



school bulletin

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

January 8, 2010

Teacher Retirement Incentive Deadline Nears

Teachers can take advantage of one-on-one retirement counseling, workshop sessions and other special meetings this month to help them decide whether to participate in an early retirement incentive by the Jan. 29 enrollment deadline.

The Board of Education recently OK'd the early retirement incentive for K-12 teachers and other certificated non-management employees, pending sufficient participation in the plan.

The incentive may help to offset local bud-

get cuts caused by the state's ongoing fiscal crisis.

CalSTRS one-on-one counseling sessions are available to teachers by appointment only on Jan. 19 at the Administration Building. Call 997-8193 for an appointment.

Additional counseling sessions may be scheduled through the Los Angeles County Office of Education directly. Contact STRS Counseling at 922-6414.

A general CalSTRS retirement seminar also has been scheduled for 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 11 at the Administration Building, Room 143. Attendance is limited. RSVP by today, Friday, Jan. 8 at ext. 8214. A subsequent Jan. 19 general workshop is fully booked. These presentations will include an explanation of the CalSTRS service retirement allowance, retirement options, updates on legislation, and disability and survivor benefits. Staff from Human Resource Services and Risk Management will be available to answer questions.

Two meetings have been scheduled by Public Agency Retirement Services (PARS) to collect enrollment forms for the early retirement incentive. The meetings are 3 to 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21 at the Teacher Resource Center, and 3 to 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 28 in the Administration Building cafeteria.

For employees who qualify, the district's early retirement incentive would provide 60 percent of both the employee's annual base salary and additional career increment, paid out over five years (12 percent each year) or longer. Benefits would start Aug. 1, 2010.

After the Jan. 29 enrollment deadline, the school district will determine whether the program would save enough money to make it feasible. The amount of cost savings will depend upon which teachers, and how many of them, choose to participate.

The school district may withdraw the incentive, provided it notifies enrolled employees of

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Board of Education

McGinnis Succeeds Ellis on Wednesday

Voters chose retired educator John McGinnis as their new school board member last week in a special election. McGinnis replaces Michael Ellis, who resigned from the Board of Education last September.

The new school board member will be sworn in during a special Board of Education meeting at 5 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 13 in the Administration Building, Room 143.

Among the five candidates who ran in the District 3 winner-take-all election, McGinnis received 721 votes, or 34 percent of the total.

Richard Lewis placed second with 616 votes, or 29 percent. He was followed by Kate Conrath with 356 votes, Pauline Gonzalez Stenberg with 263 votes and Raymond Chavarria with 166 votes.

About 6 percent of registered voters in District 3 turned out for the Dec. 29 election.

McGinnis will serve for the remainder of Ellis' unexpired term, which ends in July.

School Board Calls For Special Meetings

The Board of Education has scheduled two special meetings this month, both at 5 p.m. in the Administration Building, Room 143.

The first meeting will be held Wednesday, Jan. 13, when newly elected school board member John McGinnis will be sworn in.

The second special meeting will be held Wednesday, Jan. 27, when the ongoing budget crisis will be discussed.

The school board will still conduct its regular meeting scheduled for 5 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 19. The complete schedule of board meetings is available at www.lbschools.net.

Time to Apply for Broad Scholarships

Graduating seniors may apply for \$250,000 in Broad Prize Scholarships starting now at www.broadprize.org. The application deadline is March 1.

The Long Beach Unified School District won the scholarships last year as one of five finalists for the 2009 Broad Prize for Urban Education.

For more information, contact Kim Brinker at Scholarship America, (507) 931-1682 or (800) 537-4180 or broadprize@scholarshipamerica.org.



DOLLARS FOR SCHOLARS — Renaissance High School students Ines Arredondo, left, and Tanya Tran were two of the 15 LBUSD students awarded Broad Scholarships last year. The Broad Foundation later recognized LBUSD again as one of America's top five school districts, making another \$250,000 in scholarships available now.

Boosting Attendance One Student at a Time

When a counselor from the Attendance Recoupment Team arrives at a parent's doorstep for a home visit, the tap on the door means opportunity is knocking.

ART consists of seven counselors and five school social workers – all Long Beach Unified School District positions that already existed but this year are focused as a team on improving the attendance of habitually truant students. Team members have made thousands of phone calls and home visits to offer students a second chance, complete with referrals to social service agencies, key contacts at school, and other resources.

"The response from parents has been overwhelmingly positive," said Tiffany Brown, director of Coordinated Student Services.

"Most parents are pleasantly surprised to be offered the extra assistance."

The team's impact on attendance will be tallied in the coming months. Already, the effort shows signs of success, with parents, school principals and students praising the program's effectiveness.

"During my freshman year I felt depressed," Jordan High School student Racquel Mejia told the Board of Education at a recent meeting. "I felt like I wasn't good enough to be in the IB (International Baccalaureate) Program. I didn't want to go to school anymore. It was a big struggle with myself to get up in the morning."

Mejia recently was summoned to the school office to meet with social worker Mynor

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• Incentive

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the withdrawal on or before Feb. 19. If the district withdraws the incentive, employees will be given the option to rescind their resignation by March 1, 2010.

Participants must have at least five years of full-time employment in LBUSD as of July 31, 2010, and they must be eligible to retire under the State Teachers' Retirement System (age 55 with five years of STRS service or age 50 with 30 years of STRS service) as of July 31, 2010. Child Development Center, Head Start, hourly and substitute teachers are not eligible. Enrollment packets were mailed to eligible employees.

Contact PARS at (800) 731-7884 for more information.

• Attendance

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Montiel of the Attendance Recoupment Team. "We started talking about why I was absent so much," Mejia said. "I started to tell him how I felt. Mr. Montiel encouraged me and told me that I could do it, that I could achieve my goals. He told me that he saw a lot in me and he believed in me. He gave me a lot of advice and encouragement. Now I am a sophomore who really tries her hardest in school and gets up in the morning with no problems. I enjoy school and the learning process.

"I am very grateful to Mr. Montiel and school social workers like him. They make a big impact on my life."

Counselors and social workers from the attendance team also contact parents to thank them for their children's improved attendance. The approach seems to work.

"Our attendance has definitely improved and will continue to improve due to ART's diligent work and relationship building," said Ed Garcia, principal at Whittier Elementary School, one of the selected schools receiving ART's support. "The work ART has done for us has been incredible."

Aside from improving student achievement, better attendance also improves school budgets. The bulk of state funding for schools is allocated based upon Average Daily Attendance.

Denver Leaders Visit Long Beach Schools

Leaders from Denver Public Schools visited the Long Beach Unified School District this week to learn about LBUSD's successful practices.

Denver's school board president, superintendent and other top staff visited the central office and Cabrillo High School to learn about English language learner programs, special education, textbook adoptions, principal selection and leadership development, academic interventions and a variety of other topics regarding student achievement data, curriculum, instruction and training.

The Denver officials decided to visit Long Beach after learning about its successes from the Broad Foundation, which has repeatedly honored LBUSD as one of America's best urban school districts.

Careful Management Buoys Bond Ratings

Despite lean times, the Long Beach Unified School District's credit rating remains high because of careful management.

Standard & Poor's recently assigned a high AA-/Stable rating to the district. Such high ratings help to save taxpayers millions of dollars in bond interest. Local voters in 2008

Celebrate Education

The annual Education Celebration, which provides information on local K-8 schools' various programs, is scheduled for 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, Jan. 23 in the Cabrillo High School gymnasium.

Enter the campus from Willard Avenue, and follow the signs to free parking.

Meet principals and teachers, view student work and enjoy student entertainment.

For more information, call 997-8306.

Charter Cable Moves Ed.TV to Channel 96

Charter Cable subscribers should note that the Long Beach Unified School District's Ed.TV cable programming will move from Channel 24 to Channel 96 beginning Tuesday, Jan. 26.

Charter subscribers in Long Beach or Signal Hill can simply tune their set top boxes to Channel 96 instead of 24. This change will not affect any Verizon FIOS or Time Warner subscribers. The decision to change the channels was made by Charter.

Contact the Office of Multimedia Services at ext. 7198 for more information.

In Memoriam

Quentin Wood
former teacher
Dec. 29, 2009

Jackie Brown
Nutrition Services supervisor II,
Lindbergh
Jan. 2, 2010

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.lbschools.net

CHRISTOPHER J. STEINHAUSER
Superintendent of Schools
BOARD OF EDUCATION
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JON MEYER, Member
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approved \$1.2 billion in bonds for school modernization and construction.

The high rating doesn't eliminate LBUSD's budget woes. The school district still must cut about \$90 million more from its budget because of the state's ongoing fiscal crisis. But S&P's opinion shows that the school district continues to live within its increasingly limited means.

"The stable outlook reflects our expectation that the district will maintain good reserve levels despite expected revenue decreases resulting from reduced state revenue sources," S&P stated.

Standard & Poor's is known to investors as a leader in financial market information. S&P also maintains the S&P 500, one of the most widely followed indices of American stocks.

Kindergarten Fests

A series of Saturday informational Kindergarten Festivals for incoming kindergartners and their families kicks off this weekend.

The 9 a.m. to noon festivals are scheduled for:

- Jan. 9 at Hughes Middle School;
- Feb. 20 at Renaissance High School;
- March 20 at Powell Academy.

The free festivals provide parents with important advice on academics, kindergarten readiness, immunizations, district registration procedures and available community resources. At each festival, 25 to 30 community agencies share valuable information for parents and families regarding health, safety and education.

This year's participants receive a free book and backpack with school supplies for kindergarten.

The festivals are held in collaboration with the City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services' Early Childhood Education Committee.

Call 422-6868, ext. 231 for information.

Applications to Teach Overseas Due Feb. 1

The J. William & Harriet Fulbright Center is offering teachers a chance to teach abroad this summer in a variety of countries. Applications are due Monday, Feb. 1.

The Fulbright Center Teachers Institute, Summer 2010 offers international training experiences designed to broaden teachers' understanding of the world so they can inspire students to look beyond their own borders.

Opportunities in 2010 are available in Costa Rica, and possibly Panama, Dominican Republic, Morocco, Qatar, Oman and Malawi.

Travel costs, housing and most meals are provided to teachers who are interested in this working holiday abroad during summer break. Participants will teach English in local schools for four hours a day, four days a week. The remainder of their time will be devoted to self-directed learning, including sightseeing, study of the host culture, language training, and preparation of lessons for their home classrooms. The participants will spend six to eight weeks abroad, depending on their assignments.

For more information or to apply, call (202) 787-1894 or visit www.jwhfulbright.org/fcti.