

# Eye On The Board

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## Board Highlights May 13, 2008

Reported by Mariann Klinger

### State reviews categorical fund use

A categorical program review identified several areas of non-compliance. The four-day state review noted 15 items in non-compliance of 127 examined by an eight-member team from the California Department of Education. The district already offered resolutions for the findings.

The areas questioned by the CDE don't mean a loss of funds for the district, they just mean categorical funds must be put to use in the right place, **Joe Rice**, acting compliance officer, told the board.

Rice described the team's report as fairly routine and said two of the district's solutions were already approved by the state. "It's much cleaner than it was before, but not perfect," he said.

With a back drop of state and federal guidelines, the review examined compliance in the way categorical programs are implemented locally, according to Rice's report.

The review of nine specific programs took place at the district office, MTHS, SAS, EAHS, and LPMS.

Criticism was aimed at programs for English Language Learners, parental involvement and the requirement for qualified teachers.

The programs focus on services to at-risk and underperforming students. Rice said the key was to direct the money at student learning, rather

than to just spend the funds on field trips and computers.

Trustee **Kathryn Ramirez** called for a report on the spending of categorical funds school-by-school.

### Budget report OK'd, cuts hit \$2 million

Trustees unanimously approved the district's third interim report on its \$122 million plus budget.

The budget includes a 3 percent reserve, a positive ending balance, and a multi-year projection.

Performance based budget reductions of \$2,115,322 also become part of the district's financial package. The cuts are made during a committee review of district departments and programs.

This year's budget reductions followed the pattern set since the performance based budget committee was established.

After priority ranking some department budgets were cut from 2.5 to 5 percent.

The district expects to fund many departments at 100 percent of their budget request.

## Long term facilities plan gets approved

Trustees unanimously approved a plan calling for three new schools over the next 22 years.

The facilities master plan outlines a potential 29 percent student enrollment growth and an accompanying need for two new high schools and one middle school. The plan identifies goals important to a gradual accommodation of the expected additional 4000 students.

## EAHS plans to cast light on its stadium after public hearings

The Creekbridge neighbors provided little objection to planned stadium lighting at EAHS, but did offer complaints about game noise.

The main issue has always been about the noise, Principal **Darren Sylvia** said, relating the results of two public hearings in the neighborhood.

“We’re looking at ways to deal with the sound issue,” he added. “We expect to continue to monitor and survey our neighborhood.”

Now that public hearings have been held, Sylvia said the \$300,000 project is ready to move forward. Engineers are to submit final drawings for state approval.

The project is funded by Measure F.

## Local funds boost fine arts programs

An infusion of funds from local ballot Measure V is allowing the district to focus efforts on fine arts, particularly at the middle school

The district’s share of the funds (\$115,520) went to the middle schools, AHS, NSHS, EAHS and Community Day School, according to a report last month by John Favero, director of curriculum.

Funding guidelines call for a community-wide after-school program for 2008-2009.

The lion’s share of the funds is to pump up middle school arts, but the high schools’ allotment generally allows for a single class. At Community Day School the funds cover a knitting class, west-African drumming and dance at AHS, Baille Folklorico at EAHS and NSHS.

Middle schools received between \$28,000 and \$38,000 for fine arts programs, including music, drama and dance.

The money backs the Alisal Center for the Arts with 100 students at ESMS; choir, drama and dance for 65 students at HMS; and art, guitar, dance and intramurals for 135 students at WMS.

## Teacher says no 5<sup>th</sup> test

Trustees were asked to set a moratorium on benchmark testing for next year, during open comments at the meeting.

SHS Teacher Phil Moore criticized the benchmark testing in general and spoke out against the district’s proposal for a fifth benchmark this year.

Moore cited student testing burn out and instructional time wasted. Currently students spend 16 days on benchmark testing, he said. PLCs want to produce their own benchmark tests, he added.