



school bulletin

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

September 24, 2010

Major Grants Fund Teacher Training

Teachers seeking additional training can still take advantage two major grants awarded recently to the Long Beach Unified School District.

Middle and high school history teachers can obtain training through a three-year, \$980,000 Teaching American History Grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education.

Meanwhile, English and history teachers at Jordan and Cabrillo high schools will benefit from a four-year, \$920,000 Improving Teacher Quality grant awarded to California State University, Long Beach by the California Post-Secondary Education Commission.

The Teaching American History Grant includes teacher stipends for after-school and summer professional development sessions. This grant aims to enhance teachers' understanding of American history through intensive professional development, including study trips to historic sites and mentoring with professional historians and other experts. Projects involve partnerships with organizations that have broad knowledge of American history, such as libraries, museums, nonprofit historical or humanities organizations, and higher education institutions.

Long Beach was one of just 124 school districts nationwide to be awarded more than \$115 million in Teaching American History grants this summer. The Long Beach grant is the sixth of its kind for LBUSD, and it is likely to be followed by another \$600,000 for a fourth and fifth year of training here.

The Improving Teacher Quality Grant was awarded to CSULB's College of Education and the university's English and history departments, which will conduct training during summer institutes and release days.

Interested teachers may call the History/Social Science Office at ext. 2956.

County Honors Local Teachers of the Year

Three outstanding Long Beach Unified School District teachers were recently selected as 2011 Teachers of the Year.

One of the three also became a Los Angeles County Teacher of the Year and advances for consideration as California Teacher of the Year.

Lisa Gaa teaches fourth and fifth grade at Longfellow Elementary School, Nicole Jackson teaches kindergarten at MacArthur Elementary School, and Jamie Vallianos-Healy teaches fourth grade at Tincher Preparatory School.

Jackson was named for the L.A. County honor. All three were recently honored at a luncheon hosted by the Los Angeles County Office of Education for top teachers throughout the county.

Lisa Gaa begins each school year by using a "blank slate" in determining the best approach to take with each student.

"Although I have a variety of information about my students from their previous teachers, I make it a rule for myself not to look at any of that data until after the first week of school. I like to get to know my students with a blank slate, so that they each have the opportunity to show me the kind of students they want to be.

"This scenario happens countless times year after year, where certain students will be labeled with a reputation for bad behavior, but for me, they aren't a problem. I attribute my 'blank slate rule' to students being able to make the shift of choosing positive actions and behaviors."

Gaa's high expectations are part of her successful classroom management.

"My students thrive on the structure and discipline I provide in my classroom. They

like that I care enough to tell them 'No' sometimes, and to teach them how to make better choices. My principal has told me, 'Your students work hard because they want to make their teacher proud.' Proud is the perfect word for how I feel about my students, and my profession.

"Other teachers often compliment me on my students' achievement. They ask me, 'How do you do it? What are you doing that I'm not?'" My first answer is that I directly involve the students in the process of learning. Each student in my room knows exactly what their goals are and how they will get there. I also teach through music and dance whenever I can, to meet the needs of students with different learning modalities. I am constantly coming up with "tricks" that my students can use to remember the information."

She also stresses the importance of learning opportunities outside of the classroom.

"I get my students actively involved with our local recycling team and beach clean-up organization. My students and families enjoy taking part in these environmental improvements during school and on weekends, because they have a direct effect on their community through fundraising, health consciousness and beautification."

For Gaa, teaching offers rewards she could not imagine receiving in any other occupation.

"Working with children is the most rewarding career possible. I am always motivated and energetic about coming to work. The smiles on kids' faces when they learn something new, get a good grade on a test, get an answer to a

(Continued on next page)



Gaa



Jackson

Young Historian Wins Top National Prize

Poly High School ninth grader Priscilla Mota has won a top national prize from the History Channel for a video documentary she created as a student at Muir Academy.

Mota, now a student in Poly's PACE honors program, won the grand prize for the middle school level, earning \$5,000 for her video on the Mendez vs. Westminster school segregation case.

"Priscilla has won many academic and nonacademic awards throughout her school



Mota

years," said the student's proud mom, Rocio Mota. "She is an example of the many great students in LBUSD."

The student contest was connected with the History Channel's 12-part TV series, "America: the Story of Us" and was organized with help from the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, along with the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The video and multimedia contest was part of what the History Channel called the most ambitious, wide-ranging educational initiative it has ever organized. Related events included a live webcast with the Smithsonian Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. in which thousands of schools participated.

Curriculum resources remain available at www.history.com/classroom.

Supt. Offers Online Updates on Goals

Click on Superintendent's Goals at www.lbschools.net for regular updates on the Long Beach Unified School District's goals for 2010-11.

The goals, newly posted by Superintendent Christopher J. Steinhauser, each support the implementation of the school district's Academic and Career Success Initiative.

Under each goal, additional web links and supporting documentation will be added to help describe the school district's progress this school year.

The goals also are available on the website under Superintendent's Goals in the A-Z index.

• Teachers of Year Share Secrets of Success

(Continued from first page)
burning question, or create a project they are proud of, is what makes the purpose of my life as a teacher joyous and complete.”

Nicole Jackson believes that she was born to be a teacher, but she took a different route than many others in the profession.

“It seems that many of my colleagues come from families of teachers. I do not. In fact, when I called to tell my father that I had decided to change my major from accounting to child development in the hopes of becoming a teacher, I could hear the disappointment in his voice. I also remember him offering to pay me my offered teacher salary if I would turn down my first teaching job in an unsafe neighborhood. I understood his concern for me, but I am so thankful that I followed my heart and especially grateful for my experience with the children there.”

Jackson used some of those early classroom experiences to focus on critical components of the environment she wanted to create for her kindergarten students.

“Everyone knows what is expected of them when they arrive. The routine is predictable and it reassures my young learners. They know which subject is coming up next and how we will proceed together.”

“Our classroom is a joyful place where every child’s voice is heard. We sing and celebrate together.”

Students respond well to the structure she provides them.

“The growth my students make in one year is staggering. I have many students who start the first day not able to hold a pencil and they end the year writing four sentences on one topic. Although each child’s academic growth is different, every child walks out my door having succeeded to the best of his or her ability.”

She credits the process of earning National Board Certification for helping her to strengthen her skills as a teacher.

“This required an honest look at myself as a teacher. It was difficult to sometimes admit that I could have done better in some areas but it was this honest self-reflection that helped me become more confident in my ability. This was a time of great personal growth.”

Before the bell rings each morning, Jackson has a clear vision of what she will accomplish.

“My goal each morning is to be a teacher who inspires children so they want to share what they were taught that day. A teacher who celebrates a child’s gifts even when they are not attached to academic performance. And to be a teacher who loves and respects her students and embraces and values their diversity.”

Jamie Vallianos-Healy began her teaching career in another school district.

“I was overwhelmed with the task. I walked into class that first day, 24 years old, ready to get their eager little minds engaged. I couldn’t have been more naive.”

Three years later, after determined study as part of an internship program that helped her develop her skills as a teacher, she came to LBUSD.

“When hired, I remember walking through my new school. There were fish tanks in the halls and pictures of students on the walls. I felt like this was a place where education was prized and the spirit of learning permeated the halls.”

Vallianos-Healy took that feeling she had about her new school and amplified it in her classroom.

“Believing that the greatest obligation of my profession is to promote an intrinsic love of learning to students, I strive to create exciting and interesting assignments that engage their spirit as well as their minds. Having students work artistically along with the academic learning they do all year allows them to come away from elementary school with an appreciation of something new and the desire to learn more.”

“I always remind students that I am there not to provide answers but to provide guidance so they can find the answers themselves. Students need the opportunity to create meaning for themselves and find connections across the content areas.”

She believes that establishing strong connections with families helps parents create opportunities for their children to maximize their learning.

“At back-to-school night, I tell families that we are in a partnership together and they know they can come to me at any time. I model this by being available by phone, email and before or after school.”



Vallianos-Healy

Commission Hours

Due to staff reductions, the Personnel Commission office at 999 Atlantic Ave. is closed to the public on Fridays as of this month. Limited staff will be available for telephone inquiries. Business hours for the Commission office will be 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

The Job Board

The Alternative Education program is interviewing for two positions in the Guidance Opportunity Class program located on the campus of Franklin Middle School. Candidates should hold a multiple subject credential, be able to work with students who pose behavioral challenges, and be flexible and able to work with outside agencies.

Contact Jackie Barnett at 422-0357 or jbarnett@lbschools.net.

Dates to Remember

October

1	Crime Prevention Month 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	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— “The Columbus Controversy: Challenging How History is Written,” Grades 7-12, ed.tv 8
7	Back to School Night — High Schools
7	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— “Riding Your School Bus Safely,” Grades 6-12, ed.tv 8
8	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— “Study Skills: Take That Test,” Grades 4-8, ed.tv 8
9	Anniversary of Benjamin Bannecker’s Death
10-16	National Metric Week
11	Columbus Day/Discoverers’ Day
11-15	National School Lunch Week
12	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— “You Can Refuse,” Grades 5-8, ed.tv 8
13	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00— “Harriet Tubman,” Grades 3-8, ed.tv 8
14	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— “Beginning Responsibility: Learning to Be a Good Sport,” Grades K-3, ed.tv 8
15	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— “First Tuesday,” Grade 12, ed.tv 8
16	National Bosses’ Day
18-22	National School Bus Safety Week
19	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— “Library World,” Grades 7-8, ed.tv 8
20	8:00, 10:15, 11:30, 1:00, 2:00— “Halloween,” Grades K-4, ed.tv 8
21	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— “Going to School is Your Job,” 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	Make a Difference Day
23-31	Red Ribbon Week
24	United Nations Day
26	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— “The Reference Section,” Grades 6-8, ed.tv 8
28	10:00, 11:30, 12:00, 12:30— “If Books Could Talk,” Grades 1-3, 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

Hudson Students Win National MESA Title

Hudson K-8 School’s Math, Engineering and Science Achievement team won the national championship in the middle school competition this summer in Denver.

The Hudson team had won the state championship last spring at U.C. Santa Barbara, where the contest focused on wind energy. Students were required to build a device to capture wind energy that could lift the most weight and pull the heaviest car in the least amount of time.

The Cal State Long Beach MESA program sponsored the Hudson team for their summer trip to the national competition, which again focused on wind energy.

Hudson team members were Breanna Nery, Rae-Jillian Rivera, Kimberly Ventura, and Reginald Lata. Their advisor was James Mills.

Learn more at mesa.ucop.edu.

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.lbschools.net

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Superintendent of Schools

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In Memoriam

Marvin Holzman
former teacher
Aug. 16, 2010

Ricky Thomas
custodian, Rogers
Sept. 11, 2010