



NATOMAS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# District Update

FROM SUPERINTENDENT STEVE M. FARRAR

**April-May/2008**

## **School board information going “online”**

Beginning with our next regular meeting of the Board of Trustees on May 14, board agendas and the accompanying information packet will be available online for all employees and community members to review at [www.natomas.k12.ca.us](http://www.natomas.k12.ca.us).

Trustees made the decision to begin using AgendaOnline because it can increase public access to our agenda information while also saving us the expense of printing and delivering board packets. The web-based agenda service we're using is one offered by the California School Boards Association, which is now in the process of training our support staff, administrators and trustees on the use of AgendaOnline.

More and more school districts are using this electronic-board meeting format which for us will include having the board agenda displayed on a monitor for the audience to see during our meetings. The public also may view and print out the agendas and packets from any computer that has Internet access.

## **Preparing for H. Allen Hight Elementary opening**

We're doing much to get ready for the August 11 opening of H. Allen Hight Elementary School in North Natomas including selecting Hervey Taylor as the school's first principal. Hervey is our 2005 NUSD Teacher of the Year, former vice principal of Natomas Middle School and most recently the interim principal of American Lakes Elementary.

Registration for the school that will serve students in grades K-5 is now under way, and an information line with registration details has been set up at 567.5700. A parent information meeting will be held Thursday, April 24, from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Natomas Park Elementary.

As you may know, H. Allen Hight Elementary is the foundation of a \$75 million learning center at 3200 North Park Drive that is being built with Measure D bond funds. The school will feature a state-of-the-art library media center, spacious classrooms and a campus that is the first to be built in California with specialized funds for eco-friendly schools.

The namesake of the school is the late Allen Hight, a longtime teacher of ours who passed away in 1999 but left a treasured legacy that included inspiring a love of science in students and helping found Fort Natomas.

## **New calendars approved**

Our new calendars for 2008-09 were approved by trustees on April 9, and have been posted at [www.natomas.k12.ca.us](http://www.natomas.k12.ca.us). For our ten modified traditional schools, the school year will begin Monday, August 11, 2008, and end Friday, June 12, 2009. Calendars for our multi-track year-round and charter schools are posted on the website as well. Minimum days and report card periods will be added to the calendars in the near future.

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## What's ahead:

- Wednesday, April 23, 6 p.m., Board of Trustees retreat (continued from March 26), Education Center, 1901 Arena Blvd.
  - Wednesday, May 14, 6 p.m. Board of Trustees meeting, Education Center.
  - Thursday, May 15, with a tentative start time of 3:30 p.m., District Staff Appreciation Picnic, Natomas Oaks Park, 2230 River Plaza Drive.
  - Thursday, May 29, 5:30 p.m., HOSTS Appreciation Round-Up, Natomas High School. (Second annual barbecue co-sponsored by Superintendent Steve M. Farrar and Natomas Schools Foundation for mentors and supporters of the Help One Student To Succeed mentoring program.)
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## Showing appreciation for our employees

As I said in last month's District Update, our trustees have approved a budget plan for 2008-09 that preserves what we value most in the Natomas Unified School District — the people and the stable relationships built among all students and staff in our school family. While we have lost "things" in our budget because of the state financial crisis, we are not facing the painful layoffs that may beset so many families across the state.

I have a sense that this year's fourth annual District Staff Appreciation Picnic on May 15 at Natomas Oaks Park will hold even more meaning for us as a school family. On behalf of NTA President Brenda Borge and CSEA President Omega Brewer, I hope that you and your family will be our guests for an afternoon of fun, food and music.

In appreciation of our employees, trustees on April 9 approved resolutions designating:

- May 14, Day of the Teacher
  - May 18-24, Classified School Employee Week
  - May 4-10, Administrators, Directors and Confidential Staff Week
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## Middle School Design Team makes report

Members of the Middle School Design Team are to be commended for their research and report on how to better serve our students in grades 6-8. The Design Team of teachers, administrators and support staff began their work last fall and presented a recommendation packet to trustees on April 9 that will help guide the development of our middle schools in future years.

My special thanks to the following members of the Middle School Design Team: Brenda Borge, Leroy F. Greene Middle School counselor and NTA president; Mike Cannon, assistant superintendent, facilities and planning; Danielle de la Porte, Natomas Middle School teacher; Julio DelSolar, Leroy F. Greene Middle School teacher; Tera Diggs, student services supervisor; Ron Dwyer-Voss, president of the NUSD Board of Trustees; Bob Evans, Leroy F. Greene Middle School principal; Hannah Gilman, Heron School teacher; Laura Hendrix, special education coordinator; David Hunt, educational operations coordinator; Anthony Katsaris, Natomas Middle School teacher; Christine Minero, assistant superintendent, secondary education; Carla Najera-Kunsemiller, Natomas Middle School principal; Stephen Nichols, administrative secretary, secondary education; Robert Pogue, Leroy F. Greene Middle School teacher; and Ken Whittemore, assistant superintendent, human resources.

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## Please let me know what's on your mind

This new District Update is part of my effort to improve communication with you, and as part of that outreach I want to hear from you. I have created a new email address for you to share your thoughts and concerns with me. Please email me at [feedback@natomas.k12.ca.us](mailto:feedback@natomas.k12.ca.us).