



school bulletin

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

November 5, 2010

White House Praises LBUSD in L.A. Times

A White House official quoted in the Los Angeles Times praises Long Beach's Seamless Education Partnership, a cooperative venture among K-12 schools and higher education.

The recent article by Times reporter Carla Rivera says The Long Beach College Promise, which is Seamless Education's signature initiative, "is being hailed as a national model."

The College Promise, now in its third year, "is tackling the barriers that prevent many students from succeeding in college," Rivera writes. The initiative is a collaborative effort involving the Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach City College and California State University, Long Beach.

Noting that the College Promise received national attention at an October education summit in Washington, D.C., the Times quoted White House education official Juan Sepulveda:

"We're looking at communities that are trying to step up and push new reforms, ideas and innovations," said Sepulveda, director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, which hosted last month's summit. "Long Beach has been successful with their Seamless Education Partnership. This is something that every community is dealing with."

Seamless Education aligns curriculum, instruction and teacher training from pre-kindergarten through the doctoral level. The program was described as a national model in a case study earlier this year by the Washington D.C.-based Business Higher Education Forum. The partnership connects LBUSD's educators with business leaders, LBCC and CSULB to help students progress smoothly through their education and into the workforce.

Silicon Valley Likes Long Beach Schools

The nonprofit Silicon Valley Education Foundation, a think tank devoted to raising student achievement statewide, likes what it sees in the Long Beach Unified School District, including stable leadership and the sophisticated use of data to improve instruction.

The foundation's Thoughts On Public Education online forum, funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, includes two recent articles praising Long Beach schools for their "consistent and impressive progress."

The first article, "Lessons from High-Performing Districts," says that Long Beach and other successful districts "have progressed by focusing inward, ignoring fads and avoiding controversies, board infighting, and labor strife that have beset large districts."

Significant numbers of English learners and minority students are becoming proficient on state tests in Long Beach and a handful of other districts, observes education writer John Fensterwald at toped.svefoundation.org.

What is working for these successful districts?

"Number one, using student data to inform instruction," writes Fensterwald, adding that "Long Beach has built a powerful student data system, LROIX (Long Beach Research Office Internet), that tracks students' progress and teachers' impact on students."

Also common to successful school districts is the longevity and tenacity of their leadership. Superintendents in these districts "are not your turnaround specialists brought in to bust heads and leave," Fensterwald notes. Many of these superintendents have spent their careers in their districts.

"They intimately know their communities and have built trust over time with their teachers and board trustees. Because they're in for the long haul, they can build systems that work," Fensterwald adds. "Some of the superintendents may be low-key, but they're not

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CSEA's Unit A OKs Deal, Unit B Re-Votes

After narrowly voting down a tentative agreement, Unit B of the California School Employees Association Long Beach Chapter 2 will vote on a revised deal next Wednesday, Nov. 10.

The Long Beach Unified School District Board of Education meanwhile approved a new contract with CSEA's Unit A this week after members of that unit ratified their agreement with a 63 percent vote. A similar deal was rejected by 51 percent of voting members in Unit B last week, sending negotiators back to the table where they reached a new tentative agreement with Unit B late Monday.

If Unit B members now ratify their revised agreement with a simple majority, then the Board of Education could schedule a special meeting to OK the deal in time for Unit B furlough days to take effect during the week of Thanksgiving (to coincide with other employees' furlough days).

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Unit B Ratification Vote

Wednesday, Nov. 10

9:30 to 11:30 a.m., Transportation Branch
2700 Pine Ave., Long Beach

2:30 to 6:30 p.m., Maintenance Branch
2425 Webster Ave., Long Beach

Non-Reps May Pay 5% Toward Health Plans

Managers and other non-represented employees here could contribute 5 percent of health insurance costs effective Jan. 1, 2012 as part of budget cuts that the Board of Education is likely to consider next week.

The potential cuts for non-represented employees include up to seven furlough days in fiscal year 2011-12. That same fiscal year, step and column advancement would be suspended for these employees. The cuts are part of an agenda item that is planned for the school board's meeting at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 9.

Also part of the school board agenda item is a plan to achieve \$300,000 in savings through a central office reorganization.

The proposed cuts follow similar provisions for seven furlough days and a 5 percent contribution on health insurance that were approved by the school board this week for CSEA Unit A workers (see story above).

The reductions proposed for next week's school board meeting, combined with the recent savings achieved with CSEA, total nearly \$7 million, including more than \$1.2 million in ongoing savings.



HEALTH FAIR — Monique Cole, head teacher at Burnett Head Start, checks her blood pressure with the help of nurse Tom Hughes at the school district's employee health fair. Open enrollment in health plans continues through the end of this month.

• Silicon Valley

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pushovers.”

A second article by Fensterwald, “Districts Show the Way in Using Data,” says that in Sacramento, the partially completed statewide student data system, CALPADS, has become mired in a power struggle over the management and oversight of the system.

“But in Fresno, Long Beach, and San Jose, districts aren’t waiting around for the state to finish a colossus. They and a few well-run charter organizations have built their own data systems that are doing what CALPADS, as currently designed, won’t provide: fast and ready information to guide teachers’ decisions in the classroom and administrators’ judgments in working with teachers,” Fensterwald states. “These systems are models for other districts, and they should steer the Legislature and governor as they consider what’s next for CALPADS.”

Arun Ramanathan, executive director of the Ed-Trust West, puts it more bluntly in the article:

“Innovation is reflected in districts in California but not in Sacramento.”

Learn more at svfoundation.org.

No Bullying Allowed

The Long Beach Unified School District has created a public service announcement now airing on local cable and Fios TV to warn students and parents about the dangers and consequences of bullying in schools.

The announcement features LBUSD Superintendent Christopher J. Steinhauer and Long Beach City Councilman Robert Garcia. The councilman notes that Long Beach schools have firm anti-bullying policies that prohibit harassment based upon a student’s color, culture, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or any other reason. Students who engage in such behavior can face suspension, expulsion and other disciplinary measures.

Steinhauer adds, “Bullying can lead to hurt feelings, physical harm and – as we have unfortunately seen elsewhere in the nation – even the senseless loss of young lives.”

The two-minute spot airs on ed.tv (Channel 96 in Long Beach and Signal Hill, Channel 35 in Lakewood, and Channel 47 on Fios TV). The announcement runs every two hours on the hour, publicizing the following anti-bullying resources:

- Long Beach City Human Dignity Program, 570-6730;
- Trevor Project 24-hour hotline for LGBT teens, (866) 488-7386.

In addition, the Los Angeles County Office of Education issued a recent bulletin providing school districts with a toll-free suicide prevention hotline. The toll-free number for the DiDi Hirsch Community Mental Health Suicide Prevention Center is (877) 727-4747.

In Memoriam

Joan Prijatel
former teacher
Oct. 10, 2010

Math Grant Brings \$1M for Training

Math teachers here will use a state grant of nearly \$1 million to continue boosting student achievement at five high schools.

The four-year grant from the California Postsecondary Education Commission will allow teachers to gain additional training with the help of professors at California State University, Long Beach.

Participating schools are Cabrillo, Jordan, Lakewood, Millikan and Poly high schools.

The grant, called EQALS, aims to provide Evidence-based, Quality professional development in Algebra for Learners’ Success. The idea is to boost math achievement, especially for groups such as English language learners and special education students.

The training will focus on deepening teachers’ knowledge of algebraic concepts. Participants will improve their ability to monitor student progress and to differentiate, or customize, instruction based upon students’ needs. Teachers will learn strategies for working with English learners and students with disabilities.

Participating teachers also will receive classroom materials such as graphing whiteboards, and they’ll be paid for their time outside the normal school day or during summer.

The California Postsecondary Education Commission was established in 1974 as the state planning and coordinating body for higher education. Learn more at cpec.ca.gov.

Band Spectacular Set For Tuesday Evening

The 26th annual Long Beach Unified School District High School Band Spectacular is scheduled for 7 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 9 at the Cabrillo High School Stadium. This event showcases marching bands from Cabrillo, Jordan, Lakewood, Millikan, Poly and Wilson high schools along with the Long Beach City College Viking Show Band.

Each band will present their 2010 field show. Dance teams, drill teams and tall flags from the schools also will be featured. The evening culminates with a special performance by the combined bands.

Tickets are available in advance from high school band members or at the gate on the evening of the performance. The suggested donation is \$5. All proceeds benefit the high school band programs.

SCHOOL BULLETIN

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Superintendent of Schools

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• CSEA Vote

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Unit A includes clerical and support services employees. Unit B includes construction, maintenance, repair and transportation workers.

Both units A and B had reached similar tentative agreements after about five months of negotiations and during a time of continuing cuts to public education statewide. Despite the state’s attempt to reduce the amount of education cuts in California’s recently adopted budget, LBUSD must deal with a budget shortfall of over \$50 million in the next two years.

For Unit A, the approved agreement now provides some job protection and job restoration in exchange for five furlough days this school year and up to seven furlough days next school year, along with other changes to salaries and benefits.

Furlough days this school year, for Unit A employees working a standard work week, are scheduled for Nov. 22 to 24 of 2010 (Thanksgiving week), and for March 25 and March 28 of 2011.

The approved contract’s job restoration language says LBUSD will restore roughly 36 percent of the remaining members on a reemployment list who have been laid off since April 19.

The approved CSEA agreement also includes a 5 percent employee contribution toward health care costs beginning Jan. 1, 2012, and the suspension of step advancement on the classified salary schedule for this school year and the next one. The main revision in the latest Unit B tentative contract is the addition of the following language regarding the 5 percent contribution toward health care costs:

“No later than October 1, 2011, the district and CSEA shall reopen negotiations to assess the need to implement the employee contribution of 5 percent toward their health benefit costs effective January 1, 2012.”

Job protections in the approved and tentative deals include an agreement not to layoff bargaining unit members for the remainder of this fiscal year and next fiscal year, with some exceptions. If the state reduces LBUSD’s funding by \$50 or more per pupil, for instance, negotiations may be reopened.

The agreement also includes changes to health benefits, including the elimination of the PacificCare plan, a change in pharmacy plans and other modifications that will save money while still providing employees with competitive benefits, including a wide range of health plan options and health care providers.

Retirement Seminars

Thinking about STRS retirement? A series of sessions about the California State Teachers’ Retirement System is scheduled for the coming weeks.

Each presentation will cover the CalSTRS service retirement allowance, retirement options, updates on legislation, and information on disability and survivor benefits. Staff from Human Resource Services and Risk Management will be available to answer questions.

The seminars, all from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m., are scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 30 or Wednesday, Jan. 5 at 1515 Hughes Way, Room 143, and on Monday, Jan. 31 at the Teacher Resource Center-ABC room, 1299 E. 32nd St.

Attendance is limited. RSVP by Friday, Nov. 22 at 997-8214.