



school bulletin

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

September 26, 2003

You've All Earned This National Prize

We won. And we all know why. The Long Beach Unified School District has a wonderful team of dedicated people who work so hard with total commitment to provide good schools and excellent education for all students. We are blessed with truly heroic teachers, classified personnel and administrators, school and office staffs, support services, Board of Education members, Personnel Commissioners, PTA, VIPS, the Long Beach Education Foundation, hundreds of educational business partners, Principals for a Day, local service clubs and philanthropic groups. We appreciate the help of city and civic leaders, youth-building organizations, school boosters, proud alumni, local clergy, veterans, retirees and many others who support our kids and schools.



To all who have made this tremendous achievement possible, my deepest, heartfelt thanks. Thank you so much for believing that
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CELEBRATION--Cheers, screams of delight and high fives prevailed at Wilson, one of the outstanding schools visited by a team of national evaluators. They validated the district's exemplary achievements and K-12 reforms.

TOP PRIZE--Eli Broad in New York presents a check to Superintendent Chris Steinhauser, Board of Education President Bobbie Smith and TALB President Tony Diaz for a half million dollars in college scholarships to be awarded next spring to more than 100 deserving students.



America's Best Urban School System Honored

The Long Beach Unified School District this week received the top urban school district award in the nation--the Broad Prize for Urban Education. At New York's Rockefeller Center, Superintendent Chris Steinhauser accepted a \$500,000 check for scholarships from philanthropist Eli Broad.

"Every staff member in our schools gives 100 percent every day," said Steinhauser. "That's what's so unique about this place. We want to be champions of what's right for kids. This prize recognizes that we're an excellent school district that's getting even better."

The award luncheon, attended by national news media and U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, honored Long Beach schools for narrowing the achievement gap. The district was selected for raising achievement for students from all walks of life, and for breaking through language and income barriers to give all children their best chance at success.

"We offer our sincere congratulations to the 2003 winner of the Broad Prize for Urban Education--Long Beach Unified School District," said Eli Broad, founder of the Broad Foundation. "We are thrilled to honor the very best school districts in America."

The Long Beach contingent shrieked with excitement when the winner was announced.

"I lost all my sophistication and cool," said Board of Education President Bobbie Smith.

Mayor Beverly O'Neill was ecstatic. "This award is the result of many years of hard work by all of the school district's employees, including teachers and administrators, each of whom share in this wonderful achievement," said O'Neill. "It's a tribute, not only to Chris Steinhauser, but also to Dr. Carl Cohn, the former superintendent, who worked tirelessly to improve the education system in our community."

The fact that the prize went to a California school district is noteworthy considering the state's record budget deficit and reduced school funding.

As a result of state budget cuts, the Long Beach district has eliminated \$40 million from its budget by freezing the hiring of non-teaching positions and implementing other cost-cutting measures. By using reserves and controlling costs, the district so far has protected classroom instruction, maintained class size reduction and averted the demoralizing layoffs felt by many other California school districts.

Long Beach, the most ethnically diverse city in the nation according to the U.S. Census, was one of five finalists. The other 2003 finalists were Boston Public Schools, Garden Grove Unified School District, Jefferson County Public Schools in Kentucky, and Norfolk Public Schools in Virginia. Each received \$125,000 in Broad scholarships.

SUCCESS--Glazier Bob Medina and sign painter Eric Larsen wasted no time posting the good news at 1515 Hughes Way. More than 50 national news media outlets covered the story reaching an estimated 80 million Americans on Monday with the Long Beach story.



• You've Earned It

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all students can learn and for making certain they do. Thank you for giving students your best every day and for teaching by your example that education is worth their best efforts, too.

Thank you for encouraging one another daily, even in the face of state budget cuts, challenges to education and problems beyond our campuses that sometimes make learning more difficult. You give kids hope and help and happiness when they succeed.

Thank you especially for narrowing the achievement gap, for improving student performance, for having high standards, for going the extra mile, for doing whatever it takes to help students learn.

Thank you also for your patience and perseverance, your understanding, insight and wisdom, your ability to focus your efforts on what's most important and not be distracted from our crucial mission.

Thank you for making the quality of life better and the future brighter here in America's most diverse city by giving the gift of education to our 98,000 students this year.

Pleased Parents, Good Data Helped

A high degree of parent satisfaction and a thorough data collection system helped Long Beach Unified School District win the Broad Prize. National judges met with a diverse group of parents from several Long Beach schools during their recent visit.

"One reviewer said he had never seen a happier, more satisfied group of parents," said Nancy Wolfe, a parent who met with evaluators. Her children attend Hill Classical Middle School and Wilson Classical High School, both visited by the judges.

"Over the past five or six years there's been tremendous innovation at both schools," Wolfe said. "The big thing at Hill is the eight class periods, with double blocks of time. At both schools, the kids who need more help in math and English are getting that extra assistance. I couldn't be more proud that my kids are going to those two schools."

The rigorous judging of finalists also called for 20,000 pieces of information on student achievement – a daunting task for any school district, but a manageable one for Long Beach.

"One of the criteria setting us apart from our highly qualified competitors was our data collection system," said Deputy Superintendent Dorothy Harper, who attended the award ceremony in New York. "We received high praise for the work our Research Department does."

The district has worked hard in recent years to develop online data systems that give teachers valuable feedback, allowing them to monitor and adjust instruction well before final exams. Broad Foundation judges said they were impressed by the Research Office's rapid response to schools that request help accessing and interpreting the data that drives crucial decisions about teaching and learning.

The Broad Foundation also has provided grant money to support the school district's Malcolm Baldrige quality improvement efforts. Baldrige methods are used by the nation's most successful businesses. The Baldrige approach includes a strong emphasis on data-based decision making.

HILL WINNERS--

The good news reached Hill when Lee Lockyer delivered their school mail. He had heard on the radio that Long Beach had won. School marquee throughout the district reflected the major achievement. Hill's rigorous instruction impressed the judges.



It's Not Easy to Win This Highest U.S. Honor

Winning the Broad Prize validates the hard work of teachers, staff, parents and community members. The prize goes to the urban school district making the greatest overall improvement in student achievement while reducing achievement gaps among ethnic groups and between high- and low-income students.

The selection jury, composed of leaders in business, government and philanthropy, includes governors and CEOs of some of the nation's largest corporations and non-profits. More than 100 U.S. urban school districts were invited to compete as eligible candidates. A school district cannot nominate itself.

A review board of education leaders from

across the country -- with the help of the National Center for Educational Accountability (NCEA) -- analyzed more than 20,000 pieces of information about LBUSD achievement. A team of researchers conducted thorough inspections of each finalist district and met with school boards, superintendents, union leaders and parents. In Long Beach, researchers visited Tucker, Hill and Wilson. They also visited Robinson and Poly last year.

Finalist districts all demonstrated consistent high performance or improvement over three years in elementary, middle and high school reading and math. All performed above their expected 2002 performance levels.

IT STARTS HERE--

Tucker kindergartners and teachers Claire Robertson and Nicole Jackson prepared a large thank-you banner that they will sign and send to Eli Broad. The Broad Foundation's evaluation team visited the school, which serves many disadvantaged students. It made exemplary achievement gains in reading and math. Tucker principal David Taylor was interviewed on Fox 11 News.



SCHOOL BULLETIN

Official publication of the Long Beach Unified School District issued bi-weekly during the school year from the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, 1515 Hughes Way, Long Beach, California 90810. (562) 997-8000. www.lbUSD.k12.ca.us

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In the Spotlight . . .

Superintendent Chris Steinhauer is the interview guest of Art Levine on the next edition of "Straight Talk," a televised public access interview show featuring local newsmakers.

They discuss the Broad Prize and challenges facing the nation's most diverse school district.

The show will air Sunday, September 28 at 6:30 p.m. on Charter Cable Channel 3.

On the superintendent's flight back from New York, the pilot announced to all the passengers that there was a special group from Long Beach schools that had just received the award for being the best large school district in the nation. They received an ovation from everyone on the plane.