



school bulletin

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

October 9, 2009

Australians Seek LBUSD's Advice

The upward trend of student achievement here has attracted attention from the land down under.

Australian Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard, the country's second-most senior officer, asked the Long Beach Unified School District to participate in a roundtable discussion on education reform this week at Rand Corporation's Santa Monica offices.



Gillard

LBUSD Superintendent of Schools Christopher J. Steinhauser joined Gillard and a select group of education experts from Southern California on Monday to discuss issues of transparency and accountability in K-12 education.

Steinhauser provided information on LBUSD's use of student achievement data, its parental and community involvement, and Long Beach's nationally recognized Seamless Education partnerships with higher education, among other topics.

"She was the highest ranking public official I've ever met," Steinhauser said, "but she was very down-to-earth, very friendly."

Gillard is Australia's first female Deputy Prime Minister and one of the most powerful ministers in Australia's history, holding the positions of Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion.

In 2007 Gillard became the first woman in Australia's history to assume the Prime Minister role by becoming Acting Prime Minister while Kevin Rudd attended a United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bali.

District Staff Finally Gain Access to Hi-Hill

Staff from the Long Beach Unified School District have finally gained access to Hi-Hill Outdoor Education Center after this summer's Station Fire scorched the surrounding Angeles National Forest.

The camp's buildings remain intact, staff confirmed, but a more thorough assessment of the property continued.

The camp won't become operational soon because it was cut from the school district's budget as a result of the state's fiscal crisis. With nearby hillsides now stripped of vegetation, the area also may be subject to mudslides as winter approaches.

State Schools Chief to Lead Principals for Day

Taking the helm at this year's Principal for a Day event on Wednesday, Oct. 14 will be honorary Superintendent for a Day Jack O'Connell, the state's superintendent of public instruction. O'Connell will job-shadow Superintendent Christopher J. Steinhauser. Both superintendents will speak at a noon debriefing reception at the Carpenter Performing Arts Center at California State University, Long Beach.



O'Connell

The Superintendent for a Day is the ceremonial and inspirational leader of the annual event when business and community leaders become principals for a day at elementary, middle and high schools to observe students, teachers and the operations of California's third largest school district.

O'Connell has visited Long Beach schools on several occasions to learn more about their successful practices. Earlier this year he visited LBUSD to highlight the district's effective use of data to improve student achievement.

O'Connell was elected to a second four-year term as state superintendent of public instruction in June 2006. He was the only statewide official to be elected in the June primary election, after earning more than half of all votes cast in a field of five candidates. He was first elected to serve as California's state superintendent in November 2002, earning more votes than any other contested candidate in the nation.

Co-chairing this year's event are Mike Murray, president of the Long Beach Education Foundation, and Henry Fung, immediate past president of the foundation. Murray also is a government and communications director for Verizon, and Fung is associate dean of the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at Cal State Long Beach.

For more information, call 997-8054.

County Honors Local Teachers of the Year

Three outstanding Long Beach Unified School District teachers were recently selected as 2010 Teachers of the Year.

Two of the three also became Los Angeles County Teachers of the Year and advance for consideration as California Teacher of the Year.

Jamaica Ross teaches fourth grade at Signal Hill Elementary School, Adrienne Sandstedt teaches earth science and the MESA elective at Lindsey International Studies Magnet, and Amelia Valinsky-Fillipow teaches third grade at Kettering Classical Elementary School.

Ross and Valinsky-Fillipow were named for the L.A. County honor. All three were recently honored at a luncheon hosted by the Los Angeles County Office of Education for top teachers throughout the county.

Jamaica Ross has experience spanning many grade levels, having taught second, fourth and fifth grades and a 6-8 intervention program. She takes a proactive approach to guide her students to pursue their personal best in all areas.

"In my classroom, my students know that as much as reading, writing and arithmetic are essential skills, it is a greater accomplishment to have exceptional character and have the ability to work well with others.

"I work toward the goals of growth and proficiency in state testing, however I push harder for them to produce individual thoughts, for them to be independent thinkers and have confidence in what they think and in the choices they make. My students trust me and know I believe in them and all they do. They know they have a fan, a support, an advocate in me."

Ross had an early interest in becoming a

teacher.

"As I got older, I took coaching and camp counseling positions, and recognized the huge rewards available in teaching, mentoring and working with people. I learned that I not only affected the lives of the children I coached and counseled, but I also impacted the lives of the adults involved."

For Ross, difficult days in the classroom present unique opportunities to connect with students for greater achievement. On one such day, she stopped her scheduled lesson and requested the attention of her students.

"I asked them to help me and to help themselves by writing a letter that told me honestly what they thought and felt about this year. How they felt about what they were learning, about me, about PE time—whatever they wanted to get off their chest, they could write. It could be signed or they could disguise their writing. I let them know that their perspective matters and honesty was the only way for me to improve. The letters were empowering and relieving for them and insightful and precious for me. I offered some perspective and showed them that I can adjust, while still letting them know that not all ideas will be put into action. The week that followed was

(Continued on next page)



Ross

Names in the News

Jennifer Rodarte was promoted to principal at Carver Elementary School. She was previously vice principal at Dooley Elementary School.

The Personnel Commissioners Association of Southern California recently named **Ramon Curiel**, executive officer of the Personnel Commission, as the recipient of the Robert Fisher Award for Professional Excellence in the Field of School Personnel Management.



Rodarte

Credential Current?

All certificated employees must keep their credentials and permits current at all times.

California law does not allow certificated service without possession of a valid credential or permit. If employees allow a credential or permit to expire, or if they do not provide the state with evidence of meeting renewal requirements, they cannot remain in paid status in any California public school district.

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing requires all clear and professional credential holders to renew their credentials at www.ctc.ca.gov. Click on "Renew Your Credential Online." The online renewal requires payment by VISA or MasterCard.

For questions, call ext. 8071.

Retirement Seminar

Certificated employees planning for retirement are invited to a seminar to learn about CalSTRS service retirement allowance, retirement options, updates on legislation, and disability and survivor benefits.

Staff from Human Resource Services, and Risk Management will answer questions.

Meetings will be Monday, Nov. 9 or Wednesday, Dec. 2 at 1515 Hughes Way, Room 143 or Tuesday, Jan. 19, at the Teacher Resource Center-ABC Room, 1299 E. 32nd St. Seminars are 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Attendance is limited. RSVP by Nov. 3 at 997-8214.

Pleasant Surprise

Madison Elementary School teacher Cheryl Toretzky was one of more than 1,000 teachers nationwide this week who were surprised by staff from Office Max with \$1,000 worth of school supplies as part of their "A Day Made Better" campaign.

Office Max joined with Adopt-A-Classroom to create the one-day event intended to raise awareness that teachers often spend hundreds of dollars of their own money on classroom supplies annually.

Toretzky shared her gifts with fellow kindergarten teachers at Madison. For more information, visit adaptaclassroom.com.

"Great organizations find a way to survive and even thrive during difficult times."

— Caltech President Jean-Lou Chameau

Teachers of the Year Share Success Stories

(Continued from first page)
focused with more students participating than ever before."

Adrienne Sandstedt serves as her science department chair and facilitates community service projects to engage her students.

"A truly inspirational moment for me as a teacher was this spring when my sixth grade students investigated the many issues related to the removal or reconfiguration of the Long Beach breakwater. Their assignment was to participate in a mock press conference on the future of the Long Beach breakwater. Students chose to be a reporter or elected to be a city stakeholder representative.

"As students shared their views and answered one another with more thought-provoking questions, I knew these students were well on their way to developing their problem-solving and critical thinking skills. By the end of the discussion, of which I was a near invisible observer, the students had raised several new insights that managed to alter my own opinion on the issue. As a teacher, I am always excited when I learn from my students, which I am pleased to say is often."

Sandstedt became a teacher following a career in advertising that included working abroad. She was troubled by the multiple injustices she saw while working in third world countries.

"As I pondered why these crimes were allowed to continue unabated, I always came back to the same answer: lack of education. An educated public has a means to oppose injustice and bring voice to their convictions. I came to understand how important education is to righting so many of the wrongs people face in this world. I came to realize how empty my words were without action.

"I believe it is my mission as a teacher to develop open-minded, informed young people who can think critically and recognize their role as responsible citizens and stewards of the Earth."

This past year, Sandstedt became a MESA (Math, Engineering, Science Achievement) advisor and organized her school's first MESA class.

"I saw tremendous growth in my students' abilities to analyze, think critically, work as a

team and creatively address and solve many challenges.

"Being a MESA advisor has made me a better teacher, because I saw first hand how students could truly grow when they learn to take risks and begin to trust their own abilities. I learned to step away and put more emphasis on the process of discovery rather than feeling the need to monitor each step of production for a perfect end product. This approach carried over into my other classes and I found myself giving the students more independence than I did in the past."

Every morning, Amelia Valinsky-Fillipow greets each student with their choice of a handshake, high-five or hug.

"Making this genuine connection right off the bat shows them that they each matter to me as individuals. Having individual contact first thing in the morning tells me how each student is feeling at the beginning of the day. Often, some kids come to school in an emotional funk before the class day even starts. By having this positive interaction, students are able to get the day started more successfully. If needed, I can take a minute with a student while the rest of my class begins the day."

During one class when students read their poems aloud, a contentious discussion about pickles began among the eight-year-olds. By guiding students' strong feelings into subsequent poems, she was able to show students what their writing could accomplish.

"This simple poetry lesson evolved into a magical teaching moment. This was a moment that, as a teacher, you can never plan, but only hope for and recognize when it comes. A moment where time limitations and lesson plan restraints fly out the window and the next thing you know, the bell has rung and it is time to go home. A moment when kids groan because they are genuinely sad that they have to stop what they are doing and leave.

"I find moments like these so powerful and invigorating. The students were engaged, having fun with purpose, and they were in control of their learning. They thought, reasoned, answered and debated, and loved it. These kinds of moments inspire me to foster an environment that allows for this type of unplanned experience because it is a powerful part of the education experience."

Valinsky-Fillipow's personal life is a reflection of her views on learning and achievement.

"While teaching at Kettering, I have run numerous marathons, returned to Long Beach City College (held a full academic load) and ran cross-country and track (placing fourth and 12th in the state at the age of 35) and have run a 100-mile race. I am extremely proud of these accomplishments, and some were harder than others. Some events required me to ask for help along the way. I share these experiences with my students and remind them that there are times that I have only been able to reach a goal with help and encouragement. I never gave up. It is my job to gently push them to work harder (sometimes more than they want to) and to accomplish things that they thought were impossible."



Valinsky-Fillipow



Sandstedt

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