



school bulletin

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September 24, 2004

Teachers of the Year Give Students Their Best

Three outstanding Long Beach Unified School District teachers have been selected as 2005 Teachers of the Year. Sylvia Padilla teaches kindergarten at Henry Elementary School; Laura Angell teaches fourth grade at Addams Elementary School; and Stephen Dublin teaches economics and government at Millikan High School.

They are guests today along with top teachers from throughout Los Angeles County at an awards luncheon at the Hilton Universal City. The Board of Education will honor them at an upcoming meeting.

Sylvia Padilla's outstanding teaching in the two-way bilingual immersion program at Henry recently earned her recognition as 2003 California Association of Bilingual Education Teacher of the Year.

She credits her father as her first and most important teacher. He showed her the importance of attentiveness. She recalls listening to Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* with him, while he called her attention to the smallest details.

"Listen to the castanets," he would say. "No one would know that they are there. The beauty of art is found in the simplest details."

She considers teaching an art form and pays great attention to detail to reach and help students excel.

"I look for those details and find the strength each child brings," Padilla said. "I build on that strength and help each child unlock the knowledge every child must gain to become a successful reader."

"I teach with purpose, but also with deep awareness that my lessons may fail--yet the best opportunities to learn may be in a child's question or in another child's confusion," she said.

Each day she uses frequent assessments to keep aware of her students' changing needs and adjust her instruction.

She checks for understanding through active group participation or individually during transition times such as lining up for recess or dismissal.

"These quick glimpses into their understanding allow me to focus on the skills and objectives learned every day. Children take responsibility for their learning.

Their patterns of performance and understanding emerge, allowing me to evaluate my daily teaching."

For Padilla, it's all a part of making sure that she offers students the opportunity to do their best. She has high expectations for her own work.

"High standards mean that I assess and reflect daily on my teaching and plan according to the outcomes," she said. "I keep learning because I am never satisfied (and) I share what I have learned with others."

On the first day of school in Laura Angell's classroom, students hold a mock funeral that is essential for their learning.

"The first lesson is called the 'I Can't' funeral," Angell said. "Students write down all the

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Padilla



Angell



Dublin

CAMS Wins National Blue Ribbon Award

The California Academy of Mathematics and Science this week was named a 2004 No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. CAMS was one of only 32 public high schools in the U.S. to receive this top national honor.

"The Blue Ribbon Award is a watershed award," said principal Kathy Clark. "It validates a decade of hard work in establishing this school and the continuing excellent work of students, teachers and staff."

CAMS won the award in the category of schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds. To qualify, they must show dramatic improvement in student performance. CAMS could also have been nominated in the category of schools whose students, regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent on state tests.

CAMS serves many underrepresented groups. Its students are often the first in their families to graduate from high school, to earn college admission, to win a scholarship--many of them earning full rides to top colleges and universities. More than 40 percent of CAMS students qualify for free or reduced price lunches because they come from low income families.

But their performance is first rate--among the best of the best. In head-to-head competition with top schools in California, CAMS has one of the highest rates of admission to Stanford and UC campuses.

Virtually all CAMS graduates go on to college. Most pursue math or science--disciplines that have traditionally been underrepresented among women and some minority groups.

High Schools Exceed State, National Goals

Each of the Long Beach Unified School District's large, comprehensive high schools -- Cabrillo, Jordan, Lakewood, Millikan, Polytechnic and Wilson -- recently met and exceeded their state Academic Performance Index targets and their national No Child Left Behind targets for yearly progress.

"I'm happy to say that the high schools have done a phenomenal job," said Christopher J. Steinhauser, superintendent of schools. "They have moved mountains."

The high schools are implementing several reforms to boost learning and increase college readiness. These initiatives include extra help in math and reading for students who need it, extensive assistance with college entrance exam preparation, more rigorous graduation requirements, more participation in honors and Advanced Placement classes and exams, smaller learning communities within large high schools, more counseling assistance and other steps to help students pass the California High School Exit Exam.

Five Schools Share \$7.8 Million Federal Grant

The Long Beach Unified School District will receive a \$7.8 million three-year grant to support arts and academic achievement in the middle grades and beyond. U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige announced the grant Tuesday as part of \$108 million in No Child Left Behind grants to be shared by magnet schools in 50 school districts nationwide.

The Long Beach grant will benefit Butler K-8 School, Hill Classical Middle School, Hudson K-8 School, Stephens Middle School and Renaissance High School for the Arts.

These magnet schools offer a special curriculum capable of attracting substantial numbers of students.

Butler will upgrade its visual and performing arts magnet, adding new technology and enhancing dance, theater and arts instruction. An electronic piano lab and digital editing class will be added. Butler's magnet will prepare middle school students for nearby

Renaissance High School for the Arts.

Hill Classical Middle School will enhance its existing classical school by adding a computer lab and more electives such as intensive algebra, Spanish, French, speech/debate, psychology, dance and advanced art.

Hudson will offer International Baccalaureate, nationally recognized coursework that includes English, Spanish, social studies, math, arts, science and technology. The school plans to upgrade its computer lab, increase music offerings and offer field trips that boost learning in all subjects. Graduating students will be prepared to enter International Baccalaureate at Jordan High School.

Stephens Middle School's performing arts magnet will extend its school day to include more academic electives and orchestra, theater arts, video art and animation, ballet and dance.

Renaissance High School for the Arts will

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AP, Honors Courses Enroll More Students

Enrollment in high school advanced placement and honors classes in the Long Beach Unified School District is increasing rapidly. This fall, local high schools are offering more AP classes than ever before. Students are signing up in record numbers. More than 14,000 of the 26,000 students now attending high school here have completed or are taking one or more AP or honors courses.

AP enrollment increased by 1,700 students this year. Enrollment in honors classes increased by 700 students.

In some local schools, nearly 40 percent of the students are now taking AP classes—a record high.

With the help of the new AP Bridge assistance, first-time AP students are learning how to succeed in challenging AP courses. More students are taking and passing the difficult AP courses and AP exams than ever before to earn college credit while still in high school. As a result, more students are also earning college admission and winning academic scholarships. Last June, members of the Class of 2004 won more than \$20 million in academic scholarships, the most earned in any single year during the past decade.

Retirement Event

Honoree	Date	Contact
Linda Midgett	Oct. 8	Gayle Mashburn ext. 6121

Dates to Remember

October	Character Education Month
	Computer Learning Month
	Disabilities Employment Awareness Month
	Filipino American History Month
	Crime Prevention Month
1	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Getting to School Safely is Your Job," Grades K-3, ed.tv 8
3-9	Fire Prevention Week
5	Back to School Night--Middle School
5	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Columbus," Grades 3-5, ed.tv 8
6	Back to School Night--High School
6	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00-- "Christopher Columbus," Grades 2-8, ed.tv 8
7	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "School Bus Safety," Grades 3-6, ed.tv 8
8	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Study Skills: Take That Test," Grades 4-8, ed.tv 8
10-16	National Metric Week
11	Columbus Day/Discoverers' Day
12	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "The Columbus Controversy" (Columbus Day), Grades 7-12, ed.tv 8
14	National Community Education Day
14	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Riding Your School Bus Safely," Grades 6-12, ed.tv 8
15	Ramadan, First Day
15	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "First Tuesday," Grade 12, ed.tv 8
17-23	National School Bus Safety Week
19	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "You Can Refuse," Grades 5-8, ed.tv 8
20	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00-- "Harriet Tubman," Grades 3-8, ed.tv 8
21	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Beginning Responsibility: Learning to be a Good Sport," Grades K-3, ed.tv 8
22	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Shape Hunting: Circles, Triangles, Rectangles, Squares," Grades K-3, ed.tv 8
23-31	Red Ribbon Celebration
23	Make a Difference Day
24	United Nations Day
26	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Library World," Grades 7-8, ed.tv 8
27	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00-- "Halloween," Grades K-4, ed.tv 8
28	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Going to School is Your Job," Grades K-3, ed.tv 8
29	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30-- "Operation School Bus Safety: Be Cool, Follow the Rules," Grades K-2, ed.tv 8
31	Halloween
31	Standard Time Day (set clocks back)

• Teachers Make Extraordinary Efforts

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things they believe they can't do. After they have completed their list, they are instructed to rip it up and promise to replace the 'I Can't' with 'I Can, I'll Try, I Will!' Their signatures on the 'I Can't' headstone affirm their commitment. The headstone remains in a prominent place in the classroom throughout the year."

She realized the value of her exhaustive lesson preparation when a student wrote to thank her.

"Previous teachers had told her to 'just keep trying' when she didn't understand something," Angell said. "She said I was the only one who re-explained the steps until she understood the concept. I have spent literally hundreds of hours meticulously scripting out text and breaking down concepts into kid-friendly jargon so my students can see a clear progression from one step to another.

"Her letter brought tears to my eyes. It showed me that my efforts and time had been well spent. It gave me the inspiration to continue doing this time-consuming task so that all my students could acquire the skills necessary to be world-class competitors."

Angell's efforts have resulted in higher standardized test results. In all areas, her students outperformed district averages on the 2003-04 California Content Standards Test.

"My students are also assessed on a daily, weekly and monthly basis," she said. "I know how my students are doing at all times and tailor my instruction to match the needs of the class."

A remarkable endorsement of her teaching skill came from the parent of a former student. The mother had been critical of Angell's high expectations for her daughter, but last year had asked for her son to be placed in her class.

"During the parent conference, she told me her daughter's success in middle school was a direct result of my instruction and high expectations," Angell said. "She said the skills and discipline I taught her daughter in fourth and fifth grade enabled her to be the honor student she is today."

Angell's dedication to students includes starting an after-school homework club and using her vacation time to teach an intersession course. She is totally committed to her students' growth.

"The day I stop caring so passionately will be the day I give up teaching," she said.

For Stephen Dublin, the best way to learn is by doing. He simulates all key aspects of economics and government in his classes.

"From a 20-minute simulation teaching the concept of 'opportunity costs' to a three-week

presidential election simulation to a nine-week international negotiations simulation, I train and allow my students to be responsible for their own learning."

He considers a student's comment that he made a difficult subject easy as a supreme compliment. It's one of his classroom goals.

"If students are engaged, they will learn," said Dublin. "I really enjoy performing in front of my students. I sing. I dance. I act. But that only partially describes why my class is fun."

For years he has required community service for his students, long before the district made it a graduation requirement. His students have been honored twice by the American Red Cross for their work. The City of Long Beach and the County of Los Angeles recognized his students for outstanding work in local and national elections.

"A very important role of a teacher is helping students realize the significant role they have in serving their community and helping others to take action," he said.

To maximize student responsibility for learning, Dublin wrote a proposal four years ago to establish the PEACE Academy at Millikan. Now in its third year, PEACE Academy brings together 400 students and 14 teachers who value and practice community service, mentoring, involvement in real-world problem solving, character education and ethical behavior.

"Working with this group of talented, dedicated and enthusiastic teachers has rejuvenated me," he said. "I feel very blessed. After 31 years of teaching, I am doing my best work.

A former student once commented to him, "You care more about our grades than we do."

• Magnet Grant

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expand to offer a full visual and performing arts curriculum and advanced academics that meet University of California entrance requirements. The school will offer Advanced Placement biology, pre-calculus, psychology, digital art and imaging, 3-D art, piano, and all levels of dance, choir and theater arts.

Job Opportunities

Applications are now being accepted at the Personnel Commission, 999 Atlantic Ave., third floor, for benefits assistant, Human Resources technician, Kids Club assistant and Kids Club lead assistant.

Correction: The TALB Bowling League's organizational meeting is at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, September 29 at Cal Bowl.

SCHOOL BULLETIN

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In Memoriam

Virginia S. Curley
former librarian
June 27, 2004

Gayle Holler
recreation aide, Grant
August 20, 2004