

# San Diego City Schools

## Staff Bulletin – October 1, 2003

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### **DWA Update**

Practice your PeopleSoft at new DWA Open Lab

Wish you had a place to practice your new PeopleSoft training? You got it. The DWA team has created an Open Lab for both school site and central office staff who've gone through PeopleSoft training to practice what they've learned.

Twenty-five stations have been set up in the lab so you can practice your actual PeopleSoft work, such as timecard entry or using the new Personnel Action Request (PAR) form ([http://prod031.sandi.net/dwa/assets/hr\\_hire\\_PAR.pdf](http://prod031.sandi.net/dwa/assets/hr_hire_PAR.pdf)), the electronic replacement of the Assignment Authorization form. DWA staff will be on hand throughout the day to offer assistance and answer questions.

The Open Lab will be available starting Oct 13<sup>th</sup> through December 18<sup>th</sup> on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., and the schedule will be tied to training subject areas:

- October 13, 15, 16, 20, 22, 23, 27, 29 and 30 – Time and Labor, and PAR processing
- November 3, 5, 6, 10, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20 and 24 – Time and Labor, PAR processing, and eProcurement
- December 1, 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 15, 17 and 18 – Time and Labor, PAR processing and eProcurement.

The lab is located in the Horizon room in Building "I" in the Instructional Materials Center (IMC) complex. Signs will direct you to the Horizon training facility. You don't need to reserve a station, but access is provided on a first come, first served basis.

Still haven't signed up for training? Check with your site administrator to make sure you know who should attend which training sessions, and then check the course descriptions. The training schedule has just been updated to include sessions in November and December for both central office and school site staff.

If you have additional questions, please email [dwa@sandi.net](mailto:dwa@sandi.net), or visit the DWA website at [www.sandi.net/dwa](http://www.sandi.net/dwa).

### **October is Disability Awareness Month**

October is Disability Awareness Month, a nationwide observance designed to raise awareness of how people with disabilities learn, live, play and work. In San Diego City Schools, the Board of Education passed a resolution in recognition of this observance, and in partnership with a series of special events and activities occurring districtwide that will increase the awareness and sensitivity of staff and students to individuals with disabilities.

As part of this effort, the district's Special Education Site-based Diagnostic Resource Teachers (SBDRTs) participated in a disability awareness training provided by the Disability Awareness Network (DAWN) in September, at the expense of the Exception Family Resource Center

(EFRC). The training allowed SBDRTs an opportunity to practice providing subsequent training for their schools in an interactive way, using a comprehensive packet of materials provided by the EFRC.

During October, each SBDRT will work with individual site administrators to provide disability awareness training to faculty, who will in turn then be prepared to complete some activities with students in their classes in order to facilitate a keener understanding and sensitivity to disabled individuals.

Parents are encouraged to get involved by volunteering for such activities as doing a Rolling Reader tutoring in their child's classroom, helping to prepare the materials, or assisting the teacher in sharing the information and materials with the class.

For more information about October Disability Awareness Month, please contact Lori Kay, Special Education Parent Facilitator, or Gayle Coonce, Special Education Program Manager, at (858) 490-8500.

## **Getting to Know You**

*Debbie Chiles, Special Education Early Childhood (SEEC) teacher  
Ericson Elementary*

### **Tell us a little bit about your background.**

I got into Special Education because I have a son with special needs. He's 25 now, but I began volunteering with his schools when he was young. Because of his needs, I wanted to be able to support him in school and felt volunteering was important. I was also working full time, but eventually ended up spending more time volunteering than at work.

### **What did you do at the time?**

I have a degree in personnel and labor relations and was working in that field. I ended up quitting and began a job with the school district as a part-time Special Education Parent Facilitator. That was about 18 years ago and I've been with the district ever since.

### **What does that work entail?**

Parent Facilitators have a child with special needs and are hired by the school district to help other parents of children with disabilities to get through the Special Education process. I worked specifically with families of newly diagnosed children. I helped them to understand the IEP process (Individual Education Plan) and provided support and resources. It can be very overwhelming for parents -- trying to understand what the disability may mean for their family. It is beneficial to have support during this time.

### **Does your own situation with your son give you a special perspective on helping these parents?**

I think so. By sharing with these parents some of the issues I've faced with my own son, they tend to trust me because they know I can relate. My son's diagnoses have run the gamut -- from autism and moderate retardation to Attention Deficit Disorder and other learning issues. Fortunately, he has made great progress in many areas of his life. However, when he was 16, I found out he has Muscular Dystrophy, which is a degenerative disease for which there is no cure. This was actually the impetus for me to go back to school to get my teaching degree.

### **How so?**

I knew that I really needed something, career-wise, that would provide me a path to being self-reliant and be able to better take care of my son. So, I went back to school in my mid-30s, and got my multiple-subject teaching credential and a specialist credential to work with children who are severely handicapped. I also earned my master's degree in Education.

**That's amazing! Were you still working, too?**

Yes, I was still working full-time, and at that point, I had two children and a husband to care for. I had a ton of support from friends and family who kept encouraging me to get my degree. My credentials allow me to teach almost anywhere and I choose to work with these young children. I love working with them and their families.

**Tell us about the children you work with now.**

I work with 3- and 4-year-old children; most have a diagnosis of autism. We run a very structured sensory and behavior intervention program and use a lot of visual supports to help children become more independent and self-confident.

**What's an example of a visual support you would use?**

We use a lot of picture schedules, which is very effective in helping these small children learn to transition from one activity to the next and to know where to go. As adults, we are familiar with and use daily organizers and planners. This is the same sort of thing, only for really little kids. It really helps to increase positive behavior. And as they become more independent and confident, we can focus on real teaching, and not just behavioral interventions.

My goal is to help these students move out of my program to the next level and into more general education-type programs. We are teaching them the skills of being in school, how to learn and how to behave.

**What are some of the best moments?**

There are so many. Our kids have such a diverse learning curve; some of the seemingly small things are really quite a big deal. With each small piece of progress, we all get excited and say "did you see that?" or "did you hear what he just said?" and as a group we all go "Yeah!" We have a lot of very challenging behavior issues and it can be really tough. We try something and tweak it and get excited when it works; "Oh, okay! That's the secret for *this* child." It's a constant reward when you get a good clue as to what each child's 'secret' is, to uncover his or her learning style.

**The district is recognizing October as Disability Awareness Month. What would you like for people to get out of this observance?**

I really hope people take the opportunity to think about what it's like for families who have children with disabilities. It's not something they choose. It's a card that's been dealt them and they deserve support and acceptance. That's the key, I think. Acceptance. If we can, as a community, be more accepting of people with disabilities, it would make a world of difference. Then, the person's ability becomes the focus, not the disability.

**Lincoln's walls come tumbling down**

New Lincoln will be built in its place

On Wednesday, September 24, a crowd of alumni, students and neighbors quietly gathered outside Lincoln High to watch the wrecking ball demolish their old school.

**Wendell Bass**, principal of Lincoln, led the event. Guest speakers, including Superintendent Alan Bersin, Board Vice President Katherine Nakamura, Councilmember Charles Lewis and former Deputy Mayor George Stevens, made comments before the demolition began. Several Lincoln students, who are now attending other area high schools, were also at the event.

As part of Proposition MM, Lincoln is being rebuilt and expanded. The new, larger school will help relieve high school crowding because Morse High, San Diego High, and the old Lincoln cannot currently accommodate the full high school population in southeast San Diego.

The demolition will continue over the next four months and should be completed by January 2004. Then the district will conduct environmental soil tests, grade the site, and finalize design and construction documents. Construction crews will break ground in Fall 2004.

The new school will reopen in Fall 2006. The district estimates an enrollment of nearly 2,800 students on opening day.

## **Improving Parent Communications**

Recognizing the vital role parents play in their students' academic achievement, San Diego City Schools (SDCS) has recently created several tools to improve effective parent involvement.

### *Setting a Standard*

*Parent Communications and Involvement Standards* is a document that outlines expectations for communicating with and engaging parents at the district, school, classroom and home levels.

On August 5, 2003, the Board of Education unanimously approved the *Standards* and suggested that a framed copy of the one-page Summary in English and the school's second language be prominently displayed at each site.

### *Sharing the Best Ideas*

The *Portfolio of Best Practices* is a collection of excellent parent involvement activity examples from different schools across the district. The purpose is two-fold. First, to praise principals and staff for their exceptional efforts to strengthen parent communications and involvement at their schools. Secondly, to share the practices with other schools so they may incorporate some of the ideas. The *Portfolio*, published with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is available online at: <http://sandi.net/parents/pciw/index.htm#port>.

### *Communications Notebook*

The *Communications Notebook* is an easy-to-use reference guide for principals and staff. It contains information from various departments with parent-related information, as well as video/web services, Prop MM, partnership and volunteer opportunities, parent support, and parent and community involvement information. Included is a guide to handling the media and the Board-approved Parent Communications and Involvement Standards. The *Communications Notebook* was also published with support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

### *Sharing the Information*

In mid-September, Principals' Conference attendees were given bags containing a *Communications Notebook*, *Standards* in English and Spanish, laminated *Parent Communications and Involvement Summary* posters to post in school offices, and the first annual *Portfolio of Best Practices*.

In the months ahead, the Parent Communications and Involvement Workgroup (PCIW), comprised of 30 parents, teachers, principals and district staff, will help draft a needs-assessment survey, which will be provided to all sites. The information gathered will help identify what

activities are presently in place, the level of participation, and how the PCIW can help schools and district central office departments.

For a complete copy of the *Standards* or one-page *Summary*, visit SDCS website at: <http://sandi.net/parents/pciw/index.htm#standards>.

## **High School Graduation Rates**

*Data to be used for second phase of Adequate Yearly Progress*

Earlier this month, the California Department of Education (CDE) posted high school graduation rates for schools throughout the state. The graduation rates, calculated statewide for the first time, were determined using information on high school graduates and high school dropouts aggregated over a four-year period.

Districtwide, San Diego City Schools graduation rate in 2001-02 was 83.3, compared to 84.6 in 2000-01. This equals a 1.3 percent decrease.

CDE will use the graduation rate data for the 2000-01 and 2001-02 school years in the second phase of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reporting. The accountability provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 require that schools meet criteria for Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), test participation rates, Academic Performance Index (API), and graduation rate. AYP Phase I reports, distributed last month, provided results for the first two components. This month, AYP Phase II Reports will provide results for the last two additional AYP indicators, graduation rate and API, indicating if the criteria were met.

For individual school results, please visit the California Department of Education's website at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov).

## **San Diego City Schools Receives \$3 Million Walton Family Foundation Grant**

San Diego City Schools received a \$3 million, three-year grant from the Walton Family Foundation to help raise student achievement at 10 lower performing schools. The grant, which will be used from 2003-06, will fund 10 parent academic liaison (PAL) positions and two peer coach/staff developer positions.

"In order for the district to raise student success at our lowest performing schools, we need to provide them with the tools and resources," said Chief Academic Officer Mary Hopper. "The Walton Family Foundation grant will help us put additional support into the schools where they are most needed. We believe that students and schools have made gains where these strategies have already been added."

The following schools will each receive a Parent Academic Liaison, supported through the award from the Walton Family Foundation: Adams, Birney, Brooklyn, Carver, Central, Hamilton, Linda Vista, Rowan, Valencia Park, Webster. Carver and Valencia Park will also have a Peer Coach/Staff Developer allocated for their sites.

## **News You Can Use**

- The **Board President's Scholarship Award** is presented annually by the President of the **Board of Education** and **California Coast Credit Union** to two monthly classified employees interested in becoming teachers. Each year, the California Coast Credit Union donates \$2,000 to fund these scholarships. The recipients each receive a \$1,000 check that will be presented at an upcoming Board of Education meeting. The Scholarship funds are to

be used for tuition, fees or books at any local two- or four-year college or university. The award this year will be announced at the November 18 board meeting. Previous winners are not eligible. Applicants must submit an application form and two applicant reference forms, available on Site Operations Circular #1017

(<http://www.sandi.net/staff/circulars/0304/so1017.pdf>) on the district's "For Staff" page. Completed applications must be received by the Board of Education Office, Room 2231, Eugene Brucker Education Center, no later than 5 p.m., October 27, 2003.

- The **Annual Cal-SOAP (California Student Opportunity and Access Program) Career Fair** will be held on Tuesday, October 21, from 6-9 p.m. at the Scottish Rite Center (1895 Camino del Rio South San Diego, CA 92108) In addition to having more than 100 local, state, and national universities and colleges on hand to answer questions, the fair will provide students and parents access to informational breakout sessions discussing financial aid, California Community Colleges and the transfer process, and college essay writing tips. For more information, contact Cal-SOAP at (858) 569-1866 or Pam Perry at [pperry@mail.sandi.net](mailto:pperry@mail.sandi.net).
- The **13th Annual SAVY Youth Leadership Conference** will be held on Thursday, October 30, 2003, from 8:30-1:30 p.m., at the San Diego Concourse. SAVY (Students Actively Volunteering for You), is a youth leadership program of Volunteer San Diego comprised of middle school and high school students from around San Diego County. In collaboration with San Diego City Schools, SAVY offers many opportunities for students to become actively engaged in community service and service learning activities. This free conference is open to teachers and students, grades 7-12. It will feature a variety of interactive workshops and presentations in the areas of Youth Service and Volunteerism, Youth Leadership, and Service Learning. Participants will learn how to get involved in service, develop leadership skills, learn how to motivate and involve others, as well as network with youth, adults, and community service agencies. Lunch will also be provided. The registration deadline for the conference is Friday, October 17, and space is limited. To register for the conference online, visit Volunteer San Diego's website at [www.volunteersandiego.org](http://www.volunteersandiego.org). If you have questions or need additional information, please call Jennie Stover, AmeriCorps Promise
- **Schools can now earn cash for paper recycling**  
Your school can now earn cash for recycling paper! Thanks to an innovative contract initiated through our **Recycling Department**, Paper Depot will collect paper and pay each school directly for its efforts. This program not only provides a new revenue stream for your school, but it could save the district up to \$300,000 per year in landfill fees.

#### **How does it work?**

- In the coming weeks, Paper Depot will deliver bright blue 3-cubic-yard recycling bins to schools. They will be placed next to the gray trash bins.
- Encourage your staff to place all types of paper in the bins (anything that tears). Click [here](#) for a list of paper that qualifies.
- Paper Depot will empty the bins when full. Their trucks have the capability to record the weight of the bins, which will be calculated into your school's cash rebate.
- Payment will be made directly to schools every other month. The price paid per ton is expected to fluctuate based on the market. Currently, the value is \$5.00/ton for mixed paper. For reference, a well-packed, neatly stacked 3-cubic-yard bin will hold a half-ton of paper. These numbers, although low by themselves, can add up fast. Also, the district will no longer be charged for paper recycling collection.
- Building Services Supervisors/Plant Operations Supervisors have been informed of the change. They can still call Bill Causee at (858) 627-7216 with any issues regarding missed pickups and service issues.

#### **How can schools implement recycling education programs?**

The Recycling Department has developed several tools to educate staff and students about recycling and environmental programs:

- Last year, most middle and high schools created Conservation Clubs to operate beverage container recycling programs. Your school can link paper recycling education to these clubs, or offer the responsibility to another environmental or student club.
- In October, elementary schools will receive information about how to create a Planet Protector Club to help with paper recycling, education and monitoring.

If you have any questions about the district's recycling programs, please contact Andrea Calbow at (858) 627-7376.

- **BORDERS EDUCATORS APPRECIATION WEEKEND**

Borders wants to say "Thank you" to San Diego educators, and all of us who support teaching and learning in the classroom, with an **Educators Appreciation Weekend**, October 10-12, 2003. The three-day appreciation event offers a 25% discount for all education employees, as well as retired teachers and student teachers. Just bring your district ID or pay stub. The discount cannot be combined with any other discount or coupon, and the discount on electronics is 10%. The discount does not apply to gift cards, periodicals or non-stock special order. Educators will also receive 40% off on any food or beverage item in the café.

As part of the weekend events, each Borders store will host a special Community Day, where tables will be manned by local businesses and organizations offering free samples and small items for educators. The first 200 educators at each store's Community Day event will receive a tote bag with coupons, freebies and other samples. Community Days are planned for October 11 for the El Cajon, Mission Valley and Carmel Mountain stores, and on Sunday, October 12, at the Gaslamp store.

Additionally, each store will have copies of *"Beat the Budget Crisis"*, a resource booklet for teachers that lists area businesses and organizations that offer either a field trip or speaker or a discount for educators. This booklet is free to all educators while supplies last. For hours, call the Borders location nearest you:

Carmel Mountain - 11160 Rancho Carmel Dr. (858) 618-1814

El Cajon - 159 Fletcher Parkway (619) 593-5119

Gaslamp - 668 Sixth Ave. (619) 702-4200

Mission Valley - 1072 Camino Del Rio North (619) 295-2201

## Scenes from Schools

- Dennis Key, muralist, and **Linda Taggart**, principal of **Correia Junior High School** cut the ribbon dedicating the new sealife mural in the center courtyard of campus on Curriculum Night, September 18, 2003 while the Correia band, lead by **Jim Trespasso**, played a medley of tunes. Students and parents worked on the mural over the summer under the direction of muralist, Dennis Key. (include scenes from schools photos 1&2.)
- Schools are celebrating the completion of their **Proposition MM** facilities by hosting ribbon-cutting events. **San Diego High School** hosted Senator DeDe Alpert and gave honorary diplomas to the construction team at its grand opening of the new classroom and science lab building. At **Birney Elementary School**, students, parents and neighbors autographed the artist's rendering in the new library. It will be framed and posted. **Fletcher Elementary School** parents enjoyed a special ceremony and library tours before the annual back-to-school night. **Clairemont High School** held an all-student assembly as 1,500 students packed the courtyard to watch the marching band, choir, drill team and cheerleaders kick off

the opening of the new library and amphitheater. (include scenes from schools photos 3,4,5,6).

## Hall of Fame

- **Ericson Elementary's** 6-to-6 program's "Keep the Lights On" after school, a national event supported by JC Penney's and Arnold Schwarzenegger, has been selected as an outstanding after school care program. Congratulations to the 6-to-6 group!
- **Correia Jr. High's** Jazz Band will be featured on the **KUSI**, Channel 9/51 Morning News Saturday, October 18. On Oct 25, **Correia's** Advanced band students play at the Pt. Loma Cultural Faire and on October 28, some of students will play with Jason Scheff, the bassist from the group Chicago, at Dana's auditorium at 7p.m.

## In Memoriam

- **Maria Theodore**, whose service with the district began in 1966, passed away September 25, 2003. Ms. Theodore was the principal at Henry High School at the time of her retirement.