



DURÓN'S DIGEST

UPDATE FROM SUPERINTENDENT ROBERT J. DURÓN

SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Bottom line affects meals program

After 12 years of providing free meals to all of our students regardless of ability to pay, SAISD is now charging students who do not qualify for free or reduced meals. Unfortunately, District finances are such that we can no longer afford to cover deficits in the food service budget from the operations budget. Approximately 12 percent of our families were affected by this change which I realize may have caused confusion for some parents and campuses. Without this change, the projected deficit for the food services budget was approximately \$3 million.

Containing costs

The District has made major reductions over the last two years which have resulted in significant savings. Through the closure and consolidation of six schools, savings from staff efficiencies and other reductions, SAISD realized a savings of \$15.6 million in one year. Still, this is not enough. Our Board has requested we create a Cost Containment Committee to study more ways to reduce the budget. Members will be appointed soon and will work under the guidance of Associate Superintendent Steven Bassett.

Reaching out to dropouts

I am gratified to report that on Saturday, Sept. 6 more than 300 volunteers from San Antonio's corporate sector joined our Board members, staff and me in knocking on the doors of high school students who had not returned to school. Mayor Phil Hardberger called on volunteers and elected officials to encourage these students to enroll. The initiative was based on one that began in Houston a few years ago. I believe the community members came away with a better understanding of the difficulties many of these young people confront and the reasons they choose for dropping out. Approximately 1,021 homes were visited and contact was made with 498 individuals.

Excellence to be GRANTed

I'm looking for out-of-the box ideas and hope teachers will apply to the next cycle of the Excellence in Education Grant Program. Grants of up to \$5,000 will be awarded for innovative activities in support of goals to benefit the largest possible number of students. The monies are funded by the San Antonio Foundation for Excellence in Education, which has granted more than \$95,400 since its inception last October. Applications will be made available next week via the SAISD Web site and winners will be notified in November. For more information contact Carmen Vázquez-González at 299-5670.

Feedback

Thank you to those who took time to respond when I launched this communication vehicle earlier in the month. I appreciate your input and look forward to continuing the dialog.

Sincerely,