



IUSD Board Briefs

Highlights from the Irvine Unified School District's Aug. 28 Board of Education meeting

Board members vote to retain current grade configuration

The Irvine Unified School District's Board of Education voted unanimously to discontinue plans related to the proposed 6-8 grade configuration at local middle schools, opting instead to retain Irvine's traditional K-6, 7-8 configuration. The Board thanked the parents, teachers and staff members who participated in the initiative.

In March of 2004, the School Configuration Committee brought to the Board a recommendation regarding the change in grade configuration for new and existing middle schools. In the years that followed, staff worked with teachers, parents and administrators to develop specific plans for a middle school transition, taking into account curriculum, staffing, credentialing, special programs and facilities. Under a timetable approved by the Board, implementation was scheduled to begin at two campuses in 2008.

In the fall of 2007, in order to review extensive data and to ensure diligent planning, it became necessary to hit the "pause" button on the 6-8 transition until an updated scope of information was gathered, particularly related to facilities. IUSD's Business and Facilities departments were directed to update the Facilities Master Plan, a comprehensive document spelling out all building and modernization needs, as well as anticipated sources of funding for upcoming construction projects.

Since then, it has been determined that transitioning to a 6-8 grade configuration would exceed initial cost estimates. Moreover, staff has tracked a shift in enrollment that suggests IUSD's current middle schools – without adding sixth grade – will grow larger than originally projected.

Though the 6-8 initiative has ended, Board members and staff emphasized that the research and data collected during the last three years will not go to waste. The effort has yielded insightful discussions about Irvine's curricular goals and it is staff's intent to pursue strategies to enhance both math and science instruction.

Administrators present information on Response to Instruction (RtI)

Board members heard an overview of Response to Instruction (RtI), a proactive, personalized instructional process within the general education curriculum designed to meet students' needs as determined by assessment data.

IUSD is in the beginning stages of RtI implementation as part of a three-district consortium along with the Tustin and Manhattan Beach unified school districts. Together, the triad will be known as the West Coast Center for Educational Excellence.

(Continued on next page)

BOARD OF EDUCATION

GAVIN HUNTLEY-FENNER / SUE KUWABARA / CAROLYN McINERNEY / MICHAEL PARHAM / SHARON WALLIN

GWEN E. GROSS, Ph.D., *Superintendent of Schools*
VERNON MEDEIROS, Ed.D., *Deputy Superintendent, Business Services*
TERRY WALKER, *Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources*

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



Board Briefs (Continued)

Cara Bergen, who will serve as executive director of the center, gave the presentation along with El Camino Real/Woodbury Co-Principal Tammy Parham and IUSD veteran Coordinator Mark Sontag. Bergen emphasized that this systemic process of defining interventions will be customized for each individual site, resulting in a structure that reflects each school's needs.

Teams of teachers and administrators at IUSD's Culverdale, Plaza Vista, Springbrook, Westpark, Woodbury and Vista Verde sites will be trained in October for 2008 implementation. In May, a second wave of training is scheduled for additional IUSD campuses.

IPSF announces plans for International Walk to School Day

Seeking to promote healthy lifestyles for kids and their families, the Irvine Public Schools Foundation encouraged all IUSD families to participate in International Walk to School Day on Wednesday, Oct. 3. IPSF is sponsoring the event locally and has partnered with IUSD, the City of Irvine and the Irvine Chamber of Commerce. Walk to School Day will also coincide with the kick-off of IPSF's annual fundraising campaign.

Superintendent's evaluation leads to a contract extension

On a unanimous vote, the Board approved a contract extension for Superintendent Gwen Gross through June 30, 2010.

Coming Up:

Regular Meetings: *Tuesday, Sept. 18, 2007 in the Board Room*
Tuesday, Oct. 9, 2007 in the Board Room