

Eye On The Board

The Salinas Valley Federation of Teachers
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Board Highlights January 11, 2005

Reported by Mariann Klinger

District set to meet equal access law

Bright yellow notices became stand-out additions to classroom walls after district officials made a mad dash during the holiday to meet technical requirements of the Williams Act.

The notices invite complaints relating to inadequate materials or needed repairs in the classroom. The hurry was to get the notices posted, but the district already fulfills the new law's requirements, according to Superintendent **Roger Anton**.

The Williams Act calls for a complaint process aimed at ensuring adequate classroom materials (primarily textbooks and science equipment), safe and well-maintained facilities, and properly assigned and credentialed teachers.

In answer to questions from trustees, Anton said the state is still debating details concerning the law.

The law assigns funding to make repairs or purchase materials for schools on program improvement plans. That translates to many of the district's

schools except Salinas High School. La Paz and El Sausal middle schools and Alisal High School could qualify for materials funding. These schools, along with Harden and

Washington middle schools, Alavarez and North Salinas High Schools, could qualify for facility repair funds.

Anton said the district already met the criteria of the law. The district "always had a complaint process form," he said.

In recent years, the district directed bond monies at renovating and improving the schools. "We make schools as clean, safe and functional as we can," he added.

Furthermore, Salinas High will be included because the district "already does it," Anton said.

While district officials believe local schools comply with the law already, Anton said they were looking to standardize school facilities. Standardization could meet the spirit of the law, since the Williams Act stems from a lawsuit alleging some schools and students lacked equal access to materials, credentialed teachers and well-maintained facilities.

The initial lawsuit, filed in 2000 by 100 San Francisco students, claimed the state Department of Education failed to provide for all its schools equally. The suit was settled last year, earmarking \$138 million for materials, \$800 million for repairs and \$50 million for checking compliance.

The lawsuit noted that 45,000 of the state's teachers are not credentialed or not credentialed for their teaching assignment. District officials made the rounds of area

schools last year in an effort to ensure teachers qualified for their teaching assignments in the district. The review, in compliance with No Child Left Behind, examined credentialed teachers, but not those with emergency credentials. The number of teachers working in district schools on emergency credentials was not easily accessible, according to human resources secretary **Jeannette Hobbs**.

Monitoring for compliance with the law and funding is to be handled by the county office of education, but schools also must submit a yearly report demonstrating compliance.

Anton said the county office must establish a process for inspection, which must be done in the first month of school.

Trustees **Kathryn Ramirez** and **Sandra Villarreal-O'Campo** asked that notices in the classroom be posted in Spanish for parents who do not speak English. "All documents should be in Spanish," said Ramirez.

Summer session readies for student influx

The pressure of the state's high school exit exam and increasing district requirements may prompt a growing number of students to attend summer school, according to Curriculum Director **John Favero**.

Favero, who introduced the 2005 summer session classes for approval, said he expects the number of students to continue increasing as it has in the past.

Favero said the summer program allows students to make up poor grades or prepare for the CAHSEE.

Standards and expectations are the same in summer school as in the regular program, he added.

The summer session is scheduled to run from June 22 to July 26 for five hours a day.

ROP will also offer summer classes from June 20 to July 29. Classes include auto body,

computer applications and repair, child care and office careers. Co-op classes will be offered in agriculture business, retail and restaurant sales. Co-op classes run from June 13 to August 6.

The Migrant Education Program will offer classes for middle and high school students, including language development and math and English institutes, work-study and PASS programs. Classes meet from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Salinas Adult School will run its regular program during the summer from June 20 to August 5. The district's ACE classes will be offered after the regular session is dismissed.

Favero's report projected a need for 130 teachers and 55 classified employees. Hiring for summer administrative staff is set to begin February 28.

ELL progress, testing meet state demands

Most of the nearly 6,000 students who need to demonstrate proficiency in English have been tested and many have advanced in language development, according to a district report.

The district is keeping up with state requirements to test second language students and student progress exceeds state expectations, said **Abel Valdez** of instructional services.

Ninety-nine percent of the district's English Language Learners have been tested during the school year, he said.

State standards require a minimum of 51 percent of the students to show progress in language development and 30 percent to demonstrate proficiency in English. Valdez said 68 percent of the students tested locally showed progress, while an additional 41 percent demonstrated proficiency.

Valdez said the district has 16 percent of the state's second language students. Nearly half of those students are at AHS and EAHS.

Students are tested in four areas of language development, including listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students progress along five levels from beginning English language learners to advanced learners. Most of the district's students fall into the level of intermediate to early advanced, Valdez said.

While testing success was the topic of the report, Ocampo said she wanted data on the number of ELL students that drop out of school and those who go on to college. "I feel strongly that we don't pay enough attention" to these students, she said.

Trustee **Rich Foster** commented that the board's concern about drop-outs should be for all students, not just for English as a Second Language students.

In response, Valdez told board members that his report emphasized the testing. "Academics would be another report," he said.

HR prepares for teacher recruitment

The district may need as many as 80 new teachers for 2005-2006, according to **Alejandro Hogan**, director of Human Resources.

Hogan laid out a plan for recruiting teachers, including advertising, interviews, attending job fairs and involvement in a bi-national program.

Generally, newspaper advertisement is done in local publications with the exception of the Los Angeles Times. The district also advertises online with educational employment web sites.

Hogan said job fairs provide the best access to new teachers. District officials attend fairs held by colleges and universities both in and out of state.

The district also plans to renew its involvement with the bi-national program between California and Mexico. Through the program local officials can interview prospective teachers after the Mexican government screened potential candidates.

Candidates must have certification in the content area, at least three years teaching experience and proficiency in English. If hired, they would teach in the district for a maximum of three years. Currently, five teachers from Mexico work in the district, according to Hogan's report.

Hogan said recruitment is to begin in March.

The report also described its ongoing plan to help new teachers find housing. The plan calls for low-interest (1 percent) loans up to \$3,000 and a tie in with an area rental management firm.

Policies

The board approved the following policies 7-0.

(Adopted)

BP 1000 – Concepts and Roles in Community Relations

BP 1020 – Youth Services

BP 1100 – Communication with Public

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BP 1112 Media Relations

BP 1113 – District and School Websites

BP 1150 – Commendations and Awards

BP 1220 – Citizen Advisory Committees

BP 1340 – Access to District Records

BP 5113 – Absences and Excuses

BP 5113.1 – Truancy

BP 5117 – Inter-district Attendance

BP 5141.1 – Accidents

BP 5141.4 – Child Abuse Reporting

Procedures

BP 5145.7 – Sexual Harassment

BP 6145.2 – Athletic Competition

BP 6158 – Independent Study

BP 6172 – Gifted and Talented

BP 4100 – Certified Personnel

(Rescinded)

BP 1160 – Use of Students

BP 1200 – Participation by the Public

BP 1311.1 – Political Activities of School Employees

BB 9325 – Board/School District Records

Teachers' Letter Forum

Teachers are invited to send letters-to-the-editor style comments or questions about newsletter topics or other concerns of general interest to the SVFT membership.

Letters will be printed on a space available basis. Letter writers should include a name and phone number with any submission.

All letter writers must be identified. Letters may be edited for space considerations.

Letters can be sent through the district mail to M. Klinger at Alisal High School or by email to mklinger@salinas.k12.ca.us