

# Eye On The Board

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## Board Highlights from October 2010

Reported by Mary Ellingwood

### School Safety Topic of Recent Board Meeting

In the wake of several recent shootings in Salinas, the SUHSD School Board requested a presentation about School Safety from Administration. Before the presentation began, school board President, Phillip Tabera, stated that the topic of school safety will be ongoing.

Superintendent Earhart began the meeting by saying, "I'm honored to work with these people. I don't think I've really ever said this, but thank you for what you do."

He then mentioned the Board Policy #5144 of Zero Tolerance stating that, "We tolerate no nonsense per our manual...you cannot enter our schools without a signed contract" which informs students and parents of the district's expectations for academics and behavior.

Mr. Earhart also listed services that are offered to help students stay on track such as Sunrise House, Parents as Teachers, Silver Star, and many others. He noted that this year the district has contracted with Probation Services and Canine Detection. The district has also installed over 320 video cameras at the sites, utilizes two-way radios, school intercoms, and cell phones for administrators to help keep campuses safe.

Finally, Superintendent Earhart cited several recent projects that have been recently completed to improve school safety such as the newly erected fence at La Paz Middle School, and E-School implementation of wireless access for administrators and other designated personnel.

After the presentation by the administration, Trustee Tabera said, "We have a contract with probation officers as a result of using community service officers and I would like to know what their duties are and how that's going?"

Mr. Earhart responded, "We have seven probation officers split between sites and they deal with students on probation as well as assist administrators with site activities." Several principals were in agreement that the probation officers are an asset at the sites and that their presence is invaluable.

"Another question is about lockdowns and can the schools be locked down completely?" asked Trustee Larison. Each site principal responded that they can either be completely locked down or locked down with small areas of exception.

In response to a question by Trustee Saenz about how to reassure parents that our schools are safe, Mrs. Roney-Peterson, principal at WMS responded, "We need to get parents into the schools so they feel they have a participatory relationship with the school and that they belong there."

Then, Trustee Cann asked, "Have you discussed among yourselves what can be done to help these students...are the kids most at-risk getting reached?"

The principal of SHS, Mr. Heckmann responded, "There are problems that are occurring outside of the schools that are beyond the scope of what we can accomplish during the school day."

Board members expressed concern about students at the sites and Trustee Martinez wanted to know if sites needed help for grieving students. Mr. Burns, principal of EAHS, responded, "I appreciate that the superintendent

was at our school within ten minutes to help with the crisis. In any crisis, since I've been here, the district has been very supportive... We have nine counselors (We have a special grant) and that was really helpful."

Mr. Caresani, principal of NSHS, said that their counseling center and Sunrise House had met the needs of students at their site. And, Mrs. Roney-Peterson, principal of WMS, acknowledged teachers as "the silent sufferers" because some teachers have known students who were killed for two or more years.

As the conversation began to wind down, SVFT Co-President, Peggy Carroll addressed the board, "We're all trying to make sense of the senseless... As you look at the stuff we need such as procedures and activities, the staff, students, and community need to know that the fence line will be the line that says we will have a safe place for our students inside this fence."

## **Board Approves Revisions to 2010-2011 Budget**

The adopted budget for 2010-2011 was revised and the revisions approved by a vote of 7-0 at the October 26, 2010 meeting of the SUHSD School Board

The revisions included the reinstatement of five furlough days which will be paid with restricted federal funds using the Federal Education Jobs Fund SB847.

## **Summer Session 2011 Adopts Narrow Focus**

Due to ongoing budget issues facing the school district, the 2010-2011 Summer Session will focus mainly on providing remediation to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. The goal of the summer school program will be to support juniors and seniors who have either failed a core course and need to repeat it for graduation, have fallen behind between 5 to 30 credits, or need to pass the CHSEE (California High School Exit Exam), or need to bring up their GPA to a 2.0.