

Eye On The Board

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Board Highlights March 11, 2008

Reported by Mariann Klinger

District seeks its own path to improve

District officials want to go it alone, when it comes to program improvement.

The district, now in its third year of program improvement, faced sanctions for failing to meet all federal targets of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Compared to others, however, the district is categorized as at a “light” level.

Like other districts that came close to meeting all standards, Salinas is asking that the state’s emphasis be put on districts with more serious problems.

Districts will ask the state board to focus on the seven districts in dire need, Superintendent **Roger Anton** told trustees.

Anton said state funds should be used where they are most needed –Greenfield. The state is to make \$45 million available in Monterey County, he said. It should “spend the money in Greenfield and leave us alone.”

At earlier meetings Anton announced his intention of telling the state just that. He said Salinas schools met more than 90 percent of the criteria.

“I believe if we continue what we’re doing and using current resources . . . as long as we’re seeing growth . . . our kids are making progress our schools are there,” he said.

“The district will continue to move forward on providing students with the best level of education, further identification of the causes of student performance and intensive professional development for teachers and administrators,” Anton wrote in his report.

The state’s recommendation for schools at the “light” level is to offer a technical assistance provider to help develop a tailored plan that would bring the district in line with accountability targets.

The state identified 38 teams as intervention providers. The district is to work with an intervention team.

The issue of concern is the state’s fourth recommendation in which the state reserves the right to invoke additional sanctions at any time.

“The district is most interested in continuing its efforts without distractions or new initiatives altering the course of the district’s improvement,” the report said.

Digitronics is out; new system to update district

The district is to put its antiquated information system to rest, beginning next year.

The district expects to sign with eSchool Plus – the chosen replacement system—by April, according to a report by Information Services Manager **Joe Zeligs**. He estimated the total

initial price at \$475,123 and ongoing costs, including license renewal and maintenance at \$61,500 a year.

The district is to give up the struggle to maintain Digi, put in place more than 15 years ago, before the internet, before Windows. District techs told trustees the system, long used to record student attendance, was becoming more and more difficult to maintain. Replacement parts more difficult to locate. And more problematic is the fact that the system simply won't communicate with the Web or Windows.

eSchool Plus was named as the preferred replacement. Supplied by Sungard Pentamation, the system offers 100 percent web based modules for master scheduling and reporting. The system has a long track record of success with K12 districts. Pajaro Valley Unified School District is the closest to use the newer system.

In addition, the system will offer an on-line parent portal where parents can view student grades and progress reports. The grade book is web based and the system is compatible with cell phones and other hand-held wireless devices.

Hardware installation is to begin by June. Some staff training is set to begin when school opens in August. The whole process is expected to take about 18 months, said Zeligs.

District schools to get funds for new teachers

Current legislation provides funding for teacher recruitment for low-performing schools. AHS and the middle schools qualify for a share of the \$163,448.

The program will allow the district to offer bonuses, training in use of curriculum guides, and training to work in collaboratives for new math and science teachers.

NCLB certified new math and science teachers at schools eligible for the funds could qualify for the bonus.

Trustees approved the plan that would provide \$59,702 for use at AHS, \$21,080 for ESMS, \$29,736 for HMS, \$25,510 for LPMS and \$27,420 for WMS.

Consent Agenda

Trustees approved by a vote of 7-0 the following:

- Testing and inspection services for EAHS stadium restroom project by Kleinfelder, Inc. The work is to cost \$16,943.
- Testing and inspection services for NSHS stadium restroom building and for the Adult Education computer lab project by REI & Associates. Cost for each is expected to be \$1000 per building and \$1000 per month for the site development part of the project.