



COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION



SAN BENITO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

February 2024 Newsletter



The San Benito County Office of Education is proud to share our February newsletter with you. Each month, we update you on programs, events and news in the county office and the districts we serve in San Benito County. In addition, we invite you to stay connected through our various social media platforms.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and our students across San Benito County as we

Engage, Encourage, Empower...Educate!

SBCOE Hosts First Literacy Summit in County

San Benito County Office of Education hosted the county's first Literacy Summit on January 25 at the Veteran's Memorial Building in downtown Hollister. SBCOE Director of Curriculum & Instruction and Equity & Access, Mai Cruz, coordinated the event, which featured nationally renowned speaker and educator, Dr. Kate Kinsella. The event brought together parents, educators and community members to learn how they can support literacy for students throughout San Benito County.

SBCOE is actively working to improve literacy in the county through its Building Bridges2Literacy Initiative. Literacy Summit attendees heard from keynote speaker, Dr. Kate Kinsella and participated in Roundtable Discussions led by local educational leaders and partners including Hollister Elementary School District, Navigator Schools, North County Joint Union School District, San Benito High School District, Footstep2Brilliance, Scholastic. Roundtable discussions focused on how to support literacy for students at all grade levels as well as for multi-lingual learners and struggling readers. The highlight of the evening was the recognition of the top 15 readers from SBCOE's Winter Reading Challenge who were honored at the event. Click here to view the list of [Top 15 Readers](#).

San Benito County Office of Education would like to thank our sponsors: California Mutual Insurance Company, Dona Ester, Dibudio and Defendis Insurance Brokers, Footsteps2Brilliance, LG Sign Co., Mechanics Bank, Mindful Healing Therapeutic Services, Nexus Ed Solutions, Scholastic and VFW Post 9242/American Legion Post 69 with special appreciation to the VFW Post 9242/American Legion Post 69 who provided the venue and catered the event.



SBCOE Honors Community Champions



Hollister City Manager, David Mirrione, was presented with SBCOE's Community Champion Award by the San Benito County Board of Education in January. Mr. Mirrione worked tirelessly to coordinate with agencies to ensure the residents of the Line Street fire received services, housing and support. Thanks to Mr. Mirrione, the families had the resources they needed during such a difficult time. We appreciate his efforts to make our community a great place to live!

SBCOE Welcomes New HR Credentials Coordinator

SBCOE is excited to welcome Mackenzie Hignel as our new Human Resources Credentials Coordinator. Ms. Hignel is not new to SBCOE, having served as both a Health Services Specialist and an Educational Specialist previously. Prior to that she worked at Hollister Prep School.

Ms. Hignel's experience working with districts in the county to provide Temporary County Certificates (TCCs) along with other credentialing services will help her move seamlessly into her new position. She is excited to move into the Coordinator position and looks forward to working with the districts in San Benito County to ensure students have qualified and appropriately credentialed staff in their schools.



SBCOE Boosts Cybersecurity

The San Benito County Office of Education has recently taken a significant step towards enhancing its cybersecurity posture by implementing Duo's multi-factor authentication (MFA) solution. In an era where cyber threats are becoming increasingly sophisticated, the adoption of MFA is a critical strategy for protecting sensitive data. This technology requires users to verify their identity using multiple pieces of evidence before gaining access to digital resources, significantly reducing the likelihood of unauthorized access.

This initiative reflects the growing recognition of the importance of robust cybersecurity measures within the educational sector. By deploying Duo's MFA, the San Benito County Office of Education not only safeguards its digital assets and the personal information of students and staff but also sets a precedent for other institutions in the importance of prioritizing digital security. This proactive approach is essential in combating the rising tide of cyber threats facing educational institutions today.

SBCOE Hosts Budget Workshop

School District and Community Board members from around the area came together for Capitol Advisor's Budget Perspectives Workshop in January. SBCOE hosted the event, which gave attendees insight and information about the recently released Governor's Budget Proposal for the 2024-25 fiscal year. The current proposal provides funding for most of the TK-12 grade education programs with a very small COLA (Cost of Living Adjustment) of 0.76%. The Governor will make adjustments to his proposal over the next several months before bringing it back in May. The legislature will then pass a budget over the summer.

Student's Qualify for CA State Spelling Bee

The San Benito County Office of Education held its Countywide Spelling Bee on February 6, 2024, at the Veteran's Memorial Building in downtown Hollister. Twenty students qualified for the event in two age groups. Students in grades 4-6 competed in the elementary division while 7th-9th grade students were eligible for the middle school division. After more than 15 rounds in each division, the top three spellers were finally selected, a testament to the strength of the competition this year. The top two spellers in each division qualified for the California State Spelling Bee hosted by the San Joaquin County Office of Education in Stockton, California on April 27, 2024 at the Wentworth Education Center. This year's winners are:

4-6th Elementary Division

1st place	Marley Murillo*	Accelerated Achievement Academy
2nd place	Fox Westphal*	Hollister Dual Language Academy
3rd place	Elise Gonzalez	Hollister Prep School

7-9th Junior High Division

1st place	Lyla Pulizzi*	Accelerated Achievement Academy
2nd place	Miraclin Jebastian*	Hollister High School
3rd place	Anthony Mirrione	Spring Grove Elementary School

*State Qualifier

Thank you to our judges, Mayor Mia Casey, Supervisor Angela Curro, Supervisor Mindy Sotelo and Assistant Superintendent Shannon Hansen; our Spelling Bee Master, Kim O'Connor and the VFW Post 9242/American Legion Post 69 for allowing us to use their facility.



Community Schools and Wellness

SBCOE is leading the efforts to promote transformative practices in social emotional and mental health. SBCOE Ed Services, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Gwen Baquiran, and Mental Health Coordinator, Adina Austin, presented at the Transformational Community Schools Statewide Workshop on February 6th. Their presentation discussed the integration of wellness centers into school systems and the importance of creating a safe and supportive environment at schools. The Wellness Centers at San Andreas High School and Tres Pinos School are also featured in the CA Central Coast Community Schools Newsletter, which highlights the transformative spaces in schools that promote student well-being. Ms. Austin has spearheaded the development and implementation of wellness centers and calming corners in SBCOE Alternative Education Programs, Tres Pinos School and Hollister Navigator School and is working with Willow Grove and Bitterwater Schools to develop wellness areas.

STEAM Expo to be Held March 13



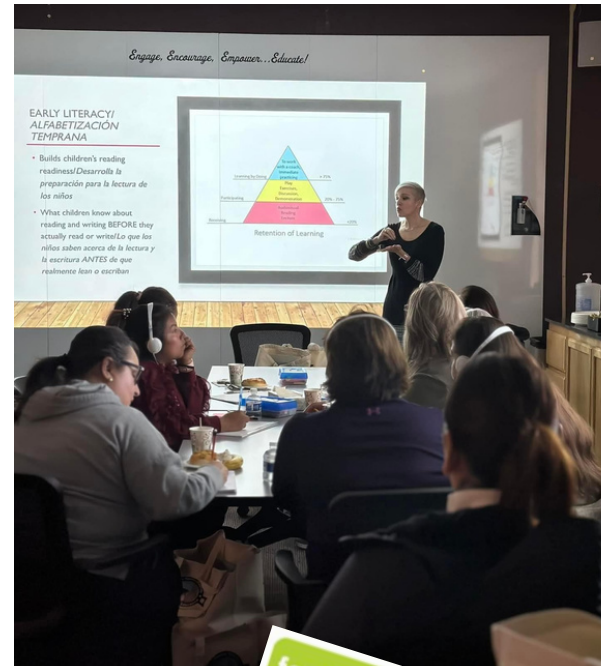
All students in San Benito County are invited to join the San Benito County Office of Education on March 13, 2024 for our annual SBCOE STEAM Expo. The event will be held at Veteran's Memorial Building in downtown Hollister beginning at 4:00pm. The entire community is invited to join us for student projects and demonstrations, interactive STEAM and art activities, food and more. Students who are entering Science Fair projects, STEAM Projects or Inventions should drop them off at the Veteran's Memorial Building on March 11 or 12 between 10am and 4pm. Entry forms and additional information can be found on our website at www.sbcoe.org. Thank you to our sponsors including Ecology Action, Julia Robinson Mathematics Festival, The Tech Interactive, RAFT and VFW Post 9242/American Legion Post 69.

SBCOE Begins Early Literacy Certification Program

As part of its Building Bridges2Literacy Initiative, the San Benito County Office of Education began a new Early Literacy Certification Program on February 3, 2024. The program brings early literacy classes to daycare providers and preschool teachers throughout San Benito County and is designed to help participants learn new skills and strategies they can use with our youngest children to develop critical literacy skills. Eighteen participants attended the first in a series of workshops that run through April 13, 2024.

Led by Dr. Danielle Thomas, the workshop series will cover six components of literacy and five areas of reading necessary to help young children learn. Participants received four children's books, as well as a set of Alphabet paired cards that were incorporated into the training. As part of the certification, participants will create an Early Literacy Plan that they will implement with the children they work with currently.

Although the Early Literacy Certification Program is full at this time, it will be offered again next Fall. If you are interested in earning your Early Literacy Certification, please contact Keith Thorbahn at kthorbahn@sbcoe.org or Mai Cruz at macruz@sbcoe.org.



Students Continue to Build Their Literacy Skills

In January, County Superintendent Krystal Lomanto visited classrooms to award top Fall Reading Challenge winners at local schools. Students in the top three classrooms as well as those who read 25,000 or more words using the Footsteps2Brilliance reading app received reading charms. Students in Ms. Burbank's Kindergarten class at Rancho Santana, Ms. Allemand's 1st grade class at Rancho Santana, and Ms. Fuentes' 1st grade class at San Juan Elementary School received star reading charms while students in the county who read over 25,000 words were awarded trophy charms.

This year, SBCOE also held a winter reading challenge between December 1 and January 5. The top 15 readers were recognized at the San Benito County Office of Education Literacy Summit on January 26.

Look for our upcoming Spring Reading Challenge in March. If your child is not already registered for the Footstep2Brilliance app, you can do so for free at www.myf2b.com/register/SanBenitoCOE.



ECE Offers Screening Clinics

The San Benito County Special Education Department is the Regional Program operator of the Special Education Preschool located at 1011 Line Street in Hollister. They conduct monthly screening clinics to support residents of San Benito County that may have concerns with their child's developmental milestones, working closely with the San Andreas Regional Center (SARC) to support students that are turning three years old. They also assess students who have medical referrals. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you would like to schedule a screening or have any questions, 831.630.2525 X511.



Suicide Prevention Training Offered to Educators

All educators in San Benito County are invited to attend the free Suicide Prevention Training provided by the Suicide Prevention Service of the Central Coast on February 26, 2024 at 3:30-4:30pm at the Epicenter. Attendees will learn about:

- Importance of discussing suicide and mental health
- Beliefs and attitudes regarding suicide
- Identifying warning signs for individuals at risk
- Self-care strategies and seeking help
- Providing support to someone at risk
- Locating and accessing relevant resources
- Understanding the process when contacting 9-8-8 (suicide prevention hotline)
- Addressing questions and providing answers

Register at:

<https://sanbenito.k12oms.org/eventdetail.php?id=243825>.

San Benito County Mental Health Coordination Results in Universal Referral Process

School-based mental health services in San Benito County took a big step forward in January as schools and community agencies completed the San Benito County Universal Referral Process. This new process will streamline services for students while also ensuring they receive the appropriate Mental health services. Because the same system will be used to coordinate services in all public schools and community agencies that serve school-aged children, the process will also be easier for families to understand.

The universal referral process is the product of two collaborative networks led by the San Benito County Office of Education and the San Benito County Behavioral Health Department. The Mental Health Lead Network consists of leaders from each agency and county districts who come together to develop common processes and practices to support the mental health needs of students in San Benito County. Monthly San Benito County Mental Health Provider Network meetings are available to all mental health providers in the county. The goal of the network is for providers to learn more about what each agency offers and to collaborate on processes and procedures.

In addition to the Universal Referral Process, the two teams have also created a Universal Referral Form to be used by each school and have agreed upon common language and understandings around Tier 1, (general), Tier 2 (intervention) and Tier 3 (intensive) services.



HEALTHY MINDS
HEALTHY LIVES
ENGAGE, ENCOURAGE, EMPOWER... EDUCATE!

UPCOMING EVENTS

FEB 2024

SBC STEAM Expo

(Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math)

March 13
4:00-7:00pm
Veteran's Memorial Building

All students in grade Pre-K through 12th grade are encouraged to share their inventions, STEAM projects or participate in our County Science Fair!

Join us for live student demonstrations, interactive arts and science experiences, and food.

SBC Arts Showcase

April 10
4:00-7:00pm
Veteran's Memorial Building

All students in San Benito County are encouraged to submit artwork.

Join us to view live performances, interactive arts projects, and food.



Professional Learning Opportunities

Feb 1: Leading for Impact

<https://sanbenito.k12oms.org/eventdetail.php?id=241848>

2:30-4:30pm via Zoom

Feb 3: Early Literacy Certification

<https://sanbenito.k12oms.org/eventdetail.php?id=244550>

3:00-4:00pm via Zoom

Feb 5: CAC-Inclusion and Communication with Family

<https://sanbenito.k12oms.org/eventdetail.php?id=245163>

5:30-7:00pm via Zoom

Feb 8: SBC Math Initiative 2.0

<https://sanbenito.k12oms.org/eventdetail.php?id=245490>

1:15-3:15pm

Maze Middle School

Feb 15: Paraeducator Training

<https://sanbenito.k12oms.org/eventdetail.php?id=225604>

3:00-4:00pm

Epicenter

Feb 12: LCAP Workshop #1

<https://sanbenito.k12oms.org/eventdetail.php?id=243967>

3:30-5:00pm

SBCOE Boardroom

Feb 12: San Benito County Arts Initiative

<https://sanbenito.k12oms.org/eventdetail.php?id=241587>

3:30-5:00pm via Zoom

Feb 26: Suicide Prevention Training

<https://sanbenito.k12oms.org/eventdetail.php?id=243825>

3:30-4:30pm

Epicenter

Feb 29: PBIS 2.0

<https://sanbenito.k12oms.org/eventdetail.php?id=239930>

2:30-4:30pm

Meetings

Feb 2: SARB Screening

8:30-11:00am

WFD Center

Feb 12: Student Support Network/McKinney Vento Meeting

11:00am-12:00pm

Feb 14: Rural Principals Meeting

3:30-5:00pm

Feb 26: ATSI Informational Meeting

3:30-4:40 via Zoom

Feb 28: Mental Health Provider Network Meeting

3:00-4:30pm via Zoom

