

# Eye On The Board

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## Board Highlights August 11, 2009

Reported by Mary Ellingwood

### School safety highlighted as continued priority

Speaking to a small crowd and representation from local newspapers, Peggy Carroll, SVFT co-president, cited a recent escalation in violence in the Salinas community as a reason to reaffirm our commitment to safe schools and let the public know that “we run safe schools and we’ll do whatever is necessary to keep our schools safe,” because, “we have no tolerance for thuggish behavior.”

The new superintendent, James Earhart, expressed satisfaction with past success of keeping schools in the Salinas Union High School District free of violence stating, “We’ve done a very good job.”

He cited recent improvements in working with the police department to pay the School Resource Officers (SRO), principals increased work with the SRO’s, upgrading all of our surveillance, and getting our presence out front at the beginning of the school year. Mr. Earhart ended by saying, “We’re on top of this.”

### Assistant Principal Moves

Two Assistant Principals will be at new schools this year. Ni’Cole Mukes will move from Alvarez H.S. to Salinas H.S and Eric Deleissegues will move from Mission Trails ROP to Alvarez H.S.

### Boosting attendance can bolster ADA

Phil Moore, SHS teacher, addressed the board about how to improve attendance and garner more ADA.

Citing a January, 2009 news article about Sioux Falls, South Dakota that outlined how that school district improved the number of days missed by students, by 10 percent in the last year, Moore described how the SUHSD could find “opportunity in crisis.”

Mr. Moore said that each year principals scramble to increase attendance during CST’s. Moore handed out a document, based on the Sioux Falls model that would increase attendance throughout the academic year suggesting that the district rework board policy “limiting school choice for students who don’t regularly attend school and bringing back the truant officer.” He also stated the necessity in “establishing an ADA task force” within the district and volunteered to participate.

### Budget crisis continues across state and district

The much awaited agenda item about the budget was discussed last at the school board meeting.

Superintendent Earhart opened his statement about the budget saying, “We’re looking at \$4 million to fix this year and we’re not the only ones... everyone in the state is having this issue.” He was referring to the most recent 5 percent reduction in revenue. Mr. Earhart, responding to questions about reducing the school year, stated that

Administration was working with the leaders of all the employee groups and that the discussions did include the reduced school year option that was passed in the latest budget.

## **Proposed fee for Adult Education classes**

Bob Harper, Adult Education Instructor, addressed the School Board proposing fees for all adult education classes. He cited state budget cuts last year that decimated the adult education budget around the state. Mr. Harper stated that there is a new practice emerging around the state of California to make up for lost revenue by implementing a fee structure for adult education courses. He proposed a \$10 per ESL student fee per quarter, as well as, a one-time fee for each student.

The effect of the fee implementation would raise about \$90,000 to \$100,000 to help offset current budget deficits.

Board Trustee Kathryn Ramirez asked if the Adult School had “gone to the business community to look for support from them?” She added, “because they’re the ones who benefit from the people who get support and learn English from you.”

Mr. Harper said that the Adult School is, in fact, building relationships with business around the community referencing partnerships with Hartnell College and other local businesses. He noted that the Adult School also began offering targeted English classes like “English for Health Care” and “English for the Agriculture Industry”.

## **Coaching stipends addressed**

Bill Scott, teacher and coach at SHS, addressed the board of trustees acknowledging that this is a bad year for the budget, but the necessity is present to discuss coaching stipends. He said that the coaching stipends are inadequate and have not been revised since 1979 in the district. He referenced that the Head Varsity coaches receive the same stipend as the Junior Varsity coaches for Water Polo. He also said that he actually pays an assistant coach 40% of his salary so they can have an assistant coach.