



# school bulletin

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

March 19, 2010



**CUTS HURT** — Lowell Elementary School third grader Chloe Knopf joined more than 2,000 teachers and other supporters during a recent afterschool rally at Wilson Classical High School to oppose California's ongoing, multi-billion-dollar cuts to education. California ranks among the bottom in the nation in per pupil funding.

## 200 Teaching Jobs At Stake in Negotiations

The Long Beach Unified School District issued 1,019 notices of potential layoff to certificated employees by the March 15 deadline, a move prompted by the state's ongoing budget cuts to public schools.

In negotiations with the Teachers Association of Long Beach, the school district has proposed three furlough days and contributions to health benefits in an effort to save at least 200 teaching (not administrative) jobs for the 2010-11 school year. For more information, click on Bargaining Update at [www.lbschools.net](http://www.lbschools.net).

Statewide, nearly 22,000 layoff notices have been issued to teachers and other staff this year, the California Department of Education reports.

In Long Beach, the school board had OK'd notices for 783 positions, but 1,019 notices ultimately were required in part because some positions are shared by more than one employee, and because uncertainties regarding the number of teachers retiring, resigning and returning from leave mean that the school district must issue enough notices to allow it the flexibility needed to balance its budget.

## Beat-the-Odds School Wins National Honor

International Elementary School in downtown Long Beach is one of 13 schools to earn the prestigious National Excellence in Urban Education Award. School officials will accept the honor from the National Center for Urban School Transformation during a May 5 to 7 conference in Long Beach.

"If every school in America served diverse populations of students as well as these 13 schools, achievement gaps would be eliminated," said Joseph F. Johnson, Jr., Executive Director of NCUST.

To be eligible, schools must have high numbers of low-income students and may not have selective admissions policies. Test results must be better than the state average on required assessments, and show few or no achievement gaps among various demographic groups of

students. All schools must have high attendance rates, low suspension and expulsion rates, and exceed the federal government's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for at least the past two years.

Each winning school receives a \$1,000 check, a large banner for the school, and a profile at [www.ncust.org](http://www.ncust.org).

At the winning schools, researchers found impressive evidence of students learning challenging academic content and skills in reading, writing, science, mathematics and social studies that exceed grade level expectations. The reviewers saw students benefiting from "excellent academic support structures" that helped ensure their success in learning the challenging content.

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## Obama's Plan Aims to Reward Good Schools

By Christopher J. Steinhauser  
Superintendent of Schools

We have good news and bad news about the list of schools that the California Department of Education just deemed to be among the poorest performers in the state. The good news is that thanks to the hard work of our teachers and others, no schools in the Long Beach Unified School District appeared on this "lowest 5 percent" list. The bad news is that because we have no schools on the list, our schools and students will miss out on tens of millions of dollars in federal education funding that will instead go to the poorest performing schools.

Last Saturday, President Barack Obama attempted to remedy such funding flaws as he

unveiled his blueprint for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as No Child Left Behind. Building upon his administration's Race to the Top education initiative, President Obama's plan would reward academic growth and innovation instead of simply sending more money to troubled school districts. We applaud the president's plan, which presents an important opportunity to revamp many of NCLB's deficiencies.

Instead of unfairly labeling schools as failures, including some of the top-ranked schools in the nation, President Obama's plan would abolish NCLB's draconian Adequate Yearly Progress system, replacing its single snapshot approach with a system that rewards academic

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**LONG BEACH READS ONE BOOK** — Los Angeles Times columnist Steve Lopez recently mentored a group of students from Renaissance High School for the Arts as part of "The Message," an instructional program and televised conversation featuring communicators and artists. Lopez wrote "The Soloist," which was selected for this month's Long Beach Reads One Book campaign. For "The Message" air times, click on the Television Programs icon at [www.lbschools.net](http://www.lbschools.net).

## • Obama's Blueprint for School Reform

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gains. Here in our school district, which has attracted national attention for its successful school reforms, we say it's about time.

We welcome the president's emphasis on competitive grants. Competition drives reform by recognizing and rewarding success. We saw this theory in action when, even before any Race to the Top money was spent, many states moved forward on a number of reform issues as they competed for federal funds.

The president's blueprint contains a number of other features that we favor:

- Competitive grants will focus on big-picture goals (student success, teacher excellence, etc.) and give recipients the freedom to decide how to meet those goals.
- Competitive funding will drive reform not only at the state level but also at the school district level. We relish the opportunity to apply directly for federal funds, bypassing Sacramento.
- Designated funds will support local projects to incubate and expand promising reforms. This approach not only complements our practice of launching pilot projects and then carefully evaluating and refining them before implementing them more broadly. It also inherently encourages collaboration with teachers and community partners, which has been key to our success in Long Beach.
- Fewer, but larger and more flexible funding streams will be created for areas integral to student success, giving states and districts flexibility to focus on local needs. These new, competitive funding streams will still ensure that federal funds are used wisely. At the same time, school districts will have fewer restrictions on blending funds from different categories, meaning less red tape. We have consistently advocated for such increased flexibility at the state and federal levels.

- College and career readiness standards will be implemented, as will improved assessments aligned with those standards. This effort will enhance our own Academic and Career Success Initiative, which aims to prepare more students for high-paying, high-demand jobs.

Critics of the president's plan should consider this. Few people dispute that the current system doesn't work. Secondly, our students in Long Beach face the same and often greater challenges than those in other school districts, yet they regularly miss out on large sums of federal help. Two-thirds of our students live below the poverty line. More than 30 languages are spoken in our schools. Yet somehow we continue to make significant progress. Federal policies should not punish our teachers and students for their successes. We're just as deserving of those federal funds – if not more so – than other school systems.

## • National Honor

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Reviewers also saw teachers using engaging instructional methods that helped students perceive learning as interesting, relevant to their lives, and fun, according to a statement from NCUST. Students, parents, teachers and staff reported that they felt respected and valued by one another and by the school administrators.

"Another outstanding feature of winning schools is the commitment of their teachers and administrators to continue to set and pursue even more challenging academic goals, even though these schools already have achieved results that far exceeded state or federal expectations," NCUST noted.

NCUST is a part of the QUALCOMM Institute for Innovation and Educational Success at San Diego State University.

For more information on the National Excellence in Urban Education Awards or the NCUST Symposium, visit [www.ncust.org](http://www.ncust.org).

## More Districts Save Jobs With Furloughs

All but a few of Orange County's 27 school districts and county Department of Education have approved furloughs or are considering them for the 2010-11 school year, according to a recent article in The Orange County Register.

Employee furloughs of up to 12 days long have become a favored option for balancing 2010-11 budgets at local school districts, The Register reported.

Several districts are already using furloughs to shorten the 2009-10 year. Irvine's school board and teachers' union recently agreed to 12 furlough days for the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years. Santa Ana Unified cut three non-instruction days this year.

Eighty-seven percent of Los Alamitos teachers voted to take two furlough days this year and four next year, alleviating the need for layoffs or class size increases, according to the Los Alamitos News-Enterprise.

## Lakewood NJROTC Competes Nationally

For the first time, Lakewood High School's Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps unit has been asked to join an invitation only, national competition in Pensacola, Fla. during spring break. The two-day competition will include academic, physical fitness, colorguard and precision drill contests.

The Lakewood students are quickly trying to raise \$20,000 for the trip. For information on how to help, call ext. 3152 or ext. 3153. For more information on the competition, visit [www.thenationals.net](http://www.thenationals.net).

## Jaguars Like Pi

Cabrillo High School will join thousands of other campuses across America for "Pi-Day" this Friday, March 19. The national event promotes math literacy by celebrating one of mathematics' most intriguing numbers – pi. Pi Day is observed during the week of March 14 because the date's numeric expression, 3-14, equals pi's estimated value of 3.14.

The event is a sort of pep rally for math, as students participate in a variety of critical thinking activities. The event helps raise money for the Jaguars' Math Club.

Learn more at [www.PiAcrossAmerica.org](http://www.PiAcrossAmerica.org).

## Kindergarten Fest

This year's third and final Saturday informational Kindergarten Festival for incoming kindergartners and their families is scheduled for 9 a.m. Saturday, March 20 at Powell Academy, 150 Victoria St., Long Beach.

The free festival will provide parents with important advice on academics, kindergarten readiness, immunizations, district registration procedures and available community resources. Community agencies will 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. Call 422-6868, ext. 231 for information.

## Dates to Remember

April	
	Mathematics Education Month
	Young People's Poetry Month
1	April Fools' Day
1	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 – "Adventures in Poetry I," Grades 3-6, ed.tv 8
2	Good Friday
2	International Children's Book Day
2	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 – "The Velveteen Rabbit," Grades K-5, ed.tv 8
4	Easter Sunday
4	Orthodox Easter Sunday
4-10	National Library Week
5-9	Spring Recess
5-6	Passover (Pesach) – Concluding Days
6	California Poppy Day
10-17	Week of the Young Child
11	Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom Hashoah)
11-17	National Student Leadership Week
13	Thomas Jefferson's Birthday
13	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 – "Operation School Bus Safety: Be Cool, Follow the Rules," Grades K-2, ed.tv 8
13-15	Cambodian New Year
14	Third Quarter Ends
14	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00 – "Arbor Day/Earth Day," Grades K-3, ed.tv 8
16	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 – "No Time to Waste," Grades 4-12, ed.tv 8
18-24	Administrative Professionals Week
18-24	Public School Volunteer Week
18	Anniversary of Paul Revere's Ride
21	John Muir Day
21	Administrative Professionals Day
21	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00; 22 - 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30; 28 - 8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00; 29 - 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 – "Adventures in Poetry II," Grades 3-6, ed.tv 8
22	Earth Day USA
22	Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day
23	William Shakespeare's Birthday
23	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 – "You Can Refuse," Grades 5-8, ed.tv 8
27	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30 – "Cinco de Mayo," Grades K-4, ed.tv 8
30	National Arbor Day

## In Memoriam

**Virginia Soriano**  
intermediate office assistant, Lindbergh  
March 12, 2010

### SCHOOL BULLETIN

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Superintendent of Schools

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