



# SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS

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## *Staff Bulletin*

*October 21, 2005*

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### **INTERVIEW WITH DR. CARL COHN NEW SDCS SUPERINTENDENT OPENS UP TO STAFF BULLETIN**

Dr. Carl A. Cohn officially joined San Diego City Schools on October 3, three months after being unanimously selected by the Board of Education to lead the district. A lifelong teacher and learner, Cohn has more than 35 years experience in education, serving as a teacher, counselor, central office administrator and superintendent. Before coming out of retirement in July 2005 to join SDCS, Cohn worked for 10 years as superintendent of the Long Beach Unified School District, California's third largest district. During that tenure, Cohn became the longest serving superintendent of any large, urban district in the nation.

A recipient of the Harold W. McGraw Jr. Prize in Education for his leadership in boosting student achievement, Cohn serves on the National Assessment Governing Board and the boards of the Re-Inventing Schools Coalition, the Wallace Foundation Education Leadership Advisory Committee, and the National Heritage Academy.

In this edition of *Staff Bulletin*, the new Superintendent explains his goals for San Diego City Schools and shares his thoughts on a variety of topics.

#### **What are your first impressions of San Diego City Schools?**

In terms of my visits to schools, so far I'm very impressed with what I see. There is a powerful focus on serving kids on the part of the leaders of schools. They clearly see their mission as teaching, learning, and making sure kids move forward academically.

While I've encountered nothing but nice, friendly, welcoming people, the central office here has something of a bureaucratic feel to me and over the next few months, I want to ask a number of questions about that. To what extent have we all been trained in customer friendly, client-centered approaches to doing business?

I welcome everyone's participation and ideas, no matter where they work in this organization. There's no limit on creativity. When it comes to advancing our primary mission, I want people to think carefully about ways to say yes, rather than no. If people have good ideas about how we can improve City Schools, I'm very interested in hearing those ideas. I want to start a regular forum that's an

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

opportunity every six weeks or so for any employee-- certificated or classified-- to get together with the superintendent and share any concerns they have about City Schools.

I believe it's important to maintain the proper tone by listening carefully and in a sense modeling the dignity and respect that's necessary. By treating people well, they in turn will want to treat others well.

**What goals have you set for our district?**

My first goal is to *accelerate gains in student performance*. I chose the word 'performance' very carefully because I believe a rich curriculum is important. Last night, I was at Madison watching a theatre arts performance and it was stellar. That's a performance. It's not all about test scores. By choosing the word 'performance,' I'm clearly sending a message that students perform in all kinds of ways and we ought to celebrate them. That being said, we need to make sure youngsters are prepared to move on after spending years with us.

The issue of goal number two, *provide safe, orderly and well-maintained schools*, is so important in an urban environment. The 'broken window' theory says that to leave a broken window, or to leave property unkempt, sends a powerful message and invites trouble and further deterioration. Even though we have diminished resources, we-- not necessarily only the superintendent-- have to figure out a way to get it done.

Goal number three, *strengthen parent, community and higher education support*, suggests that it's not only about what we do, but it's our connection to others that makes a difference.

Number four, *boost employee morale*, isn't necessarily about money or raises. It's really about asking 'how do you boost morale in a way that it's linked to goal number one?' If workers are more enthusiastic and feel more included in the process, isn't it likely they're going to accelerate gains in student performance?

The last goal is really the 800-pound gorilla in the room. *Secure adequate funding for schools*. We need to make sure in everything we do, we become advocates for what public schools need. If that means taking positions that the state and federal government are not comfortable with, so be it. If it means saying the state and federal government haven't met their obligations to school children, so be it. If it means lowering the level of conflict so funders feel more comfortable donating money, that becomes important.

Several people have said to me that the reason they like my goals is that there are only five. I'm big on the issue of trying to communicate in ways that reduce things to 'kitchen table talk,' and bring in the widest audience possible.

**How do you plan to work with unions?**

When you look at those groups that represent employees, it's important to establish positive relationships with them. I don't believe unions or collective bargaining are going away any time soon, so trying to work with established employee organizations is very important. It's one thing to talk about new leadership; there needs to be a level of accountability that makes sure that the respectful treatment of employees is part and parcel of how we operate as an organization.

**What final message would you give to SDCS employees?**

I'm very dedicated to being open and accommodating, to listening, and to being eager to go to schools. I really want employees' ideas on how we can make San Diego City Schools a much better place—for kids, for employees, for parents, and for the public that supports us.

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**SDCS WELCOMES DR. CARL A. COHN  
EVENING RECEPTION SPONSORED BY EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS AND  
DISTRICT**

To give all members of the community, parents and employees an opportunity to officially welcome the district's new superintendent, Dr. Carl A. Cohn, the Board of Education designated time at the October 11, 2005, board meeting for a community reception.

The reception, which featured entertainment from the University City High School jazz band and refreshments catered by the SDCS Food Services Department, was open to anyone who wished to greet Dr. Cohn. Lines of district staff, students, parents and members of the community stretched before Dr. Cohn, who answered questions and met many of the approximately 350 people in attendance.

Refreshments were hosted by the San Diego Unified Council of Parent Teacher Associations; San Diego Education Association; local chapters of the California School Employees Association - OTBS, PARA, OSS; Administrators Association of San Diego; and Police Officers Association, with support from the district's Food Services and Transportation Departments.

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**BUSINESS AND EDUCATION LEADERS MEET NEW SUPERINTENDENT  
MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY COME OUT IN FORCE**

On October 6, three days after officially beginning his tenure as Superintendent of San Diego City Schools (SDCS), Dr. Carl A. Cohn met and addressed business and education leaders at a reception held at SeaWorld.

The program featured the presentation of colors by the Serra High School NJROTC brigade color guard and the singing of the national anthem by Madison High School junior Remy Remigio.

District Chief of Staff Kerry Flanagan delivered opening remarks, as did Andrew Fichthorn, executive vice president/general manager of SeaWorld San Diego. Board of Education President Luis Acle introduced Dr. Cohn, who addressed the nearly 400 people in attendance.

Principals from across the district and central office administrators joined Partners in Education, OASIS tutors, and leaders from the nonprofit and business sectors to meet the new superintendent and hear about his vision for the district.

To learn more about Dr. Cohn's goals for SDCS, read the exclusive *Staff Bulletin* interview above. For more information on Dr. Cohn, read his official biography on the district's website, [www.sandi.net](http://www.sandi.net).

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## **TWO CITY HEIGHTS SCHOOLS CUT THE RED RIBBON**

Students, staff and parents dedicated two new City Heights schools in October. Festive celebrations were held at both Cherokee Point Elementary and Herbert Ibarra Elementary, our two newest Proposition MM schools. At Cherokee Point Elementary, Deputy Mayor Toni Atkins, Board President Luis Acle and Superintendent Carl Cohn congratulated students on their new school. In a packed auditorium at Herbert Ibarra Elementary, guests listened as Board Trustee Shelia Jackson and Dr. Cohn thanked the Ibarra family for lending their name to the school. Herbert Ibarra (1923-1993) was the first Latino principal in the school district. Herbert Ibarra's wife, Lila Ibarra, and son, Drew Ibarra, helped cut the ribbon at the ceremony.

The two new schools represent an \$80 million investment in City Heights. Each school has 32 classrooms with cutting-edge technology, including wireless Internet access and laptop computers.

Both new schools were funded by Proposition MM, the \$1.51 billion bond measure passed by San Diego voters in 1998 to renovate existing schools and build new schools in San Diego. Eight more new schools are currently under construction.

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## **OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIOD BEGINS FREE FLU SHOTS OFFERED AT INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS**

This year, San Diego City Schools is adding a new component to its open enrollment period. Rather than just mailing packets containing information on the variety of health care offerings, the Benefits Department has organized a series of meetings to provide employees with information regarding available benefit programs. As an added bonus, those who RSVP to attend an information session will receive a free flu shot.

Meetings will be:

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Location:</b>
October 31	Morse High School in the Auditorium
November 1	Eugene Brucker Education Center
November 2	Mission Bay High School in the Auditorium
November 3	Marshall Middle School in the Multi-purpose Center
November 4	Hoover High School in Room 1103

SDCS Benefits staff and benefit providers will be available at each site all day between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to provide assistance and address any of your questions.

In order to ensure that those wanting flu shots will receive them, please respond to Ronnie Adair at [radair1@sandi.net](mailto:radair1@sandi.net) advising which of the locations you will be attending.

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### **NEWS YOU CAN USE**

#### **DISTRICT EMAIL REMINDER**

Occasionally, emails are sent to groups of people (all-staff, all-principals, central office managers, etc.) via list servs. These emails can be identified by looking at the "To" line (eg, To: All-Elementary-Principals). Please do not reply to these emails as your reply will go to the "owner" of the list serv rather than the intended recipient. To reply, create a new email and enter the name of the person you would like to contact. This will ensure your message gets to the appropriate person.

#### **JOIN THE CSA EXECUTIVE BOARD**

Community Service Association (CSA), the employee contribution club, has one vacancy on the Board of Directors representing certificated employees. There is also a Board of Director position representing classified employees with the incumbent running for re-election. Board members are elected to a 3-year term of

office that begins in January. If you are a current CSA member and would like to submit your name as a candidate, please contact Michele Fettig, CSA Secretary/Treasurer, at (619) 725-5613 or [mfettig@sandi.net](mailto:mfettig@sandi.net) by Friday, October 21.

#### PLETHORA OF PIANOS FOR SCHOOLS

The district's Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Department has a plethora of upright pianos available to school sites. Any school wishing to have an upright pianos may call the VAPA office at 858-539-5349 or send an email to [kchildressevans@sandi.net](mailto:kchildressevans@sandi.net). VAPA will have as many pianos delivered as needed.

#### SUPPORT P.E./HEALTH/ATHLETICS, ATTEND THE 2006 BUICK INVITATIONAL

As a fundraiser, the district's P.E./Health/Athletics Department is selling tickets to the 2006 Buick Invitational PGA Golf Tournament, taking place January 23-29, 2006. Tickets are currently being sold and will be available for purchase until January 22, 2006.

#### NEW DIRECTOR OF RISK MANAGEMENT

Kassia Kossyta has been appointed the new Director, Insurance & Risk Services, effective October 27, 2005. Kossyta comes to SDCS from the City of National City, where she was Risk Manager for more than 15 years. A long-time representative to SANDPIPA, the County Joint Powers Authority, she served as claim committee chair and authority president for four years. If you would like to know more about what Risk Management does for you, please go to <http://prod031.sandi.net/risk/>.

#### INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF BLUES FOUNDATION "BLUES SCHOOLHOUSE" PROGRAM

The International House of Blues Foundation (IHOBFF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing the arts to schools and communities through programs that promote cultural understanding and encourage creative expression. The IHOBFF Blues SchoolHouse (BSH) is a standards-aligned program that teaches students about the music, art, history, and cultural impact of the blues and traditions of related folk art. During BSH programs, the House of Blues venue is utilized as a multimedia classroom where students and teachers (grades 7-12) experience a guided art tour or presentation of the House of Blues' Folk Art Collection and a live musical presentation that traces the evolution of the blues musical form. BSH programs are offered FREE OF CHARGE to San Diego Unified District public schools. Blues SchoolHouse Components are: guided tour of House of Blues Folk Art Collection; Live, interactive musical presentation; distribution of BSH Classroom Guide to participating teachers; and a teacher workshop: *Learning about American Culture through Blues Music & Folk Art*.

## FREE GOLF CLINICS FOR SCHOOLS

Gary Kilgore, director of instruction for the Nike Golf Learning Centers at the Tecolote Canyon Golf Course, will put on free in-school clinics and clinics at Tecolote Canyon. He is also offering a special discount on group classes for family and friends of San Diego City School employees. For more information, call Gary at 858-366-7666.

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## HALL OF FAME

- Patrick Henry High School 10<sup>th</sup>- and 11<sup>th</sup>- grade AVID teacher **Erin McPeek Mangahis** was selected as one of the county's Teachers of the Year at a black-tie celebration at the San Diego Civic Theatre. McPeek was included in a *San Diego Union-Tribune* article noting her "exemplary efforts on behalf of students, parents," and those of the other county teachers of the year.

- **Carmen Munnely**, an eighth-grade teacher at De Portola Middle School, has been named Wal-Mart's statewide teacher of the year. The honor brings a \$10,000 grant for the campus, and Munnely was presented with a one-year membership to the professional organization Phi Delta Kappa International, among other prizes.

First selected by her students and colleagues as Walt-Mart's local teacher of the year winner, Munnely was then chosen by Phi Delta Kappa International out of 194 educators throughout California as the top teacher in the state. Each state's teacher of the year winner will compete for the national title- and a \$25,000 school grant- to be announced in November.

- Madison High School Principal **Ginger Eves** was invited to participate in a conference as part of the National Association of Secondary School Principals' *Breakthrough High Schools* project. Eves was selected to share "specific strategies that have directly to improved student achievement because Madison High School has demonstrated multiple years of school progress with poor and disadvantaged students."

- **Chela Munar** from the Parent and Community Involvement Department and **Maritza Ramirez** from Field Elementary Were September's winners of the district's Recycling Office recycling contest. The October winners were **Gloria Reyna** of Pacific Beach Elementary and **Nancy Mirafior** of Accounts Payable.

Chela won 2 tickets to Landmark Theaters, and Maritza won 2 tickets for the zoo or Wild Animal Park from the San Diego Zoological Society and a Jamba Juice thermos with coupons. Gloria received a Bay Cruise from Hornblower, and Nancy's prize was a \$25 gift certificate from Ralph's. Interested in participating in the contest? All administrative sites have pledge cards in their lunchrooms, or

you can obtain a copy of the pledge card on the district's website. Fill it in, print it out and put in the card in District mail, or fax it to Andrea Eaton at 858-627-7414.

- In an ongoing effort to promote educational achievement, San Diego City Councilmember Anthony Young collaborated with the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce, J. Todd Figi, K.B. Homes Coastal, Inc. and San Diego Office Interiors to provide funds to the **third grade teachers** in the Fourth Council District. The funding will be used to assist teachers in purchasing educational materials.

- **Cherokee Point Elementary** and **Herbert Ibarra Elementary** have earned the prestigious "CHPS" designation. The Collaborative for High Performance Schools recognizes schools that incorporate healthy design criteria and energy efficiency features, such as naturally lit classrooms, proper ventilation and indoor air quality. These two schools are among the first in the state to receive this honor. In addition, **Bob Kiesling**, chief facilities officer, and **Jim Watts**, district architect, have been given special recognition for championing the CHPS program within our school district.

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### SCENES FROM OUR SCHOOLS

- Last month, *Staff Bulletin* described **Roosevelt Middle School's** kickoff of their application for the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme. Students participated in an IB program-type activity: working in groups, they made chairs that were strong enough to hold Dr. Martel using newspapers and masking tape. Shown here, Dr. Martel sits in one of the creations.

- Students from **Carson, Central, Crown Point, Dingeman, Holmes, Johnson, Logan, and Pacific Beach elementary schools** participated in an effort coordinated by the district's Visual and Performing Arts Department to collect works of art and/or stories of support and love for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The work will be sent to schools in the Baton Rouge area to let the children of the storm know that the children of San Diego care about them.

- On September 9, 2005 **Wangenheim Middle School** staff and students joined together in the school's quad to remember those Americans who lost their lives on September 11, 2001. The school band played while the school choir sang "America the Beautiful." Principal Robert Grano spoke before the assembly observed a moment of silence while the Color Guard presented the flag.

- Rod Luck visited **Gage Elementary School** on September 29. The first of two live television segments featured the Gage Running Club, a program that allows children to earn prizes based on running and/or walking before school and at recess. Gage Principal Kristi Dean, P.E. teacher Cindi Elrod, Running Club co-founder Carole Wilson, student runners and parent volunteers were all

interviewed. The second segment focused on the school's Birthday Book Club. *Union-Tribune* reporter Leigh Fenley donates books to the school and students may pick out a book in honor of their birthday. The books selected by the students are then donated to their classroom's library (in the name of the student).

- San Diego City Schools' photovoltaic/solar roofing projects were featured during San Diego Solar Energy Week (September 25-October 1). Presented by the San Diego Regional Energy Office, the week-long event highlighted organizations that use solar energy solutions, including San Diego City Schools. On Wednesday, September 28, community members toured the **Education Center's** roof to see the new photovoltaic roofing project first-hand. For information about SDCS' photovoltaic/solar projects, go to <http://prod031.sandi.net/energy/Page.asp?CategoryID=4&PageID=125>.

- **Freese Elementary School** third grade teacher Melissa Mechtly and two of her former students, Carolina Lemus and Josue Beas, were photographed on campus for an ad highlighting Sempra Energy's community relations efforts. Through a donation from the company, the San Diego Foundation made a grant to Freese in support of the school's partnership with the San Diego Guild of Puppetry. Students such as Carolina and Josue use puppetry to reinforce literacy lessons and to learn about the artistic aspects of making and performing with puppets.

- Johnson Elementary and Encanto Elementary dedicated their new libraries in September. The new facilities, funded by Proposition MM, provide students with books, computers and Internet access. Congratulations!

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## STUDENT SALUTES

- **Nia Gipson**, a student at San Diego High School International Studies, was named as a Semifinalist in the 42nd annual National Achievement Program. Conducted by National Merit Scholarship Corporation, the program is academic competition for Black American high school students. More than 130,000 students from all parts of the U.S. who entered the 2006 National Achievement Program by requesting consideration in the program when they took the 2004 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test as high school juniors. Nia is one of only 1,600 Semifinalists in the nation, and 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!

- Point Loma High School Student **Nicholas A. Kaschak** as recently found worth of the rank of Eagle Scout by an Eagle Court of Review. Nicholas is a member of Troop 500, which serves the Point Loma/Ocean Beach peninsula of San Diego, California.

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## SAVE THE DATE

The Indian Education Program is holding a San Diego Community **Halloween Party** in conjunction with the San Diego American Indian Health Center, Indian Human Resource Center and Tonkawa Indian Seniors. This year's party, which has a circus theme, will take place on October 26 from 7-9 p.m. at Oak Park Elementary School (2606 54<sup>th</sup> Street, 92105). Come dressed as your favorite circus performer, or any way you choose. The organizers will provide hot dogs and chips, but participants are asked to bring a potluck dish. The entrance fee is one bag of candy for each family. For more information, contact Para Peters at the Indian Education office at 858-627-7362.

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## IN MEMORIAM

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

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## CLASSIFIEDS

For Sale

**Tools**- various. Washing machine, Amana commercial size- \$50. Aerobic bicycle - \$20. 619-275-5810.

1998 **Travel Trailer**, excellent condition, fully contained, \$5,000. 1995 Harley Sportster, a beauty, \$5,000. 619-562-0382

Mint condition **wood bunkbed** including ladder, mattresses, complete bedding and guard rails, two wooden three drawer chest of drawers, wood/glass small standing curio cabinet w2/ shelves and lights, one large standing freezer. 858 485-339

Matching **Washer/Gas Dryer**, Kenmore Brand. Excellent Condition. A Great Buy! \$200.00 for both. 858-578-1246

1998 Blue **Toyota Sienna** XLE. Excellent Condition- 98,000 miles. \$9,900. 619-578-7009

For Rent

Sabre Springs 2 bedroom 2 bath **condo** \$1500 per month. Call 619-697-1694.

Wanted

**Female Vocalist** Wanted. Seeking a female vocalist to front our 80's pop/rock/dance cover band. Practice once a week and play out a couple of times a month. If interested, contact Don at [dcleland@sandi.net](mailto:dcleland@sandi.net)

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