



## District 300 outlines stimulus spending

By Jameel Naqvi | Daily Herald Staff

Published: 9/15/2009 12:02 AM

School Web sites in Spanish, new computers for special-needs students and English classes for parents are among the initiatives that federal stimulus money would fund in Community Unit District 300.

District 300 officials outlined their plan for spending an estimated \$5.6 million in stimulus funds during a presentation to the school board Monday.

The bulk of the funds would be spent on special education, for which the district expects to receive \$4.4 million.

Officials plan to spend half of that on existing special education costs, which effectively frees up money for other uses.

"It in theory gave us \$2.2 (million) more to spend in the general education area," Chief Financial Officer Cheryl Crates said.

Of the remaining \$2.2 million earmarked for special education, \$1.5 million would go toward new early intervention programs and staff training, among other initiatives.

About \$600,000 of the special education dollars would be spent on interactive whiteboards, computers and other technology for special-needs students.

The district expects to receive almost \$1.2 million in federal funds for high-poverty schools.

Officials plan to use the funds to enroll at-risk students at four east-side elementary schools - Golfview, Meadowdale, Parkview and Perry - in extended-day kindergarten.

"It's going to be very intensive - so they'll be able to move ahead on their reading skills and their readiness skills," said Luz Baez, director of title programs.

The \$1.2 million would also pay for literacy programs, staff training, computers and versions of school Web sites in Spanish, as well as classes in the GED high-school equivalency exam, computer skills and English for parents at high-poverty schools.

Through the initiatives for low-income families, the district hopes to raise reading scores by 10 percent and get at least 60 percent of kindergartners to meet literacy standards at high-poverty schools.