

Eye On The Board

The Salinas Valley Federation of Teachers
21 West Laurel Drive Suite 61, Salinas, CA 93926-3434
Telephone: 831 -442-8234 ~ Fax: 831 -442-8563 ~ E-mail: presidents@svft.net

Board Highlights May 26, 2009

Reported by Mariann Klinger

Budget cuts hit district harder in coming year

A federal stimulus package may offer a financial bridge to the next school year, but then the district's budget will "fall off a cliff" into 2009-2010, according to Chief Business Officer **James Earhart**.

Earhart documented the fiscal "cliff" in a multiyear projection, showing the board what will happen. This year, despite a starting budget \$6 million down from the year before, grants and the stimulus package provide a \$3.1 million boost. But next year, the full force of budget cuts is likely to hit the district, he said.

"It's not a pretty picture. It's the worst I've ever seen."

The numbers indicate a decline in lottery money and grant money, as well as the cuts passed on by the state. Earhart estimated a projected budget of \$76 million compared to \$83.7 million in 2007-2008. "It means a change of life in the way we have operated," he added.

Trustee **Philip Tabera** said some cities and counties have asked employee unions to take a reduction in pay. "Is that likely here?" he asked.

If money problems continue, Earhart said, "it would be a reasonable request" and preferable to shutting down programs.

Trustee **Kathryn Ramirez** said she wanted the district with the help of employees to seek ways to be more cost effective before asking for cuts.

Students advance in state measures

District schools and students edge toward an ever increasing improvement rate, while dropouts continue to show dramatic declines.

Overall the district averages a 680 API.

In a report to the board district officials showed area schools closing in on target rankings with middle schools at a high level four except for LPMS. LPMS ranks three.

The high schools range from three (AHS and NSHS), four (EAHS) and five (SHS).

The report indicated growth for 2008 and the expected targets for 2009.

For API base, the high schools range from 648 (AHS) to 703 (SHS) for 2008 and are targeted for a five to eight point increase for 2009.

Middle schools struck a range of 685 to 717 API for 2008.

As the year closes, 76.5 percent of the district's seniors passed the CAHSEE, a state requirement for graduation. Pass rate ranges from nearly 70 percent at AHS to 83 percent at SHS.

Seniors failing one or more parts of the exam can retake during the summer.

In addition, nearly 65 percent of entering seniors passed the CAHSEE district wide. Only 13 percent failed the state test. The latter students will have opportunities during the school year 2009-2010 to pass the test.

The report indicates that higher percentages passed at least one part of the state exam.

MTHS rankings and percentages are somewhat lower than the other schools.

Better tracking systems and formulas allow the district and the state to identify the numbers of students earning a diploma from the district's schools.

District wide nearly 89 percent of seniors in a given year receive a diploma. Except for MTHS, the district high schools hover around a 90 percent success rate.

For the most part, district high schools' success rate exceeds the county and the state. Countywide high schools reached nearly 86 percent graduation rate in 2008, while statewide high schools graduation rate was just short of 80 percent

"We're on the right track," said Associate Superintendent **Tim Vanoli**. The instructional services chief presented a three-year comparison to the board verifying the district's continued success rate.

Vanoli said graduation rates are developed using the four-year graduation rate formula for NCLB. The formula consists of the number of graduates in Year 4 divided by the number of graduates (Year 4) plus ninth grade dropouts Year 1 plus tenth grade dropouts Year 2 plus eleventh grade dropouts Year 3 plus twelfth grade dropouts Year 4.

No tracking is in place for students who drop out in eighth grade.

Jill Cameron from the district office told trustees that more than 65 percent of the district's ninth graders passed the healthy zone criteria that are part of the graduation requirement.

In 2009, high school students passed five of six criteria at a range of 60 percent at NSHS to 73 percent at EAHS.

The range for passing healthy criteria among middle schoolers fell below 50 percent district wide.

Seventh graders ranged from 31 percent at HMS to 56 percent at WMS. The figures, however, demonstrate and improvement each year, said Cameron, who offered the board a three-year comparison.

Policies

(First reading)

- BP 0200 – Goals for the School District
- BP 2000 – Concepts and Roles in Administration
- BP 2140 – Evaluation of the Superintendent
- BB 9000 – Role of the Board
- BB 9322 – Agenda/Meeting Materials
- BB 9323.2 – Actions by the Board

Consent Agenda

The board passed the following by a vote of 7-0 to:

- Approve the proposal from Axiom Engineers to replace heating and ventilation units at NSHS and HMS. Cost of the project is \$23,100.
- Award the bid for EAHS stadium lights to Collins Electric Company for \$311,519.