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**Vallecitos Superintendent Dr. Paul Cartas Receives Top Award
From The Small School Districts' Association**

Vallecitos School District Superintendent Dr. Paul Cartas has been awarded the Small School Districts' Association's top award for leadership, the Charles Binderup Award.



Dr. Cartas' charge, they have nothing but very positive things to say about his leadership. He is a very honest person who is adept at facing major challenges head-on and up-front."

"I'm honored and privileged to receive this award from the Small School Districts Association," said Dr. Cartas, who has served as Superintendent of the Vallecitos School District for 20 years. "Being honored by my peers in the Small School Districts' Association is truly an honor. I'm very appreciative."

Dr. Cartas began his public education career as a teacher in the Encinitas Union School District in 1974. He concluded his tenure there in 1990, as District Director of Technology. From there, he was named Superintendent/Principal of Vallecitos School District.

Cartas, with a Bachelors of Science degree in Physics from UCSB, a Master's of Science in Special Education from SDSU, and a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Technology from USC, was nominated for the award by Bonsall Union School District Superintendent Justin Cunningham.

The Vallecitos School District administers a state pre-school, the Rainbow Advanced Institute (RAI) K-6 Academy, the RAI Digital High School, and Vallecitos Elementary School.

"Dr. Cartas has transformed the Vallecitos School District during his tenure by advocating for the needs of the whole child," Cunningham wrote in his nomination. "Not only have the academic measures of his district been admirable, but even the state of the facilities has improved greatly. Dr. Cartas has made it a place where students want to spend time."

Dr. Cartas said working in small school district provides both challenges and rewards. "One of the challenges in a small school district is that you are it: if there's an issue that needs to be addressed, you're the one that's going to address it. Technology, personnel, curriculum and instruction, whatever it is, you are it.

Another fellow district superintendent, Coronado Unified School District's Jeff Felix, wrote, "When you speak with either a parent or teacher that has been under

"But it's always something new," he continued. "It's very exciting. One of the most rewarding things is that you can actually make significant improvements in a small school district, much faster than you would be able to in a large district. You can do a tremendous amount. You can raise achievement and really make a difference for kids.

Providing Financial Solutions to Improve California Schools

Pre-Election Planning

From the moment a district decides to improve its school facilities, to when the Board approves its resolution calling an election, we manage the process every step of the way. We assist districts in creating a financing plan, conducting a public information program, performing a voter survey, and finalizing a facilities improvement program that is acceptable to the community.

- Financing and Capital Plan
- Voter Survey
- Public Information Program
- Election Resolution

"Isom Advisors brought to me an innovative plan that would upgrade and renovate our facilities as well as improve the general fund. They implemented the plan to perfection and we won handily."

*Tim Baird, Superintendent
Encinitas Union School District*

Election Services

Our School Bond Advisory Team helps the local campaign committee implement a proven strategy to win its election. Our key to success lies in the fact that we provide all the services critical to a successful program. The only job the local campaign committee has to do? Fundraise, garner endorsements, and provide volunteers for voter outreach.

- Campaign Strategy
- Voter Communication
- Campaign Budgets
- Mailers, Walk Flyers, Handouts
- Get-Out-the-Vote Activities

"After the District lost a parcel tax election, Isom Advisors helped develop a bond strategy to save money for our general fund – over \$6 million a year. I thank Isom Advisors for a job well done."

*Steven Lawrence, Superintendent
Mt. Diablo Unified School District*

Financial Advisory

As an Independent Financial Advisor, our job is to represent your District, solve your financial problems, and save money while doing it. We manage the bond sale from start to finish.

- Structuring of the Bond
- Legal Document Review
- Rating Agency Presentation
- Bond Pricing

"If your District is considering a bond program, Isom Advisors is who I would turn to first. They are honest, provide the highest level of service, and most importantly, get the job done."

*Chris Von Kleist, Superintendent
Orland Unified School District*



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[Method:] Establish how the solution will be used and its value based on an intangible or tangible return.

[Strategy:] Establish how the strategic use of the program, solution or product aligns with the defined strategies and the philosophy of the district.

**This criterion is based on the cycle and is used to assess the measurable solution to gauge the cost effectiveness of all software, hardware and programs.*



OnPoint is passionate about partnering with administrators and teachers to create this dynamic environment. In the paradigm shift of teacher led facilitation and instruction with technology, teachers are supported through customized training, support resources and standards aligned digital content. An administrative culture based on instructional leadership in support of the new shift in the paradigm is also created in support of the teachers and forward movement.

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Dale Ellis – Superintendent
Lakeside Union Elementary School District

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Regional Meetings

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Friday, July 8, 2011
The Cliffs Resort
2757 Shell Beach Road
Shell Beach, CA 93449

Siskiyou Regional

Monday, October 3, 2011
Siskiyou County Office of Education
609 South Gold Street
Yreka, CA 96097

Humboldt Regional

Friday, September 23, 2011
Video Conference
Humboldt County Office of Education
901 Myrtle Avenue
Eureka, CA 95501

Redding Regional

Tuesday, October 4, 2011
Shasta County Office of Education
1644 Magnolia Avenue
Redding, CA 96001

Southern California Regional

Friday, October 7, 2011
Radisson Hotel
11520 West Bernardo Court
San Diego, CA 92127

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New Superintendents Symposium

26th Annual New Superintendents Symposium
July 21 – 22, 2011
The Embassy Suites
100 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814

Fall Conference

1st Annual Fall Conference
August 11 – 12, 2011
The Radisson Hotel
500 Leisure Lane
Sacramento, CA 95815

29th Annual Conference

March 28 - 30, 2012
The Radisson Hotel
500 Leisure Lane
Sacramento, CA 95815

SSDA MAY WEBINAR SCHEDULE

THE MAY REVISE:
"A Look From 30,000 Feet"

Presenter:
David Walrath
SSDA, Legislative Advocate

Date:
Monday, May 16, 2011

Time:
4:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Registration Fee:
SSDA Member - \$35.00 per attendee
Non-Member - \$75.00 per attendee

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"An Overview of the LAO Consolidation
Report and Recommendations"

Presenter:
David Walrath
SSDA, Legislative Advocate

Date:
Monday, May 23, 2011

Time:
4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Registration Fee:
SSDA Member - \$35.00 per attendee
Non-Member - \$75.00 per attendee

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Public Employee Pensions

Submitted by: David Walrath - SSDA Legislative Advocate



Government Brown has released a 12-point plan on public employee pension changes he refers to as a reform plan. This article will provide SSDA's position on the most significant of these pension change proposals affecting the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS).

SSDA believes Governor Brown is making this proposal as a means to show the citizens that he is serious about governing California. He also is responding to public opinion polls, media stories and real abuse that has occurred in public pensions during the past year. While there are very few situations of criminal abuse, those situations have received significant media coverage as has the dollar amount of public pensions being received by some retirees. It is probable that addressing public pension changes will assist in persuading voters that the State of California is becoming governable and the state can be trusted with extending or passing new tax revenues.

The following analysis is divided between those parts of the proposal that: 1) have clear bipartisan support; 2) affect only new members to a public employee pension system and, lastly; 3) those proposals that will affect current as well as new pension plan members.

BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR PENSION CHANGE

Applicable to both current and future employees are the changes that would eliminate pension earnings after a felony conviction and prohibit retroactive pension increases for current or future employees. SSDA has no position on these two issues.

Prohibit Purchasing "Air Time"

SSDA opposes the third proposal that has bipartisan support; the repeal of purchasing non-qualified service. Current law allows CalSTRS members to buy up to five years of non-qualified service. This is usually service other than what is identified in statute as eligible for purchase, such as military service and out-of-state service, etc.

SSDA opposes eliminating this provision to buy up to 5 years of non-qualified service because it will primarily penalize private sector employees transferring into public schools, particularly those in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. SSDA also opposes because it will penalize women who typically have less than a full career and need to improve their pension if they lose time due to parent care-giving, relocating with a spouse or other reasons.

Limit Post-Retirement Public Employment

CalSTRS currently limits post-employment retirement and with some exemptions that were developed to address the need for highly qualified classroom teachers and administrators in interim positions.

Continued on page 4

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All Property In A Newly Unified School District Is Liable For Bonded

Indebtedness Of The Prior School Districts

Submitted by: Eileen O'Hare-Anderson - Liebert Cassidy Whitmore

Imagine that the voters in the Happy Unified School District (USD) have approved a bond measure. The voters in the neighboring Valley Unified School District have rejected a similar bond measure. Now assume the two districts merge to form the Happy Valley Unified School District. May the property in the former Valley USD be liable for the indebtedness approved by the voters of the former Happy USD? The Attorney General has issued an opinion finding that it is.

The Attorney General's opinion finds that when two or more school districts merge to form a single unified school district, all of the property in the formerly separate school districts becomes liable for all of the outstanding bonded indebtedness of each of the former districts. In doing so, the Attorney General rejected the argument that requiring property owners who had not voted on previous bond issues to pay the resulting bond debts violates the State Constitutional provisions established by Proposition 13.

Education Code section 35573 provides that when a school district merges with another school district or districts to form a new district, the new district is liable for all of the indebtedness of the former constituent school districts. For instance, in our example, when Happy USD and Valley USD merge into Happy Valley USD, the property in both districts will be taxed to repay the bonds of the former Happy USD.

The Attorney General found that section 35573 and related Education Code provisions governing school district reorganizations would be void if only the property taxpayers within the boundaries of each former school district that issued bonds before the merger were liable for payment of those particular outstanding bond obligations.

The Attorney General next addressed whether this reallocation of debt without voter approval violates the provisions of the State Constitution enacted with Proposition 13. Article XIII A, often referred to as "Prop 13," generally limits the increases on property taxes. Section 1(a) of Prop 13 imposes a general 1% limit on real property taxes. However, section 1(b) of Prop 13 provides that the 1% limit does not apply to three

specific types of indebtedness, including: "Bonded indebtedness incurred by a school district..for the construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or replacement of school facilities.." Education Code section 35570 identifies the same three types of indebtedness as the only ones eligible for reallocation when school districts merge. While section 1(b) governs the categories of indebtedness exempt from the limits of Prop 13, it does not specify what property is subject to the exemption.

The Attorney General found that the Education Code sections at issue complement section 1(b) of Prop 13. Applying section 35573, all of the property in a newly formed unified district can be taxed to pay the bond obligations of the former constituent districts. Thus, the Attorney General concluded that the debt reallocation procedure established by the Education Code when school districts merge to form a new unified school district is consistent with, and does not violate, Prop 13.

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Partnering with the Private Sector

Submitted by: Oswaldo Galarza - CSM Consulting, Inc.

The biggest obstacle to educational and business success may be technology services implemented without thoughtful engagement of the executive team and stakeholders and lack of alignment to district strategic goals. Over the last few years, school districts have embraced technology in both business and instructional environments. Small school districts may have the added challenge or benefit of depending on COE's for payroll, and possibly a significant portion of their business environment; but these services can vary substantially from one county to another. Instructionally, some small districts are way ahead of the curb in their adoption and infusion of technology. Indeed, private and charter schools competing with public education are often an example of innovative technology and software use in support of instructional and business goals. E-rate, EETT and other early programs such as the Digital High School program opened the door for educational institutions to build the infrastructure and also provided an opportunity to infuse technology into classrooms. Savvy and innovative districts have long embraced technology; in many cases, they have created a chief technology officer position (CTO), or hired technology directors / coordinators making them a part of their cabinets to ensure the proper execution, leadership, and engagement in this core area of their strategic goals. Sadly, financial constraints, as well as difficult choices have resulted in cuts to this critical area. In many cases districts can ill afford a full-time leadership employee to support their technology goals. Just giving a network engineer or technology support person this title without truly engaging technology is also a poor alternative. This often leads to communication problems, unrealistic expectations and a lack of real engagement of technology and the processes that are required to have the successful alignment and implementation of business and educational initiatives. However, it has been said, a crisis is a great opportunity to embrace change. I recently chatted with a respected leader in the state, he reminded me of the substantial challenges and goals facing educational institutions eager to implement initiatives and improvements to business systems. Progress with these initiatives necessitates internal staff and private sector professional services and consulting. Within this context, I propose that your District explore what is right for your organization to enable your projects to move forward with the engagement of the private sector. My position

is that the time has come to look at partnerships with the private sector and virtual CTO/technology leadership, to ensure that your team has the advantage of experience and leadership customized to your needs.

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State School Facility Program Review

Submitted by: David Walrath - SSDA Legislative Advocate

The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) has established a Schools of the Future Initiative with a broad spectrum of participants.

The Initiative's purpose is to restructure the current School Facility Program (SFP) for a 2012 state school bond. The SPI created eight different subcommittees to develop recommendations.

For Construction Reform the subcommittees are:

Funding and Governance

- The subcommittee will review current funding proposals, such as AB 331 (Brownley, 2011), and develop recommendations for cost savings while considering the need for complete schools. The subcommittee will review the current governance structure of the Office of Public School Construction, Division of the State Architect, Department of Education, and the State Allocation Board and make recommendations for streamlining.

School Site Selection and Community Impact

- The subcommittee will review how Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and communities should better collaborate in the selection of school sites. The subcommittee will develop recommendations to foster joint-use, smart growth and schools as centers of communities.

Modernization

- What recommendations would this group make to improve the current modernization program? This subcommittee will also consider recommendations for a future modernization program that will allow for the transformation of existing school space into 21st Century learning environments. The subcommittee will consider the requirements of campus maintenance, American Disability Act modifications, and educational modernization.

Educational Impact of Design

- There is a substantial body of research on the impact of school facilities on educational achievement. What design principles and features should a 21st Century learning environment include? The subcommittee will make recommendations on design principles and features that should be consid-

ered in a 21st Century learning environment.

For High Performance Schools the subcommittees are:

Financing

- The subcommittee will review and make recommendations regarding how existing sources of funds can be maximized for LEAs to build energy efficient and energy generation projects. Work should include recommendations to eliminate legislative and regulatory obstacles.

Renewable Energy

- The subcommittee will review and make recommendations regarding promotion of the integration of renewable energy in school projects including planning, design and ways to save operational dollars. Work should include recommendations to eliminate legislative and regulatory obstacles.

High Efficiency Schools

- The subcommittee will review and make recommendations on how to promote green and sustainable school construction and operational practices. Work should include recommendations to eliminate legislative and regulatory obstacles.

Grid Neutral Schools

- The subcommittee will review and make recommendations on how the number of grid neutral schools can be increased. Work should include recommendations to eliminate legislative and regulatory obstacles to grid neutral schools.

SSDA appreciates Superintendent Torlakson's leadership for including small school district representatives in this Initiative. SSDA will be working with the Superintendent, CDE staff and the other participants on the recommendations.

