



school bulletin

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

July 16, 2004

Teacher Honored for Groundwater Science

Susan Garcia, seventh grade science teacher at Powell Academy and former professional hydrogeologist, was recently honored for her outstanding efforts to bring alive the science of groundwater for young students.

Garcia was presented the Distinguished Service Award from the Water Replenishment District of Southern California. She involved students in essay and poster contests about the water cycle, brought in water experts for school presentations and organized a field trip to a water treatment plant, a desalination facility and a spreading ground for replenishing groundwater.

For 14 years Garcia worked as a hydrogeologist, making contaminant assessments of property and proposing remediation efforts for businesses and organizations such as UPS and NASA. After being laid off following a downturn in business, she assessed her corporate skills in educating and training clients and put them to use in a north Long Beach classroom. With five years experience at Powell, she remains active in hydrogeology. She is a state registered geologist and certified hydrogeologist and serves as a board member of the Groundwater Resources Association of California.

She believes teaching middle school students gives her maximum opportunity to affect their lives for the better.

"They are at an age where they aren't contaminated by things around them that can pull them back from achieving--gangs for example," she said. "A lot of students don't see the opportunities out there, except what's right around them in their neighborhood, and obviously there is so much more. I like to expose them to things and ideas they may not have even considered--plant some seeds, do something that can move them in the right direction.

"Adolescents want to be young adults, and if I can show them a positive way to do that, it can make a big difference," Garcia said. "I want to see if, through my actions, I can change their actions."

The subject of groundwater lends itself to showing young students how their own actions in the present can affect their future.

"Whatever happens on the surface impacts what happens to the groundwater, now and in the future," she said. "Just because we're

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Garcia

O'Connell Backs New High School Reforms

Jack O'Connell, State Superintendent of Public Instruction and author of the landmark legislation that made the largest reduction of elementary school class size in California history, has his eyes on high schools.

"We're starting to see real progress (in elementary and middle schools)," he told an audience of 300 this week at a meeting of the Long Beach Rotary Club aboard the Queen Mary.

"Test scores have increased for five years in a row," he said, citing steady progress on state tests, including the California English Language Development Test.

"We have more students reading at grade level in the State of California than ever before," he said.

Most schools, 78 percent, met his challenge of improving scores at least 5 percent last year.

He also reported a 6 percent increase in SAT scores and something he's most proud of--4 percent more students taking it.

More schools are attaining the goal of 800 on the state Academic Performance Index. At the elementary school level two years ago, 20 percent hit 800. Last year 26 percent did. In middle schools 13 percent hit 800 two years ago. Last year 16 percent did. In high schools only 4 percent hit 800 two years ago. Last year 7 percent did.

"To me, that's unacceptably low," O'Connell said of the high school numbers.

He expressed gratitude for passage of the largest state school bond measure in the history of the U.S. and noted that a record number of local school bonds have also passed recently--more than 85 percent.

Despite these successes, the state must now focus on reform of the high school system, he said. With the California High School Exit

Exam looming as a graduation requirement in 2006, there's an urgent need to increase high school achievement.

To accomplish this, he called for passage of legislation that would make it easier to align high school texts with standards and increase training for high school administrators, including principals.

"I have yet to go to a great school that did not have a great principal," he said.

He cited one high school that had raised its standards and required all students to take tougher academic courses. That school "had its college admission rates go off the charts," he said.

"Our economy depends upon a well trained workforce. Students must have academic skills, analysis skills, computer skills, career and technical skills," O'Connell said.

He pledged to reduce the duplicative and unnecessary paperwork burden placed on local school districts by the State Department of Education. With only 180 school days, school districts must respond to 154 requests from SDE--almost one a day.

"We won't ask for the gender and ethnicity of kids 40 times," he said. "We're eliminating 10 percent of our forms this year and another 7 percent in January. Our forms will ask 1,075 fewer questions."

O'Connell believes in accountability, accessibility, openness, smaller classes, comprehensive testing and up-to-date facilities and wants to see progress in all these areas.

He expects a status quo budget for K-12 public schools with some dollars for new students in districts with increasing enrollment. Enrollment in the Long Beach Unified School District is not expected to increase this year.

Board Members Get Crash Course in Reform

Two members of the Long Beach Unified School District Board of Education have been picked to take part in a major nationwide effort funded by Los Angeles-based philanthropist Eli Broad to reform urban schools.

Board Members Jon Meyer and Felton Williams will be brought to Park City, Utah for the unique program bringing together school board members from 10 urban districts July 24 through 30 for an intense crash program in reform.

"Long Beach is a very important urban school district, and success there can inspire success elsewhere in America," Broad said.

"I asked these two members of the Long Beach Board of Education to come to the Institute because they care about public education, and I know they can be among the leaders of this nationwide effort to improve the way public schools are governed," Broad said.

All expenses for the training are paid by The Broad Institute.

"This is a great opportunity," said Meyer, a

long-time teacher and principal who was elected to the school board last year. "We're totally committed to steady improvement in student achievement. This year we're moving into major high school reforms after enjoying considerable success in elementary and middle schools."

"Every student can and must learn," said Williams, newest Long Beach school board member who earned his Ph.D. at Claremont University studying under renowned economist Peter Drucker. "Our schools won the Broad Prize for Urban Education, but we still have work to do to close the achievement gap. It's imperative that we build on our success, learn all we can, and share what works."

Williams, who replaces retiring Board President Bobbie Smith, will be installed as a new board member on Monday, July 19.

Meyer and Williams will join new board members from Atlanta, Denver, Cleveland, Memphis, Providence, Charlotte, Wichita,

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• Crash Course

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Anchorage and Christina (Delaware), for the program.

The Broad Institute for School Boards is a national training and support program for newly elected and newly appointed urban school board members. Each summer, the Institute conducts an intensive one-week residential learning experience modeled after Harvard University's program for new mayors and new members of Congress. The Institute team is led by Don McAdams, former board president of the Houston Independent School District and a nationally recognized expert on school boards.

This year's Institute for School Boards will mark the third time Broad has put new school board members from 10 urban districts through the program designed to "teach new board members early on how to be effective policy and reform leaders – in short, how to stay focused on student achievement," Broad said.

There is reason for optimism that the reform effort is taking hold.

"This is the third class of new board members we have put through this intense training, and already we're seeing some results," Broad said. "In more than a dozen urban districts around the country, the focus on student achievement is a little sharper and governance for reform is a little more effective. And we have just begun."

McAdams, founder of the Center for Reform of School Systems and the managing director of The Broad Institute for School Boards, pointed to the continuing achievement gap as evidence that the quality of urban school boards must improve. Noting a study by the Education Trust, McAdams said in school districts where student achievement is the intense focus, the achievement gap is shrinking.

McAdams pointed to the Education Trust report which shows:

- The achievement gap between white and Latino students in 4th grade reading in Arizona would shrink by almost two-thirds if Arizona's Latino 4th graders performed as well in reading as Latinos in New Jersey do.

- The gap between whites and Hispanics in California in 8th grade in math would shrink by half if California's Latino 8th graders performed as well in math as Latinos in Texas do.

"Clearly, this notion that poor and minority kids cannot be expected to perform as well as more affluent white kids is wrong," McAdams said. "The pockets of progress we see around the country in closing the achievement gap prove it."

The Job Board

- Cubberley School is interviewing applicants for a Grade 7 GATE science/health position. For information, call Michael Navia, principal, at ext. 3600, or Luana Wesley, vice principal, at ext. 4610.

- Bancroft Middle School is looking for teachers for two positions: Excel English, grade 7 and Excel Science, grade 6. Interested candidates should be credentialed in the content area of either English or Science and be familiar with how to differentiate instruction for gifted and accelerated students. Contact Deborah Stark, principal at 425-7461 or ext. 3500, or dstark@lbusd.k12.ca.us.

Degree Gap Widens

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the income gap is widening between the educated and uneducated. An advanced degree is more valuable than ever before.

M.A.--A college graduate with a master's degree now earns 2.75 times as much as a high school graduate (Thirty years ago it was 2.2).

B.A.--A college graduate with a bachelor's degree now earns 1.9 times as much as a high school graduate (It was 1.6).

A.A.--A community college graduate with an associate's degree now earns 1.2 times as much as a high school graduate (It was 1.1).

0--A high school dropout now earns less than half as much as a high school graduate (It was two-thirds as much 30 years ago).

Recent Promotions

The following classified employees recently received promotions:

Neri Deguzman, computer electronics technician, Information Services;

Lidia Flores, Healthy Start assistant-bilingual Spanish;

Veronica Plascencia, elementary school office supervisor, Signal Hill.

In Memoriam

Ruth Kashishian
former elementary music teacher
May 3, 2004

Edna Kupper
former social worker
June 3, 2004

Jacqueline Hubbard
intermediate office assistant, DeMille
June 26, 2004

Alex Newman
college aide, Emerson
July 3, 2004

Ruth Sarson
former principal
July 10, 2004

Kathy Perez
senior accounting assistant, Accounting
July 13, 2004

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.lbusd.k12.ca.us

CHRISTOPHER J. STEINHAUSER
Superintendent of Schools

BOARD OF EDUCATION

BOBBIE SMITH, President
MARY STANTON, Vice President
JAMES CHOURA, Member
SUJA LOWENTHAL, Member
JON MEYER, Member
CHARISSA GOGGIN, Student Member



REPORTING FROM ILLINOIS--Lot Tan, LBUSD's "ed.news" and "ed.sports" veteran, is the newest reporter at WREX TV, an NBC affiliate in Rockford, Illinois.

• Water Award

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temporarily using the water now doesn't mean we should destroy things that might have a big impact on future groundwater. Students can realize that everything is interrelated and that small changes can have big consequences. With groundwater--and with life--I want them to be able to make a benefit/cost analysis, in order to understand consequences and be equipped to make informed decisions."

Job Opportunities

Applications are now being accepted at the Personnel Commission, 999 Atlantic Ave., third floor, for human resources supervisor, instructional aide-alternative schools, instructional aide-alternative schools bilingual Khmer, instructional aide-alternative schools bilingual Spanish, student store operator and supervisor-autism services.

Schools Save Energy

The Long Beach Unified School District's energy education program has produced first year savings of approximately \$1.4 million.

Energy managers reviewed school sites for conservation and found many ways to save dollars without adversely affecting instruction.

The energy savings effort encourages:

- adoption of energy-related campus policies and guidelines,
- use of energy audit forms to identify energy waste and areas for improvement,
- checking and monitoring gas, electric, water and sewer meters regularly,
- using web-based tools to track energy consumption, and other energy conservation measures.

Retirement Events

Honoree	Date	Contact
Tomio Nishimura	July 28	Fran Carlson ext. 7565 Shirley Chiavetta ext. 8489
Peg Boortz	Aug. 13	Ann Weiman (714) 891-6135