



from the office of Superintendent Robert Collins

A Lesson from Valhalla High on the Importance of Being Competitive **Visit with Valhalla Journalism Class Addresses Issues of Academic Rigor and College Admissions**

Last Wednesday, I had the opportunity to participate in a press conference with the Valhalla High School journalism class. The students were well-prepared with probing and professionally framed questions that reflected the skill and talents of their journalism advisor, Peggy Ormsby. Ms. Ormsby represents Grossmont's best. She has been an English and Social Studies teacher, Advanced Placement U.S. History teacher, track and field and volleyball coach, and is a Nationally Certified Social Science teacher.

The class posed a wide range of questions that included addressing students who are not successful in high school, college counseling, facilities issues, 9th grade transition, Career Tech Education, national politics in education and elements of the strategic plan that will be presented to the Board of Education on February 21st. They also addressed college admissions and weighted G.P.A.s, as well as the importance of a strong Advanced Placement and academic program.



**Superintendent Bob Collins
and the Valhalla Journalists**

It is also important that **we understand the importance of the Grossmont District being academically competitive with districts throughout San Diego County and the State.** Each high school should provide a strong academic program defined by several important components. These components will help define our District academically for the greater San Diego area and beyond.



**Peggy Ormsby,
Valhalla Journalism Advisor**

"High quality enrichment programs will be in place for students exceeding standards."

Goals and Objectives 2007-2008, Grossmont Union High School District, Board of Education

In the Spring of 2007, the Board of Education set a specific goal to address students exceeding standards. The issue now is, "What are those enrichment programs and components of a high quality academic program?" The following are components that if not absolutely necessary, certainly have to be considered as what strong, academically focused school districts are about. Many were discussed with the Valhalla journalists.

1. Ensure that we have an aggressive process for the identification of **gifted and talented students** and that we provide these students with **appropriate enrichment opportunities**.
2. Establish a **strong, "foundational" Advanced Placement program** to address the needs of students exceeding standards.
3. Partner with **Grossmont and Cuyamaca Colleges** to provide opportunities for our students to enroll in advanced coursework during their high school careers.
4. Libraries and school technology should provide materials to permit student access to **"higher" level collections for advanced research**.
5. A **new emphasis Districtwide on mathematics and science** would build upon current strengths and new science facilities, while expanding higher level science offerings and building strong college and business partnerships.
6. Provide our **Advanced Placement teachers with both professional growth** opportunities and time to be a **Professional Learning Community Districtwide**.

Providing a rigorous and challenging academic program that prepares students for the most competitive colleges and universities is our charge. While many of those programs exist in Grossmont today, others have to be developed over the next three years. Our challenge is clear: **to build in each of our high schools the most competitive academic program in the greater San Diego area and beyond** for our young people and their families.