



school bulletin

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

December 19, 2003



Photo by Steven Georges/Press-Telegram

WORLD CHAMPION--Joan Van Blom, LBUSD's physical education curriculum leader and a two-time Olympic silver medal winner in single sculls, recently took first place in her age bracket in the European Concept 2 Open Championship in Paris. Rowing the equivalent of 2,000 meters on the ergometer machine against 24 top international competitors, Van Blom finished in 7:30.8, five seconds ahead of the field.

Report Warns of Possible Budget Shortfall

For the first time, the Long Beach Unified School District is reporting that it may not have enough funds to meet its reserve requirements through the end of the school year. The Board of Education this week received its first interim financial report for 2003-04. The report is an early warning system that shows the district's reserves have dipped below the legally required 1 percent of expenses, despite more than \$40 million in cuts over the past three years.

"In the history of these interim reports, the district has never issued a qualified report, which means we may not be able to meet our financial obligations," said Larry Bozanich, financial services officer.

The district has stabilized most expenses, including salaries, but it faces skyrocketing costs for employee health plans and workers compensation. The report was submitted to the County Superintendent on Wednesday.

Health Plan Open Enrollment Starts for 4,800

New health benefit plans were unanimously approved this week by the Board of Education for classified and non-represented employees to reduce costs while maintaining high quality medical services. Open enrollment for these employees starts Monday, December 22 and ends midnight, Friday, January 16.

Any of these employees wanting to add an eligible dependent or change dental or health plans may do so during open enrollment. Important changes in coverage take effect February 1.

In addition to 3,400 classified employees, approximately 350 managers, 230 counselors and psychologists, 525 non-represented employees and 335 retirees are eligible to receive the same health benefits, bringing the total number of district employees receiving these benefits to more than 4,800.

Affected employees received information packets on open enrollment this week, including examples of health plan changes and answers to frequently asked questions. These documents are available on the district's website home page at www.lbusd.k12.ca.us (click on the headline "Health Plan Open Enrollment Starts for 4,800"). Eligible employees who have not yet received the information should contact Risk Management at 997-8236 or riskmanagement@lbusd.k12.ca.us.

Open enrollment for teachers will begin when the Teachers Association of Long Beach and the school district reach a bargaining agreement.

Classified and non-represented employees will see several changes and new options under the agreement OK'd by the California School Employees Association, Chapter 2.

CCN EPO will replace Blue Shield HMO and PacificCare. Employees in either of these plans will automatically be enrolled in CCN EPO unless they specify Blue Shield PPO,

CCN PPO or Kaiser during open enrollment. CCN EPO includes a \$5 office visit co-pay, unlimited lifetime maximum coverage, and no annual deductible cost.

CCN PPO deductible is \$150/\$300 per year and the lifetime maximum coverage is \$2 million.

Blue Shield PPO deductible increases to \$250/\$500 per year. The lifetime maximum coverage is \$1 million.

Kaiser prescription drug co-payment increases to \$5 per prescription. Chiropractic coverage is added.

If you are currently enrolled in Blue Shield PPO or Kaiser and wish to remain in your current plan, you do not need to re-enroll.

During open enrollment, classified and non-represented employees may enroll online at www.superioradministrators.com until midnight Friday, January 16 or submit enrollment forms to Risk Management by 4:30 p.m. January 16. Site secretaries have the forms. The online enrollment will be up and running December 22.

Two informational meetings are scheduled to help employees make their decisions. The first meeting is 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 7 in the Millikan High School Auditorium. The second meeting is 4 to 6 p.m. Thursday, January 8 in the Poly High School Auditorium.

Soon after open enrollment, employees will learn how to enroll in a flexible spending account called a 125 Plan. This plan saves employees money by allowing them to withhold pre-tax dollars to cover unreimbursed medical and dependent day care expenses.

Employees with questions about the health plan changes should contact Superior Benefits, which is the district's plan administrator, at (888) 439-9090 or Risk Management at either 997-8236 or riskmanagement@lbusd.k12.ca.us. The district and Superior Benefits will respond within two working days.

ALBEM Gets Benefits

The Association of Long Beach Educational Managers thanked the Board of Education this week for voting to maintain high quality health benefits for its members during lean times.

"We've been monitoring the budget situation closely," ALBEM President Ruth Ashley said at the Board of Education's regular meeting. "The reality is that we cannot continue business as usual. We know that you're working hard to keep cuts away from the classroom. We support those efforts."

She pointed out that recent negotiations with classified employees have resulted in some of the best health benefits in the state.

LBUSD employees will still pay no monthly out-of-pocket premiums for health care. Only 4 percent of large employers nationwide provide health coverage at no premium or payroll deduction cost to employees.

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Kids Step to Fitness

Thousands of local students are receiving pedometers to help them keep track of their physical activity, set goals and stay fit. The small stop-watch-like gadget is worn on the belt to count the number of steps taken daily.

The school district's health and physical education office has distributed more than 18,000 of the devices to schools, with another 24,000 coming soon. The distribution will reach all middle and high school students.

The pedometers come with lessons on nutrition and exercise in P.E. classes, said Joan Van Blom, health and P.E. curriculum leader.

"What I'd really students to do is examine that bag of Cheetos, count the calories, then count the number of steps they'd have to take to burn those calories," Van Blom said. "The idea is not to grade students on how far they go. We want students to self-report accurately and plan how to improve."

As part of a \$1 million Nutrition and Physical Activity Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the pedometers have the imprint, "Eat 5 A Day And Be Active," encouraging consumption of five fruit and vegetable servings each day. The exercise goal is to reach 10,000 steps each day. Depending on one's stride length, that's about four miles.

Recent Promotions

The following classified employees recently received promotions:

Sam Dimas, area custodial manager, Operations;

Veronica George, food service supervisor I, Prisk;

Lynnae Hitchcock, Kids Club lead assistant, Bixby;

Angel Thomas-Hall, intermediate food service worker, Addams.

Dates to Remember

January

1	New Year's Day
1-3	Japanese New Year Festivities
5	George Washington Carver Day
6	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "I Have a Dream: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," Grades 9-12 ed.tv 8
7	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00; 8 - 10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Writing Poetry--Adventures in Poetry," Grades 3-6, ed.tv 8
9	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "The Boyhood of Martin Luther King, Jr.," Grades 4-6, ed.tv 8
13	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "I Have a Dream: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.," Grades 6-8, ed.tv 8
14	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00-- "Martin Luther King, Jr./Black History Month," Grades K-5, ed.tv 8
15	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Everyday Creativity," Grades 4-12, ed.tv 8
16	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "What Liberty and Justice Mean," Grade 5, ed.tv 8
18	World Religion Day
19	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
20	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Silversmith of Williamsburg," Grade 5, ed.tv 8
21	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00-- "Benjamin Franklin," Grades 2-8, ed.tv 8
22	Chinese New Year
22	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Dare to Dream," Grade 9, ed.tv 8
23	10:00, 10:45, 11:25, 12:20-- "First Moon, Celebration of the Chinese New Year," Grades 6-12, ed.tv 8
27	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Preventing Conflicts & Violence," Grades 6-12, ed.tv 8
28	National School Nurse Day
28	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00-- "The Wright Brothers," Grades 3-8, ed.tv 8
29	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "School Bus Safety," Grades 3-5, ed.tv 8
30	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Staying Out of Trouble with Your Friends (Duffy's Story)," Grades 3-4, ed.tv 8



LAST STOP--Bus driver David Miller took a final field trip to the Long Beach Aquarium recently with Colin Powell Academy students. The 35-year employee--who has logged 700,000 miles transporting 1.5 million students from every school in the district--is retiring this month. "We serve some of the greatest kids in the world," he said.

Ribbon Nominee

The California Academy for Mathematics and Science (CAMS) was nominated this month by the California Department of Education to become a national 2004 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School.

CAMS was one of only 35 outstanding California schools nominated for this top national honor.

Nomination for the award was based on test scores--growth and achievement in reading and math over three years--including results for all significant subgroups.

CAMS staff will now complete a detailed application to the U.S. Department of Education. Winners will be announced next year by U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige.

Job Opportunities

Applications are now being accepted at the Personnel Commission, 999 Atlantic Ave., third floor, for administrative secretary, assistant school safety and emergency preparedness director and fleet maintenance supervisor.

"Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence."
--Robert Frost

SCHOOL BULLETIN

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STAR Schools Shine

Elementary STAR Awards for large student achievement gains this week celebrated the fifth and best year yet with 17 schools receiving the award, the highest number ever to qualify.

Two schools received the STAR award for the third consecutive year: Lowell and Tucker.

Seven schools were honored for the second year in a row: Burroughs, Garfield, International, Roosevelt, Stevenson, Sutter and Whittier.

Eight schools were first-year recipients: Buffum, Edison, Kettering, King-Edison, Longfellow, Mann, Muir and Webster.

To receive the STAR (student Success terrific Teaching Academic Results) Award, a school must

- triple its API and each sub-group growth target,
- show English Learner positive growth toward proficiency on the California Standards Tests (CST),
- have more students reach grade level proficiency in their reading benchmark and math facts than the year before, and
- make significant gains in reducing its achievement gap.

WASC Approval

Renaissance Career Academy achieved an "Interim" term of accreditation from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the highest accreditation possible following the initial visit of the accreditation team.

The term of the accreditation runs through June 30, 2006. Before then, the school will prepare for a full six-year accreditation by completing a self-study and accreditation review. The school will respond to the recommendations of the visiting committee and have key staff attend training sessions that explain the self-study process and accreditation criteria.

Pro-Growth Meeting

An informational meeting about the Professional Growth Requirement process will be held Wednesday, January 14, at 4:15 p.m. in the Longfellow Elementary School Auditorium. Certified employees with a California Single Subject or Multiple Subject Professional Clear Credential may attend this meeting for information about professional growth hours, district procedures and professional growth advisers. For information, call ext. 2901 or the TALB Office at 426-6433.

• Budget

(Continued from front page)
spending from its general fund, including overtime expenses. Employees are curtailing all travel and conference expenses unless they use categorical funds such as federal and state grants. A freeze on equipment purchases and other deferrable expenses continues. The district hopes to avert class-size increases, layoffs and other damaging cuts that would impair the education of children.

Other California school districts are likely to file similar qualified financial reports. San Diego schools face up to \$90 million in cuts. Los Angeles schools face cuts of hundreds of millions of dollars.