



# school bulletin

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

November 18, 2011

## National Education Alliance Praises LBUSD

A recent visit to the Long Beach Unified School District by a representative of a Washington, D.C.-based national education policy organization prompted a glowing review on the group's website.

Ace Parsi, a policy and advocacy associate with the Alliance for Excellent Education, authored a blog entry this month titled, "The Long Beach Way: A Systemic Approach to Educating Every Child in Every School."

The Alliance works to improve national and federal policy so that all students can graduate from high school ready for success in college, work and citizenship. The group focuses on America's most at-risk secondary school students who are most likely to leave school without a diploma or to graduate unprepared for a productive future.

Following are excerpts from Parsi's review of LBUSD. Read the full article at [all4ed.org](http://all4ed.org). Search for "The Long Beach Way."

"Last week I did a site visit at Long Beach Unified and was reminded of what is really possible in urban education. When we hear of great, transformative superintendents, we often hear names like Michelle Rhee (Washington, D.C. schools) or Joel Klein (New York schools). While I wouldn't take away anything from other leaders, to me, Chris Steinhauer and the LBUSD staff should be at the fore of any conversation on great district leadership and the types of district systems to which the nation should aspire.

"The district has not been short on honors over the years... Yet, it's not awards or numbers (Continued on next page)

## Giving a Special Gift

By Christopher J. Steinhauer  
Superintendent of Schools

The season of giving is upon us. But for our employees and our many supporters, giving is not limited to a certain time of the year. Day in and day out, they give of their talents, time and even their own resources to support the students in our schools.

I was touched by the recent donation of a beautiful, \$800 violin that we received as part of an instrument drive to maintain the high quality of our music programs. Amazingly, the violin was donated by one of our recently laid off teachers.



This selfless act illustrates better than any numerical performance index or test score why our schools are some of the best in the nation. We care deeply about our students in Long Beach, and we go beyond the call of duty to ensure their success.

Not that data isn't important. In fact, one national expert just observed that we in LBUSD are "almost fanatical about data." With all our test scores now tabulated, including our year-round schools that tested on a later calendar, it's clear that more and more schools are reaching the state's target of 800 out of 1,000 points on the Academic Performance Index, a success story that's repeated throughout our many diverse neighborhoods no matter the challenges they may face.

But using data is simply a means to an end. Driving the effective use of data is our underlying dedication to the powerful notion that every child deserves a good education. Equal access to good schools is nothing less than the civil rights issue of our time, and public schools are still the best equipped institutions to handle this challenge. For the vast millions of students nationwide, public schools remain the primary means of upward mobility and a path to a better way of life. Public schools are still the backbone of our democracy.

In Long Beach we're proving that public schools can stand for excellence and equity, and that we deserve to be supported. To all who continue to assist us, I thank you for providing our children the lasting, precious gift of a good education, and I wish you a wonderful holiday season.

## Keller Would Close Under Consolidation Plan

Long Beach Unified School District staff proposed this week that the Board of Education close Keller Elementary School at the end of this school year, transferring the students to nearby Burcham K-8 School next fall. Keller would then temporarily accommodate students and staff from Newcomb K-8 School while Newcomb is completely rebuilt.

School district staff also recommended that Roosevelt students be transferred to Butler Middle School next school year while Roosevelt is completely rebuilt. Butler students would instead attend the brand new Nelson Middle School that is nearing completion at 20th Street and Cherry Avenue in Signal Hill.

The new Roosevelt campus is targeted for completion in January 2015. Meanwhile the Butler campus is being considered for re-use as

a small high school, though no formal recommendation has been made by staff to the school board.

No final action was taken by the school board during this week's public workshop that contained agenda items for information only. Final decisions on these matters may occur on either the Dec. 6 or Dec. 20 school board meetings.

The Newcomb, Roosevelt and Nelson projects are being funded with Measure K school bonds that local voters approved in 2008. Such funds can be used only for school construction and renovation. Among the reasons LBUSD is focusing on Newcomb is that the school is on the state's priority list of campuses that need to be rebuilt or retrofitted to meet modern seismic safety standards. Roosevelt is an aging campus (Continued on next page)



### JORDAN JAM —

Jordan High School students Steven Alvarez and Eduardo Chequez join classmates for a jam session at LBUSD's annual Band Spectacular at Cabrillo High School. Marching bands from local high schools presented their field shows and performed with the Long Beach City College Viking Show Band.

## Open Enrollment

Open enrollment in health benefits for Long Beach Unified School District employees continues through Nov. 30. An enrollment packet was mailed to each employee's home address. Learn more at [lbschools.net](http://lbschools.net) under Employee Benefits in the A-Z Index.

## Major Grant Boosts Latino Student Support

One of the nation's largest foundations, the Lumina Foundation, has awarded \$600,000 to support collaboration among the Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach City College and other partners as they work to increase the success of Latino students here.

LBCC earned the grant as part a major nationwide project funded by Lumina.

Under the grant, LBCC will focus many of its efforts on the Long Beach College Promise. Through the College Promise, LBUSD administrators and high school teachers work with college faculty and staff to create clear pathways for students to follow as they move from one education institution to another. These

## • Consolidation Plan

(Continued from first page)  
that originally opened in 1921.

Keller now has about 360 students in grades K-5, making it one of the smallest schools in the district. LBUSD staff continues to examine the consolidation of small schools to save money.

"Unfortunately, the state budget continues to worsen, and LBUSD must find additional ways to reduce costs and improve efficiency," LBUSD Superintendent Christopher J. Steinhauer said. He told the school board that districtwide enrollment has dropped by more than 14,000 students since 2002, requiring district planners to make sure that school facilities are being used wisely.

As part of staff's recommendation, students who live within the current Keller boundary will be offered the opportunity to continue attending Keller while it houses Newcomb K-8 students until Newcomb reopens in fall 2015. Fewer than 80 of Keller's students live in the Keller neighborhood. The remainder come from elsewhere in the school district. Because Keller is not at capacity, it can accommodate the larger Newcomb population, though the school district may need to temporarily add as many as eight portable classrooms to the Keller campus.

The latest recommendations are part of the school district's implementation of its Facility Master Plan, which was developed after more than a year of meetings and other collaboration with residents throughout the school district.

Learn more at [lbschools.net](http://lbschools.net). See Measure K Bond Program in the A-Z Index.

pathways prepare LBUSD high school graduates to succeed in college. College Promise students also are guaranteed a tuition-free semester at LBCC, along with preferred admission to Cal State Long Beach after completing certain requirements.

Reports show that the College Promise reduces the need for college-level remediation while increasing student persistence rates.

Latinos are the fastest-growing student population in America, and the grant is focused on the critical connection between their educational attainment and the future of the economy.

"If California is going to succeed and remain competitive, we must increase Latino graduation and transfer rates at our community colleges and universities," said LBCC President Eloy Ortiz Oakley. "Latinos make up the largest population of students at LBCC, and their success is critical to our local and state economies."

Under the national project, Lumina will provide a total of \$7.2 million over four years to 12 partnerships in 10 states with significant and growing Latino populations.

The Long Beach College Promise has been cited as a model education partnership by several education organizations and foundations.

## Music to Jim's Ears

The phone continues to ring steadily in Music Curriculum Leader Jim Petri's office as members of the public respond to the Long Beach Unified School District's request for musical instrument donations.

From an elderly woman who donated her beloved cello that she had played while attending middle school in Long Beach, to an offer of a 100-year-old violin and even a stray accordion, the instruments continue to accumulate to the tune of nearly 90 so far, including a few dozen gathered at a recent drop-off day for the public at the Teacher Resource Center.

There's still time to transform idle instruments into tax deductions before the end of the year. Instruments needed are violin, cello, flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet and trombone.

Monetary donations toward the cause also are being accepted by the nonprofit Long Beach Education Foundation. Donate at [lbschools.net/give](http://lbschools.net/give). Select the "Musical Instruments" designation in the dropdown menu to make a secure, online, tax deductible donation. Or make Jim's day by calling him at 997-8175 with your pledge of an instrument.

## • National Praise

(Continued from first page)  
that make Long Beach great. At Long Beach, it's all about the system... The five LBUSD school board members are all former educators who provide the district advice without being a barrier to key innovation. Similarly, teachers seem proactive about taking bold steps that will help students in the long-run. Unlike most districts in the country, LBUSD district leaders have come through the system with relatively little turnover. Steinhauer himself started out as an elementary school principal and then moved to the district staff before becoming superintendent in 2002. Long Beach also has the deep support of businesses, postsecondary partners, the mayor, and others...

"The board and teachers are treated as partners rather than obstacles to innovation. In order to ensure buy-in, they are brought in long before an initiative is about to take off. All stakeholders know that the district is not going to pursue the flavor of the month in school innovation. LBUSD has a clear vision and approach and, regardless of what the fiscal climate is, it pursues that approach with as much fidelity as possible. For example, as the district works to implement the districtwide strategy, Linked Learning, stakeholders are aware that this work dovetails with the district's previous smaller learning communities and college and career readiness initiatives..."

"The district is almost fanatical about data... The district not only collects in-depth student data, but also has mechanisms to gather teacher feedback which district staff use to support teachers and site leaders ..."

"Through various long-standing advisory committees, LBUSD creates trusting, honest and mutually beneficial relationships with the business, postsecondary and political communities in the region. These relationships are not about attending a meeting or writing a check. They are about creating opportunities for long-term active engagement in how education is delivered to students districtwide..."

"The district has redefined equity and access to a high-quality education by saying, we're not going to have a good school here or there where some students can get a high-quality education. Instead, we're going to have a high-quality system where all students benefit from this education regardless of the school they choose to attend..."

"Taking a page out of 'the Long Beach way' can provide huge benefits to students in other schools and districts across the nation."

## Retiree Donates \$10K

Former Long Beach Unified School District teacher Peter Tsamous donated \$10,000 to the Long Beach Education Foundation for visually impaired education, students with special needs, and homeless education.

### In Memoriam

**Earl "Spud" Higgins**  
former coach and teacher  
Oct. 26, 2011

### Community Meetings

**Keller's Proposed Closure**  
6:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 28  
Keller Auditorium  
7020 E. Brittain St.

**Newcomb's Reconstruction**  
6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 29  
Newcomb Auditorium  
3351 Val Verde Ave.

**Roosevelt's Reconstruction**  
6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 30  
Poly High School Auditorium  
1600 Atlantic Ave.

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](http://www.lbschools.net)

CHRISTOPHER J. STEINHAUSER  
Superintendent of Schools

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