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## Moraga School District Considers Priorities

By Jean Follmer

The Moraga Governing Board is reviewing the District's Strategic Plan. The current Strategic Plan is effective for the period 2005-2008 so is scheduled to be updated next year. Moraga Superintendent Rick Shafer said tentative priorities were established at a recent Board retreat: Instruction, Technology and Gifted and Talented Students.

Schafer said the District will continue its efforts to continually improve instruction for all students. Regular discussion between the teachers is being promoted in an effort to cultivate the sharing of best practices.

The District's students already perform on the high end of the standardized test score range and "CSTs are post-mortem. Test scores are just a reflection of the learning that's taking place," said Schafer. "We want real time measurements and real time instruction. We need more time for this," said Schafer, adding that there is some fear surrounding the idea. "Teaching is an art. When you introduce a metric into the art" there will be some initial hesitation.

The District also plans to determine how it can more effectively search for and retain excellent teachers at the middle school level. Schafer said the District typically gets over 200 qualified applications for an open spot in K-5 and only a fraction of that number for grades 6-8.

Technologically, the District seeks to determine its needs in the areas of hardware, software and classroom tools (such as interactive white boards). Schafer said they seek to answer the question "What do we want to do with our hardware and software and where do we go from here?" They will also decide what the standard classroom technology set-up will be.

The District seeks to address the academic needs of all students. Schafer said the District already has a number of programs in place to aid students with special education needs. He indicated the District is more lacking in its ability to meet the needs of Gifted and Talented students. The District only receives about \$16,000 per year for Gifted and Talented programs and approximately \$8,000 of that goes straight to overhead. "How do we touch those students at the very high end?" asked Schafer. The District has long included differentiated instruction, but they want to find the most expeditious way to meet the needs of the Gifted and Talented population.

Schafer stressed that none of the priorities have been finalized and won't be until the District has solicited and received feedback from parents, staff and community members. At that point, the Board will develop an Action Plan to revise the Strategic Plan.

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