

New superintendent explains needs for second Hermosa Beach school

by Michael Macdonald

"We had to grow," said Hermosa Beach School District Superintendent Dr. Gwen Gross, explaining the school board's recent decision to move the kindergarten through second-grade classes from Hermosa Valley School to Hermosa View School.

Dr. Gwen Gross, a Wisconsin native, became Hermosa's superintendent in December. Formerly on the faculty of Kent State University in Ohio, Gross was a kindergarten-sixth grade principal for 14 years in Palos Verdes and Laguna Beach.

Approximately 300 children will be transferred to the grammar school on a Prospect Avenue, east of Pacific Coast Highway in September. There are a total of 800 students in the district.

"Our only other choice was placing two more portable classrooms at Hermosa Valley, at a cost of over \$100,000," Gross said this week. "We would have had to order them by March 1.

Gross said Hermosa View, which until recently was leased to a Japanese school, will require about \$100,000 in paint, windows and cosmetic improvements, and an additional \$150,000 in furnishings, carpets and lighting.

"It would have doubled the cost if we had chosen to make Hermosa View an upper grade, intermediate school," Gross said.

"It is wonderful that the current and previous school boards

had the foresight to maintain and not sell the site. By renovating now, we make the site much more attractive for a lease if the district no longer has a use for it."

Gross said Hermosa View would have a capacity of about 350 students. "Predicting school growth is tricky, but we don't see major growth past the capacity of this site," Gross said.

The district currently has \$400,000 in developers fees which can be used for the renovation. In addition, there is over \$3 million from the sale of school property on tap for capital improvements.

The North School site, while still owned by the district, is currently in the second year of a ten-year lease as a pre-school. **ER**



Newly appointed Hermosa Beach School District Superintendent Gwen Gross. Photo by Michael Macdonald.