



school bulletin

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

April 24, 2020

Jill Baker Named Superintendent

The Long Beach Unified School District Board of Education unanimously selected Jill Baker as superintendent of schools this month. She will succeed Christopher J. Steinhauser, who is retiring after 18 years as superintendent.

Baker, a Long Beach resident, will start as superintendent on Aug. 1. She has worked for the school district for nearly 28 years, first as a teacher, then as a principal and central office administrator. She is currently deputy superintendent of schools, overseeing leadership development, curriculum and instruction, early learning, and supervision and support of schools. She is well known by community members and employees for her encouraging presence and her longtime commitment to systematically improving achievement for all students.



Baker

“Dr. Baker is a key reason why our school system is considered nationally, and even internationally, to be a high-functioning organization,” Board of Education President Felton Williams said. “She is a thoughtful, strategic planner who has served our schools extremely well. On behalf of the school board, I congratulate Jill and thank her for accepting this challenging assignment.”

The school board will consider a formal contract for the new superintendent at a future board meeting.

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SIGN OF HOPE – A student peers out from his home to watch a parade of teachers drive their cars through the neighborhood during statewide school closures due to the coronavirus pandemic. Schools continue to provide meals and online learning. **Story on next page.**



Nonprofit L.B. CaLL to Merge with LBUSD

The Board of Directors of the nonprofit Long Beach Career-Linked Learning (Long Beach CaLL) has announced a new arrangement with the Long Beach Unified School District to help more young people develop personal and professional skills that contribute to their success in the workforce.

“After much board discussion, it became apparent that the best option for maximizing impact for students would be if CaLL’s ongoing function was made an internal component of the school district,” Long Beach CaLL Board Chair Cindy Bater said. “The board is excited about the stability this will bring to CaLL’s mission and looks forward to continuing its work and maintaining its strong partnerships. The arrangement may be different, but

the benefit to students and businesses alike will continue, if not improve.”

“At the forefront of all Long Beach CaLL board decisions is ensuring the best possible work-based learning opportunities are made available to Long Beach students,” stated an announcement from CaLL. “By embedding the functions of CaLL into the district, the Board of Directors is confident its mission will be better supported and it will maintain the stability needed to ensure lasting impact for thousands more students.”

All staff and functions of CaLL are transitioning to LBUSD’s Office of the Deputy Superintendent of Schools and its new Administrator of K-16 Collaborations & External Programs, Michelle Thomassian.

Thomassian was recently hired after the passing of CaLL’s prior executive director, Jean Egan. Upon the consent of the State Attorney General’s Office, CaLL will dissolve as a 501(c)(3) non-profit and function as an LBUSD program. The current commitment of CaLL board members will continue as they serve as an advisory council helping to ensure a seamless transition and support to students and business partners.

“LBUSD’s Linked Learning approach has had tremendous success in helping students graduate with the skills and confidence necessary to succeed in college, career and life. This integration of CaLL’s work is an exciting opportunity to increase students’ access to work-based learning experiences as well as their application of classroom knowledge to the real-world,” said Jill Baker, LBUSD’s deputy superintendent of schools.

Linked Learning pathways in schools combine challenging academics, demanding technical courses and work-based learning focused on an industry theme.

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CAMS Ranked No.1 High School in State

U.S News and World Report’s newest rankings this week listed the California Academy of Mathematics and Science as the top high school in California. CAMS is operated by the Long Beach Unified School District on the campus of Cal State Dominguez Hills.

“We’re so excited to be named the top high school in California,” CAMS Principal Wendy Poffenberger said. “This ranking is especially meaningful to us because 46 percent of our students are economically disadvantaged, and our minority student population is 93 percent. Our students, their families and our dedicated staff are beating the odds, and they deserve this special recognition.”

CAMS ranked 11th in the nation.

Also earning their place on the rankings were Avalon, Cabrillo, Jordan, Lakewood, McBride, Millikan, Poly, Renaissance and Wilson high schools. Alternative education schools Beach High School, Educational Partnership High School and Reid High School

were listed as well. View the full list at [usnews.com/education](https://www.usnews.com/education). Long Beach’s newest high school, Sato Academy of Mathematics and Science, was not yet ranked because the methodology used graduation data from 2017-18. At Sato, the Class of 2019 was the first group to graduate.

The U.S. News rankings include data on more than 24,000 public high schools in 50 states and the District of Columbia. Nearly 18,000 schools were ranked on six factors based on their performance on state assessments and how well they prepare students for college. The ranking methodology takes a holistic approach to evaluating schools, focusing on six factors: college readiness, reading and math proficiency, reading and math performance, underserved student performance, college curriculum breadth and graduation rates. “College readiness” is measured by participation and performance on Advanced Placement and IB exams.

• Supt. Baker

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Baker, 50, is the first woman selected as superintendent in the school district's 135-year history. She was chosen after a statewide search that included several community forums, advisory committee meetings, multiple interviews of candidates, and electronic surveying of constituents to determine which qualities they would like to see in their next superintendent.

"I am deeply honored to be selected as superintendent of such a high quality organization," Baker said. "Thank you to the Board of Education and to everyone in our communities who provided their input during the superintendent selection process. We're facing unprecedented challenges because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, but I so appreciate everyone who continues to support our students and their families. Please be assured that I am working closely with Superintendent Steinhäuser to ensure a smooth transition of leadership so that we can best support our school communities in the weeks and months ahead, and I look forward with all of my heart to the day we can gather again in our beloved schools and classrooms."

Steinhäuser's retirement was announced in December. His last official day on the job will be July 31.

Learn more by finding this article at lbschools.net.

• L.B. CaLL

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"The school district would like to thank CaLL's esteemed board members and their respective organizations for their years of service," Baker said. "We are excited to continue partnering in an advisory capacity as well as engaging additional organizations that share our dedication to the college and career readiness of Long Beach students."

Building off the success of the Long Beach College Promise, Long Beach CaLL launched in 2012 as an intermediary to support Long Beach students in college and career readiness. Over the course of its history, CaLL has served thousands of students and businesses. Business leaders have routinely praised CaLL services, citing the improvements to both morale and productivity. Over the last three years, CaLL has placed 239 high school students in internships, and more than 2,000 have participated in work-based learning activities.

Questions regarding ongoing services for students and business partnerships can be referred to Michelle Thomassian, administrator, K-16 Collaborations & External Programs, Long Beach CaLL at 997-8000, ext. 6495.

School Nurse of Year Nominations Due

The Long Beach School Nurses Association seeks nominations for School Nurse of the Year for 2019-20.

Each year, the association recognizes one special nurse for outstanding contributions to the health and well-being of students.

To obtain a nomination form, email Nancy Suzuki at nsuzuki@lbschools.net. The deadline for submission is 4:30 p.m. Friday, May 1.

'Signs of Hope' During Global Pandemic

The news from the Long Beach Unified School District arrived in a jarring email and text message at mid-day on Friday the 13th in March of 2020. Schools would close until at least April 20 due to the global coronavirus pandemic. The school closures were then extended to May 3, and then again to the end of the school year in June as the number of illnesses and deaths nationwide continued to climb at an alarming rate.

The school district, being 135 years old, was no stranger to adversity. The Spanish Flu had shut down schools here a hundred years ago. The 1933 Long Beach earthquake destroyed numerous school structures, their unreinforced masonry crumbling when tectonic stresses triggered the Newport-Inglewood Fault. Historians observed that because the 1933 earthquake struck when school was out, "the physical shell of a school system had received a mortal blow, but the living heart of it had been spared – its children."

That "living heart" also has been spared during the 2020 pandemic. Children have been least affected by symptoms of the virus, which has been most harmful to the elderly, particularly people with underlying health conditions.

But the pandemic began taking a financial and psychological toll throughout society. The stock market initially crashed. Tens of millions of people nationwide filed for unemployment benefits. Store shelves emptied, and basic items like toilet paper and face masks oddly became treasured commodities. Businesses closed. Weddings, funerals, graduations and church services were canceled.

The school district, meanwhile, tried to serve its students as best it could during the

closure period. The Board of Education held meetings via videoconference and YouTube livestreaming, with public testimony supplied via emails that were read aloud by staff.

By mid-April, schools here had provided children with more than a quarter million meals to go, an important feat in a school system where two-thirds of students qualify for free lunches because their families cannot afford them.

Soon, the school district began helping to provide food for the city's homeless shelters. Cabrillo and Jordan high schools became sites for drive-through coronavirus testing, and Lindsey Academy served as a temporary fire house. Students from McBride and Poly high schools began making protective face shields using 3-D printers, with Molina Healthcare contributing funds to the cause.

Within days of the closure, the school district offered a Home Learning Opportunities website providing lessons specific to individual schools and teachers. Administrators and teachers distributed encouraging videos to families, along with more than 11,000 Chromebook computer tablets and information on how to access low-cost Internet at home.

But students and teachers soon missed their in-person interactions, so much so that some schools organized parades, with teachers driving their cars through neighborhoods as beaming students and parents cheered them on from the safe confines of their homes. At 8:20 p.m. on Fridays (20:20 in military time), high schools lighted their fields and buildings as a salute to the Class of 2020.

Amid all this, the Board of Education announced (via virtual meeting) that they had selected longtime LBUSD educator Jill Baker to succeed retiring Superintendent Christopher J. Steinhäuser. The next day, the front page of the Long Beach Press-Telegram contained the headline "LB Unified Names Chief."

Juxtaposed on the same front page was a story about virus infection rates and hospitalizations beginning to level off. That headline read, "Signs of Hope Among Deaths."

Names in the News

Poly High School students earned top honors with their video entries in C-SPAN's national StudentCam Competition, which receives thousands of videos submitted from students throughout the nation. **Hamid Torabzadeh, Katherine Padilla and Pia Hao** won first prize for their video, "Vision 2020: Restoring the Integrity of American Democracy." **Kyra Kawamura and Alexa Bryson** won second prize for "Opportunity for All." **Maya Randolph** won third prize for "Justice for All." Earning honorable mention were **President Morgan-Barnes** with "Robots vs. Our Future;" **Solene Millsap and Lillian Dailey** for "The Homeless Epidemic;" and **Diana Michaelson and Visud Chang** for "More Than Meets the Eye: A Look at the Affordable Housing Crisis." Students receive \$3,000 cash for first prize, \$1,500 for second, \$750 for third, and \$250 for honorable mention. Find the videos at studentcam.org.

Wilson High School senior **Jason Sam** won first place and \$500 in the Fall Career and Technical Education Conference Cover Contest, in which students submit designs for the cover of the written program for the event. Fellow Wilson senior **Tyler Reed** earned honorable mention. Both are students of 2D art and design teacher **Roxan Rendon**.

In Memoriam

Joanne Van Cleave
former teacher
February 28, 2020

Barbara L. Lee
former school support secretary
March 11, 2020

Franklin R. Goodman
former teacher
March 20, 2020

Latach Hayes
instructional aide, Head Start Services
March 30, 2020

Patricia H. Brown
teacher, Avalon
April 3, 2020

SCHOOL BULLETIN

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CHRISTOPHER J. STEINHAUSER
Superintendent of Schools

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