

Eye On The Board

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Board Highlights August 25, 2009

Reported by Mary Ellingwood

The High School Community Service Requirement

Community Service Coordinators from the District's four high schools were asked to present the community service requirement to the School Board and explain their accounting systems for how the hours are maintained.

Angela Bracco of Salinas High School, Jessica Capen of Everett Alvarez High School, Margaret Noroion of North High, and Gloria Chidez of Alisal High School showed a power point outlining the community service program. They highlighted the program's requirements, role in the community and, in the words of Ms. Noroion, how it "develops a passion for something outside of the school community."

Trustee Phillip Tabera was concerned about the transparency of the timeline for approval of hours versus when the actual hours are completed. Tabera noted, "You're supposed to get approval before the community service hours are done."

Gloria Chidez, AHS, stated that, "Coordinators work with a lot of agencies that do specific events, so we accept those community service hours without prior approval."

Angela Bracco, SHS, added that, "Sometimes students will work in a hospital or nursing home, and instead of turning in timesheets for every two hours, they'll keep the hours over time and turn them in later."

Trustee Margaret Bonetti spurred much discussion when she asked, "Who sees the hours that are kept filed and are they kept in the cumulative file?"

Angela Bracco, SHS, said that the community service hours files are seen only by the Community Service Coordinator, counseling, and the school principal.

Trustee Ramirez agreed with Bonetti that, "The information should be kept confidential because it is information about minors and they should not have this information shared."

Gloria Chidez, AHS, responded to the board questions saying that, "No information is given except the student name and phone number, and parents have to approve the hours before we approve them."

Other members expressed concern about student information being shared with the public and the board agreed to research how the files related to the student community service requirement are maintained and discuss it at a future meeting.

Assistant Superintendent Tim Vanoli ended by saying that, "In 1992, when this thing was put together, this was voluntary on the part of the student and with the permission of the parent." He said that, "We [the district] didn't want to be the position of placing students in volunteer positions in the community with prior consent from the parents."

Business Services Present Economic Outlook

Cindy Fellows presented the economic outlook for the Salinas Union High School District. Ms. Fellows began by stating, “This is the worst budget since 1993. We’re looking at an 18.61% deficit for 2009-2010 and Proposition 98 isn’t helping because the guaranteed money gets smaller and smaller because of decreased revenue” from state tax sources.

Ms. Fellows wanted to be clear that this is not that the district is overspending; it’s that “we’re getting big cuts in revenue.” She showed, for example, how the district started the year in the black, but then we lost COLA, then the revenue limits shrunk exponentially, and grants are being shuffled around by the state every day.

The financial dashboard shows the bad news about the district’s budget will likely continue to get worse through 2012-2013. Ms. Fellows said, “When you look at your budgets, the bottom line is there won’t be more money. They want you to do more with less because of NCLB, but instead of doing more with less, we’re going to have to try to do different with less.”

Superintendent Earhart noted that, “Schools are fully funded with formula funds, so there will be plenty of paper and copies at the sites.”

Ms. Fellows ended by responding to a question from the Board about QEIA funds and whether they will continue to be there for use. She said, “It’s still in the courts and they’re starting to take money from you if you try to pull out [of the QEIA grant].”

Superintendent Earhart’s Upcoming Budget Calendar

8/25/09	Budget Presentation
8/27/09	Meet with CSEA
9/8/09	Unaudited Actuals to Board
	ROP Presentation
	Adult Education Presentation
9/14/09	Middle School Principals Budget Review
9/21/09	High School Principal Budget
9/28/09	Cabinet
	Develop a Budget List
10/13/09	Budget Information to School Board
10/27/09	2010-2011 Budget Action Items

After presenting his budget calendar, Superintendent Earhart addressed the School Board saying, “I know you don’t want to hear it, but I’m here to tell you that we’re going to give everyone the changes early so they can be prepared. We have this year to work on it and we’ll do what we can. We’ll pull through.”