



SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS

Staff Bulletin

September 23, 2005

BACK TO SCHOOL 2005-06

Welcome to the 2005-06 school year. The summer was a busy one for San Diego City Schools (SDCS), as you will read. This edition of Staff Bulletin will share some of the changes that took place during the summer, and some of the exciting things that have happened across the district in the first few weeks of school.

Perhaps the most significant event of the summer was the unanimous selection by the Board of Education of Dr. Carl A. Cohn as the new superintendent. Dr. Cohn, who has served as a teacher, counselor, and central office administrator, and who was superintendent of the Long Beach Unified School District for 10 years, joins SDCS on October 3, 2005. To read Dr. Cohn's biography, visit the district's website, www.sandi.net.

The district added to its campuses during the summer with the completion of Cherokee Point and Herbert Ibarra elementary schools. These campuses were built to relieve overcrowding in City Heights through Proposition MM.

As the year goes on, look to *Staff Bulletin* on the third Friday of each month for information about district events and initiatives, and for profiles and recognition of the people who make up the district. If you have a story suggestion or comment about Staff Bulletin, e-mail communications@sandi.net. Also remember to look for *Newsline* every Wednesday for additional news and events.

###

PROPOSITION MM: NEW SCHOOLS OPEN DOORS FOR STUDENTS IN CITY HEIGHTS

September marked a major milestone for Proposition MM when two new elementary schools opened to serve students in City Heights. And now, as Proposition MM nears its seventh anniversary, focus is shifting to new school construction. Eight more new schools are currently under construction throughout the city and are set to open in 2006, 2007 and 2008. A comprehensive update on the Proposition MM program is available at http://www.sandi.net/board/reports/2005/0726/e2b_ppt.pdf.

Read more below:

- Cherokee Point: A world-class elementary school
- Herbert Ibarra: An exciting place to learn

"The mission of San Diego City Schools is to improve student achievement by supporting teaching and learning in the classroom."

- 13 schools open new libraries, media centers

###

CHEROKEE POINT: A WORLD-CLASS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

By Cynthia Reed-Porter

When the new Cherokee Point Elementary School opened its doors on September 6, 2005, its principal, Dr. Rich Cansdale, hoped it would be the first of many exciting and memorable experiences for the students, parents and staff at this City Heights school.

“At Cherokee Point, we want to provide a safe and caring environment that allows children to collaborate, take risks and become responsible life-long learners. We are about educating the whole child,” Cansdale explained.

Cherokee Point, named for the neighborhood which it serves, is one of two Proposition MM elementary schools that opened this fall. The new schools will help relieve campus overcrowding in one of the most densely populated areas of the city.

Cansdale has actively sought out partnerships to help build “a world-class school that is high achieving, and at the same time, the center of the community.” He has connected with elected officials and led tours for Deputy Mayor Toni Atkins, who is also the city council representative for the area, and Jack O’Connell, state superintendent of public education. He has also aligned the school with several nonprofit and community organizations.

Price Charities, for example, has given the school a \$50,000 grant to help extend the instructional day. The grant is funding remedial and enrichment instructional programs for approximately 200 students.

Copley YMCA, located across the street, provides additional daycare at the school. Both programs are in addition to the “6-to-6” after-school program.

As principal, Cansdale has also focused efforts on instructional quality and support. In addition to eight former staff developers, literacy and mathematics instructional specialists, and a nationally board-certified library-media teacher to “connect the library sciences with the classrooms,” Cherokee Point is home to University of San Diego Professors in Residence Dr. Kathleen Collins and Dr. Sally Yard.

Cansdale said that he and his staff are also establishing a social tone and school culture that focuses on high academic and civic standards, good character and community service.

“With rigorous teaching and learning, our expectations for a high achieving school are attainable. But we don’t stop with the students; we want to be a catalyst to improve the neighborhood and the community,” continued Cansdale.

The principal’s approach to involving the neighborhood and community has paid off. Neighbors have volunteered for safety patrol and enthusiastically greeted students and served coffee to parents on the first day of school.

Cansdale is no stranger to opening a new school. In 2001, he opened Ellen Browning Scripps Elementary School in Scripps Ranch, the first school to be built with Proposition MM funds.

He is, therefore, familiar with the “exhilarating opportunity” opening a new school presents. Cansdale particularly relishes the chance “to work with teachers to develop a common belief system” by thinking “deeply about what the school will become.”

For the staff at Cherokee Point, in the end, it all comes down to the school’s students. “They truly are our most important ‘visitors’ of the day!” he said.

#

HERBERT IBARRA: AN EXCITING PLACE TO LEARN

By Cynthia Reed-Porter

Even though her name might suggest otherwise, Principal Susie Sovereign doesn’t plan to “reign” over the new Herbert Ibarra Elementary School. In fact, one of the reasons she wanted to be the principal of the new City Heights school was to “start from scratch to create a top-notch team.”

“I know we’re going to do great things here,” she said. “It’s all about the instruction in the classroom and getting to know the students. We have staff that cares about the children, and they will do whatever it takes to help them be successful. Everyone has a very positive work ethic.”

Ibarra is one of two Proposition MM elementary schools that opened this fall and will help relieve campus overcrowding in one of the most densely populated areas of the city. The school is named for the first Latino principal in San Diego City Schools, which is particularly appropriate since approximately 80 percent of the 550 Ibarra students are Hispanic. Other cultures that are represented at the school are Somali, Vietnamese and Cambodian.

When Sovereign was forming her instructional team, she looked for teachers who wanted to make a difference and who would work well together. Many have worked with Sovereign in the past and requested to come to the school because she was the principal.

“I guarantee that each child has an excellent teacher,” Sovereign said. “Each teacher is a dedicated and positive role model.”

To support efforts to develop the “whole child,” Sovereign has hired a full-time counselor, nurse and a community builder. She has also hired a full-time technology support person to assist teachers, provide instruction and serve as a technician.

Technology is integrated into the curriculum throughout the grade levels. Starting in kindergarten, children have access to the latest technologies, including wireless Internet access and laptops. Each classroom is equipped with laser printers, DVD/VCR players and cable, and teachers are using document cameras to magnify books and other materials on a large screen.

Sovereign's goal is simple and straightforward. She wants to ignite a passion for learning among the Ibarra students and develop good human beings.

"We make a difference when we come together to accomplish the same goal," she explained. "Even though the teachers came to Ibarra from about a dozen different schools and varied backgrounds, they came to consensus fairly quickly. That's quite an accomplishment."

Sovereign builds consensus by tapping into her teaching and leadership experience that spans more than 20 years. She most recently served as principal of North Park Elementary.

This is the first school Sovereign has opened. It's been a challenge, she said, but one she tackled with a lot of help.

"Since I hadn't opened a school before, there was a little bit of a learning curve," she explained. "But I can't say enough about the support from the district. It's incredible how many people it takes to build and open a new school. There has been an amazing depth of involvement and commitment from everyone – from construction to ordering furniture, from boundaries to safe routes to school, and from cafeteria to procurement to technology. My knowledge of the district has quadrupled."

###

13 SCHOOLS OPEN NEW LIBRARIES, MEDIA CENTERS

While the focus of Proposition MM is turning toward new school construction, many existing schools are still in the throes of renovations and campus expansion. To date, 82 of 161 schools have completed all projects as listed on the Proposition MM ballot measure. The remainder of schools should be completed in early 2006.

As part of the renovations, 104 schools are getting new libraries, of which 90 are complete. Over the past six months, 13 schools have held ribbon-cutting ceremonies for new libraries, including:

- Benchley-Weinberger Elementary
- Cubberley Elementary
- Encanto Elementary
- Franklin Elementary
- Hawthorne Elementary
- Johnson Elementary
- Jones Elementary
- La Jolla Elementary
- McKinley Elementary
- Perry Elementary
- Rolando Park Elementary
- Roosevelt Middle
- Wangenheim Middle

To plan a ribbon-cutting ceremony at your school, review the checklist available online at <http://prod031.sandi.net/propmm/principals.htm#plan>.

###

DR. CARL A. COHN CHOSEN AS NEXT SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT

Unanimous vote came at special meeting

On July 23, 2005, the San Diego City Schools (SDCS) Board of Education held a special meeting of the board and, following public testimony, unanimously voted to hire Dr. Carl A. Cohn as the next Superintendent of San Diego City Schools. Cohn served most recently as Clinical Professor at the Rossier School of Education at the University of Southern California. Dr. Cohn will begin his tenure at SDCS on October 3, 2005. Interim Superintendent Leslie Fausset, who served during the transition, will be joining the Solana Beach School District as superintendent.

“We are very excited to welcome Dr. Cohn as the next leader of San Diego City Schools,” said Board President Luis Acle. “Dr. Cohn’s proven track record in urban education is exactly what we were looking in an ideal candidate – he is an educator and a collaborative leader with an ability to develop a vision with stakeholders.”

In a recent interview with the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, Cohn said, "rather than coming into a place with ready answers and solutions, I try to listen and to find out what's really going on – especially when it comes to conflict.”

Look for more on Dr. Cohn in future editions of *Staff Bulletin*.

###

NEW SCHOOLS CONSTRUCTION DELAYS

The Proposition MM semi-annual update was recently presented to the Board of Education. The report highlights the program's financial status, accomplishments, challenges and goals. It is available on the district website at www.sandi.net/board/reports/2005/0726/e2b_ppt.pdf.

Most notably, the Proposition MM update included information about construction delays at several of our new schools due to severe winter rainstorms, environmental issues, and dissolution of a modular contractor. These construction delays have resulted in revised opening dates for several of our new schools.

###

COMMUNITY, FAMILY BREAK GROUND ON FLORENCE GRIFFITH JOYNER ELEMENTARY

The family and friends of Florence Griffith Joyner were among the distinguished guests at a groundbreaking ceremony for the new school named in memory of the famous and beloved Olympic gold medalist track star.

The new Florence Griffith Joyner Elementary School, under construction at 4271 Myrtle Avenue in City Heights, is scheduled to open in September 2006. It will help relieve crowding at Edison, Hamilton and Rosa Parks elementary schools.

Florence Griffith and Elizabeth Tate, the mother and sister of Florence Griffith Joyner, helped with the "first dig" and spoke highly of the athlete known as "Flo Jo." Joyner, known as the World's Fastest Woman, broke records in the 100- and 200-meter events and elevated women's track to a higher level. She founded the Florence Griffith Joyner Youth Foundation for disadvantaged youth, which is now based in City Heights and managed by Tate.

The new school, situated on 6.3 acres in City Heights, will include 32 classrooms, a library, multipurpose room, state of the art technology, energy efficient design features and a joint-use grass playfield. The buildings' steel columns and roof lines express the spirit of Florence Griffith Joyner in their dynamic swiftness and strength.

The new school, which will help ease classroom overcrowding at City Heights schools, is also the anchor of a larger urban village project. As envisioned, the San Diego Model School Development project will include replacement housing, community services and open space.

The new school is funded by Proposition MM, the 1998 bond measure that provides \$1.51 billion toward \$4 billion of needed repairs and construction at San Diego City Schools.

###

PROP. MM SNAPSHOT

- 3 of 15 new schools have opened
- 82 of 161 existing schools have completed all projects as detailed in Voter's Guide
- 2,370 of 2,725 Voter's Guide items completed
- Also completed:
 - 90 libraries
 - 68 instructional support spaces
 - 35 science buildings
 - 14 permanent classroom buildings to replace portables
 - 110 lunch court shelters
 - 132 painted exteriors
 - 49 schools re-roofed
 - 153 playground units

WHAT DO ALL THE NEW SCHOOLS LOOK LIKE?

Do you want to see artists' renderings of all new schools being built under Proposition MM? Renderings, ceremonial groundbreaking shovels and other commemorative materials are being displayed in the glass building on the north side of the Education Center. You can also find renderings and information on the Proposition MM website at www.sandi.net/propmm/new.htm

###

NEWS YOU CAN USE

- **Free Nutrition Curriculum** available for K-12 teachers by U.C. Cooperative Extension. Each curriculum comes with teacher manual, fun lessons, quizzes and new MyPyramid poster. Standards-based! Please contact Stella Weaver at (858) 694-2122 or at sweaver@ucdavis.edu.
- If you aspire to earn both your Master's Degree and **National Board Certification**, National University offers an opportunity to achieve your goals in a meaningful way through a one course per month format—online, on ground or a combination of both! For more information, visit the district website.
- The Education Center Building Committee has organized the October 1, 2005 **Education Center Flea Market**. Taking place from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. at 4100 Normal Street in the main parking lot off Campus Drive, the flea market is open to family, friends, and schools interested in an easy fundraiser. Spots, which are \$10 prior to the event or \$15 day-of, are available on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, contact Julie Hendershot at 619-725-7317 or jhendershot@sandi.net. To view the flyer, visit http://www.sandi.net/staff/newsline/2005/flea_market_flyer.pdf.
- The Department of Education recently released a tool kit of resources that Hispanic families can use to improve their children's performance in school. The tool kit includes nine department publications in English and Spanish, including "Questions Parents Ask About Schools," "A Guide for Reading," and "Helping Your Child Succeed in School." The materials will be distributed to schools throughout this month, and are also available online. The information is designed for families of children in preschool through high school. The **Tool Kit for Hispanic Families** is available on the Web at www.edpubs.org.

###

HALL OF FAME

- The **Counseling and Guidance Department** recently received a Grant To Reduce Alcohol Abuse, a three-year Federal grant that will provide \$498,000 a year to support district programs. The department will be adopting and implementing a research-based classroom guidance curriculum entitled, "Towards No Drug Abuse Program" in all 9th grade classrooms districtwide. There will also be continuing refresher lessons at the 10th, 11th and 12 grades. The grant will also fund a minimum of 4 "community dialogues" to provide parents and concerned community members the opportunity to dialogue about these socially relevant issues.
- Over the past several months, the San Diego Chargers has awarded San Diego City Schools \$137,000 overall in grants for physical fitness, education, and nutrition programs. The Chargers Champion Program has provided San Diego County schools more than \$1.6 million in scholarships and grants since the beginning of the program six years ago. This year's grantees are: **Keiller Middle** (\$27,000), **North Park Elementary** (\$2,000), **Sunset View Elementary** (\$30,000), **Roosevelt Middle** (\$40,000), **Carson Elementary** (\$30,000), and **Paradise Hills Elementary** (\$8,000).
- **Susan O'Neil** of the Construction Management Department has been selected as Facilities Management Division "Employee of the Month" for the month of September. According to Construction Management Supervisor Carol J. Pezzopane, Susan "is the

spark that keeps our department running on high beam. Her positive attitude, caring nature and willingness to pitch in on any task on a daily basis is so appreciated. She always has a smile and kind work for everyone."

- **Agin Shaheed, Race/Human Relations & Advocacy Program** Manager, and his department recently received a special thank you from "The Dr. Phil Show." On August 8th, 2005, the show used the department's "Five Name Game" as an audience activity for a show titled "Are you a Racist." The show aired on Thursday, September 22.

- Another employee from the Race/Human Relations & Advocacy Program Department, **Macedonio Arteaga, Jr.**, received a Local Hero Award as part of Hispanic Heritage Month for his work with Izcalli, a program promoting self-esteem and self-determination through arts and culture for Chicano and Native American youth in San Diego. To read his bio and watch a segment that aired on KPBS, visit <http://kpbs.org/Television/DynPage.php?id=1799>

- Chief of Staff **Kerry Flanagan** was named one of *San Diego Metropolitan Magazine's* "40 under 40" for 2005. The annual list recognizes the region's young business and civic leaders. Flanagan was honored as the third-highest ranking woman in the district.

#

SCENES FROM OUR SCHOOLS

- The International Baccalaureate (IB) program is a rigorous course of study that trains students to think critically about learning and to strive to improve in all academic areas. Roosevelt Middle School is applying to become an IB Middle Years school, and hopes to become the first school in the city to have the IB program in grades 6-8. On September 20, Roosevelt held a ceremony representing the school's entry into the application process. Officials from the IB Organization will visit the campus this fall to consider Roosevelt for the program.

Principal Dr. Julie Martel gave a short welcome before African drummers and dancers from the World Beat Center took the stage to entertain students and staff. IB Program Coordinator Jeannette Vaughn gave an introduction of the Middle Years Programme, and San Diego High School students who are enrolled in the senior level program spoke about the impact IB has had on their lives. Later in the morning, students returned to their classrooms to participate in an IB program-type activity: working in groups, students made chairs that were strong enough to hold Dr. Martel using newspapers and masking tape.

- On Tuesday, September 13, **Gage Elementary** held a ceremony to honor those emergency personnel who are first responders to catastrophes across our nation--such as 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. The school's safety patrol presented the colors and led students and dignitaries-- including San Diego Police Department mounted officers and San Diego Fire Department firefighters-- in the Pledge of Allegiance. Principal Kristi Dean presented the first responders with proceeds from their "Quarters for the Quarter" collection for the victims of Hurricane Katrina for the officers to "pass on" to the responders assisting those in the Gulf Coast. Students and staff raised \$1,000, and the

school's Partner in Education, the La Mesa Branch of California Coast Credit Union, matched their donation.

- **Serra High School's** Naval Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps, accompanied by a trumpeter, held a brief remembrance ceremony to honor the victims of the attack on America on September 11, 2001. Students joined with other Americans across the country by gathering to demonstrate respect and unity.

#

STUDENT SALUTES

- **Katelyn Carano** of Alcott Elementary School won first place honors in Senator Christine Kehoe's annual 39th District 5th Grade Essay Contest. Katelyn's essay about the seals at the La Jolla Children's Pool earned her a State Senate Certificate of Recognition from Senator Kehoe, as well as a SONY Electronics-sponsored digital camera, and a Padres-sponsored goodie bag.

For submitting the most essays, **Dana Middle School** won a 27" color television sponsored by SONY Electronics. For submitting the second most essays, **Brooklyn Elementary** won a Gateway computer, which the company donated for the contest.

In addition to the aforementioned schools, Senator Kehoe received essays from the following SDCS elementary schools **Balboa, Benchley Weinberger, Bethune, Franklin, Freese, Gage, Johnson, Knox, Marshall, McKinley, Pacific Beach, Sequoia, and Walker.**

This annual contest invited all 5th grade classes in the 39th Senate District to write a persuasive letter to their school principal, the editor of a local newspaper, or their Senator regarding an issue that is important to them.

- 31 students from SDCS were among only 16,000 in the nation announced as Semifinalists in the 51st annual National Merit Scholarship Program. These scholastically talented high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 8,200 Merit Scholarship Awards, worth \$33 million, that will be offered next spring. The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test served as an initial screen of program applicants. The nationwide pool of Semifinalists, represents less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors.

Congratulations to **La Jolla High students Tomas Anderson, Matthew Bohrer, Elena Churilov, Claire Deken, Meredith Ganon, Rachael Garcia, Nicholas Garver, Parhaum Hamidi, Jordan Liew, Joseph Lin, Ian MacLeod, Eric Sefton, Harin Song, Praveen Subamani, Zachary Wstrick, Elizabeth Zhang, and George Zhou; Patrick Henry High students Fabrice Heng and Gautam Wilkins; High Tech High students Erica Krimmel and Katherine Quinn; Point Loma High student Kevin Yaeckel; San Diego High International Studies student Lauryn Stephanson; Scripps Ranch High students Jenna Adsit, Lauren Eby, Jason Goldfine-Middleton, Ross Goldman, Bonnie Gordon, Steven Gordon, Alexander Lovell, and Maria Mortensen.**

These students may advance to the Finalist level through an outstanding academic record throughout the high school years, endorsement and recommendation from school principal, and qualifying SAT score. Good luck!

###

SAVE THE DATE

- Saturday, October 8, 2005, Cox Communications Presents "**A Salute to Teachers**," the annual San Diego County Teacher of the Year Awards. The black-tie-optional event at the Civic Theatre, will honor teachers at all levels from across the county, including SDCS Teachers of the Year Jennifer Hunt (Field Elementary), Phil Ensberg (Preuss School), and Erin McPeck (Henry High). For more information, go to <http://www.sdcoe.net/comm/salute/teachers.asp>.
- Are you interested in becoming a **National Board Certified Teacher**? A required orientation is scheduled for Saturday, October 22, 2005 at the Instructional Media Center (IMC), 2441 Cardinal Lane, Building "G" from 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. To register, please contact Velvet Wright at 858-496-1882 or e-mail: vwright@sandi.net.
- Looking for a family-friendly activity? Come to a **free matinee movie** at PETCO Park at the Park. On Saturday, September 24 at 3:00 p.m., the "Wizard of Oz" will be shown on the big jumbotron in the park. In lieu of admission, bring a canned food donation for the San Diego Rescue Mission and St. Vincent de Paul Villages. Park at the Park is located at J Street between 8th and 9th Avenues behind Petco Park. You're encouraged to bring blankets, food and beverages (no lawn chairs permitted). Concessions for sale will also be available. For more information, visit <http://www.ccdc.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/news.NewsDetail/newsID/206>
- A **retirement party** for Bob Gunstad will be held on Saturday October 15. For more information, please call Leslie at 619-840-6219 or Amy at 619-697-7550.
- A **fundraiser happy hour** will be held for Narciso Garcia, the vice principal at Chollas-Mead Elementary who is in the hospital with relapse of leukemia. The event will take place at Chevy's restaurant in Mission Valley on Friday, October 7th at 4:00p.m. Depending on the net purchases made by the participants, 15%-20% of the net sales will be donated to Narciso, who just underwent a bone marrow transplant and will run out of sick leave and partial sick leave before he is able to return to work. For more information, please contact Vera Valdivia, principal, Dewey Elementary.

###

IN MEMORIAM

Please look for "In Memoriam" in a future edition of *Staff Bulletin*.

###

CLASSIFIEDS

Aquarium for sale: 60-gallon double deck aquarium- wrought iron stand, \$50. **Lazy Boy chair**, \$30. 619-281-0111

Car for sale: 1996 4-door beige Toyota Camry LE, excellent condition- 98,000 miles, \$5175. 619-523-5044

Sailboat for sale: 14 ft. Lido, xInt condition, 2 sets of sails, \$2,000. 619-921-5419

Cremation Plots for sale: Greenwood Cemetery Cremation Plots, Memory Lake section. Barbara, 760-788-0131 or jesusmyrock@msn.com

Wanted: Indian arrowheads/artifacts. Must be ancient and authentic. Steve, 619-222-8562

House for Rent: Talmadge area, 3 bedrooms, office, 1 3/4 baths, gardener and water included, \$1,500 month. 619-460-7894

#