



school bulletin

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

December 4, 2009

Focused on Students Despite Tough Times

By Christopher J. Steinhauser
Superintendent of Schools

It's been a semester of stark contrasts. Each week brings gloomier news from Sacramento about billions more dollars of deficits and looming cuts to our state's already decimated education budget. Public agencies everywhere are considering employee furloughs, layoffs and other harsh measures.

Yet somehow, week after week, we quietly and persistently go about our business of educating our students. What's more, we're still arguably one of the nation's best urban school districts – a beacon of hope for our nation and beyond.



Consider just a few recent examples of what others throughout America and the world think of the Long Beach Unified School District.

The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers has

called upon our school district to review both K-12 and College and Career Readiness standards. Working with these groups and the U.S. Dept. of Education, Long Beach is taking advantage of historic opportunities to shape common national education standards that will affect U.S. education reform for years.

Elsewhere, a national journal on educator training describes "a deep commitment to professional learning and widespread use of data" in LBUSD. The article, "Let Data Do the Talking," appears in the fall edition of the *Journal of Staff Development*. Produced by the National Staff Development Council, the journal is known as America's authority on professional learning, and it notes that Long Beach schools are widely praised for their success.

A new report from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the Center for American Progress and the American Enterprise Institute singles out LBUSD as an effectively managed school system. The report, "Leaders and Laggards," grades the 50 states on their educational systems, and it notes a few promising leaders in educational reform.

"Today, various organizations are addressing
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Eight Schools Make Statewide Honor Roll

Eight schools in the Long Beach Unified School District made the statewide Honor Roll list announced this week by California Business for Education Excellence.

Schools receiving this distinction from California's business community have demonstrated consistently high academic achievement and have made significant progress toward closing achievement gaps among all of their students.

The CBEE Honor Roll is made up of two different awards — the Star Schools Award (395 schools) and Scholar Schools Award (909 schools). Long Beach has four schools on each list.

"We're delighted to have so many schools on this prestigious Honor Roll," said Christopher J. Steinhauser, LBUSD superintendent of schools.

"Business leaders know high quality schools when they see them, so this is truly an honor," Steinhauser said. "It's also a testament to the tireless work of our teachers, support staff, administrators, parents and many others."

The school recognition program uses individual school and student subgroup performance data based on the California Standards Tests and California High School Exit Exam to evaluate academic performance.

CBEE Star Schools are those with significant populations of socio-economically disadvantaged students that have shown a significant increase in grade-level proficiency over four years for all groups of children.

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Teacher Retirement Incentive on the Table

The Board of Education has OK'd an early retirement incentive for K-12 teachers and other certificated non-management employees, pending sufficient participation in the plan. The incentive may help to offset local budget cuts caused by the state's ongoing fiscal crisis.

For employees who qualify, the district would provide 60 percent of the employee's annual salary, paid out over five years (12 percent each year). Alternative payment plans equivalent to the same value also will be offered. Benefits would start Aug. 1, 2010.

The enrollment deadline is Jan. 29, after which the school district will determine whether the program would save enough money to make it feasible.

The amount of cost savings will depend upon which teachers, and how many of them, choose to participate.

The school district may withdraw the incentive, provided it notifies enrolled employees of the withdrawal on or before Feb. 19. If the district withdraws the incentive, employees will be given the option to rescind their resignation by March 1, 2010.

Participants must have at least five years of full-time employment in LBUSD as of July 31, 2010, and they must be eligible to retire under the State Teachers' Retirement System (age 55 with five years of STRS service or age 50 with 30 years of STRS service) as of July 31, 2010.

Child Development Center, Head Start, hourly and substitute teachers are not eligible.

Enrollment packets are being mailed to eli-

gible employees. Employee orientation meetings will be held 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 10 in the Millikan High School Auditorium and 4 p.m. on both Wednesday, Dec. 16 and Wednesday, Jan. 6 at the Teacher Resource Center, ABC Room.

Contact Public Agency Retirement Services at (800) 731-7884 for more information.

A general workshop on STRS is scheduled for 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 19 at the Teacher Resource Center, ABC Room.

STRS one-on-one counseling sessions are available by appointment only on Dec. 15, Jan. 5 and Jan. 19 at the Administration Building. Call 997-8193 for an appointment.

20,000 LAUSD Workers Accept Furlough Days

About 20,000 employees in the Los Angeles Unified School District have agreed to four unpaid furlough days to help close a huge budget gap.

Two units of the Service Employees International Union Local 99 representing cafeteria workers, bus drivers and other employees recently approved the measure by a combined vote of 953 to 234, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

The members will take one furlough day per month from February through May to save about \$7.7 million.

"By each of us taking on a bit of hardship it

is our goal to prevent more layoffs in the future and ensure that students continue to receive the services they need to learn," said Edward Reed, Local 99's president, in the *Times*.

Earlier this month, officials in the Los Angeles district asked union members to accept the furlough days and a future 12 percent pay cut to offset a nearly \$60 million budget deficit this year and a \$480 million shortfall next year. The union has not yet voted on the pay cut, which must be negotiated.

Earlier this year, about 1,100 bus drivers who are also represented by SEIU Local 99 agreed to six unpaid days off this fiscal year.

33% More Local Grads Attend 4-Year College

Four-year college enrollment among Long Beach Unified School District graduates has increased more than 33 percent since 2003.

Enrollment in two-year colleges also showed a significant increase over the same period, rising 6.1 percent, while the overall number of high school graduates here rose by 18.5 percent.

Among LBUSD graduates, more than 1,300 enrolled in four-year colleges last year, an increase of 33.7 percent since 2003.

The school district has made a concerted effort in recent years to increase enrollment in Advanced Placement college preparatory courses, and to provide extra counseling, tutoring and other academic support to high schoolers who might not have otherwise considered themselves to be college material.

The success of Long Beach's efforts to produce more college students has significant implications for the local economy and beyond. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics show much higher rates of unemployment among non-college-educated workers.

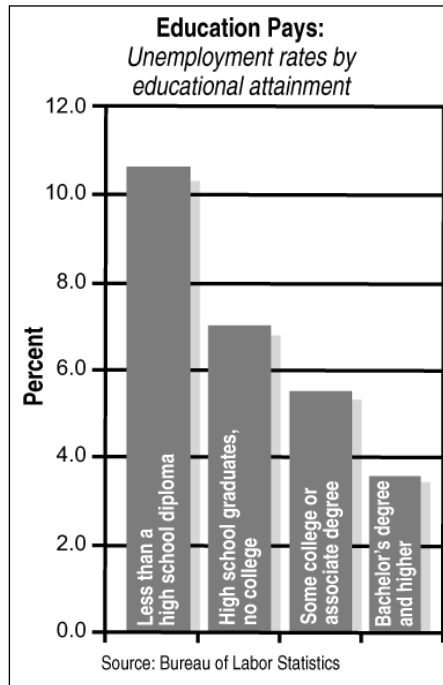
The unemployment rate for individuals who

are 25 and older with less than a high school diploma increased from 7.5 percent in 2007 to 10.6 percent in 2008.

The jobless rate for high school graduates with no college rose by 2.4 percentage points, to 7 percent, the highest rate since such tracking began in 1992.

From 2007 to 2008, the unemployment rate for those with some college or an associate's degree increased by 2 percentage points, to 5.5 percent.

Among college graduates, the unemployment rate increased by 1.2 percentage points, to 3.3 percent, equal to the previous peak in 1992.



• Focused on Kids

(Continued from first page) stubborn challenges by pursuing familiar notions of good teaching and effective schooling in impressively coherent, disciplined and strategic ways," the report states. "Some are public school districts, such as Long Beach Unified School District."

On the international scene, Australian Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard, the country's second-most senior officer, recently asked the LBUSD to participate in a roundtable discussion on education reform in Santa Monica. I joined Gillard and a group of educators from Southern California to discuss issues of transparency and accountability in K-12 education. I provided information on LBUSD's use of student achievement data, its parental and community involvement, and Long Beach's nationally recognized Seamless Education partnerships with higher education.

Shortly after the Australians asked for our advice, a delegation from Thailand visited our Gompers K-8 School to learn more about our science instruction.

And of course, for a record-tying fifth time, LBUSD was honored among America's top five school districts during a recent ceremony in Washington, D.C. Our school district was one of the five finalists for the national Broad Prize for Urban Education.

"Long Beach continues to be America's crown jewel of urban school districts, outperforming other urban districts year after year," said Eli Broad, founder of the prize.

Among the reasons we continue to gain such national attention is that our test scores show far more of our students meeting state standards than just a few years ago in all subject areas.

Since 2003, when all California Standards Tests (CSTs) were completely aligned to state standards, the number of LBUSD students meeting standards (by scoring at the proficient or advanced level) has increased steadily.

We're also seeing hundreds more students taking Advanced Placement courses and going to college.

Considering that we've repeatedly slashed our budget since 2003, these solid gains and resulting accolades speak highly of our employees and everyone in our community who has stood by us during these tough times.

Despite our many challenges, we still have the will to win, and astute observers throughout our nation and the world have noticed.

Sign Up for Fun Run

There's still time to register for this Saturday's Jingle Bell Jaunt Fun Run in Belmont Shore. The one-mile race, sponsored by the *Grunion Gazette*, will benefit local schools. Registration will be accepted at www.gazettes.com through this Friday, and runners may sign up in person on the day of the event at the Gazette Newspapers office, 5225 E. 2nd St. in Long Beach.

Race times are 5:30 p.m. for adults and 6 p.m. for children. The fun run starts at the Gazette office. The annual Belmont Shore Christmas Parade will follow.

Proceeds go toward health and fitness activities at local schools. Some proceeds also will go toward an annual \$500 Melody Ross Memorial Scholarship.

Registration is \$25 through Friday, and \$35 on Saturday.

• CBEE Honor Roll

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Star Schools in LBUSD include the California Academy of Mathematics and Science, Emerson Parkside Academy (elementary), and International and Mann elementary schools.

CBEE Scholar Schools are those that show significant levels of academic achievement, but do not have a significant socio-economically disadvantaged student population.

Scholar Schools in LBUSD include Newcomb Academy (K-8), and Gant, Lowell and Naples elementary schools.

"We know from the success of these schools that it's possible for all schools and all students in California to reach high levels of academic achievement and to close achievement gaps," said Kirk Clark, executive director of CBEE. "By highlighting Honor Roll schools, recognizing their achievement and giving them a voice we hope other schools can learn from these schools' proven best practices and achieve the same results."

A list of the 1,304 Honor Roll schools can be found at www.cbee.org.

CBEE was founded in 1999 by major corporations and business organizations to represent the business community in state education policy making. The organization's mission is to raise academic achievement and close achievement gaps in California public schools by making certain that every student reaches a minimum of grade level proficiency.

Retirement Events

Honoree	Date	Contact
Irene Salazar	Dec. 16	Alicia Esquivias ext. 1774 Vickie Swan ext. 3016
Alice Stephens	Dec. 17	Lisa Poblete ext. 8030

SCHOOL BULLETIN

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CHRISTOPHER J. STEINHAUSER

Superintendent of Schools

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In Memoriam

Chuck Wilshire
former teacher
Nov. 28, 2009

Roberta Coder
former teacher
Dec. 1, 2009