

Eye On The Board

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Board Highlights May 27, 2008

Reported by Mariann Klinger

Trustees nix new grant fund position

The district's request for approval of a new administration-level job description met with a resounding "no." All seven trustees voted against the categorical program manager job description, vetoing the idea of another administrator.

Some trustees said the effort to institute the new post circumvented the board's recent decision to eliminate an assistant principal at LPMS and WMS in the 2008-2009 school year.

"We just cut administration and now we're putting it back in," said Trustee **Cheryl Larison**. She suggested a teacher leader for the position.

"It's not the time to be asking for a new administrative position," said Trustee **Kathryn Ramirez**.

Trustees decided to record objections and submit them to district officials.

The district called for the new post as a way for handling \$1.5 million plus in categorical programs at La Paz Middle School. District officials said they envisioned the categorical program manager at a level with an assistant principal but as a leader of program development and maintenance.

Their request identified the new administrator as a leader who: maintains categorical programs in compliance with federal and state guidelines and

who provides supplemental instruction and services to staff in collaboration, in aligning the curriculum, in coordinating planning, development, implementation and evaluation of projects.

LPMS Principal **Steve Oliver** said the middle school became the recipient of Quality Education and High Priority grants totaling \$1.5 million. LPMS also receives other categorical funding similar to grant monies allotted to other schools.

"We want to make the categorical manager the leader to make programs yield better results," Oliver said, adding that a mid-level administrator would be cheaper than a top-of-the-scale teacher.

District officials said 70 percent of the post would be funded with categorical monies and 30 percent with general funds. While assuring trustees that only one new manager would be hired for only one year, the description called for a 217-day year at middle schools and 221 at high schools.

For some trustees use of general funds was the sticking point and for others it was adding an administration post with the potential to expand beyond LPMS.

For Trustees **James Reavis** and **Lila Cann** general fund use stood in the way. "If it's (assistant principal post) necessary, why are we cutting assistant principals. I'm concerned about the use of general funds," she said.

Superintendent **Roger Anton** said about \$12,000 from the general fund would be used to pay the new administrator.

Ramirez expressed concern that once the job description was approved the new position could become an administrator at other schools and could ultimately prompt conflict at school sites. “We have principals and we have assistant principals,” she said, asking where categorical managers would fit into the hierarchy.

SVFT co-presidents expressed concern for the cost of a new administrator. Grant money is intended to reduce class size, but this would add to administration instead, said Co-President **Kyle Samuels**.

It’s another administration job with the potential for one at each school site, said Co-President **Peggy Carroll**. She questioned the need for the new administrator, saying that there is no change in categorical funds from this year to next year.

CAHSEE practice could involve more students

The CAHSEE, a test that steers high school graduation, may find its way into middle schools soon.

Tim Vanoli, associate superintendent of curriculum, said the district gave a practice CAHSEE to freshman and hopes to push the practice into 8th grade, so students will be ready to pass the test in sophomore year.

Sixty percent of last year’s sophomores passed the test on the first try. This year 64 percent passed it the first time.

Although the CAHSEE is required for graduation, Vanoli said only 13 students were denied a diploma in 2007 because of the test.

Vanoli said the number of seniors not receiving a diploma because of the CAHSEE could increase, however, because the state will no longer give a waiver for special education students.

To date nearly 90 percent of seniors have passed the exam. The pass rate does not include the May CAHSEE.

WMS hits 800 mark on API with subgroup

Washington Middle School met all of its state growth targets and its non-Hispanic students broke the 800 mark – a first for the district.

The state identified 800 has the target for academic performance in all its schools by 2014. Each year schools are expected to demonstrate at least a 5 point gain on the index.

In the past seven year, since the API has been used, the district’s middle schools have shown more than 200 growth points and the high schools 100 points, according to Vanoli. All the district’s schools have advanced in ranking when compared to other state schools, he added.

The high schools vary in the overall API level from 412 at MTHS, to 599 at AHS, 654 at EAHS, to 664 at NSHS, to 692 at SHS. At the middle schools the API ranges from 636 at HMS, to 642 at LPMS, to 668 at ESMS, to 710 at WMS.