



school bulletin

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

January 25, 2008

Lean Times Require Prudent Measures

By Christopher J. Steinhauser
Superintendent of Schools

Exactly five years ago, the headline on my message in this newsletter read, "We'll Get Through These Tough Times." It was a message about the state's massive budget crisis, and it explained the measures we were taking to minimize the impact of the crisis upon teaching and learning. All too soon, this cycle has repeated, and the state again finds itself in dire financial trouble.



Once again, we must take prudent measures in anticipation of a state budget that will be one of the worst we've seen.

The state budget deficit is \$14 billion and growing. School districts statewide are bracing for mid-year budget cuts, followed by a 2008-09 budget that promises to strip billions of dollars from education.

As in the past, our goal is to keep cuts as far away from the classroom as possible and to minimize the need for layoff notices. To do so, we must work now to live within our means so that we can soften the impact of the looming economic hardship.

Effective immediately, we are suspending all expenditures except those items and services that are deemed absolutely essential. Central office staff will work together with sites as they determine what is essential until the crisis has passed. We will postpone filling vacant positions whenever feasible, and we'll begin looking at various contingency plans to trim spending.

Throughout this difficult time, we must keep our vital mission at the forefront of all decisions. We must continue to improve student achievement by serving every student, every day.

In the meantime, we, along with other educators statewide, will advocate for the preservation of Proposition 98 funding guarantees at the state level while the legislature and governor work toward an agreement on the state budget. Long Beach Unified also has been working diligently to receive some key waivers from the state that would provide much needed flexibility in the way we spend state funds. This flexibility will help to cushion the blow of state cuts.

The road ahead will be difficult, but we will do everything possible to remain one of the best school districts in the nation – one that despite the state's huge fiscal challenges continues to make steady academic gains and close achievement gaps faster than any other large, urban school district in California. We've done it before, and we can do it again.

National Group Lauds Excellence at 6 Schools

Six schools in the Long Beach Unified School District have earned recognition from the National Center for Urban School Transformation.

Tucker, Signal Hill and King elementary schools, along with Robinson K-8 Academy, each made the 2008 Honor Roll, a distinction shared by only 53 schools in the United States. Of these four local schools, both Tucker and Signal Hill were selected to advance as finalists for NCUST's top honor this spring, the 2008 Excellence in Urban Education Award. Only 20 finalists were chosen nationwide.

The finalists "prove that our nation's urban schools can be wonderful centers of learning that change children's lives," said Joseph F. Johnson, Jr., executive director of NCUST. "As a nation, we should be seeking out opportunities to applaud and support these schools while we provide systematic, substantive assis-

stance to other schools seeking to attain similar results."

The remaining two local honorees, Riley and Addams elementary schools, were recognized as Schools on the Move, demonstrating "dedication to the achievement of success in urban education."

LBUSD was the only school district in California to produce two finalists for the top award. In fact, NCUST chose only two other California schools as finalists this year – one in Bakersfield and one in Sacramento. Last year, Long Beach's Edison Elementary School became one of only seven schools nationwide to win NCUST's top honor, while LBUSD's Signal Hill Elementary School qualified as one of only 18 finalists.

To compete for the top award, urban school applicants must meet 11 rigorous criteria, (Continued on back page)

Virtual Trade Fair Preps Students for Careers

Hundreds of students from dozens of schools throughout the state participated in the Long Beach Regional Occupational Program's third Virtual Enterprise Trade Fair recently at the Long Beach Convention Center.

Virtual Enterprise is a high school-based program that allows students to develop and run simulated businesses, preparing them for the world of work. Each high school in the district offers such classes, which meet the A-G requirements for admission to state universities. Virtual businesses trade their services and products during the semester and compete in contests at virtual trade fairs throughout the state and the world.

At the event, guests and judges spent virtual

dollars to buy services and products. The judges, a select group of Long Beach business partners and educational leaders, scored the virtual businesses in competitions based on a series of professional criteria.

Students competed in such categories as Most Creative, Most Professional, Best Salesmanship, Best Company Catalog, Best Job Interview or Resume, Best Mission and Vision Statement, Best Marketing Plan, Best Company Newsletter, Best Television Commercial and Best Webpage.

New at this year's event were 30-minute professional development sessions modeled after training provided at traditional business conferences.

VIRTUAL REALITY – Millikan High School senior Rene Delgadillo, left, conducts a virtual business transaction with a passer-by at the annual Virtual Trade Fair as classmate Artemio Palencia looks on. Virtual Enterprise classes help students to meet college entrance requirements while preparing them for the realities of the working world.



O'Connell Critical of State School Funding

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell was highly critical of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposed state budget for 2008-09.

"At a time when California must make substantial investment in schools in order for our young people to survive and succeed in the global economy, the governor's budget takes a giant step backward," O'Connell said. "All over California today, school districts are struggling to find ways they can cut their budgets mid-year, after contracts have been signed, materials paid for, and programs planned.

"*Education Week's* comprehensive report card of public school systems nationwide gave California a grade of D+ when it comes to funding our schools. New Jersey and New York annually spend more than \$5,000 per pupil in excess of what our state invests in our students. As abundant research makes clear, we simply need to invest more, not less, in preparing these students to succeed."

What Others Say

"Long Beach Unified continues to be among the most effective school districts in the country," Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster said during his recent State of the City address.

"Providing economic opportunities for our young people continues to be a personal passion of mine, and that is why I am very pleased to announce that the unique educational partnership between my office, the Long Beach Unified School District, organized labor, and private business is a reality," Foster said, referring to the new ACE Academy at Jordan High School. The academy offers students the opportunity to prepare for careers in architecture, construction and engineering.

MLK Award Winners

Three students have earned the city's inaugural Peacemaker Awards in honor of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

The winners are: Emma Ogiemwanye of the California Academy of Mathematics and Science; Auriel Armstrong of Wilson Classical High School; and Clarissa Lopez of Millikan High School.

Ogiemwanye founded the first Judaism Club at CAMS to provide an open forum for both Jewish and non-Jewish students. Armstrong volunteers at homeless shelters and conducts food drives for the elderly. Lopez is part of the PEACE Academy, which challenges students to think critically, use their leadership skills and participate in community service.

In Memoriam

Barbara Skinner
former CDC Nutrition Services worker
Dec. 26, 2007

Zelma Dumas
recreation leader, Marshall
Jan. 10, 2008

Professional Status

Certificated employees may now use an automated Professional Development Management System to sign up for courses, receive e-mail notification of upcoming classes, and monitor their coursework progress.

The system will be for both classified and certificated employees, although only certificated courses are currently listed.

To use the system, select the Professional Development Management System button on the Professional Development (Curriculum Office) page of the LBUSD website at www.lbschools.net. Employees will need their eight-digit Employee Identification Number, which can be found on a paycheck or pay warrant, and the four-digit year of birth.

For information, call 424-8438.

Dates to Remember

February

- Black History Month
- National Children's Dental Health Month
- 1 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— "The Klan: A Legacy of Hate in America," Grades 9-12, ed.tv 8
- 2 Groundhog Day
- 4-8 National School Counseling Week
- 5 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— "George Washington," Grades 3-5, ed.tv 8
- 6-Mar. 22 Lent
- 6 8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00— "Abraham Lincoln," Grades 2-8, ed.tv 8
- 7 Chinese New Year
- 7 LBUSD/City of Long Beach Groundhog Job Shadow Day
- 7 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— "Abraham Lincoln," Grades 3-5, ed.tv 8
- 8 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— "The Boyhood of Abraham Lincoln," Grades 4-6, ed.tv 8
- 11 Lincoln Day
- 12 Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
- 12 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— "Valentine's Day, Grades K-4, ed.tv 8
- 13 8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00— "George Washington," Grades 2-8, ed.tv 8
- 14 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— "Presidents Day," Grades K-5, ed.tv 8
- 15 Susan B. Anthony's Birthday
- 15 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— "Riding Your School Bus Safely," Grades 6-12, ed.tv 8
- 17 National PTA Founders Day
- 18 President's Day
- 18 Washington Day
- 19 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— "You Can Refuse," Grades 5-8, ed.tv 8
- 20 8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00— "Alexander Graham Bell," Grades 3-8, ed.tv 8
- 21 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— "New Zebra in Town," Grades K-5, ed.tv 8
- 22 George Washington's Birthday
- 22 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— "Jackie Robinson Story," Grades 6-12, ed.tv 8
- 26 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— "Why We Need Each Other: The Animal's Picnic Day," Grades 1-4, ed.tv 8
- 27 8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00— "Women's History Month," Grades K-3, ed.tv 8
- 28 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— "School Bus and the Exceptional Child," Grades K-12, ed.tv 8
- 29 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— "Dr. Seuss's Cat in the Hat," Grades K-5, ed.tv 8

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• Nationally Honored

(Continued from front page)

including proficiency rates on state assessments that exceed state averages, high achievement for all demographic groups served, high attendance rates, low suspension and expulsion rates for all demographic groups served, high graduation rates, and the attainment of federal Adequate Yearly Progress goals.

The majority of students served at the schools must meet low-income criteria, and the schools must have non-selective admissions policies. Only 53 applicants from across the nation met these lofty criteria. All 53 of them are listed as NCUST's 2008 National Honor Roll.

The 20 finalists are the honor roll schools that presented the strongest evidence of high levels of achievement for all of the students they serve. These 20 schools will receive on-site visits that will lead to the selection of ten winners, who will be recognized at the 2008 NCUST symposium May 7 to 9 in San Diego.

Winners will receive an award check for \$1,000 and a large banner for their school, as well as a commemorative photo album, a profile published on the NCUST website, and complimentary travel and registration for two people to the symposium.

Representatives from each winning school, along with several finalists, will present their successful strategies at the 2008 symposium.

NCUST is part of the QUALCOMM Institute for Innovation and Educational Success at San Diego State University. The organization was founded to support urban schools nationwide, encouraging their transformation into highly successful institutions that promote enthusiastic learning, student success and the preparation for a positive future.

For more information, visit www.ncust.org.

Names in the News

Sandra Rogers, language arts curriculum leader, has won the Excellence in Teaching Award from the California Association for Teachers of English. Rogers will receive the award at CATE's conference on March 7 in Long Beach.

Linda Mehlbrech, history and social science curriculum leader, has won the Hilda Taba Award from the California Council for the Social Studies. The award, which is the highest honor bestowed by the CCSS, recognizes an educator's professional contributions to the field of social studies in California. The award will be presented at the CCSS annual conference, scheduled for March 7 to 9 in Oakland.

Josie Gavieres, whose son once attended Bryant Elementary School, has won a Honda Helpful Award from Honda Corp. for her volunteer work at Bryant. She started a non-profit organization that helps boost students' literacy skills by allowing them to read aloud to trained therapy dogs. The award included a new 2008 Honda Element vehicle that will help Gavieres drive dogs to schools.

Gregory Fisher, an economics and government teacher at the California Academy of Mathematics and Science, has been selected to participate in the Toyota International Teacher Program. The project is one of the preeminent teacher study-abroad programs in the nation. Fisher will study tropical forest eco-systems and sustainable agriculture methods in Costa Rica.