

School Efforts Continue as Semester Opens

By Ruth Passen

As the new school semester opens, a new administration in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) has also brought about a change of administration for the Potrero Hill Middle School.

Dr. Sam Rodriguez has replaced Claudia Jeung as the school's newest principal. He will be assisted by the school's regular Vice-Principal, Lou Roth, as well as an added Vice-Principal, George Sloan.

This change of the top guard alone will not necessarily assuage the concerns of members of the Friends of Potrero Hill Middle School (FPHMS), who have spent many active months in meetings urging the Board of Education to improve conditions at the school.

Lowered academic results, disciplinary problems, teacher incompetency, large class sizes, and an excessive percentage of Special Education students are a few of the many problems and frustrations that parents, neighbors, businesspeople and other concerned community residents have been working to overcome during the past school year.

Carlos Cornejo was appointed by the Board of Education after the ouster of former Superintendent Robert Alioto to

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the new admini

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be acting Superintendent of Schools, while a search for a permanent Superintendent is conducted by the Board. Cornejo has promised the FPHMS to attend the opening day of classes at the Middle School in September.

With a 14 year career in education, mostly in the San Jose School district, and as past principal of San Jose High, Rodriguez has promised the FPHMS that although he doesn't know Potrero Hill he is "serious about knocking on doors to learn about the community," and asked at an early meeting with residents and school staff "Will you back me and help me get this off the ground?"

Vice-Principal George Sloan taught at James Lick Middle School and transferr-

ed to Potrero from a job as Assistant Principal at Martin Luther King School, both in the SFUSD.

Rodriguez emphasized, "I'm not afraid to get the staff and community involved and also the parents. Superintendent Cornejo said to me, 'Those people on Potrero Hill really want to get something done.' They've heard you downtown - that's why we're here."

Rodriguez also promises a tough stand on discipline, and is definitive on curriculum improvements. "I have a background of turning schools around!" he proclaimed.

Taking a "wait and see" stance, FPHMS is prepared to be at the school on opening day to observe classroom sizes and teacher assignments. A follow-up visit within two weeks will help determine how well the new administration heeds community input.

During the years since the newly appointed Acting Deputy Superintendent of Schools Thomas Sammon was principal of Potrero Hill Middle School (1971-78), and with the departure of Jeung, there have been seven turnovers in administration there. With such a disappointing "revolving door" administrative history at the school, Rodriguez and Sloan were asked what commitment they could make to this community. "We'll be at the school for as long as we are doing the job," they both replied.

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