D. Overall, the restructuring accounts for pay boosts of between \$4,638 to \$19,542.

But Saenz said CSEA had a problem with the restructuring step before similar requests among classified employees could be honored.

Associate Superintendent Alejandro Hogan said the CSEA issue was to be part of the last leg of negotiations currently underway. “We still need to work on union restructuring requests,” he added.

Pawlick backers

present recall plans to board

Saying the board has refused to listen to complaints about personnel decisions, **Michael Payne** served notice of intent to seek the recall of all seven board members.

The initial letters required 10 signatures, but recall petitions will require signatures from 20 to 25 percent of the eligible voters in each district in order to place recalls on the ballot. The process could take as long as six months and could tax the resources of the county Election Department and the district, according to Registrar of Voters **Tony Anchundo**.

In the meantime, four trustees face reelection in November 2005 and the other three in 2007.

Payne and a small cadre of parents, teachers and students voiced complaints over past months about trustees’ decision not to renew the contracts of Dr. **Fernando Elizondo** as district superintendent and Dr. **Joseph Pawlick** as principal of Salinas High. Payne also complained that Anton, a 21-year district employee, was awarded a three-year contract to succeed Elizondo without a search for a replacement or interviews. Payne, along with other Pawlick backers, accuse trustees of conducting the business in secret, but board President **Rich Foster** said he would make the information public if Pawlick authorizes it. The board conducts personnel matters in closed session as a matter of law, he said, adding that the final decision on Pawlick may not be made until June.

Over the past several board meetings backers have come forward to attest to

Elizondo's value, but more often to Pawlick's good work at SHS. When contracts were not renewed, backers cited the board as non-responsive and threatened a recall. At the recent meeting, they announced the intention of following through on the threat.

Earlier in the evening, the board voted 5-1, with Tabera voting no and **Sandra Villarreal-Ocampo** absent, to approve a three-year contract for Anton to serve as superintendent.

After the meeting, Trustee **Anne Brown** said she was not concerned about the threatened recall. "It's hard to do," she added.

Consent Agenda

Trustees voted 6-0 (Ocampo was absent) to:

- Approve agreement with Kasavan Architects to provide services in connection with the new high school project.
- Authorize an agreement with Tombleson, Inc., for the Mission Trails ROP Improvement Project.

Tombleson was the low bidder at \$834,896. The project includes the replacement of the heating-ventilation system, and roof.

Policy Revisions

First Reading

(Adopt)

BP 3100 – Budget

BP3531 – Student Insurance

BP 3540 – Transportation

BP 7160 – Construction projects by community or staff

(Rescind)

BP/AR 3334 – Extra-Curricular Testing

BP 3514.2 – Environmental Safety and Workers' Compensation

BP 3541.31 – Transportation for Non-Public Students

BP 3571 – Buildings/Capital Outlay