

Eye On The Board

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Board Highlights: November 14, 2006:

Guidance program set for students

School counselors are soon to be the first line of defense for at-risk students and their parents. With passing the CAHSEE and graduation as the ultimate goal, counselors will be expected to hold individual conferences with students and parents in an attempt to improve performance. Six new counselors, hired this summer, and four more soon-to-be-hired will join seasoned staff to begin student-parent conferences with a Dec. 31 deadline for completion.

The counseling press marks the start of the district's two-prong plan to assist at-risk students. Recently passed state legislation provides funding for the additional counseling services.

The services tie in with the district's attempt to put counselors on a flex time schedule that will allow them to meet parents in the evening. SVFT President **John Nolan** said the District put the issue on the table for negotiations.

The District's expectation is that counselors will meet with all parents and at-risk seventh, eleventh and twelfth graders by Dec. 31.

The District identified at-risk students as seventh graders who are far below basic in math or English, eleventh and twelfth graders who have not passed all or part of the CAHSEE, and twelfth graders who are not on track to graduate, according to a report by Associate Superintendent **Tim Vanoli**.

Currently, the district has 495 seniors and 904 juniors who have not passed at least a part of the CAHSEE, and 516 students far below basic in either math or English.

Vanoli said the plan would call for the identification of available resources to help at-risk students, and conferences that would thoroughly explain consequences and options to parents and students.

The conferences mark only the beginning. The two-prong plan includes a comprehensive counseling program and a plan for the future that illustrates the effect of counseling at-risk students. Vanoli said a district committee is to develop the plans.

Spending to focus on learning

Spending is likely to get a small overhaul when this year's \$10 million plus in categorical funds goes to school sites.

While categorical funds are already earmarked for specific programs, schools make spending choices within programs. Those financial choices should emphasize educational goals, according to **Joe Rice**, interim director of the district's special projects office.

Each site must develop a categorical budget aligned to its Single Plan for Student Achievement, he said.

In the past, he said, school sites spent money. Now sites "must change spending patterns and habits . . ." Rice told trustees, the change calls for identifying the problem, goals to solve the problem, listing steps toward the solution, using data to support, and finally checking how much is needed.

Schools must make budgeting decisions according to learning goals, he said, adding that when it comes to this kind of spending, schools are "not doing a good job. . . The budgets should be driven by student needs."

Along with a call for changed spending habits, Rice presented an interim categorical funds

budget, saying that “it’s not true that there is not enough money.”

The largest amount, slightly more than \$1.4 million, is earmarked for AHS, with LPMS set to get slightly more than \$1.3 million. Other apportionments include about \$1 million for ESMS, \$856,522 for EAHS, \$643,236 for HMS, \$591,325 for NSHS, \$503,184 for WMS, \$284,315 for SHS and \$48,502 for MTHS. The district currently administers 130 different categories of restricted programs. This year’s apportionment for the programs is \$7.7 million, but Rice said the district has carryover funds from last year in the amount of \$2.3 million. All will be available to categorical programs this year, he added.

Programs supported by categorical funds include Gear Up and the High Priority Schools Program. Four of the district’s schools receive funds from HPSP for program improvement.

Most ELL students report for testing

Ninety-nine percent of English language learners completed tests assessing language proficiency, according to Rice, whose projects offices tested the 4,723 students.

The number of student present for testing has increased each year since 2002. Rice said only 39 students district wide were not tested by staff. The state requires annual tests to determine skill levels of English language learners, ranging from beginning to advanced.

AHS leads with the number of ELL students (1174) in the district, followed by LPMS (607). All of the district schools include some ELL students with the fewest at MTHS (122) and WMS (312).

Portrait shows school sites looking good

Superintendent **Roger Anton** drew a portrait of the district highlighting achievements and challenges. “Our schools look good,” he told trustees.

Anton focused on five categories – governance, high expectations, curriculum and instruction, assessment and evaluation, and support systems and facilities.

In the course of his report, Anton drew attention to the steady growth of student test scores,

curriculum aligned to the standards; benchmark testing that supports instruction, and professional training.

Challenges remain the pass rate on the state exit exam, graduation rate and program improvement status. Currently, four of the district’s schools, as well as the district itself, are on program improvement status.

The report marked the third in a series of reports to the board, emphasizing the condition of the district. Anton called the report an annual update. Much of the information was included in previous reports.

Among the district’s achievements, Anton listed the goals set by the board, the revision of board policies, six-year accreditations earned by a number of the district schools, including the most recent – SHS.

In addition, Anton said the ninth grade academies and teacher collaboration at the middle school were positive achievements. While he emphasized a variety of programs, he held out professional development for special praise. “It’s a big achievement for us,” he said of the summer teacher institutes in math, reading, social science, science and writing. About 600 teachers attended the various institutes over the past few years.

Projects nearly ready; bond funds allocated

Bond monies from ballot Measures M and F are all allocated, according to Chief Business Officer **James Earhart**.

Remodeling and repair projects are still underway, but many are getting close to completion, he told trustees.

Workers are expected to: spend another summer at AHS, wrap up the theater project at SHS and complete stadium restrooms at NSHS and EAHS.

Bond monies, along with developer fees, a special reserve fund and deferred maintenance funds, financed more than \$86 million in remodeling, repairing and building projects over the past four years.

In a report to the board, Earhart itemized the amounts spent from each source at the district’s school sites.

In addition, to the capital expenditures budget, Earhart noted that the Performance Based Budgeting committee is set to begin work on the 2007-2008 budget.

He told trustees that he reduced the size of the committee to ensure attendance. Committee members include **Rich Foster**, parent representative; **Vici Sutton**, SVFT; **Azalea Perez**, CSEA; **Paul Quiggle**, HS teacher; **Jennifer Galeria**, MS teacher; **Michael Romero**, HS assistant principal; and **Judith Peterson**, MS assistant principal.

Leadership goal fails to make policy level

Board members quietly shot down one of its own goals, setting aside a suggestion to rotate leadership on the board.

Currently, board officers are elected by trustees. Trustees **Phillip Tabera** and **Kathryn Ramirez** sought a policy change that would call for the vice president to take over as president after the year of service. Both also urged that board officers demonstrate prerequisite qualifications for the offices by completing a master's in governance training. Ramirez said the training should be included in the policy.

The lack of support for the change became obvious when Trustees **Jim Reavis**, **Art Gilbert** and **Margaret Serna-Bonetti** stated their support for the existing policy. Reavis, bristling at the call for governance training, said his constituents' vote is all the qualification he needs. Serna-Bonetti agreed, stating that maturity, good judgment and experience were enough.

Four of the trustees have already completed the governance training: Tabera, Ann Brown, Gilbert, and Ramirez--Ramirez being the most recent graduate of the program. Lila Cann and Serna-Bonetti are currently enrolled. Reavis is the only Trustee to not enroll in the program.

Sports complex to bear name of coach/teacher

The NSHS track and field complex is to be named the Marv Beguhl Sports Complex, after a long-time coach and teacher.

Trustees approved the designation unanimously. **Marv Beguhl** practically lived at the school, said Earhart, remembering a young coach/teacher new to the school when the CFO was a student there. "He came in early in the morning . . . and was there until night."

In a letter to the board, NSHS Principal **August Caresani** told trustees that all members of the school community were eager to honor Beguhl, who also served as athletic director.

Beguhl, whose six children attended NSHS, is said to still attend sports events. The school is planning a ceremony to announce the renaming of the sports complex March 15, 2007.

Business travel rate set to increase .04

Trustees approved an increase of four cents a mile to in the mileage reimbursement rate.

The increase, which takes effect Jan. 1, 2007, boosts the reimbursement rate to .485 cents per mile.

Policies

(Adopted by a vote of 5-0. Trustees **Lila Cann** and Tabera were absent.)

BP 5131.63 – Steroids

BP 5141.23 – Disease Prevention

BP 6158 – Independent Study

BP 6162.5 – Student Assessment

BP 6162.54 – Test Integrity/Test Preparation

BP 3000 – Concepts and Roles

BP 3300 – Expenditures and Purchasing

BP 3310 – Purchasing Procedures

BP 3315 – Relations with Vendors

BP 3516 – Emergencies and Disaster

Preparedness Plan