



# school bulletin

ISSUED BI-WEEKLY SEPTEMBER THROUGH JUNE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

July 11, 2003

## State Board Delays Exit Exam Consequences

The California Board of Education this week voted unanimously to postpone high school exit exam consequences for two years.

Passage of the exam had been scheduled to become a requirement for high school graduation starting with the Class of 2004. With postponement, the Class of 2006--this fall's sophomores--will become the first required to pass the state test in English and math to receive a diploma.

The first opportunity they will have to take the revised California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) is March 2004.

State officials said disappointing statewide results prompted the postponement. When the last batch of scores was released last year, 73 percent of the Class of 2004 had passed the English portion and 53 percent had passed math.

In the Long Beach Unified School District, 79.8 percent of the Class of 2004 has passed the English section, and 61.5 percent has passed the math section.

In voting for the postponement, State Board members said they expected the passing rate to rise as teachers across the state continued to incorporate preparation for the test into their teaching. They cited better results from the class of 2005; on the first attempt, 79 percent of the class passed the English section, and 60 percent passed the math section.

The English section of the test covers reading comprehension, word analysis, writing structure and grammar. The math portion tests knowledge of fractions, probability, linear equations and basic geometry.

"As schools continue to focus sharply on aligning courses to California's standards, more and more students will pass the test," said Kerry Mazzoni, the state secretary for education. "A two-year delay in the exam's consequences will give schools extra time to focus on the standards we expect them to meet."

While the State Board of Education has postponed the exam as a graduation requirement, this will not be "Ferris Bueller's Year Off" for students in the Long Beach Unified School District. District schools will be working harder than ever to prepare all students to meet or exceed state standards in English and math.

While this year's juniors and seniors have a reprieve from the diploma test, they must still face employers in a tight job market and colleges with record numbers of applicants and rigorous admission and placement exams. It's very much in each student's self interest to take advantage of all of the courses and opportunities LBUSD schools offer that help them meet state standards.

If they learn these essentials now, students will save both time and money by not having to take remedial courses in college. They're also more likely to be the lucky ones who get better jobs, while others who are not as well

prepared don't get good job offers.

"We will continue to expect more of our students," said Chris Steinhauser, superintendent of schools. "We will press on to have the highest pass rate of any large district on the exit exam when it is reinstated as a graduation requirement. Parents need to know our pursuit of excellence continues. This is no time to relent in our efforts."

The Long Beach Unified School District now requires all students to pass Algebra I. They must also write an acceptable junior thesis or successfully complete a senior writing course. In addition, beginning with the Class of 2007, students must complete 40 hours of service learning to demonstrate civic responsibility and enhance their awareness of career opportunities. These graduation requirements are not affected by the state decision to postpone the consequences of the exit exam.

## Space Camper Heads To Huntsville Monday

Eighth-grade science teacher Teri Lockerman is going into space. At least that's what her students at Tincher Preparatory School in Long Beach believed.

"They thought I was leaving on a space shuttle," said Lockerman, describing her students' reaction when they learned she'd been selected to attend Space Camp in Huntsville, Ala., this summer.

The 37-year-old Long Beach native will take to Space Camp a life-long fascination with the heavens. Her interest in space goes back to the time she was a young child watching Apollo launches on television.

Lockerman's path to teaching, and ultimately Space Camp, had a few twists and turns along the way. Her first career was in fashion merchandise/marketing, where she worked for 10 years before realizing she wanted more out of life.

"I wasn't fulfilled. I wanted to learn more," Lockerman said. "I enrolled at Long Beach City College and had a biology professor who completely changed my perspective of science. I knew right then I wanted to be a science teacher."

Following her graduation from CSULB, Lockerman has been teaching in the Long Beach Unified School District for the past five years. The emphasis in her science curriculum is on physical science. "We examine element properties, atomic and molecular structure, and chemical composition, to name a few."

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## District Will Survive Summer Stalemate; Fall's the Problem

The current Sacramento stalemate over a 2003-04 state budget will not affect the Long Beach Unified School District's ability to pay employees or vendors this summer. But if the impasse continues into September without a state budget, local school districts could encounter a severe cash-flow problem.

Last year, the state budget also missed its July 1 deadline and was not approved until the first week of September. That was before the state had seen its earlier \$11 billion surplus deteriorate to an unprecedented \$38 billion deficit.

"We expect no problem paying our July and August bills," said Larry Bozanich, financial services officer. "But in September, with thousands of teachers and other 10-month employees returning to work, the district must be able to meet much larger payroll obligations."

If the state still has not approved a budget by the end of September, "We could hit the wall and have to borrow from our construction bond funds," he said. "It's never gotten this ugly before."

The gridlock in the California Legislature over proposals to raise taxes and cut services is not expected to be resolved soon. Both sides in the partisan debate are still far apart.

In the worst-case scenario, the L.A. County Office of Education, which issues payroll checks to all school employees who work in L.A. County, may have trouble guaranteeing that the checks won't bounce because of insufficient funds.

"We hope that won't happen," said Bozanich. "We hope the state will approve a budget in time to avoid any hardship on school employees and their families. We'll just have to wait and see."

The state's \$38 billion deficit continues to worsen. School districts could exhaust cash reserves this fall unless the state borrows money to balance the budget, cuts spending, increases taxes or approves some combination of all three. Although the growing state deficit may require years to recover from, the Long Beach Unified School District is in better financial condition than many other school districts.

"We're all going down the same road," said Bozanich, "but others will go over the cliff first."

Unlike several California school districts that are already bankrupt or on the verge of bankruptcy, LBUSD has made prudent budget cuts over the past two years and has reduced staff through normal attrition and by not filling some vacancies. This district was one of the few large districts in California that did not issue layoff notices as a result of recent state budget cuts to education.

## • Space Camper

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Lockerman says this is an exciting time to be a science teacher – and a great time to go to Space Camp. "There's so much taking place with space exploration, and my students are extremely curious," she said. "Space seems so far away, yet when you bring it into the classroom, students are fascinated."

When she returns to Long Beach from Space Camp, Lockerman plans immediately to put to use what she has learned. First, she'll share what she learned with teaching colleagues, where there's a heavy emphasis on astronomy in third, fifth, and sixth grades. Then, she'll build a unit for her own curriculum at Tincher Preparatory School.

Lockerman says she's committed to making the most of her Space Camp experience. "I'm going to be a human sponge and absorb all of it," she said.

"This is a once-in-a-life-time opportunity."

She's scheduled to fly into Huntsville on Monday.

## The Job Board

• Emerson Parkside Academy is hiring a 50 percent facilitator for the 2003-04 school year. If interested, e-mail Cindy Young, director, at [cyoung@lbusd.k12.ca.us](mailto:cyoung@lbusd.k12.ca.us) or leave a phone message at 420-2631 ext. 301. Candidates will be contacted to schedule interviews.

• Do you have expertise in turning around students who are at-risk because of social and emotional challenges? Soaring Eagles Academy (SEA), an elementary alternative education program, is seeking teachers who are highly motivated in working with alternative education students. Would you like to take a one-year "sabbatical" to explore a rewarding and challenging opportunity? Teachers interested in this one-year assignment are encouraged to apply or call for more information. Positions are available for primary and intermediate multiage classrooms. For information, contact Damita Myers-Miller, SEA administrator, at ext. 8187, or Karen DeVries, assistant superintendent, at ext. 8247.

## Names in the News

**Mike Torres'** combination fourth and fifth grade class at Cleveland took first place for grades 3-5 in the 19th Annual Press-Telegram Stock Market Game. Winners in grades 6-8 are **Robert Denithorne's** sixth-grade class at Tincher, first; and **Patrick Benko's** eighth grade class at Rogers, second. Winners in grades 9-12 are **Chris Johnson's** ninth grade class at Jordan Freshman Academy, first; **Bill Nieland's** DECA Sales and Marketing class at Wilson, second; and Nieland's DECA Sports and Entertainment class at Wilson, third.

**Stephanie Bauer**, marine biology and Odyssey teacher at Lakewood, recently received the Award of Excellence in Education from the Long Beach Aquarium of the Pacific. The Award of Excellence honors outstanding service to ocean conservation.

**Drea Avent**, a beginning and advanced television production student interviewer on [ed.sports](http://ed.sports) and news anchor on [ed.news](http://ed.news), just landed her first professional television job. She is a sports reporter for News-24, a 24-hour news station in Houston.

## AVID Students Excel, Prepare for College

One way that the Long Beach Unified School District is fulfilling its mission to assure the educational success of students is through AVID—Advancement Via Individual Determination—an academic elective for average students who were not previously successful in a college preparatory program but who show academic potential.

AVID students begin college preparation with the goal of enrolling in and graduating from a four-year college. AVID students are prepared for the highest levels of study, up to and including pre-AP, honors and Advanced Placement courses. AVID develops students' academic skills and supports students' efforts to become competitive college applicants.

LBUSD middle schools with AVID programs include DeMille, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marshall and Stephens. Marshall is a National Demonstration Site. High schools with AVID include Cabrillo, Millikan and Wilson.

Students can enter the program as early as the sixth grade and remain in it through the twelfth. Those entering before their junior year get maximum benefit from AVID.

AVID features a regularly scheduled college preparatory class teaching study skills, writing skills and critical thinking for students in grades six through twelve.

In addition, AVID students are enrolled in honors classes (at the high school level) or college prep English, mathematics, social science and language classes required for admission to colleges and universities. Tutors work with students to help them with problems they may encounter in these challenging courses. AVID students are expected to maintain C's or higher in order to meet the four-year college entrance requirements.

AVID enjoys an exceptional success rate. Since 1990, nearly 15,000 AVID students have graduated from high school and gone on to college. According to research on AVID by the University of California, San Diego, high school students enrolled in the program for at least three years graduate and enter college at a 93 percent rate, 75 percent higher than the national average.

More than 60 percent of AVID's graduates enroll in four-year colleges and universities. The national average for four-year college enrollment is 35 percent. Latino AVID graduates are going on to four-year colleges at almost two times the national average, and the program's African American graduates are going on to four-year colleges at one and a half times the national average. After two years, 89

percent of the AVID students in one four-year university were still enrolled and on track for graduation; this retention rate is far higher than the college average.

For information, parents may contact their child's school guidance counselor or visit the AVID website at [www.avidcenter.org](http://www.avidcenter.org).

## Recent Promotions

The following classified employees recently received promotions:

**Olivia Buell**, Kids Club lead assistant, Kids Club-Fremont;

**Sonia Ocampo**, Head Start instructional aide, Head Start Services;

**Edward Richardson**, intermediate food service worker, Hamilton;

**Alicia Rodriguez**, inventory control assistant, Purchasing.

## Job Opportunities

Applications are now being accepted at the Personnel Commission, 999 Atlantic Ave., third floor, for computer support specialist assistant, purchasing office assistant, purchasing office assistant-food service and senior purchasing office assistant.

## A Lighthouse District

A team of education experts inspected Long Beach schools recently to determine whether the school district qualifies as the best urban school system in the nation. The top award, the Broad Prize for Urban Education, will be announced in September.

The team of judges was impressed. Among them was Jean Rutherford, Director of Educational Initiatives for the National Center for Educational Accountability.

"You have something so special," said Rutherford. "I saw passion and intensity. You are a lighthouse for this country. I've never heard as many positive, clear examples of how people feel about the support they get from their school district."

## Buyers Like Schools

"The residential real estate market is exceedingly hot right now," said John Gooding, Century 21 Sparow-Shoreline partner.

In addition to low interest rates and low inventory, which is characteristic of most of Southern California, Long Beach has seen people return to the city, fueling the demand.

The latest census update this week revealed a 2.4 percent increase in the Long Beach population during the past year.

"About 10 years ago, there was a fairly large exodus from Long Beach, driven by the perception that the schools were not competitive," said Gooding. "In the last five years, we've seen many of those people move back due to the wonderful job the school district has done in enhancing education."

"Gravestones bear two dates, with a hyphen in between. What are you doing with the hyphen in your life?"

### SCHOOL BULLETIN

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