



# Board Briefs

Highlights from this week's Board of Education meeting

## **IPSF chair updates board on foundation efforts**

Jan Kerchner, chair of the board of trustees for the Irvine Public Schools Foundation, affirmed IPSF's support of Irvine schools during the ongoing state budget crisis.

In encouraging parents to contribute to the foundation, Kerchner cited IPSF's expansive fundraising initiatives, which help pay for health clerks, nurses, the MyIUSD.org Parent Portal and classroom support. She also announced that on Feb. 23 participating restaurants will donate 20 percent of their sales to Irvine schools through the IPSF-sponsored "Dine Out, Help Out" event.

For more information about IPSF, or to make a donation, visit [www.ipsf.net](http://www.ipsf.net).

## **State PTA raises awareness of education shortfalls**

Steffanie Early, president of the Irvine Unified Council PTA, told the Board that the California State PTA continues to raise awareness of the chronic underfunding of public education while encouraging its members to write to the governor opposing further cuts.

Early thanked IUSD board members for sharing information about the budget and other matters of interest at recent site-based PTA meetings. She also affirmed that the Irvine Unified Council PTA is working with IPSF on its Five Week Campaign to raise funds for classroom support.

## **Board leads latest discussion on impacts of state crisis**

Board members, staff and the community took part in the latest discussion related to the state budget crisis and its impact on IUSD, with much of the conversation centering on potential cuts to elementary art, music and science programs.

In 2006, the Irvine Company pledged \$20 million over 10 years – or \$2 million per year – to IUSD for enriched curriculum in art, music and science in grades four through six. That curriculum amounts to two additional 60-minute science lessons per week; two 40-minute music lessons per week; and six hour-long art lessons per year, all taught by specialists in their respective fields.

As this program evolved, IUSD gradually increased its own yearly contribution to \$1.8 million to keep pace with rising costs, bringing the total program expense to approximately \$3.8 million. With the state budget crisis resulting in a projected \$20 million shortfall for 2010-11, decreasing the district's contribution is one of many options under consideration.

District coordinators Mark Sontag and Brad Van Patten presented potential options for reducing the profile of these programs, and members of the public weighed in as well, with most extolling the value of art, music and science specialists at the elementary level.

The Board is expected to vote on reductions for 2010-11 at its March 2 meeting.

*(Continued on next page)*

# More highlights from the Feb. 16 Board of Education meeting

## **Board complies with instructional materials requirement**

Meeting an annual requirement of the California Education Code, Board members adopted a resolution ensuring the availability of textbooks and instructional materials for 2009-10.

## **Board adopts service and budget plan for special education**

Board members reviewed and adopted the district's service and budget plan for Special Education. This action, taken yearly, is a requirement of the state Education Code.

## **Board approves class-size waiver requests for grades 1-3 and 4-8**

Following separate public hearings, the Board voted to submit waivers to the California Department of Education seeking to reduce penalties in the event the state's class-size caps are exceeded in grades one through three and four through eight.

Terry Walker, assistant superintendent of Human Resources, explained that this action does not signal IUSD's intent to increase class sizes beyond the current thresholds allowable under state law. Rather, the waiver process is being considered by most school districts in an effort to ensure flexibility should the state's fiscal picture worsen dramatically.

California's Education Code requires that school districts not exceed a districtwide class-size average of 30 students in grades one through three, with no classes larger than 32. IUSD's request seeks to raise the allowable average to 32 with a maximum class size of 35. For grades four through eight, IUSD's waiver seeks to increase the maximum class size average from 29.9 to 32.

## **Wallin leads the list of prospective CSBA delegates for region**

Board members cast a collective vote for six candidates vying for a spot on the California School Boards Association's Delegate Assembly for Region 15.

The prospective delegates that received IUSD's vote are: IUSD's own Sharon Wallin; Tammie Bullard of the Tustin Unified School District; Meg Cutuli of the Los Alamitos Unified School District; Susan Henry of the Huntington Beach Union High School District; Nancy W. Kirkpatrick of the Saddleback Valley Unified School District; and Kathryn Moffat of the Orange Unified School District.

## **Coming Up...**

Regular Meetings: *Tuesday, March 2, 2010 in the Board Room (7 p.m.)*  
*Tuesday, March 16, 2010 in the Board Room (7 p.m.)*

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