



Board Briefs

Highlights from this week's Board of Education meeting

Superintendent's evaluation leads to a contract extension

Following approval of the Superintendent's Performance Evaluation for 2007-08, the Board of Education unanimously approved a contract extension for IUSD Superintendent Gwen Gross, effective July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2011.

IPSF continues to generate money for smaller class sizes

Debbie Rugani, director of Community Initiatives and Programs for the Irvine Public Schools Foundation, said the foundation has so far secured \$604,346 of the \$900,000 needed to maximize a sizeable contribution from the City of Irvine.

With the state budget crisis prompting cuts in school funding, city leaders have offered to contribute as much as \$900,000 in matching funds to help IUSD maintain smaller class sizes. That means for every dollar raised, the City will kick in an additional dollar, potentially generating as much as \$1.8 million. IPSF quickly committed \$500,000 to the cause and is looking to raise the balance by Aug. 31. Rugani said Tuesday that IPSF has, as of June 20, collected an additional \$104,346, thanks in large part to generous donations from the Irvine Unified Council PTA, several site PTAs, a parent group at Santiago Hills Elementary and the Irvine Korean Parents Association.

Rugani also announced that IPSF's second annual Walk to School Day is scheduled for Oct. 15.

Board gets an update on Response to Instruction (RtI)

Board members were updated on the district's experiences with Response to Instruction (RtI), an innovative curricular strategy that promotes differentiated instruction in reading to meet students' needs as determined by assessment data.

Four of IUSD's elementary schools implemented RtI this year under the leadership of Cara Bergen, who serves as executive director of the program for the Irvine, Manhattan Beach and Tustin school districts. On Tuesday night, Bergen discussed RtI's impact along with Westpark Elementary Principal Erica Hoegh; Culverdale Elementary Principal Allie Nixon; Kathleen Cooke, a teacher on special assignment; Culverdale teacher Joanne Bryan; and Woodbury Elementary School teachers Julie Hirschey and Anne Sahyoun.

Collectively, the group affirmed that RtI has greatly encouraged grade-level collaboration among staff and enabled students to benefit from targeted reading instruction. As a result, participating sites had success remediating those performing below grade-level while offering more challenging coursework for gifted students.

Four additional IUSD schools will begin implementing RtI in the fall, and three more are scheduled to start in January.

More highlights from IUSD's June 24 Board of Education meeting:

Board adopts IUSD's budget for 2008-09

The Board voted unanimously to adopt IUSD's budget for 2008-09 and, in the same motion, directed staff to forward all appropriate documents to the Orange County Department of Education.

With California schools bracing for significant cuts as a result of the state budget crisis, IUSD's Board voted on a number of reductions in April, prior to staff's development of a comprehensive spending plan for the fiscal year that begins July 1. The final budget approved Tuesday night outlines \$212.9 million worth of expenditures – both restricted and unrestricted – against \$208.2 million worth of total revenue, leaving a negative balance of about \$4.7 million. IUSD had planned for the latter shortfall, which will be offset by one-time savings, according to Vernon Medeiros, IUSD's deputy superintendent of Business Services.

This year, falling tax revenues have produced a state budget gap of approximately \$17.2 billion, prompting Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to propose almost no cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for California's public schools and a 6.5 percent reduction in categorical spending. Based on these figures, as well as enrollment projections, IUSD has reduced its ongoing costs by \$6.145 million and generated an additional \$6.45 million in one-time savings, including \$5 million secured by freezing nonessential expenditures during the last six months of the 2007-08 fiscal year.

Irvine and other school districts in California are required to submit their annual budgets on or before June 30 each year. While the state also shares this deadline, legislative leaders rarely meet it, forcing education officials at the local level to make important financial decisions based on the governor's proposals from January and May. Once the state officially adopts its spending plan – this will likely occur in August or September – IUSD will have 45 days to make any necessary adjustments.

Board approves plan for former Creekside High School site

Board members authorized staff to proceed with steps to exchange or lease the former Creekside High School site on West Yale Loop, as recommended by the Asset Management Plan Advisory Committee (AMPAC).

The campus, which is adjacent to the Stonecreek Shopping Center, has been vacant since Creekside moved to a new location at Barranca Parkway and Harvard Avenue in the fall of 2007.

AMPAC, comprised of Board-appointed community members and representatives from local homeowners associations, was commissioned in 2003 to study alternatives for unused district property. In addition to Creekside, the committee has also weighed in on the district's Alderwood and Vista Verde sites, recommending staff pursue sales options for both.

Coming Up...

Regular Meetings:

Tuesday, July 15, 2008 in the Board Room

Tuesday, August 26, 2008 in the Board Room

BOARD OF EDUCATION

GAVIN HUNTLEY-FENNER, Ph.D. / SUE KUWABARA / CAROLYN McINERNEY / MICHAEL PARHAM / SHARON WALLIN

GWEN E. GROSS, Ph.D., *Superintendent of Schools*

VERNON MEDEIROS, Ed.D., *Deputy Superintendent, Business Services*

CASSIE PARHAM, *Assistant Superintendent, Education Services* / TERRY WALKER, *Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources*

IUSD ... providing the highest quality educational experience we can envision.