



# school bulletin

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

February 5, 2010

## Beating the Odds At Millikan High School

Reprinted from Millikan's 'Rambler' Newsletter

By Don Keller, Co-Principal

Geneva Smith, a QUEST (gifted program) senior, will attend Columbia University in New York on a full scholarship. She came to Millikan from Cubberley K-8 School, and has made a name for herself through her academic excellence, varsity volleyball, California Scholarship Federation, and Best Buddies. Her GPA is a weighted 3.96, and she will have completed nine Advanced Placement (AP) classes upon graduation.



Smith

Maintaining a high GPA while taking such rigorous courses is even more remarkable in that Geneva holds three jobs and volunteers for the Special Olympics. But the most remarkable fact about Geneva's success is that it has been accomplished despite childhood obstacles which may have derailed others.

Geneva was born into foster care. Her biological mother was incarcerated during her pregnancy and was temporarily released for Geneva's birth. Geneva never knew her father. Fortunately, she acquired Stacey Smith as a foster care provider, and later as her adoptive mother, to guide her and provide her with an environment which was supportive and nurturing.

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## America's Educators Look to Long Beach

An alliance of top U.S. education associations reports that the Long Beach Unified School District "has long been recognized as a model urban school system." The Learning First Alliance explains LBUSD's success.

"The district hasn't achieved this success by flitting from reform to reform or looking for silver bullets. Rather, it has spent most of the past two decades building on the same educational strategies, and focusing on data, community buy-in and staff development."

These observations are part of a new article at [www.publicschoolinsights.org](http://www.publicschoolinsights.org) under the section, "Education Visionaries."

The article, "The Long Beach Way," includes an extensive interview with LBUSD Superintendent of Schools Christopher J. Steinhauser, who describes Long Beach's 18-year effort to reform local schools.

Steinhauser provides perspective on early

initiatives such as school uniforms, the Third Grade Reading Initiative, and the Seamless Education partnership with Long Beach City College and Cal State Long Beach.

The superintendent also describes LBUSD's evolution as a data-driven organization that cultivates parental and community buy-in to improve student achievement, especially through better use of communications technology.

The Learning First Alliance, which sponsors [www.publicschoolinsights.org](http://www.publicschoolinsights.org), is a permanent partnership of 17 leading education associations with more than 10 million members. Alliance members include the National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, National PTA, National School Boards Association, and the American Association of School Administrators.

## State Supt. Praises LBUSD's Use of Data

California Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell recently praised the Long Beach Unified School District's use of student performance data to improve instruction. O'Connell delivered his 7th annual State of Education Address to educators, policymakers, students and parents.

"Let me give you one great example of using data to improve instruction," O'Connell said.

"About 16 years ago, the Long Beach Unified School District began a teacher-driven project aimed at collecting assessment data in order to better understand ways to keep students in school. In order to do this effectively, the district created a data collection system,

and as teachers began to find this data more and more useful, the system evolved into a local longitudinal data system.

"In one instance, the data highlighted exceptional results in student performance in math at one particular school. It turns out that one math instructor, named Si Swun designed his own standards-aligned math curriculum, called MAP2D (Math Achievement Program), which was making headway with students. Based on these results, the school expanded this same curriculum to other classes.

"Eventually, based on the data coming from this school, the district expanded this curriculum even further, to other schools, and

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## State Crisis Prompts \$33M in Cuts Here

In light of California's ongoing and steep reductions in education funding, the Long Beach Unified School District Board of Education recently approved an estimated \$32.6 million in budget cuts. The school district faces major budget deficits requiring about \$80 million in cuts for fiscal years 2010-11 and 2011-12 combined.

The latest round of cuts could affect more than 280 teaching positions and 170 management positions, as well as some support staff. The school district does not yet know exactly which positions will be affected but is developing recommendations to be acted upon by the school board in the coming weeks.

Additional details were distributed to employees. This information remains available to the public at [www.lbschools.net](http://www.lbschools.net) (click on Budget Update).



**HANDS-ON APPROACH** — Children from LBUSD's West Child Development Center present Long Beach Rotary Club representatives with a token of appreciation for Rotary's donation of 3,200 books to local CDCs this year. Rotary also has provided more than 150,000 books to elementary schools here.

## • Geneva Smith

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"I've had to overcome a lot to be where I am," said Geneva, who received therapy to learn to cope with her traumatized childhood while learning to move on with her life. Now a senior, Geneva feels "well adjusted" and able to successfully move across the country to attend such a prestigious Ivy League university.

Geneva plans to focus on environmental chemistry and history as her majors with hopes of becoming an environmental lobbyist. She also has an interest in the fashion industry, feeling that it offers a creative outlet which can draw on and reflect culture while allowing her to use her mind.

She credits her QUEST teachers for inspiring her and guiding her along her path to success. In particular, she credits Tim Mulvehill, her former AP World History teacher, for helping her conquer her challenges. According to Geneva, Mr. Mulvehill has always offered great moral support and was an inspiration through his "great passion for his subject."

She has tied in her environmental interests with her QUEST senior project. She is constructing a tandem bicycle as an alternative form of transportation not requiring fuel.

Geneva said, "I'll miss being a Ram, my neighborhood, and Long Beach" and undoubtedly Stacey Smith, who changed her life and guided her to become a top scholarship winner.

## • Supt. O'Connell

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began to assist Mr. Swun in the production of materials for the curriculum. As the district began a pilot program for the curriculum in more of its schools, it designated Mr. Swun to coach others on teaching the curriculum.

"The pilot schools performed exceptionally well. In fact, these schools experienced a one-year, 24-point gain in their API scores due to fifth grade math proficiency. Long Beach had such great results that they expanded the math program districtwide.

"Then other districts heard about it and it spread to Fresno, Compton, Garden Grove, Lennox and Oakland. Today, thousands of students are in the MAP2D program, making real gains in proficiency. All because of one teacher innovating in his classroom a data system able to identify his success, and thanks to a culture of continuous improvement."

(Learn more about LBUSD's Math Achievement Program by clicking on MAP2D in the A-Z index at [www.lbschools.net](http://www.lbschools.net).)

"This is exactly the kind of professional learning community that uses data to support instruction that we hope to stimulate and foster through the Race to the Top (federal funding program), and I would like to salute teacher Si Swun who is here today for his innovative and collaborative spirit."

O'Connell joins a growing number of state and national leaders who are noticing LBUSD's effective use of student performance data.

President Barack Obama, in his first major policy speech on education, said last year that LBUSD's data-driven instruction is something other districts across the nation should emulate.

"I am optimistic about the future... I think that we will be able to get a Negro President in the next 40 years."

— Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1964

## STAR Elementary Schools Celebrate Gains

The Board of Education recently recognized 12 elementary schools with STAR Awards for significant gains in student achievement.

This year's winners are Addams, Bixby, Bryant, Burroughs, Emerson, Henry, King, Lafayette, Longfellow, Lowell, Naples and Whittier elementary schools.

The STAR schools succeeded despite significant budget cuts, said Jill Baker, assistant superintendent for elementary schools.

"These schools represent communities where everyone came together to use what resources they had to the greatest degree possible," Baker said.

Students, staff and parents from the winning schools participated in the awards ceremony at the board meeting.

Schools can follow one of two paths to win the STAR Award (Student Success + Terrific Teaching = Academic Results).

Path one includes a state Academic Performance Index (API) of 850 to 950 on a

## Teach in Yokkaichi

Teachers interested in teaching in Long Beach's sister city, Yokkaichi, Japan for two years beginning in August, are invited to an informational meeting on Thursday, Feb. 11, from 3 to 4:30 p.m. at CSULB's Career Development Center, Brotman Hall, Room 250.

Applications will be available at the meeting along with representatives from the Long Beach Yokkaichi committee to answer questions. For information, call ext. 8025.

## Schools Help Haiti

Parents, students and staff at schools in the Long Beach Unified School District are donating funds to help the victims of Haiti's devastating earthquake.

At Twain Elementary School, donations to the International Red Cross totaled \$1,600 in just four days.

Cubberley K-8 School collected more than \$1,000 for the Red Cross, and the school's PTA is gathering new or gently used adult and children's shoes for the Soles4Souls project. The shoes will be shipped to Haiti.

Madison Elementary School collected 735 pairs of shoes and more than \$1,500 for the Red Cross.

Share information about your school's Haiti relief efforts at [lbusdpi@lbschools.net](mailto:lbusdpi@lbschools.net).

### SCHOOL BULLETIN

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Superintendent of Schools

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scale of 1,000; API growth of 7 points or more; Federal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) growth in English, math or combined (7 percent or more); and positive gains in all areas.

Path two includes an API of up to 850; an API growth target that has at least tripled; AYP growth in English or math (7 percent or more); and positive gains in all areas.

## Furloughs in O.C.

Teachers and support staff in nearby school districts are agreeing to unpaid furlough days as California's public schools struggle to make ends meet.

In the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District, teachers agreed to take off four unpaid furlough days to save about \$6 million. About 96 percent of teachers in the Orange County district voted to approve the furloughs as part of their contract, which the school board OK'd last month, according to *The Orange County Register*.

The Orange Unified School District meanwhile approved five unpaid days off for classified school employees, or support staff, *The Register* also reported.

## ALBEM Breakfast

The annual Business Partnership Breakfast sponsored by the Association of Long Beach Educational Managers and Confidential Employees is scheduled for 6:45 a.m. Friday, Feb. 26 at The Grand, 4101 E. Willow St., Long Beach.

The event includes recognition of schools' new and continuing business partners, a raffle to fund student scholarships, and a choice between the All American (scrambled eggs with cheese and chives, bacon, hash browns and fruit garnish) or French toast swirled with cinnamon and served with maple syrup, powdered sugar and fruit garnish.

The cost is \$17.50 per person. Reservations must be received by Friday, Feb. 19. Watch for the reservation form from ALBEM, or contact Elizabeth Anklam at 494-5101.

## CCEJ Breakfast

The California Conference for Equality and Justice will hold its Interfaith/Intercultural Breakfast at 7:30 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 24, at the Hyatt Regency Long Beach.

The featured speaker at the 19th annual event is John D. Maguire, President Emeritus of the Claremont University Consortium and Graduate University. Maguire has been a lifelong participant in America's struggle for racial and social justice.

A colleague of Martin Luther King, Jr., Maguire was an original Freedom Rider in May 1961 and became a lifetime director of the King Center in Atlanta, serving during its initial year (1968-69) as chairman of the board.

The cost is \$38 per person. Mail reservations to CCEJ, 444 W. Ocean Blvd., Suite 940, Long Beach, CA 90802 or call 435-8184. Seating is limited, and reservations must be made by Wednesday, Feb. 17.

CCEJ is dedicated to eliminating bias, bigotry and racism in America.