



school bulletin

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

October 3, 2014

Longfellow Earns National PTA Honor

National PTA has recognized Longfellow Elementary School as a National PTA School of Excellence for building effective family-school partnerships. Only 170 schools nationwide were designated as 2014-16 recipients of the award.

"The partnership between Longfellow Elementary School and Longfellow Elementary PTA is a true example of what can be accomplished when schools and families work together," said Otha Thornton, president of National PTA. "Longfellow Elementary School and Longfellow Elementary PTA have put strong practices into place that involve families in the life of the school, and we are pleased to recognize them as a National PTA School of Excellence."

National PTA launched its National PTA School of Excellence program to help strengthen family-school partnerships across the nation and make measurable progress in the areas of education, health and safety, and arts and cultural exploration.

At a National PTA School of Excellence,



families feel welcomed and empowered to support student success, and PTA is a key partner for continuous school improvement. To be recognized as a National PTA School of

Excellence, PTAs evaluate their current family engagement strategies and submit a goal for school improvement that families, teachers and administrators have set together. They improve upon their family engagement strategies throughout the year,

while focusing on their goal. The National PTA School of Excellence designation is awarded for demonstrated improvement in the family-school partnership and significant progress toward their goal.

Longfellow Elementary PTA has helped to implement various school-wide family engagement programs such as the "PTA Family Reading Experience, Powered by Kindle" and "Reading At Home." These programs give families the tools to help improve reading skills for students between kindergarten and fifth grade. Other programs include the Longfellow Green Team recycling efforts to reduce waste while teaching students about the positive effects of recycling. This program helped Longfellow to earn a National Green Ribbon Award from the U.S. Department of Education in 2012. The school also offers the Uniform Exchange, an opportunity for parents and community members to share and encourage re-use of gently used school clothes.

"The second you step onto the campus of Longfellow Elementary it is evident that there is a longstanding and impactful partnership

(Continued on next page)

National Review

LBUSD Lauded For Common Core Prep

National Review Online reports that the Long Beach Unified School District is the most prepared large school system in the state, in terms of providing the technology needed for the latest academic standards known as the Common Core State Standards. National Review says a case study of the five top school districts in the state was conducted by State Budget Solutions, a national nonpartisan, non-profit research group.

SBS found that of the five California districts, "the Long Beach Unified School District is the most prepared, primarily because it has accepted outside funding from foundations, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. LBUSD has also opted to establish computer labs rather than give individual devices to students."

SBS said that Long Beach committed to providing all of its schools with wireless access, high bandwidth and updated computing devices for Common Core testing. To achieve greater wireless access and bandwidth, the district used funds from its Measure K school bond program, which raised \$1.2 billion in property taxes to build and renovate schools. For computing devices, LBUSD chose not to buy tablets for individual students. Instead, the district invested \$6 million in state technology funding to install 109 new computer labs, giving larger schools two or three labs.

LBUSD Director of Research Christopher Lund told researchers, "Basically, Long Beach Unified decided to go with a pretty conservative approach with the testing. We chose to go with the lab setting because it was a little safer,

(Continued on next page)

High School Exit Exam

96% of Seniors Pass Math, English Tests

About 96 percent of students in the Class of 2014 here passed either the math or English portions of the California High School Exit Exam, with 94 percent passing both. The overall pass rate represents a 1 percent increase over the prior year.

The Long Beach Unified School District's pass rates on the exit exam remain competitive with California's pass rates even though Long Beach has a greater percentage of disadvantaged students than California as a whole. The statewide pass rate for the Class of 2014 was 95.5 percent, matching the record high passage rate from last year.

"I am pleased California's high school students continue to pass this graduation exam at record rates," said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson. "Dedicated educators have worked hard in difficult times to prepare students for college and careers, but we must keep striving for higher levels of achievement so all students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful."

State law authorized the development of the exit exam in 1999. The law requires students in California public schools to pass the test – in addition to meeting other graduation requirements – to earn a high school diploma.

GAINFULLY EMPLOYED – Graduates of Cabrillo, Jordan and Poly High schools spent 18 months in a Certified Nursing Assistant program resulting in a 100 percent employment rate in the health and medical fields. The program is a collaborative effort including LBUSD and community partners. **Story on next page.**



Plum Assignment: Snacks at Recess

Students at Stevenson and Lee elementary schools are snacking on fresh fruits and vegetables during recess thanks to significant grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The grants of nearly \$53,000 for Lee and \$43,000 for Stevenson enable schools to provide fresh fruits and vegetables as a free snack outside of breakfast and lunch.

The two schools kicked off the program last week by lining up for fresh California plums. For some students, it was the first time they had tasted a plum.

"The Long Beach Unified School District understands the importance of creating a healthier school environment for our students, and we know that there is a direct correlation between good nutrition and academic success," said Darlene Martin, LBUSD director of nutrition services. "The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program provides a healthy snack to fuel students' minds, while introducing them to new fruits and vegetables. That is something we truly value here."

A recent School Lunch Report Card by the nonprofit Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine ranks LBUSD's meal program as one of the best nationally for serving healthful lunches.

The fruits and vegetables grant is just one way LBUSD is helping to create a healthier school environment. Breakfast and lunch menus provide whole grains, fresh fruit and vegetables, and healthy, kid-friendly favorites. Many of the menu items are made from scratch daily in the Nutrition Services production kitchen.

"We make our own sauces and other favorites like chicken chile verde, macaroni and cheese, sweet potato spiced bread and beef taco filling," said Tiffanie Bas, a registered dietician for the school district. "Making our own items from scratch allows us to control the fat and sodium content but still make kid-friendly foods."

The school district also provides nutrition education programs such as Harvest of the Month, which features a new fruit or vegetable each month and incorporates food with library and classroom activities.

See what's for lunch by visiting Nutrition Services in the A-Z index at lbschools.net.

CalSTRS Seminar

California State Teachers' Retirement System seminars will be offered on Nov. 5, Dec. 10 and Jan. 14.

CalSTRS members who are nearing retirement may find the seminars to be especially pertinent. Presentation topics will include CalSTRS service retirement allowance and retirement options, along with updates on legislation and disability and survivor benefits. Staff from Human Resource Services and Risk Management will be available to answer questions.

The Nov. 5 and Dec. 10 sessions are scheduled for 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Long Beach Unified School District Administration Building, 1515 Hughes Way, Room 143. The Jan. 14 session is scheduled for 4 to 6 p.m. at the Teacher Resource Center, 1299 E. 32nd St., in the ABC Room.

Attendance is limited. RSVP by Friday, Oct. 31 at 997-8214.

HALFWAY THERE –

The reconstruction of Roosevelt Elementary School is about 50 percent complete, with the school scheduled to open in fall 2015. Learn more about Measure K school construction and renovation projects by clicking on Measure K Update Newsletter in the A-Z index at lbschools.net.



Healthcare Academy Preps Grads for Jobs

The first class of students from the Long Beach Career Partnership Academy - Healthcare celebrated graduation as Certified Nursing Assistants last month. Eleven graduates of Cabrillo, Jordan and Poly High schools spent 18 months combining academic knowledge with workplace readiness skills and technical procedures to earn their licenses.

As of one week past their graduation, the class boasted a 100 percent employment rate within the health and medical fields in the Greater Long Beach area.

"This accomplishment indicates student commitment to a vibrant career in the healthcare industry, and each is to be commended for their skill and determination in achieving this initial step to economic self-sufficiency," said Ben Espitia, Director of Workforce Development at Goodwill SOLAC.

The Long Beach Career Partnership Academy - Healthcare is a workplace learning program resulting from collaboration among the Long Beach Unified School District, Goodwill SOLAC, and businessman Damon Dunn.

• Longfellow PTA

(Continued from first page) between Longfellow Elementary, its PTA and the community of California Heights and Bixby Knolls," said Naomie Worrell-Tate, president of Longfellow Elementary PTA. "Longfellow is truly a unique school with an outpouring of support that is vital to the overall well-being of our students. Through our PTA programs and events we are very successful in sustaining a positive school environment for almost 1,100 students year after year."

To celebrate Longfellow's achievements, National PTA will present Longfellow Elementary School and Longfellow Elementary PTA with a National PTA School of Excellence banner this Friday, Oct. 3 at the school.

For more information about the National PTA School of Excellence program, visit PTA.org/excellence.

SCHOOL BULLETIN

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• National Review

(Continued from first page) more secure lab network."

In addition to the labs, one Long Beach high school and three middle schools are receiving tablet computers to experiment and see what platform works best.

"We've been given a gift," LBUSD Superintendent Christopher J. Steinhauer stated in the report, "and we owe it to taxpayers to spend it efficiently and effectively."

The SBS report further states, "Recognized as one of the world's top 20 school systems and one of the top three in the U.S., LBUSD has been one of the most progressive school districts statewide in preparing for the Common Core. While the state's \$16.4 million (for Common Core) has helped cover some costs, the district primarily funded the CCSS through private grants and funding requests that started before state money for Common Core flowed into the district. LBUSD has been a leader in transitioning to Common Core, and it has been working on implementing the new standards during these past four years."

The Common Core standards, adopted by 45 states, were developed by teachers, parents, school administrators and other experts across the nation to establish a set of clear educational standards for kindergarten through 12th grade. The standards are designed to make certain that students graduating from high school are prepared for college and careers.

Other school districts included in the report were Los Angeles, San Diego, Fresno, and Elk Grove.

Learn more at statebudgetsolutions.org and nationalreview.com.