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February 6, 2007

To: Dr. Milt Werner-Assistant Superintendent/Curriculum & Instruction
Dr. Dennis Brown, Director of Secondary Education

Cc: All High School Principals
Secondary Music Teachers
Secondary Counselors

Re: Clarification of District Position on P.E. Credit for Marching Band

The question has been raised whether it is appropriate to grant P.E. credit, a state of California graduation requirement, to students who participate in marching band in lieu of the required P.E. classes. This practice within the district has been in place since 1999-2000 based upon a letter from the California State Department of Education which stipulated that such a decision was within the autonomy of the local board of education. Our school board formally adopted the P.E. credit for marching band and the practice has been continuous since that time.

Earlier this year, district staff was asked to confirm whether the district practice was still appropriate given the adoption of subject matter curriculum standards by the State Board of Education. Initial communication with representatives from the State Department of Education provided mixed messages with regard to our board approved practices and which in turn created some confusion and anxiety among our students, teaching staff, parents, and administration.

Please be advised that the original letter from the State Department of Education remains in effect at this time and the approval by the board of education in 1999-2000 to authorize P.E. credit for marching band remains the district's standing practice. It is very important to emphasize that P.E. credit does not extend to any other band class at any high school.

While we are not changing our practice at this time, I am asking Dr. Brown to:

1. Communicate the district's official position on P.E. credit for marching band to our music teachers, physical education teachers, counselors, secondary principals, and secondary co-administrators.
2. Provide direction to secondary principals to meet with the music and physical education teachers to address the rigors of the marching band program to more closely align the physical activities of marching band to the adopted physical education standards.
3. Provide assurance that P.E. credit is not being given for any other band class.

I am asking each principal to work with Dr. Brown and their appropriate staff members to adjust marching band routines that will meet the intent of the P.E. credit. Further, I am asking principals to communicate the continuance of the P.E. credit for marching band to counselors and other school staff to ensure students have the current information for course registration. Thank you for your assistance and leadership to clarify this important issue.

Respectfully,

Douglas M. Gephart
Douglas M. Gephart-Superintendent