

Eye On The Board

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Board Highlights November 22, 2005

Reported by Mariann Klinger

District seeks longer day, vacation cap

The district offered conservative early bargaining proposals for compensation, while seeking a longer workday for teachers and a cap on vacations for classified staff.

In an opening offer, Associate Superintendent **Alejandro Hogan** called for increasing pay based on on-going, available new funds and maintaining the status quo on medical benefits contributions.

The district is seeking an extension of the teacher workday to seven and a half hours, including a 30-minute duty-free period. For CSEA members, the district suggests eliminating the “plus days” and putting a 20-day limit on the top vacation allowance.

Patty Saenz of CSEA notified the district by letter of the union’s request to open areas of pay and benefits.

John Nolan of SVFT called for reopening on class size and in-lieu. Nolan said the union’s emphasis would be on language changes. “We are looking for a less chaotic atmosphere at the start of school,” he said.

The district’s proposal for SVFT includes:

- Sign-up bonus for hard to fill posts
- Transfer and reassignments according to the needs of students
- Increasing the starting salary for new teachers
- Bargaining with Salinas Adult School teachers as a separate group

For CSEA, district proposals include:

- Modifications on extended leave for illness
- Charge absences of less than 60 minutes to employees’ sick leave
- Change leave request process for bargaining absences

Banners fly for API at 7 school sites

Seven district schools walked off with a banner for meeting Academic Performance Index growth targets. Only two schools missed their API goal – WMS fell short of the mark by one point and one subgroup failed to meet targets at EAHS.

Director of Research **Robert Martinez** charted API targets for the district, ranging from 402 at Mount Toro to 677 at SHS.

Only Mount Toro and LPMS fell below the 600 mark. All other schools hit a growth target ranging from 600 at AHS to 677 at SHS.

ESMS led the growth process with its fifth banner, followed by HMS and AHS each earning a fourth.

ELL declining, proficiency up

While the number of ELL students is declining in the district, the numbers of students reaching higher language proficiency levels is increasing.

Of the 13,395 ELL students in the district 16.9 percent earned an advanced classification and 42.3 percent earned an early advanced classification. These proficiency levels along with scores of intermediate or higher in all skill areas allows for the student to be reclassified, according to **Abel Valdez**, who is in charge of the California English Language Development Test for the district.

Most of the district schools range between 9 percent and 21 percent at the advanced level and 40 percent to 47 percent in the early advanced level.

Slightly more than 39 percent of the students fall into the intermediate or beginning level as English Language Learners.

Thirty-eight percent of the district's total student enrollment is classified as English Language Learners compared to 31 percent at the state level and 2 percent in the county.

More students eat at school cafeteria; wellness policy due

The district food service manager credited district programs with increasing student numbers for meals and called for similar attention to a proposed wellness policy.

Students are lining up in greater numbers for lunch and breakfast at district schools, according to Food Service Manager **Christina Varela**.

District food service workers, at their stations at 7 a.m., dished out 240,378 breakfasts. At lunch they serve 88,484 free lunches, 363,848 reduced-priced lunches and 17,523 paid lunches.

The noon meal accounts for an increase of 6 percent of free or reduced lunches served in the last school year. And the universal breakfast brought 19 percent more students to school early, she told trustees.

Calling the 70 cafeteria workers "the heart of the school," Varela lauded the breakfast program as innovative. "It started," she said, "when the district decided to serve breakfast during state testing." Since then, cafeteria workers have served the morning meal to increasing numbers of students.

Varela attributed part of the increase in students receiving free and reduced meals to an aggressive effort to sign up eligible students. In addition, the eligibility process has been improved, she said. Migrant students and Hurricane Katrina families qualify without application. The numbers of eligible students were increased at SHS, EAHS, AHS and LPMS.

A policy to promote healthy eating, nutritional education, and exercise should begin in January, if it is to be implemented for the 2006-2007 school year, said Varela.

In her report, she outlined the steps to creating the policy, recommending a core committee with representatives from all school community groups. Once in place the committee must develop the wellness policy and pursue grant applications for funding, she said.

Anton paints rosy picture for trustees

Fiscal solvency, student achievement and professional development top the list of district successes in a report to the board.

Drawing what he called a portrait of the district, Superintendent **Roger Anton** narrowed the list to three major achievements and challenges. Top achievements, he said, include student success as evidenced by the API growth. Performance-based budgeting maintains fiscal solvency and a focus on student performance drives the impetus for professional development, he added.

While successes received top billing, “challenges” identified the areas for improvement. Highest need areas, he said, are adequate achievement on state tests for all subgroups, an increase in the graduation rate, and getting all district schools off Program Improvement status.

Still bristling about news reports and a PI designation identifying SUHSD as a failing district, trustees welcomed Anton’s report. “We are not a failing district,” he told them. “This year we met 32 of 38 criteria.

The report names five categories with corresponding achievements and challenges. The five categories are governance, high expectations, curriculum and instruction, assessment and evaluation, support systems and facilities.

Governance – achievements include revision of board policies, high quality

curriculum, strong instructional leadership and extensive articulation with other districts and Hartnell Community College. The challenge remains to maintain a district-wide culture focused on student learning.

High expectations – achievements include curriculum guides for language arts, math, and social science, instructional targets aimed at exceeding state goals, meeting API targets for all subgroups, seeking six-year accreditation for schools and national board certification for teachers. The lone challenge is to remove the district from Program Improvement status.

Curriculum/Instruction – achievements include training for administrative walk-throughs, AVID classes at all schools, monitoring of ELL, AHS exit from PI status, services of six resource teachers, professional development plan, mentoring and training for principals, summer program (YES) for at-risk students, training for new classified employees, and new teacher orientation. The challenges in the area are removing all schools from PI status, improving subgroup performance, ensuring the improvement of technology aimed at increasing student learning, and continuing teacher training in instructional strategies.

Assessment and Evaluation – achievements include benchmark tests in language arts, math, social science and science, use of data derived from benchmark tests, gold pin awards for students who improve a performance level in the state tests, participation in the ELL lawsuit, and using the Data Director program to assess benchmark results. The challenges are getting students to pass the CAHSEE, improving the graduation rate, and meeting the NCLB targets.

Support Systems and Facilities – achievements include sportsmanship task force, fiscal solvency, performance-based budgeting, improved student attendance, using bond monies to improve school sites,

compliance with the Williams Settlement provisions. Challenges are maintaining budgets in the face of declining enrollment, acquiring land for a fifth high school and middle school, and developing an evaluation system based on student learning and designed to help teachers improve their skills for student achievement.

Outgoing trustees noted for service

Trustees recognized **Sandra Villarreal Ocampo** and **Rich Foster** for service to the board.

Villarreal-Ocampo, who served for 14 years from the Alisal district, lost her recent bid for re-election. Foster, representing the Spreckles district for one-term of four years, decided to step down for personal reasons.

Ocampo, who did not attend the meeting, is to be replaced by **Margaret Serra- Bonetti** and Foster by **Lila Cann**

Resolutions were passed praising the outgoing trustees.

Policies

(Adopted by a vote of 6-0)

- BP 5141.21 – Administering Medications and Monitoring Health
- BP 5141.4 – Child Abuse Prevention Reporting
- BP 5141.6 – Student Health and Social Services
- BP 5141.1 – Suspension and Expulsion/Due Process
- BP 6111 – School Calendar
- BP 6142.91 – Reading/Language Arts Instruction
- BP 6159 – Individualized Education Program
- BP 6159.3 – Appointment of Surrogate Parent for Special Education
- BP 6161.2 – Damaged or Lost Instructional Materials
- BP 6164.2 – Guidance/Counseling Services
- BP 1312.4 – Uniform Complaint Procedures – Williams
- BP 4019.11 – Sexual Harassment

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 by email to mklinger@salinas.k12.ca.us or to jdnolan@sbcglobal.net