New chief for City Heights schools; San Ysidro leader to direct 3 campuses
San Diego Union-Tribune - Thursday, December 14, 2006
Author: Chris Moran

San Ysidro schools Superintendent Tim Allen has accepted a position as the leader of San Diego State University's project running three public schools in City Heights.

As executive director of the City Heights Educational Collaborative, Allen will be responsible for the education of 5,000 students at Hoover High, Clark Middle and Rosa Parks Elementary schools.

The schools have among the highest proportions of poor and non-English-speaking students in the San Diego Unified School District, and all three are under federal sanctions because of low test scores.

Allen, 57, has been a career public educator, mostly as a curriculum administrator. He said he was a finalist for the Escondido Union School District superintendent's job in the spring. He said he had not been seeking to leave San Ysidro but was recruited for both the Escondido and City Heights jobs.

Allen is scheduled to begin his new, $180,000-a-year job Feb. 1. He said yesterday he intends to continue in San Ysidro through the end of January.

The San Ysidro board hired Allen after a turbulent 18 months in which it had fired his two predecessors.

Allen was the eighth superintendent in 14 years when he was hired, and board trustee Sandy Lopez said yesterday, "He's been with us a long timethree years."

The board continued to have public disputes on Allen's watch. Trustees have accused one another of violating open-meeting laws, endorsed challengers to their colleagues in board elections and refused to pay a field trip bill from a bus company because it was owned by a trustee.

Last year the board president tearfully tried to resign her post because of board infighting, but the board did not accept her resignation.

Yet all five trustees repeatedly pledged their support of Allen and last year extended his $148,000-a-year contract through 2009.

In some cases, though, a divided board made personnel moves such as restoring a position eliminated in budget cuts or transferring an employee from one school to another that Allen had not recommended. Generally, school boards choose only one
employee the superintendent who, in turn, submits candidates for all other jobs to the board for approval.

The three veteran board members who went over Allen's head in hiring have deep community ties and said they serve their constituency, not the superintendent. Those three were re-elected in November.

Neither Allen nor board members said the election influenced his decision to leave, but Lopez said that had the veteran board members been defeated, "his job would have been easier, and he wouldn't have to deal with a board that has perceptions and ideas and an understanding that they have a responsibility to the community."

Trustee Jean Romero said she was "disappointed" that Allen was leaving. She said she's worried that plans for the construction of two schools and plans to reform low-scoring schools could be slowed by his departure.

San Ysidro has 5,000 kindergarten-through-eighth-grade students at seven schools.

San Ysidro opened a new school under Allen, and it also joined a pact that guarantees South County public school students admission to San Diego State University if they fulfill the program's seventh-through-12th-grade requirements. Previous turnover in San Ysidro's leadership had delayed San Ysidro's entrance into the Compact for Success.

It was in part that experience in dealing with Allen that made him a proven talent to San Diego State, said Ethan Singer, associate vice president for academic affairs. San Diego State is in its eighth year running the three schools under an agreement with the school district, the teachers union and Price Charities, a nonprofit group that has donated millions of dollars to help public schools in City Heights.

Allen will be responsible for instruction at the three schools as well as developing an annual budget with money from the school district, Price and San Diego State.

Tim Allen

New job: Executive director, City Heights Educational Collaborative

Age: 57

Residence: Encinitas

Résumé:

* Superintendent, San Ysidro School District, December 2003 to present

* Principal, Chula Vista Elementary School District, 2001-03
* Director, instruction and assessment, Lennox School District, 1998-2001