



# Board Briefs

Highlights from this week's Board of Education meeting

## Board praises Jabara family for funds to aid math adoption

The Board of Education formally thanked Gary Jabara and his wife, Lisa, for donating \$50,000 to help launch the district's new math curriculum, which features innovative lessons and materials for students in kindergarten through the eighth grade.

The Jabaras, who have two children attending IUSD schools, made the donation to the Irvine Public Schools Foundation in August. The funding is already facilitating vital professional development for IUSD's math teachers, ensuring a smooth transition from the district's previous math series to the newer instructional materials, which heavily emphasize critical thinking skills.

More than 600 elementary teachers and 40 secondary teachers have been trained in the new curriculum, and the feedback from schools has been positive. After reading brief testimonials from local classrooms, Superintendent Gwen Gross said the Jabaras' gift was particularly valued in light of California's budget crisis, which is expected to result in reduced funding for school districts throughout the state.



Representatives from IUSD and the Irvine Public Schools Foundation honor Gary Jabara, who contributed \$50,000 to help the district launch its new math adoption. From left to right: IUSD Math & Science Coordinator Mark Sontag; Board of Education President Carolyn McInerney; Debbie Rugani of IPSF; IUSD parent and contributor Gary Jabara; Superintendent Gwen Gross; and Board of Education Clerk Gavin Huntley-Fenner.

## IPSF will continue to raise money to match the City's pledge

Debbie Rugani, director of Community Initiatives and Programs for the Irvine Public Schools Foundation, said the foundation will continue to raise funds throughout the year in an effort to maximize the sizeable pledge made by the City of Irvine, which has offered to contribute as much as \$900,000 in matching funds to help IUSD maintain lower student-to-teacher ratios.

Rugani also announced that IPSF plans to formally kick off its yearly corporate and community fundraising campaign on Oct. 15, when the foundation will host its second annual Walk to School Day.

## Board receives a comprehensive update on new math adoption

Math & Science Coordinator Mark Sontag delivered a comprehensive presentation on the district's new math adoption for grades K-8.

Instructional materials for mathematics, which are mandated to be aligned with California's rigorous content standards, are adopted by school districts on a seven-year cycle. After much delibera-

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## More highlights from IUSD's September 16 Board of Education meeting:

tion, IUSD's teachers and administrators collaboratively selected Houghton Mifflin's Math Expressions for K-5 classrooms and the Holt series for grades six through eight, beginning with the 2008-09 school year.

Sontag said the Math Expressions series carefully develops fractions and proportional reasoning while the Holt materials promote the systemic development of algebraic thinking. Both publishers emphasize problem-solving and critical thinking.

Though year-round schools have reported that the lessons require additional preparation, the feedback from students and parents has been "extremely positive," Sontag said.

### **Board approves contract with City to secure health services for students**

Board members unanimously approved a contract with the City of Irvine to secure clinical and referral services for IUSD students and their families through the Irvine Family Resource Center. The City has committed \$50,000 to help maintain such support services; IUSD and Families Forward will provide in-kind facility and support staff.

### **Board reviews development options next to Creekside Education Center**

After reviewing development options for a 12-acre plot of land adjacent to the Creekside Education Center, the Board voted unanimously to forgo any building or landscaping projects at this time, citing a lack of funds.

Several nearby homeowners advocated on behalf of developing the open parcel west of Creekside, located at Harvard Avenue and Barranca Parkway. While the district also desires to eventually build a permanent facility on the property, there is currently no funding source available to facilitate construction. Lloyd Linton, IUSD's director of Construction Services and Facilities Planning, told the Board it would cost approximately \$2 million to merely grade and landscape the property, and as much as \$3.3 million to build community ball fields. Annual maintenance of the site would cost an additional \$132,000.

Board members said Creekside would be weighed along with other development priorities, including the modernization of older schools, in the district's forthcoming facilities master plan.

### **Coming Up...**

*Regular Meetings:*

*Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2008 in the Board Room*

*Tuesday, Oct. 21, 2008 in the Board Room*

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