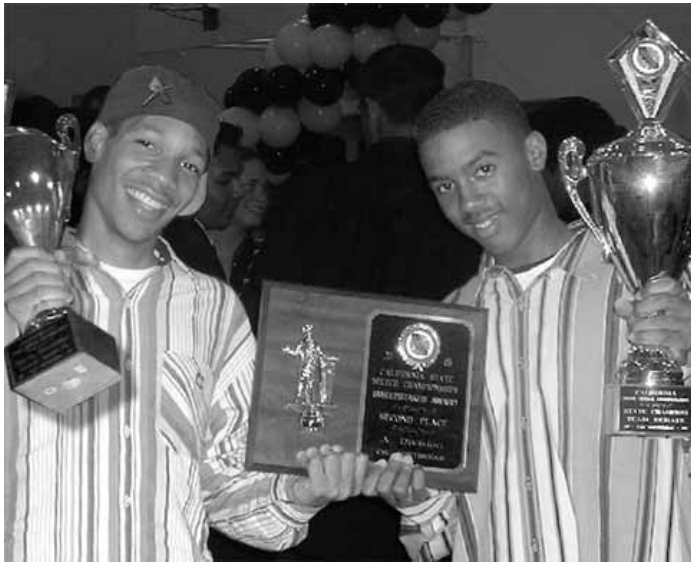




school bulletin

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

August 17, 2007



MOVIE STARS — Debate teams from dozens of the most elite, expensive private prep schools in California were overwhelmed by the stellar performance of Jordan High School students Louis Blackwell and Richard Funches. During their time at Jordan, the duo triumphed as California State Speech and Debate Champions. A new documentary chronicles their success.

\$1 Million Grant Goes To History Training

History teachers in the Long Beach Unified School District have earned a three-year, \$1 million grant to help pay for master's degree tuition and to provide additional training by renowned experts. The Teaching American History grant from the U.S. Department of Education is the fifth such grant since 2001 awarded to the school district, which has now received more of these grants than any other school system in the nation.

The latest grant will help teachers of grades three through five to further their subject knowledge and teaching skills. Their students will improve their reading skills while learning to think critically about historical events.

"We're proud to receive a fifth grant. It's unprecedented," said Linda Mehlbrech, LBUSD history/social science curriculum leader. "The Department of Education must be pleased with what we've done in the past."

The four prior grants of about \$1 million each, two of which remain in effect, have focused on improving elementary, middle and high school history instruction. The grants emphasize teacher training provided by instructors from Long Beach City College, Cal State Long Beach and Cal State Dominguez Hills.

"One of the reasons we received the new grant is that we have such a great relationship with our partners in higher education," Mehlbrech said. The new grant again will recruit teachers to participate in training. This time, about 75 teachers from local elementary schools will participate in monthly seminars and summer institutes. Another 25 will receive

(Continued on back page)

Film Hails Jordan's State Debate Champs

The story of recent Jordan High School graduates Louis Blackwell and Richard Funches, including how they captured the California State Speech and Debate Championship title during their time at Jordan, is now the subject of an award-winning feature-length documentary, "Resolved."

The movie debuted at the 2007 Los Angeles Film Festival, where it earned the Audience Award for Best Documentary Feature.

While at Jordan High, the Blackwell-Funches team outperformed 1,000 of California's best student speakers and 64 top high school debate teams from throughout the state — including many teams from elite, private schools.

The film's producer, Greg Whitely, said "Resolved" spotlights the unconventional methods used by Blackwell and Funches, who challenged the traditional approach to debate by drawing upon their personal experiences and speaking at a slower, more understandable pace. More conventional debate teams employ a style known as "the spread," in which students speak at an often incomprehensible, lightning quick pace of 400 words per minute.

Funches, interviewed by the *Long Beach Press-Telegram* shortly after the release of the new documentary, said that winning the 2005 state debate championship was a validation of the Jordan team's approach.

Funches and Blackwell also used the debate puppet to point out inequities inherent in the world of debate, where most competitors come from more affluent communities.

"I felt like it was more than just a trophy that was on the line," Funches said. "It was my personal worth, and the thing that I fought most for, which was respecting differences and bridging the gap between disconnected urban

minorities and debate."

The debate team at Jordan was made possible by a three-year grant from the Los Angeles Urban Debate League. The grant ended in the 2005-06 school year.

Both Funches and Blackwell earned college debate scholarships upon graduating from Jordan in 2006. Funches attends the University of Louisville in Kentucky, and Blackwell attends Cal State Fullerton.

For more information, visit www.debate-movie.com.

U.S. History Teacher Named Best in State

Meri Fedak, teacher at Kettering, recently was named the state's History Teacher of the Year by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and the White House's Preserve America initiative.

Fedak earned the honor based on meeting and exceeding several criteria: at least three years of classroom experience teaching American history; a deep commitment to teaching; creativity and imagination in the classroom; close attention to primary documents, artifacts, historic sites and other primary materials; and thoughtful assessment of student achievement.

The award carries a \$1,000 prize and consideration for the National History Teacher of the Year to be given out this fall. The Kettering library will also receive history books and materials in her honor.

Fedak has 35 years of teaching experience, 32 of those years at Kettering.



LIVING HISTORY — Meri Fedak, teacher at Kettering, was named History Teacher of the Year for California. The honor carries a \$1,000 prize and eligibility to compete for National History Teacher of the Year.

Math Leader Dawson Earns National Honor

Dixie Dawson, who recently retired as mathematics curriculum leader for the Long Beach Unified School District, has won the Council of the Great City Schools/Pearson Education Curriculum Leadership Award.

The award was presented at the Council's Curriculum and Research Directors' Meeting held in Portland last month. The 37-year veteran of the school district earned the award for improving the quality of teaching over several years and helping to improve student achievement districtwide. Math scores in recent years have risen significantly in local schools after reforms that Dawson helped to design and implement.

"I feel that we really have kids succeeding because we have a systematic approach," Dawson said at a recent Board of Education meeting, where she was recognized for her years of dedicated service. "If you give kids more time, if you improve instruction and give teachers the support they need, all students can learn, and that has been my focus for the entire time."

In her 12 years as curriculum leader, Dawson created numerous curriculum materials for teachers and students, designed professional development for math teachers new to the school district, and established math coach positions at the elementary, middle and high school levels. She also was instrumental in bringing technological advances to the district, improving communication and instruction by making materials available to all district teachers on LBUSD's Intranet.

Dawson initiated several reform initiatives before they became commonplace statewide. She oversaw the creation of district math standards in 1995, two years before the state of California adopted its own standards.

Recent Promotions

Hattie Araujo, buyer, Nutrition Services;

Rustum Bacho, school safety supervisor, School Safety & Emergency Preparedness;

James Booker Jr., food production utility worker, Nutrition Services;

Jeanette Jimenez Caro, instructional assistant-intensive behavioral treatment, The Willows;

Kaopoo Chao, accounting technician, Accounting;

Jeff Crouse, maintenance supervisor, Maintenance;

Marilyn Hummel, staff secretary, Special Education;

Eric Larsen, sign maker, Maintenance;

Francisco Lopez, student evaluation technician bilingual Spanish;

Philip Maidel, grounds equipment operator II;

Martha Oswald, elementary school office supervisor, Mann;

Vicki Owens, intermediate Nutrition Services worker, Powell;

Jermel Paulette, locker room attendant, Wilson;

Gail Rainwater, executive secretary, Human Resource Services;

Beatriz Rivero, school safety/security specialist, School Safety & Emergency Preparedness;

Vickie Swan, assistant Purchasing and Contracts director, Purchasing.

• History Grant

(Continued from front page)
about \$2,500 each to be used toward completion of a master's degree in U.S. history at Cal State Long Beach. These teachers have already been recruited and will start their master's programs on Sept. 5.

As with prior grants, participating teachers will travel to historical sites in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., and they will learn to make greater use of primary sources, or original historical documents, in the classroom. The result will be lessons that bring history alive for elementary school students.

"Rather than memorizing the list of U.S. presidents, for example, students will read about and discuss effective leadership in the context of historical events," Mehlbrech said. "Then they can begin to decide for themselves which presidents they should remember the most."

Other partners on the latest grant include The History Channel and renowned historians Bob Bain, from the University of Michigan, and Carol Berken, a professor of American history at Baruch College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York.

Teacher training under the latest grant also will focus on using history materials to improve reading comprehension, ensuring, for instance, that students can readily grasp the main idea of a passage of text.

The grant continues LBUSD's strong tradition of cultivating highly qualified, award-winning history teachers. LBUSD boasts the 2007 winner of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Outstanding Teacher of American History Award and the 2006 DAR Outstanding Teacher of American History Award from DAR District XIII.

The Job Board

Applications are now being accepted at the Personnel Commission, 999 Atlantic Ave., for computer support technician, credential services specialist and network specialist.

Names in the News

Robin Sinks, health education curriculum leader, was appointed by the State Board of Education to the Child Nutrition Advisory Council.

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

CHRISTOPHER J. STEINHAUSER
Superintendent of Schools

BOARD OF EDUCATION

FELTON WILLIAMS, President

JON MEYER, Vice President

DAVID BARTON, Member

MICHAEL ELLIS, Member

MARY STANTON, Member

BRITTANY QUACH, Student Member

AP Summer Institute Attracts from Abroad

More than 270 teachers from local schools and from as far away as Mexico, British Columbia and Hong Kong took part in a week-long institute at Millikan High School recently to improve their teaching of Advanced Placement classes.

The Long Beach Unified School District hosted the AP Summer Institute, which also attracted teachers from throughout California and the nation.

Three years ago, LBUSD held a summer institute just for district teachers, offering workshops in five subjects. Last year, the institute offered training in 16 subjects and became sanctioned by The College Board, which administers AP tests. This year, the event offered sessions in 21 subjects. While teachers from outside the school district paid about \$600 each to attend, LBUSD teachers received a stipend of \$500 to attend for the week. About a third of the participants were Long Beach teachers.

The school district's Gifted and Talented Education office, coordinated by Wendy Hayes-Ebright, arranged for the training.

Classified Forms

Classified forms for resignation and retirement, leave of absence, and name or address change are online on the Personnel Commission web page at www.lbusd.k12.ca.us in the alphabetical index.

Resignation, retirement and leave of absence forms need to be approved by a site or department administrator and submitted directly to Human Resource Services for board approval.

The name and address change form can be submitted directly to the Personnel Commission for classified employees if only for an address change. For an employee changing a name, copies of official documents including a Social Security card need to accompany the form. The employee should go to HRS at 1515 Hughes Way, turn in the documents and complete payroll change forms.

Lincoln's Litter Lizard

Lincoln Elementary School's Room 14 third graders recently submitted the winning name—Mr. Scales—for the human-sized Long Beach Litter-Free Lizard mascot.

For their marketing assistance, the students will receive certificates of recognition signed by Mayor Bob Foster and a special "lunch with a lizard" pizza party.

In Memoriam

Roxy Richmond
teacher, Wilson
July 29, 2007

Alverta Golston
former custodian supervisor II
July 31, 2007