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Board eyes budget, contracts for next year

By **GLENN WALLACE**
STAFF WRITER
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The option of full-day kindergarten and commitment to small classes are elements of the teachers' union contract approved by the Lompoc Board of Education on Tuesday.

"Things moved quickly and very professionally, and I thank you for that," said Anne Bossert, the board's vice president, as she addressed educators and Lompoc Federation of Teachers representatives.

The board had given preliminary approval last week but finalized the agreement with a unanimous vote Tuesday night.

Staff also shared details about the new contract, including the impact that cuts to teaching staff will have on classroom sizes.

"We do remain committed to small class sizes," said Betty McCallum, Lompoc Unified School District's director of personnel support services.

Kindergarten through third-grade classes will have a student-to-teacher ratio of 22 to 1, with classroom caps of 24 students. If

state funding for classroom size reduction were to be eliminated, those ratios would become 28 to 1, and higher for all grades.

Another part of the LFT contract is the plan to offer full-day kindergarten in the 2010-11 school year.

"We've been getting a really good response from the community and the staff about this," said McCallum.

A staggered-hour, traditional kindergarten, as well as a 288-minute kindergarten — the same length as other elementary school days — will be offered at each

school site.

"There will be many options for parents to opt out if they don't want the full day," said McCallum.

Full-day kindergarten is a pilot program set to run through June 2012, unless renewed by teachers and the district.

Looking ahead to next school year, the district also looked at its budget picture, which forecasts lean times.

Assistant Superintendent of Business Services Sheldon Smith gave a brief presentation, showing the trend of funding cuts to the district.

"It's a \$10 million drop in a three-year period," Smith said, indicating the difference between unrestricted revenue between \$67 million in 2007, to \$57 million in 2010.

After mandatory reserves, the district will be left with only an \$857,000 cushion to operate through the 2011-12 school year.

Superintendent Greg Kampf said that even though the district was "flying at a lower altitude," it was still able to demonstrate a workable budget through 2012,

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Teaching art in the modern world

Variety of artwork from local school students on display at the Grossman Gallery

By **AMANDA BROOKS**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

There is great variety in the artwork hanging on the walls of the Grossman Gallery at the Lompoc Public Library this month: pencil drawings, colored pencil, water color, black-and-white photography, digitally enhanced color photography, foil figures and graphic designs.

This variety reflects the diverse artists who created it: students from Lompoc's middle schools and high schools. March is National Youth Art Month.

"They've celebrated Youth Art Month since I've been here, so for 25 years at least," said Beth Corry, art teacher at Lompoc High School.

Nationally, Youth Art Month has been celebrated since 1961 when the Arts and Creative Materials Institute and the National Art Education Association created the program to promote public support for art education.

It's easy to imagine that over time, little has changed in the teaching of art. The techniques for drawing a rose are much the same today as they were in the time of Michelangelo or Picasso.

Those time-tested hand skills are on display at the Grossman Gallery in the drawings of birds, human faces, roses, abstract patterns and living rooms.

Yet technology has seeped into the art world.

As computers have all but taken over graphic design, and digital photography has become ubiquitous, these technologies have been embraced in the schools' art departments.

Among the student art hung at the public library are award-winning graphic illustrations and designs from students of Cabrillo High School's graphics program, which focuses on digital art and computer graphics.

Across the room are photographs from Lompoc High School's digital-photography class.

Lompoc High digital-photography teacher Andy Newbre said that his classes are constantly growing and changing as technology changes, which means he has



Photos by Len Wood/Staff

Lompoc High School student art is part of a display from area schools this month at the Grossman Gallery in the Lompoc Public Library. Below, Vandenberg Middle School student Jerome White made a foil sculpture for the art exhibit.



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ABOUT TOWN

Valley Democrats to hold meeting tonight

Lompoc Valley Democrats will hold a meeting at 7 tonight at the Grossman Gallery in the Lompoc Library, 501 E. North Ave.

Featured will be health-care speakers Lauren Pressman and Bill Mullins, along with Jim Raggio, CEO of Lompoc Valley Medical Center.

Basket-making class offered at Lompoc Museum

Lompoc Museum will host a basket-making class from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Saturday in the back garden at 200 South H St.

The instructors will be Karen Ostand and Kathy Badrak. Basket-making experience and nimble fingers are not required. Cost for museum members is \$40 and \$50 for non-members. Checks should be made payable to the Lompoc Museum.

For more information, call 736-3888.

Local school to hold information night

La Purisima Concepcion School will hold an information night from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday at 213 W. Olive Ave.

All prospective parents/guardians are invited for this opportunity to meet the kindergarten teacher and learn more about the school and its rigorous and challenging curriculum, which focuses on whole-child development and value-based character emphasis.

For more information, call 736-6210.

LCA to present Rudolph Budginas in concert Friday

Lompoc Concert Association will present pianist Rudolph Budginas in concert at 7:30 p.m. Friday at the First United Methodist Church, 925 North F St. Single admission tickets are \$25 for adults, \$10 for students, and are available at the door.

For more information, call 735-1408

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SB County Fair wine competitions are merging

New event will be called the Central Coast Wine Competition

By **LAURIE JERVIS**
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Santa Barbara County Fair has announced that it will merge its annual wine competition with three other fairs, including the California Mid-State Fair.

The new competition, to be held in mid-June, unites the Santa Barbara County Fair, the Mid-State Fair and the Ventura and Monterey county fairs, and will be called the Central Coast Wine Competition.

In past years, entries in the Santa Barbara County Fair competition were limited to wines sourced and

produced in Santa Barbara County, said Joe Brengle, deputy manager of the Santa Maria Fairpark, host of the event.

"That was limiting, because many area winemakers use grapes from other regions," Brengle said. "By merging with the other three fairs, we'll be able to allow more wines."

The geographical boundaries for the new competition will be expanded to include the entire Central Coast American Viticultural Area (which stretches from Santa Barbara County in the south to the San Francisco Bay Area in the north), as well as Ventura County, according to information released from Central Coast Wine Competition.

The Central Coast AVA comprises portions of six counties and around 100,000 acres of wine

grapes, according to the release. The counties included Contra Costa, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara.

Questioned whether the economy was a factor behind the various competitions' decision to merge, Brengle said that while the recession did not drive the decision, it was a factor, both for the competitors and the respective competitions.

"Now we'll have just one entry fee instead of four, and the four fairs will be able to pool their resources" toward a larger event, he said.

The entry fee for the new competition will be \$50, Brengle said. More information on entering the competition will be available after



Ian Gonzaga/Staff

The Costa de Oro award-winning 2007 Chardonnay is on display at the tasting room in Santa Maria.

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WEATHER
Partly sunny.
HIGH 63 / LOW 44
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