PARAMOUNT BARD
ACADEMY

Contact: Brent Malicote
Tel. 661-391-3766
Cell Phone: 661-428-4700
E-mail: brent@paramountbardacademy.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KERN COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS BOARD VOTES TO POSTPONE RULING ON PARAMOUNT BARD ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL UNTIL FEBRUARY 10.

Bakersfield, CA (January 15, 2009) The Kern County Board of Education met Tuesday to hear testimony and listen to comments from the public regarding the Paramount Bard Academy (PBA) Charter School Petition. The Kern County Board engaged in a presentation with Bill Phillimore (Paramount Farming Co.), Ric Campbell (Director Bard MAT), and Brent Malicote (PBA Principal) concerning the 700+ page Paramount Bard Academy Petition that was submitted to Superintendent Reider on December 10, 2008. After the presentation, comments from the public were heard followed by the Board's vote to postpone the decision until the February 10 meeting.

As the Kern County Superintendent of Schools (KCSOS) Board discussed the need for more time to make the best possible decision, conversation ensued which resulted in the agreement between Paramount Bard Academy Staff and KCSOS Staff to draft an MOU which might alleviate concerns that the Board may have regarding the charter school petition. The KCSOS Board stated they may be interested in becoming part of the appeals process for the expulsion process. The Academy's stance is clear. During the meeting, Ric Campbell told the KCSOS Board, "Additional checks and balances from locally elected Boards can only add to the school's overall effectiveness. Adding an appeals process like this to the plan strengthens our proposal with even more local accountability." Paramount Bard Academy legal representatives are currently drafting an MOU to submit to KCSOS staff and will be ready within one week of the January 13 meeting. PBA representatives are pleased with the opportunity to continue dialogue towards approval of this public charter school.

During public comments, Delano Mayor, Sam Ramirez spoke in favor of the Paramount Bard Academy and stated, "Delano continues to grow and is ready for this innovative Charter School." Heidi Gonzalez Dyar, a teacher, parent, and lifelong member of the Delano Community spoke in favor of the Charter School and said, "Families in Delano deserve to have a choice in where they send their children to school." Brent Malicote (Principal) stated, "The KCSOS Board asked all the right questions. I believe the Board's intentions are only the best; they want to give this charter school the thoughtful consideration it deserves." Bill Phillimore stated, "We look forward to developing an MOU with the KCSOS Board that will alleviate concerns they may have. In the end, this school is all about the kids, and we believe our petition makes that quite clear."

KCSOS will vote on the Paramount Bard Academy on February 10, 2009 at 6:00PM. The meeting will take place at the KCSOS office building located at 1300 17th Street, Bakersfield, CA 93301.

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The Paramount Bard Academy is a public charter school that will be registered with the California Department of Education by our opening date in August 2009 in Delano, California. Charter schools are public schools responsive to students needs and are held accountable for improved student achievement. The Paramount Bard Academy is a joint project between the Delano community, Paramount Agricultural Companies, and Bard College. Benefiting from the leadership of Bard's Master of Arts in Teaching Program (MAT), the Academy will work in close collaboration with the MAT faculty to build a robust curriculum and maximize student learning.

The Paramount Bard Academy is committed to graduating students with a minimum of 30 hours of college credit, prepared to advance to college and complete post secondary degrees. A primary goal of the Academy is to graduate no less than 95% of all students with the expectation that 75% or more of these students will go on to graduate from college.

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