

# From the Board Room ...

Notes from the Board of Education Meeting: 09/19/02

... informing all

## Let's Celebrate!

**Good News!** We are all so grateful to have Board Member Mike Jordan back in action. His presence has been sorely missed as have been his unique observations and constructive comments.

**Highlights.** Three extremely eloquent students from Eric Paul's Fifth Grade Roosevelt class read essays to the Board that explored feelings about the importance of education. The students were Elianea Pires, Laila Hashimi, and Milad Gueramian.

Each student delivered concrete (and personal) reasons for the value of education – from having gained the confidence to move forward in life, regardless of the field, to developing greater capacity to better understand friends, classmates and neighbors. One theme that ran throughout each essay was the unbelievable opportunity that SMMUSD students are afforded by the excellent instruction, nurturance and care of District staff. A case in point is Milad, who first enrolled in Roosevelt three years ago, speaking no English, and who now has been empowered enough to speak publicly – in a second language. Outstanding! The Roosevelt PTA Report was delivered by President Lynn Leavitt. Thoughtfully done! Thank you.

Additionally, Santa Monica Mayor Michael Feinstein addressed the Board complementing them for sober financial management, engendering a collaborative approach to problem-solving, and promoting two-way thinking relative to cooperative programs between the City and the District. Mayor Feinstein also thanked President Brownley for her outstanding leadership.

In a break from tradition, the Board has designated that the second meeting in most months this school year, will be devoted to in-depth exploration of critical issues facing the learning communities. The majority of this meeting was dedicated to statistics derived from recent test scores. Dr. Steve Frankel, Director of Standards, Assessment and Data, gave a Power Point presentation which delivered compelling evidence that SMMUSD faces a widening gap in student achievement scores. The statistics are startling. All slides are available at the district's website, Board Meetings/09/19/02: *Our Test Scores*. The Superintendent and Board have committed to implementing instructional processes and procedures that will close those gaps.

As a first step, the Superintendent is suggesting an intensive Mathematics intervention, as spelled out in the chart below.

### the voting block

**September 19, 2002**

for a complete agenda log on to  
[www.smmusd.org](http://www.smmusd.org)

**Board Meetings/ Date**

All agenda items passed,  
6-0 with a motion by

Mrs. Gottfried,

seconded by Mrs. Brady

Mr. Pratt *in absentia*, no

abstentions, Student Vote: Aye

There was no report out from

Closed Session

*Copies of all documents are*

*available in the Office of the*

*Superintendent.*

Please check the district website for important updates, contact numbers and Board Meeting Dates

#### **Correction:**

The Race and Discipline Task Force

Update discussion will be held at

the meeting of **October 17, 2002**,

City Hall, Santa Monica.

Grade	Accelerated	Standard	Double Period
6		Summer Mathematics Camp	Summer Mathematics Camp
6	Accelerated 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics	6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics	Double Period 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics
7		Summer Mathematics Camp	Summer Mathematics Camp
7	Accelerated Pre-Algebra	Pre-Algebra	Double Period Pre-Algebra
8		Summer Mathematics Camp	Summer Mathematics Camp
8	Accelerated Algebra I	Algebra I	Double Period Algebra I
9		Summer Mathematics Camp	Summer Mathematics Camp
9	Accelerated Geometry	Geometry	Double Period Geometry

The thrust of this program is to ensure equity and equality of instruction for all students by offering the same curriculum to all students and by holding the same high expectations for all students. This would be achieved by decreasing class sizes, increasing professional development for all Math teachers and administrators, implementing more rigorous community and parent outreach programs and finding ways to establish and staff vertical support teams throughout the district – empowering students and parents. The Board directed staff to **proceed with program design and development by convening a blue ribbon committee** of teachers, staff, parents, RAND researchers, union representatives and other educational partners. The Board will receive a draft in March, 2003.

The benefits of the innovative intervention/success model are many and include:

- 1) "extraordinary achievement for all"
  - 2) "closing the achievement gaps"
  - 3) reducing racial disparities
  - 4) providing prototypes for strengthening other subjects
  - 5) enhancing of college admissions, scholarship and other career opportunities
  - 6) modeling research-based educational design.
- Implementation will have fiscal implications for several years, beginning with the 2003-04 budgetary cycle.