

# Eye On The Board

The Salinas Valley Federation of Teachers  
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## Board Highlights September 25, 2007

Reported by Mariann Klinger

### Plan returns 90 students to campus

The district expects to track the behavior of 90 expelled students that returned to classes this fall after completing a rehabilitation program.

While the Caminos program offers expelled students a second chance, it continues with support and monitoring once they have returned to a school site.

Director of Pupil Services **Scott McColgan** told trustees that the district was set to begin systematic tracking of returned students this month.

Last year 52 expelled students were returned to classes.

Through the Caminos program students receive a rehabilitation plan that includes 75 community service hours for middle school students and 150 hours for high school students. Expelled students must also write a letter of apology to a victim or the school.

When the standards of the plan are met, students can apply for a readmission hearing, according to McColgan's report.

Several expelled students were turned down for readmission, because they did not complete all parts of the rehabilitation plan.

Concerned that students are kept from classes for not completing community service hours,

Trustees **Margaret Serna-Bonetti** and **Phillip Tabera** called for a lower number of service hours.

We need to lower the number of hours and tie the service work in with the offense, said Serna-Bonetti.

And, Tabera, along with calling for a lower number of work hours, cited a study that found punitive consequences a non-deterrent to committing crime.

Superintendent **Roger Anton** told trustees that expelled students often were out of school from 110 to 180 school days. Community service hours are to be done during that time, he added.

Anton suggested that established rehabilitation plans can consider lower service hours were time out of school is shorter.

McColgan said a new appreciate to counseling would provide support for the expelled students and others who have problems in school. The idea is to look for ways to deal with students before situations reach the level of suspension or expulsion.

Counselors expect to offer safety presentations in classes, emphasis the use of conflict resolution, student support and other interventions, he said.

## Sunrise House offers support at school sites

A tearful AHS student described personal experiences with sexual abuse. The teen, along with another from MTHS, told of the emotional trauma and expressed gratitude for a newly-established support group.

The girls said the group was helping them to overcome the difficulties experienced as a result of sexual abuse.

**Susan Silacci**, working with Sunrise House, said the group – Never Alone – currently meets on Tuesdays with 12 to 18 area teens at Sunrise House.

In addition to the new group, Sunrise House offers drug and alcohol counseling at school sites. **Jim Rear**, working as director, introduced staff and board members to trustees.

At the schools, Sunrise House staff provides drug prevention programs, sponsor the Adapt Club, work with opportunity classes and support community service efforts, according to Rear’s report.

## Overcrowding continues to plague classrooms

SVFT Co-President **Peggy Carroll** told trustees that district schools were affected by a “culture of bad staffing,” referring to the overcrowded classrooms that greet teachers each August.

There is a shortage of teachers and many are working a sixth period option, she said.

Although she said the situation was better than in years past, there are still overcrowded classrooms.

“We’ve got to figure out a better system,” she said. “We need to break this culture.”

Carroll suggested a task force to begin working on better staffing earlier in the school year.

## Hike in developer fees ok’d

Trustees approved a slight increase of 20 cents per square foot, raising developer fees to \$2.01 per square foot for the coming school year.

Developer fees are used for construction needs caused by growth or new development. The funds, also known as School Facilities Fees, can be used for portable classrooms, purchase and construction of new facilities, including the SHS Performing Arts Center and EAHS multi-use building.

The district collected \$1,228,729 in developer fees, according to a report by Facilities Manager **Karen Luna**.

## Board Briefs

Trustees approved a 4 percent salary increase and a 1 percent increase for health benefit caps for confidential/supervisory and management employees.

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The Performance Based Budgeting process is to begin at the end of October. An orientation for committee members is set for December 7.

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**Patricia Saenz**, former CSEA president, is to seek the board post in Area 2, formerly held by Art Gilbert. Gilbert recently announced his decision to step down after two terms in office.

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