

# Eye On The Board

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## Board Highlights October 14, 2008

Reported by Mariann Klinger

### State budget, stock market put pinch on local finances

The newly adopted state budget allows for a .68 percent Cost of Living Adjustment (about \$46 per student in ADA) and threatens a mid-year cut that could take it away.

And so far, changes in the stock market cost the district \$1.2 million, according to Chief Business Officer **James Earhart**.

The Monterey County Office of Education is responsible for investing district funds, some of which were in Lehman Brothers and in Washington Mutual Bank. The bankruptcy filings of those companies mean an interest loss of \$870,686 – money that must be taken out of the district's budget.

"It's scary . . . we're all in a situation we've never been before," said Earhart.

Anticipating problems with state monies as far back as January prompted the district to develop a 95 percent funded budget. "We will be looking at the most conservative of budgets," Superintendent **Roger Anton** told trustees.

Nevertheless, threatened mid-year cuts from the state could hamper the district's cash flow. District officials are poised to pay employees no matter what happens with state monies, said Earhart.

"If it becomes a cash flow issue we can 'raid' other funds to meet the payroll," he told trustees.

Cafeteria funds and bond monies represent the best cash available, he added.

"It's time to go into fiscally conservative mode. We need to be leaders in tough economic times," said SVFT Co-president **Peggy Carroll**. "We need to protect students and education in the district."

The 2008-2009 budget signed by Gov. **Arnold Schwarzenegger** takes a \$3.3 billion bite out of K-14 education programs. The .68 percent COLA falls below the 5.66 percent statutory COLA, according to the California Budget Project.

The project's report indicates that the governor's budget fails to include the \$150 million in Prop 98 funds needed to meet 2007-2008 obligations.

In addition, the state budget proposes to "borrow" from the lottery by selling bonds financed by future proceeds to pay General Fund obligations. The budget agreement puts the plan on the ballot with a promise of eliminating the K-12 share of lottery proceeds in favor of increased allocations for schools from the General Fund.

With a line item veto, the governor cut out \$6 million for non Title I schools subject to sanctions for failing to make progress under NCLB, \$1.8 million in federal funds allocated to schools whose English learners are failing to make progress under NCLB.

The California Budget Project also reported that children and families will be affected by cuts in health services, child care and public libraries.

## Process begins to acquire site for middle school

The district expects to begin the process of buying land for a new middle school in an area above the Creekbridge neighborhoods north of Boronda Road and east of Hemingway Street.

The first step toward the purchase is to call for an environmental review of the proposed 18-acre site. Low bidder EMC Planning Group of Monterey is to conduct the review at a cost of \$18,680, according to **Karen Luna**, manager of planning facilities.

Luna told trustees that the site is to be paid for with bond monies. "Even though we are not going to build for 10 years, we have the bond money and we have to spend it," she said.

## Schools meet state, federal growth goals

For the first time, the subgroups at six district schools met all state and federal performance goals. Only subgroups at WMS did not meet targets set by No Child Left Behind, according to **Robert Martinez**, director of research.

Three schools, AHS, NSHS and HMS, met all state and federal targets with HMS and AHS doing so for the fifth time.

With 800 as the ultimate goal, district high schools range from 516 at Mount Toro, 684 at EAHS, 647 at AHS, 660 at NSHS and 703 at SHS.

School rankings from 2 to 5 both at high school and middle school levels remain the same as in years past.

Growth goals at the middle schools ranged from 690 at ESMS, 694 at HMS, 671 at LPMS, and 709 at WMS.

## Program focuses on water skills and safety

Sixty summer school students participated in a middle school swim program at EAHS Aquatic Center.

The four-week program focused on swimming skills and water safety, according to Teacher **Sky Becker**.

Some of the students had never been in a pool before and didn't even know what swim attire was, said LPMS teacher **Marlow Contreras**.

Teacher Sky Becker presented a slide show of students working in the program and several students told of losing their fear of water.

"We're near the water. Water safety is important for our kids," said Carroll, who called for program expansion.