

# Eye On The Board

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## Board Highlights October 28, 2008

Reported by Mariann Klinger

### Anton to retire after 26 years of district service

After 26 years with the district, Superintendent **Roger Anton** announced his retirement, listing career highlights before turning the meeting over to Associate Superintendent **Tim Vanoli**.

Anton is due to retire in June at the end of the academic year.

SVFT Co-presidents **Peggy Carroll** and **Kyle Samuels** praised Anton for his dedication to students. "You always knew of his emphasis on the district's students," said Carroll.

Anton's knowledge of the schools, teachers and students when he took over the superintendent's post in 2004 was a plus for the governance, she said.

Although union officials sometimes disagreed with Anton, they never doubted his devotion to the students, she added.

Carroll said she hoped trustees would take that advantage into consideration and choose Anton's replacement from the district.

Before becoming superintendent, Anton served as associate superintendent for 15 years and as principal of ESMS for six years.

Among the highlights of his career, Anton cited steadily improving achievement scores, curriculum guides, benchmark assessments and walk-through monitoring of classrooms.

Teacher training became an important strategy for student success, as did performance based budgeting for the district's financial status.

### SVFT contract wins narrow board approval

The board approved the SVFT agreement by a vote of 4-3 with Trustees **James Reaves**, **Lila Cann** and **Cheryl Larison** opposing.

Reaves linked his opposition to the Regional Occupation Program. "The ROP got the short end of the stick," he said.

Cann and Larison made no comment to explain their vote.

The three-year contract focused on language concerning class size, collaboration and a change in the salary schedule for nine ROP teachers.

The nine ROP teachers are to get the sixth period option as long as they are teaching six hours, five days a week.

The agreement left out five teachers who spend a part of the teaching day in the field. Those teachers protested the contract during the public speaking forum at the beginning of the meeting.

## Final budget ok'd; mid-year cuts likely

Trustees unanimously adopted the 2008-2009 budget with revisions that reflect current state funding.

While the district's budget reflects a promised \$46 ADA increase, Chief Business Officer **James Earhart** said the state is likely to withdraw the increase by mid year.

The final budget also reflects the loss of interest income from recent stock market fluctuations.

The district is in good financial condition with strong reserves, according to Earhart. Nevertheless mid year cuts could cause problems, he said, emphasizing the state's financial status.

## Migrant students go to university programs in U.S.

Many of the district's migrant students participated in programs at colleges throughout the country.

One hundred seventy students took part in 13 different residential programs at various colleges, according to a report by **Blanca Baltazar-Sabbah**.

At the universities, students got a taste of college life, including intense academic activities, she said.

For many of the students the programs represented their first time away from home. For some the experience was unsettling at the beginning, but by the time they completed the programs students had gained in confidence as well as knowledge, she added.

Several of the students addressed the board, expressing appreciation and the new-found confidence. "I was afraid of speaking in public," said SHS senior **Karina Barajas**. "I'm still shy," she added, "but I'm more open now."

Among the schools offering the special programs were Harvard University, the Minnesota Institute, the University of Northern Colorado, Skidmore College, the Center for American Archeology, UCLA, UC at Santa Cruz, and California State University at Fresno.

Thirty of the students from middle and high school attended the Close Up for New Americans program.

## Summer session up by more than 600

The 2008 summer session included an additional 434 high school students and 189 middle school students over the previous year.

The district's summer programs were offered to a total of 5362 students middle and high school students, according to Curriculum Director **John Favero**.

In addition to the regular academic program, 200 migrant students took a variety of courses and the YES program at Mount Toro provided job training for 109 students and the ROP program offered an opportunity for 500 SHS students to earn job skill credits.

Winter session is set for the high schools for Dec. 13, 15 to 20 and at LPMS for Dec. 13, 15 to 19.

The 2009 summer session is to be offered from June 22 to July 24. Hiring for summer school teachers is to begin March 16.

## Crews complete repairs throughout the district

Several district schools began school with new textbook rooms, as part of the summer maintenance projects, according to **Jerry Stratton**, maintenance manager.

Stratton said district crews completed a variety of small projects during the summer, including

working on parking lots, courtyards, tennis and basketball courts.

A number of portables received a coat of paint, roofing repairs and power washing, he added.

## **'Eye on the Board' Extra**

### **Group backs retiree issues; marks legislative success**

California retirees take their rocking chairs to the capital porch, or carry stretchers into the state legislature to make a point.

"We behave like two-year-olds . . . but we're getting to be known as the can do folks," said **Nan Brasmer**, president of the California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA).

Brasmer described CARA actions on behalf of the state's seniors at its annual convention October 12 and 13 in San Francisco.

CARA members head for Sacramento to fight for 90 of their top priority assembly and senate bills, she said.

Citing the reason for the group's growing reputation among legislators, Brasmer said of the 90 bills supported at the state level, 46 passed. Of CARA's 10 top priority bills six made it into law, she added.

In a review of supporting votes by assembly members and state senators, CARA gave Democrats Assemblywoman Anna Caballero (D-Salinas) 94 percent, Assemblyman John Laird (D-Santa Cruz) 100 percent and Republicans Senator Jeff Denham 38 percent and Senator Abel Maldonado 44 percent.

Making retirement comfortable and affordable for the state's seniors sits at the heart of CARA's efforts.

At the top of the list of bills to support are ones that back affordable prescription drugs, single-payer health-care coverage and a new system for figuring the economic index.

The group fields a 30-member legislative committee to follow 1,300 bills, focusing on priority issues for retirees. "We want to make our world better," said Brasmer.

Health care stands as a number one concern for CARA at the state level and the Alliance for Retired Americans at the national level. While single-payer health care proposals hold a top priority, the groups press for changes in the current health care system. Brasmer said the groups conduct town hall meetings speaking against the privatization of Social Security and for the inclusion of dental care and Medicare Part B in the regular Medicare coverage.

She called the current state budget "the most mean-spirited budget ever."

CARA counts CSEA and SVFT, along with many other unions and community-based organizations among its members. The national group, Alliance for Retired Americans, includes 3.5 million members with 1400 clubs in 38 states.

### **Workshop focuses on state budget hits to retirees**

At a workshop, conventioners got a crash course in the state budget and its effects on seniors, along with proposed remedies at state and federal levels.

Both retired Americans groups back a plan to establish a more updated version of the economic standard index to replace the current standard set in the 1960s, according to **Susie Smith**, director of California for Economic Security.

Today's system, she said, does not pay adequately or fairly enough. Currently, support programs are available to individuals who fall below the federal poverty level of \$10,210.

A new standard would increase the allowable income level to qualify for a variety of support programs. In the new standard annual incomes and expected expenses are higher and reflect whether residents rent, own a home or pay on a mortgage.

Smith said the new index would vary from county to county to reflect the cost of living in a specific county.

For instance, in Monterey County the index would qualify individuals for support programs at incomes of \$33,698 for a homeowner with a mortgage, \$23,413 for a renter, and \$16,563 for a homeowner without a mortgage.

The Economic Security Standard Index also proposes changed values for individuals and families.

**Lenny Goldberg** called the state budget “a war on seniors.” Goldberg, executive director of the California Tax Reform Association, provided details on a budget, he said, gave senior programs a disproportionate amount of cuts.

The state’s 2008-2009 budget eliminated \$11.7 million for the California Discount Drug Program and reduced the state’s department of aging programs by \$13.2 million.

These reductions translate into cuts in the senior community employment program, multipurpose senior services program, Alzheimer’s day care resource centers, home-delivered meals programs and the senior legal hotline, he said.

The budget agreement also cut \$150 million in senior and disabled rental and homeowner assistance, he said.

Goldberg criticized Gov. **Arnold Swarzenegger** saying the governor came into office with the promise of “cleaning up the mess.” Instead, said Goldberg, Swarzenegger cut corporate taxes and the car tax taking \$20 billion out of the revenue stream. The lost

revenues put the state in a deficit, added Goldberg.

In addition, the current budget seeks to borrow from future lottery revenues to fund state programs. Goldberg said the issue is likely to appear as a special ballot measure next June, since the plan can not go forward without voter approval.

Goldberg recommended a repeal of the tax breaks and loopholes in order to fill state coffers. He called on all Californians to make fiscal recovery a priority. “Californians want a high level of services with medium level taxes. We just can’t get there without paying for it,” he added.