

# *San Diego City Schools*

## **Staff Bulletin – November 12, 2003**

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### **San Diego City Schools Reacts to County Fires**

As the fires raged throughout the county, employees from across the district responded to the crisis, either with direct response actions or by being at their work site in case they were needed. The following is an overview of just a few of the key actions taken.

#### **Initial Communication/Phone Tree**

An impromptu telephone tree was established on Sunday, October 26 to notify all principals who in turn notified all teachers/staff that schools would be closed on Monday, October 27, and to direct that the principals, site leadership teams, and the BSS should report to school.

#### **Establishing Emergency Child Care**

Eleven middle schools were opened for emergency child-care, provided by staff and volunteers, on Monday and Tuesday. On Wednesday, eight (8) child development centers (CDC) opened. For Thursday and Friday, 24 CDC were opened. The emergency child-care served 28 students on Monday and expanded to more than 850 students by the end of the week.

#### **Staffing Needs at School Sites**

Principals conducted a survey of their staffs to determine numbers of certificated and classified staff who would be able to return to work on Monday, November 3.

A decision was made that all certificated, non-classroom staff would be on call to teach as needed at school sites on Monday. The Office of Instructional Support worked with Human Resources on the development of a plan to ensure teacher coverage at district sites. Certificated, non-classroom staff and not-site based reported to the Ed Center Auditorium at 6:30 a.m. on Monday, November 3, with the understanding they might be deployed to a school site as needed.

Actions were taken to ensure that when school opened on Monday, a counselor would be available at each site. Through donated funding, we hired retired counselors and nurses to assist us on Monday. In addition, special teams of counselors and nurses were dispatched to more heavily impacted sites.

#### **Guidelines for Principals**

Guidelines were developed and issued to principals concerning the following:

- Addressing social-emotional issues.
- Instruction on the first day of school.
- Recess, physical education activities and athletics.
- Teachers' first day back on Friday, October 31. These guidelines were developed in cooperation with SDEA.
- Tips for Parents (provided in English and Spanish)
- Health Guidelines for Staff and Students
- Parent letter (provided in English and Spanish)
- Cleaning instructions from the County.

#### **Safety & Security**

- Emergency Operation Center (EOC) activated to coordinate safety and security efforts. EOC services remained active for five days.
- School Police personnel called back to provide "in-field" intelligence information to the EOC.
- Provided escorts and security for key district personnel into secured fire scene locations.
- School Police and M&O personnel shut off main gas valves at target locations.

- School Police personnel conduct security checks at all district sites and report any breaches of security, such as cut locks, damaged fences, broken windows, etc. for repair.
- Community Service Officers were assigned to provide safety and security services to all sites designated as "daycare providers".
- School Police personnel distribute 1,800 respiratory facemasks, along with bottled water to district personnel.
- School Police personnel work with the American Red Cross to provide around the clock security at their evacuation center located at Mira Mesa High School.
- School Police supervision stationed at both the City of San Diego Emergency Operation Center and the Fire Communications Center for up to the moment information on the fire.

### **Assessing Schools and Clean Up**

Principals conducted an assessment of their school sites to determine the extent of damage and debris. Results of this assessment were tabulated and used to schedule the priority for clean up.

### **District Clean Up of Schools**

Every site was contacted and assistance provided according to need.

- All schools were cleaned and ready for students for Monday, November 3.

### **Maintenance and Operations workers in the field**

- Approximately 250 M&O workers deployed.
- External site cleanup and ash removal.
- Minor site repairs.
- Checking alarms and air conditioning.
- 2 large water tankers available for large wash-downs.
- Relief custodians assisting local (site) cleaning crews.
- District divided into four (4) zones – crews worked from north to south, south to north, east to west all toward the center of the district.

### **Procurement**

- Procurement staff acquired materials and equipment for the response.

### **Food Service**

- Approximately 1,100 workers at sites.
- Kitchen areas cleaned up and then workers helped with site cleaning.

### **Transportation**

- Buses were cleaned and fueled.
- Staff available for any required movement.

### **Activities with Union Leadership**

- Meeting with union leadership Tuesday, October 28.
- Meeting with union leadership Wednesday, October 29.
- Union leadership invited to county/district news conference on 10-29-03.
- Union leadership invited to a district media event at Jerabek on 10-31-03.
- All email (All-Staff and Leadership Team Updates) communications sent to union leadership throughout the week.

### **Hotline**

- The district operated a parent and staff hotline and handled more than 80,000 calls from Sunday to Thursday. It is estimated that 80% of the calls were from callers with questions about other districts, colleges and universities.
- 51 SDCS staff members worked the phones.

- Talking points were updated twice daily. School districts, colleges and universities were contacted to gather information about their closures to provide to callers.

#### **Web site**

- A special section was created and updated regularly to provide information to staff and the community at <http://www.sandi.net/fire/index.htm>.

#### **Email Communications**

- Sixteen 16 Leadership Team Updates and 10 All-Staff emails were sent from Monday to Thursday.
- Emails and documents were shared with all charter schools.

#### **Media Briefings**

- Local news (print and broadcast) were used to distribute information to employees, parents and the community on a broad basis.
- Daily media briefings and interviews were conducted.
- Eight media advisories and news releases were issued during the week.

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### **Schools, kitchens and buses cleaned**

When the ash and smoke settled, hundreds of Maintenance & Operations employees, Food Services workers and Transportation employees fanned out across the district to start the clean-up effort.

Beginning at 6 a.m. on Thursday, October 30, 250 M&O workers headed out to schools armed with hoses. They removed ash and washed down lunch courts, windowsills, sidewalks and benches. They also made minor repairs and checked alarm and air conditioning systems. The crews split up into four zones and worked across the district from east to west with additional custodial staff dispatched to high priority schools.

Meanwhile, 1,100 Food Services workers scrubbed down kitchens and eating areas and tested stoves and ovens. The Transportation team cleaned and fueled the buses to be ready for students the following Monday.

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### **Protecting Our Schools From the Fires**

As fires approached the San Diego city limits on Sunday, October 26, Larry Wilkes got the call to report to work. The repair dispatch plumbing coordinator grabbed his tools and a full set of school utility plans he keeps at his home in La Mesa. He then drove to the Emergency Operations Center that had been set up at the Ed Center.

Larry is routinely called on weekends to respond to a variety of plumbing and pipe-related emergencies. But this was not a routine emergency. This time, he was charged with turning off gas lines at 32 schools that were or could be in the fire's path.

Accompanied by school police officer George Anderson, the two drove toward Kearny Mesa in a police cruiser. George is usually assigned to Morse High School.

"The flames were already at Interstate 805 and Clairemont Mesa Boulevard. We passed the Maintenance & Operations Center and checked for damage, then we headed to MacDowell and Madison," said Larry.

Using flashlights and the utility plans, Larry and George located the main gas meter shut-off valves on the exteriors of each school site. From noon to 10 p.m., they moved from school to school from Tierrasanta to San Carlos, as directed by the Emergency Operations Center.

“The Emergency Operations Center would tell us over the radio which direction the fire was heading, and what schools to get to next,” said Larry. “We would report back if we could see flames endangering a school site.”

One of those endangered school sites was Vista Grande Elementary in the evacuated area of Tierrasanta. The school sits atop a canyon.

“We could see the flames coming up the canyon toward the school’s fence line,” George said.

Larry and George acted quickly as the fire came onto school property. They were joined by another school police officer, Cecilio Flores. The three opened up a fire hydrant, then “fanned” the blasting water with a metal plate cover from a water meter. By directing the water spray toward the flames, they kept the fire from advancing further and damaging nearby school buildings. They also filled trash cans with water and wetted down perimeter areas.

After an hour, the fire eventually was averted. While Vista Grande’s property line and fencing were severely damaged, the efforts protected buildings and structures.

“We did what we could to make things better,” said Larry. “It was awful to see people panicking in neighborhoods as we drove through. You really feel badly for the people who lost homes.”

George, who worked two graveyard shifts later in the week at the Mira Mesa High School evacuation center, said he had never seen anything like it in his 19 years in law enforcement.

“I was impressed with fellow co-workers and our police team. Everyone pulled together and pitched in,” said George.

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## **Open Enrollment**

Open enrollment will run from November 3, 2003 to November 26, 2003. All forms required to implement changes in coverage must be received no later than November 26 in the Benefits office or be postmarked by November 26.

During open enrollment, the Benefits department (Room 1150-A at the Ed Center) will be open Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hours will return to 1 to 5 p.m. after open enrollment is complete. Information will be posted on web site at [www.sandi.net/benefits](http://www.sandi.net/benefits). Questions may be directed to 619-725-8130, Option 6.

Site secretaries (schools and central offices) will receive a package with information regarding benefits, related circulars, web site information, provider directories, list of chiropractors, and PacifiCare Primary Care Physician Selection form (note: employees currently covered with Aetna, who wish to stay with Aetna will automatically be enrolled; however, a primary care physician selection form must be completed even if an employee will be continuing to see the same doctor).

Two circulars will be distributed the last week in October:

- Circular announcing the medical/dental open enrollment period – this will be distributed in print to all monthly salaried employees via school mail. This will include plan offerings, comparison of plans, forms and other important information to aid employees in their benefit plan selection.
- Circular announcing Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA) Plan for 2004 – distributed only to monthly salaried employees of half-time or more and job share employees.

- These circulars will also be posted on the web site and accessible on the benefits page, for district staff page and the circulars page.

Retirees and individuals on COBRA will receive benefits information at their home via U.S. mail.

Sites are required to mail information to employees on long-term sick leave to their home address.

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## **Important Health and Welfare Benefits Information**

### **Employee Groups and District Working to Maintain Quality Programs and Keep Benefits Costs at 2003-04 Levels**

The District and all employee groups - the Administrators Association of San Diego (AASD), California School Employees Association (CSEA chapters 724, 759, 788), Police Officers Association (POA), and San Diego Education Association (SDEA) - agree that the district is facing serious financial challenges at the local, state and national levels that have resulted in a shortfall in the financial resources dedicated to public education now and for the foreseeable future. One area of particular concern is the increasing cost (approximately 15 to 20% increase per year) of medical benefits.

The average cost for medical, dental, vision and life insurance in 2003-04 is \$6,817 per insured employee. In 2002-03, the cost was \$5,912 per insured employee, and in 2001-02, \$5,225 per insured employee. In 2003-04, the total district cost for health and welfare benefits is projected to be approximately \$108.9 million or 9.3% of the District's \$1.171 billion total budget. This is a 16.3% increase from the 2002-03 total cost of approximately \$92.9 million or 7.6% of the District's \$1.218 billion total budget that year. In 2001-02, the total cost was \$80.5 million or 6.8% of the District's \$1.191 billion total budget that year.

The District and employee groups have agreed to share responsibility for maintaining quality benefits while reigning in the increased cost of such benefits. The parties are working aggressively to keep expenditures for these programs as close to 2003-04 levels as possible (allowing for fluctuations in the number of District employees). For 2003-04, the work of the committee resulted in \$923,339 in annual savings. If there are recommended changes to the benefits structure, these recommendations will be addressed through negotiations with the employee unions. The Health and Welfare Benefit Advisory Committee, a joint District-employee group committee composed of two representatives appointed by each employee group as well as district representatives, is working on this issue. For more information about the committee, visit <http://www.sandi.net/staff/benefits/hwbac/index.htm>.

### **Eligible SDCS Employees Receive Comprehensive Benefits Package**

SDCS offers a comprehensive benefits package to eligible employees and their eligible dependents, including a choice of three medical and three dental plan options; vision coverage; district-paid employee basic life insurance equal to one times annual salary; voluntary employee life insurance; voluntary dependent life insurance; and voluntary accidental death and dismemberment coverage. Eligible employees may also participate in a Health Care and/or Dependent Day Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA). For more information, visit [http://www.e-obie.net/sdcs/intro/sdcs\\_intro.htm](http://www.e-obie.net/sdcs/intro/sdcs_intro.htm).

SDCS participates in the Voluntary Employees Benefits Association (VEBA), whose mission is to establish, through the cooperative efforts of school employers and school employee unions, a comprehensive health and benefits program for every eligible school employee in Southern California at the most efficient cost achievable through unity of design, purchase and administration. For more information on VEBA, visit [www.sdcsveba.com](http://www.sdcsveba.com).

### **Planned Changes for 2004 Employee Benefit Carriers**

All medical insurance plan carriers raised their rates for self-paid insurance plans, therefore, those plan costs will increase in 2004. VEBA has announced that PacifiCare of California will replace Aetna in 2004. The PacifiCare proposal offers similar coverage to the Aetna plan at a lower increase in cost to the district. Costs will increase by 11.37% for the HMO and 14.29% for the POS under PacifiCare as

opposed to more than 28% under Aetna's renewal bid. Costs will increase by 20.5% for Kaiser. All insurance coverage previously underwritten by Fortis and UNUM will be replaced by Hartford in 2004. More information on benefits plans and carriers for 2004 will be provided as part of the materials distributed to employee for Open Enrollment. For more information on SDCS benefits, visit [www.e-obie.net/sdcs/intro/sdcs\\_intro.htm](http://www.e-obie.net/sdcs/intro/sdcs_intro.htm).

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## **San Diego City Schools Releases API Growth *Index Measures Academic Performance and Growth of Schools***

San Diego City Schools (SDCS) continue to make increases in student achievement, according to the 2003 Academic Performance Index (API) Growth results released in October.

### **District API Improves**

San Diego City Schools 2003 API Growth is 697, compared to its Base API of 677.

### **Achievement Gap Narrowing**

While all ethnic/racial subgroups made positive gains, African American, Hispanic and socioeconomically disadvantaged students out paced white students, districtwide.

- Hispanic students increased 31 points (from 588 in 2002 to 619 in 2003)
- African American students increased 27 points (from 604 in 2002 to 631 in 2003)
- Socioeconomically disadvantaged students increased 29 points (from 604 in 2002 to 633 in 2003)
- White students increased 10 points (from 791 in 2002 to 801 in 2003)

### **Increase in the percentage of schools meeting schoolwide and subgroup targets**

In SDCS, the number of schools that met both schoolwide and subgroup targets in 2003 were:

- 74 percent of elementary schools (85 of 114), compared to 55 percent (63 of 113) in 2002
- 52 percent of middle/jr. high schools (11 of 21), compared to 35 percent (8 of 21) in 2002
- 56 percent of high schools (9 of 16), compared to 19 percent (3 of 16) in 2002
- 66 percent of charter/pilot schools (10 of 15), compared to 53 percent (7 of 13) in 2002

### **More Schools at 800 Level**

The API ranges from 200-1000. The interim statewide API performance target for all schools is 800. In 2003, there were 37 district schools at or above 800, compared to 35 schools at or above 800 in 2002, 34 schools in 2001, and 29 schools at or above 800 in 2000.

### **In 2002-2003, 166 SDCS schools received an API.**

There are several reasons why a school might not receive a 2002–2003 API Growth Report: the school had no STAR test results in 2003; the school experienced an excessive number of parent or guardian waivers from STAR testing in 2002 or 2003; the school failed to test a significant proportion of students in a content area in 2002 or 2003 STAR testing; or a valid 2002 API Base score does not exist because the school (or district on behalf of the school) has certified that an irregularity in testing procedure occurred during the 2002 or 2003 STAR testing.

### **Background Information**

The schoolwide growth target is the amount of improvement a school is expected to make beyond its API Base (previous year) score in a year. A school met its 2002–2003 schoolwide target if (1) it met or exceeded 5% of the distance between its 2002 Base API and the interim statewide performance of 800, or (2) its 2003 API Growth was at or above 800.

In addition to schoolwide targets, schools must demonstrate improvement for “numerically significant ethnic or socioeconomically disadvantaged subgroups.” To be considered numerically significant, a

subgroup must have at least 30 students, with valid STAR scores, who make up at least 15 percent of the school's valid STAR scores, or have at least 100 students with valid STAR scores.

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## News You Can Use

- San Diego City Schools is once again participating in the countywide teddy bear drive to benefit Children's Hospital. Last year, staff and students filled a school bus with more than 1,300 donated teddy bears. This year, the goal is to fill two buses. Organized by School Police, the drive will run from December 1-5. You can drop off a new teddy bear at any school or the School Police Office at the Education Center. The Transportation Office will then pick up the bears between December 9-12. We will join other law enforcement agencies on December 15 to deliver the bears to Children's Hospital.
- For the Observance of the Day of National Concern, San Diego City Schools put Pledge materials on the website and made the videotapes that were made last year with the Tariq Khamisa Foundation available throughout the district.

Tariq Khamisa, a young college student, was shot and killed in 1995 while delivering a pizza. Shortly after his death, Tariq's father, Azim, began working with the grandfather of his son's killer to spread the message that people at both ends of a gun are destroyed by gun violence and that vengeance will never lead to healing. Videos about the Khamisa family's story, tying it to the observance of the Day of National Concern and the Student Pledge, were distributed throughout San Diego's schools.

In a wonderful example of collaboration, the Tariq Khamisa Foundation and the San Diego Public Schools are sharing these videos (one for young children and one for older students) with the D.C. Public Schools.

- Schools can win a \$10,000 technology grant for collecting food for the San Diego Food Bank!

Now is the time to sign up for Time Warner Cable's Community Spirit Challenge, a community service project which encourages local K-12 schools to compete with one another, pushing food collection to new heights. The food collection project is held in partnership with the San Diego Food Bank, and rewards the San Diego County schools that collect the highest amount of food per capita. This is determined by the total food collected divided by the number of students enrolled in the school.

The competition runs from November 1 through 30, 2003. Grand prize is a \$10,000 technology grant and pizza party for the entire school. Second prize is a \$5,000 technology grant, and third prize is a \$2,500 technology grant. In 2002, 54 schools participated in Time Warner Cable's Community Spirit Challenge and collected about 185,000 pounds of food. Santa Sophia Academy in Spring Valley took home the grand prize last year.

Schools can register online at [www.timewarnersandiego.com](http://www.timewarnersandiego.com) and fill out the online application. Teachers and parents who visit the Time Warner Cable website can also download lesson plans and ideas to teach students about hunger. Teachers can combine the food collection project with math, art, science, nutrition, and social studies for San Diego County students in grades K-12. There is also a publicity flyer that teachers and students can customize to help promote the contest at their school and in their community.

Time Warner Cable's Community Spirit Challenge is sponsored by Union Bank of California, Qualcomm, Cartoon Network, and Sammy's Woodfired Pizza. For more information, visit [www.timewarnersandiego.com](http://www.timewarnersandiego.com) or call the San Diego Food Bank at (866) 350-FOOD.

## Hall of Fame

- Taft Middle's P.E. teacher, Rob Klinefelter, ran the 26.2-mile LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon on October 12. Rob entered with the San Diego Leukemia and Lymphoma Society's Team in Training (TNT) - just seven days after he completed the Mission Bay Triathlon. The finishing times of both events are not important – what is important is that in October of '02, Rob finished two years of chemo treatments for leukemia diagnosed in October of '00. Thanks to Kroc's staff members, Rob's mom, Ann Klinefelter (Site Tech II) was on hand to witness his success.
- At the IT open forum (monthly meetings) IT Stars are recognized and presented with an Acrylic STAR that is engraved with the district logo, their name and on the bottom it says “Making a difference for our students!” Two recent stars:
  - September – Julie Kapelczak – Software Systems Analyst III
    - Julie is responsible for all of the servers we have at school sites which run the current district applications (SIS, EFRA, Mainframe Client-Server, etc). Just before school started the district was hit with the Blaster Virus, which disrupted services to school sites. Julie took the lead in getting the virus off of the servers and workstations at school sites and central office. She would stay as late as 2:30am and be back at work at 7:30am to help the district get through this crisis. She is a very hard working person and has a great attitude. She brings an esprit de corp to the department that reminds all of us that we are here to make a difference for teachers and kids.
  - October – Max Layog – Senior Systems Analyst/Programmer
    - Max is a developer that works mainly on Student Information Systems projects. He is one of the lead developers for Zangle and is helping with the modifications that the district requires in this new SIS application. Max was a tremendous asset to the school sites during the opening of school. The Zangle pilot schools had to sync Zangle, Aeries and SIS and Max was instrumental with the rest of the SIS team in getting those pilot schools configured and in sync. Max also helped out with a number of other schools that were struggling with getting their enrollment counts correct for staffing at the beginning of the school year. He as well has spent many, many hours here late a night and into the wee hours of the morning making sure the schools had what they needed so that they could open school and enroll kids.
- The Hospital School Patch program was highlighted in a recent article in Medical Center News. The program, located at the Navel Medical Center, San Diego, is an accredited school and has students ranging from 3 years old to seniors in high school. It was started so children requiring long-term hospitalization could continue their education.

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## Save the Date

- On Friday, November 21, 2003, from 7-8:30 p.m., Dana Middle School will host “Rising from the Ashes,” a fundraiser to benefit the Point Loma cluster teachers and staff who have lost their homes during the fires. The event will feature student music and theatrical performances. For more information, please visit [www.danamiddle.com](http://www.danamiddle.com).

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## In Memoriam

- **Stanley Cokkinis**, whose service with the district began May 1969, passed away on August 8, 2003. Mr. Cokkinis was a teacher at Lee Elementary at the time of his retirement.
- **Marcia G. Cook**, whose service with the district began September 1989, passed away on September 4, 2003. Ms. Cook was a teacher at Encanto Elementary at the time of her death.

- **Amee Hadr**, whose service with the district began September 1967, passed away on September 13, 2003. Ms. Hadr was a teacher at Schweitzer Elementary at the time of her retirement.
- **R. E. Harper**, whose service with the district began September 1979, passed away on August 17, 2003. Mr. Harper was an instructional assistant at Chollas Elementary at the time of his death.
- **Joseph Lynch**, whose service with the district began July 1990, passed away on September 7, 2003. Mr. Lynch was a custodian at Linda Vista Elementary at the time of his retirement.
- **Susan L. Steinberg**, whose service with the district began September 1989, passed away on September 3, 2003. Mrs. Steinberg was a teacher at Ross Elementary at the time of her death.
- **Mary Zopatti**, whose service with the district began January 1974, passed away on September 4, 2003. Mrs. Zopatti was a teacher at Ocean Beach Elementary at the time of her retirement.