



# school bulletin

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

October 7, 2011

## Meet JiJi, Animated Online Math Tutor

Parents of middle schoolers can now sign up their children for a series of innovative online math tutorials provided by the nonprofit MIND Research Institute. The Spatial Temporal (ST) Math® tutorials use a visual approach and games to teach math concepts, with lessons aligned to state standards.

Siblings of middle schoolers will gain access to the free lessons, too.

The MIND Research Institute helps elementary and secondary students to reach their full academic potential through math instructional software and systems. The institute also conducts basic neuroscientific, mathematics and education research to improve math education and advance scientific understanding.

The online lessons teach students to visualize math concepts by boiling all problems down to helping the animated penguin, JiJi, get across obstacles. The visual approach helps to meet major challenges facing public education — language barriers and diversity — and it improves teacher effectiveness.

Born out of neuroscience research at the

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## Preschoolers Here Surpass Peers Nationally

Research shows that good preschools improve children's performance later in school and life more than any other educational intervention. With this in mind, five preschool sites at the Long Beach Unified School District's Child Development Centers earned a \$3.5 million federal Early Reading First grant two years ago to support students' literacy. The grant is already getting results.

LBUSD recently received data comparing the results of Early Reading First programs across the nation. The results show that Long Beach preschool students outperformed the national average by 19 percent on gains in vocabulary knowledge. On measures of letter knowledge, Long Beach preschoolers exceeded the national average by 15 percent.

Last school year, the first group of Early Reading First preschooler participants completed their kindergarten year in LBUSD with

94 percent of these students reading at or above grade level on the district's Benchmark Book Assessment by the end of the year compared to 70 percent for the rest of the district.

The reading grant serves LBUSD's state-subsidized preschools for low income families, providing three years of intensive, research-based professional development and coaching for teachers, plus family literacy activities.

This year the Child Development Centers will train the rest of their teachers on the use of these effective instructional strategies to increase the academic achievement of their more than 1,100 at-risk preschoolers.

Contributing to the early literacy effort has been Long Beach Rotary. During the past two years, Rotary has donated thousands of books to the Child Development Centers, beefing up classroom libraries and giving each child a book of their own to keep.

## Hudson, Poly Earn State, National Honors

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, school board President Felton Williams and Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster honored students from Hudson and Poly schools this week for earning national and state titles in Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement competitions.

Students from both schools were honored at Hudson, where the K-8 school's team of four students accepted the national championship trophy from MESA's Washington, D.C. office. Hudson earned the U.S. title during competition this summer in Redmond, near Seattle.

Hudson team members were Christina Le, Michelica Balajadia, Kyrene Aganon and Rose Chelsea Lubang.

Both the Hudson team and a Poly High School team had swept the state MESA competition in May at UC Santa Barbara. The teams

surpassed 14,000 other students at preliminary and regional competitions to triumph under MESA advisor James Mills. The Poly team, also honored for its state win at this week's ceremony at Hudson, includes students Breanna Nery, Rae Jillian Rivera and Kimberly Ventura.

"We congratulate the winning teams from Hudson and Poly," President Williams said. "We have maintained our commitment to science, technology, engineering and math instruction. These national and state accolades show what amazing feats our students can accomplish if we give them the chance."

Both Hudson and Poly are served by the MESA Center housed at the Cal State Long Beach College of Engineering, and both schools earned their awards by designing the best wind energy device.

Learn more at [mesa.ucop.edu](http://mesa.ucop.edu).

## Lakewood High Wins NASA Recognition

Lakewood High School is one of 14 schools nationwide selected for the 2011 School Recognition Award for contributions to science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education.

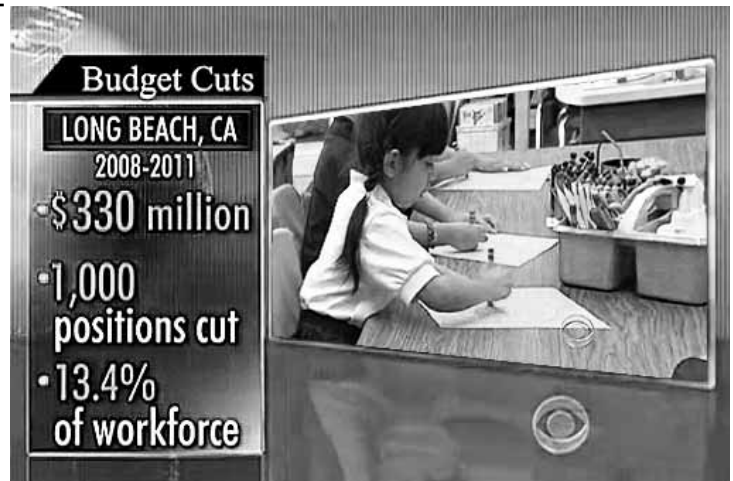
A team of NASA personnel reviewed applications and recognized the schools for demonstrating exemplary classroom practices and finding innovative uses of NASA Explorer School resources to engage a broad population at school. These schools were selected from more than 1,300 schools that have registered as participants in the NASA Explorer Schools (NES) project.

NES is NASA's classroom-based program designed around NASA's unique missions.

Three teachers from each winning school will travel to NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston next year to conduct experiments in microgravity on the agency's reduced gravity aircraft. The experiments will examine how

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**GRIM TOLL —** The national CBS Evening News tallies budget cuts in the Long Beach Unified School District. The \$330 million figure represents the amount of funding the state has cut from LBUSD since 2008. "This has to stop," LBUSD Superintendent Chris Steinhauser told CBS. **Story on next page.**



## • JiJi the Math Tutor

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University of California, Irvine, MIND's unique approach taps into the way children are wired to learn by accessing the brain's innate spatial-temporal reasoning ability. This ability allows the brain to hold visual, mental representations in short-term memory and to evolve them both in space and time, thinking multiple steps ahead.

Self-paced and self-motivating, the lessons provide students with immediate, instructive feedback, and deepen problem-solving and reasoning skills. MIND has established a track record of dramatically raising (double-digit increases) the math proficiency of students, whether they are high performers or low performers, in a large variety of settings. MIND's visual approach to teaching math has proven successful for a diverse range of students, despite their cultural or economic backgrounds, and is particularly ideal for English learners and students with learning disabilities.

Tour the online math lessons at [mindresearch.net](http://mindresearch.net). Click on Programs and then ST Math Tour.

## CalSTRS Retirement

A series of upcoming presentations will explain the CalSTRS service retirement allowance, retirement options, recent changes in legislation, and disability and survivor benefits. Staff from Human Resource Services and Risk Management will be available to answer questions. The 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. sessions are scheduled for Monday, Oct. 24 and Wednesday, Nov. 30 at 1515 Hughes Way, Room 143, or Wednesday, Jan. 18 at the Teacher Resource Center-AB room. Attendance is limited. RSVP by Oct. 20 at 997-8214.

## Parents in the Loop

School Loop, the email and website system that makes it easy for parents to know what's going on at school, now reaches nearly 40,000 households in the Long Beach Unified School District.

The School Loop system allows teachers to post homework assignments, classroom news and reminders. Middle and high school parents can also check their children's current grades and class schedule.

School Loop also is the place for parents to find the latest news about their school and LBUSD. Parents receive an email at 5 p.m. each day whenever there's something new to share with them.

The implementation of School Loop is part of the school district's board-approved Strategic Plan, which calls for improving communication throughout LBUSD and the community.

Most schools here now have School Loop websites, where parents can register to receive school updates. Registering is easy. Choose "Register Now" in the Login area. Choose "Parent Registration." Enter the requested information and choose a password. Parents will need a student identification number (SID) available on report cards.

Visit [schoolloop.com](http://schoolloop.com) to view School Loop demos.

## CBS Evening News Details LBUSD Cuts

The national CBS Evening News recently aired a story detailing the magnitude of budget cuts in the Long Beach Unified School District. CBS visited local classrooms affected by class size increases, interviewing students, teachers and LBUSD Superintendent Christopher J. Steinhauser.

CBS noted that 300,000 educators have been laid off nationwide due to budget cuts since 2008, and in LBUSD more than 1,000 positions have been cut.

Come January, CBS further noted, if the state is taking in less revenue than planned, \$1.5 billion in new cuts to education could automatically take place. That could cost LBUSD another \$30 million.

"That's unacceptable," Steinhauser told CBS. "We have to stop this. We're going to pay big time in five, 10 years from now when we don't have an educated workforce. People have got to think in the long term."

See video at [cbsnews.com](http://cbsnews.com). Type Long Beach Unified School District in the search field.

## School Districts Support Jobs Act

The national Council of the Great City Schools, which represents 65 of America's largest school districts including Long Beach, issued a recent statement supporting President Barack Obama's American Jobs Act.

The Jobs Act would provide significant funding for teacher jobs and school infrastructure.

"The nation's elementary and secondary schools are entering a third consecutive school year of severe budget cuts, educator layoffs and deferred maintenance to school buildings, a situation that is particularly grim in the nation's urban centers," the Council stated. "The President's plan will provide badly needed jobs, put laid-off teachers back in our classrooms, and fix our aging schools."

## Names in the News

Recent Jordan grad **Yuritz Galarza** was the winner in the youth category of the Press-Telegram's Amazing Women Award. Galarza has logged more than 900 hours of community service.

### SCHOOL BULLETIN

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Superintendent of Schools

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## • NASA Recognition

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fluids with different viscosities behave in microgravity; the acceleration and inertia of objects; and how the absence of gravity affects mass and weight. The Lakewood teachers are Lindsay Bobo, Keith Miller and Myles Lovell.

"This represents another innovative NASA project for teachers and students to engage in actual scientific investigations in a microgravity environment, similar to experiments conducted on the International Space Station," said Shelley Canright, program manager for primary and secondary education at NASA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. "It successfully demonstrates and enhances participants' academic knowledge in STEM."

Learn more about the Explorer Schools Project at [explorerschools.nasa.gov](http://explorerschools.nasa.gov), and watch a six-minute video showing previous winners aboard the reduced gravity aircraft at [go.nasa.gov/pjy29I](http://go.nasa.gov/pjy29I).

## Beach Walk Oct. 22 For Children's Clinic

Students, staff and parents in the Long Beach Unified School District will help raise funds for the non-profit Children's Clinic of Long Beach by participating in a 5K walk starting at 9 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 22 on Shoreline Drive.

Proceeds will help the clinic to provide low- and no-cost health care for children, many of whom attend local schools.

Teams of walkers from local schools typically raise thousands of dollars at the walk.

After working up an appetite by walking, participants can enjoy a Healthy Food Festival immediately following the 5K, including a Healthy Lifestyles Kids Zone and arts and crafts activities presented by Millikan High School COMPASS students.

Learn more and sign up at [thechildrensclinic.org](http://thechildrensclinic.org).

## Junior League Gives Classroom Supplies

Teachers and students at Addams Elementary School will have more supplies to use for school projects this fall thanks to the Junior League of Long Beach.

JLLB recently organized a school supply drive among its members. The resulting donations — more than 900 items ranging from markers and glue sticks to notebooks and Kleenex — were presented to the Addams faculty at a staff meeting.

"Teachers are thankful for the donations," said Addams Principal Rosana Madrid-Arroyo. "Neighborhood families who find their checking accounts reserved for food, rent and gasoline are also appreciative."

Learn more about JLLB at [jllb.com](http://jllb.com).

"Being the richest man in the cemetery doesn't matter to me... Going to bed at night saying we've done something wonderful... that's what matters to me."

— Steve Jobs