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Getting to Know '07-08 Teachers of the Year



Rudy Jimenez Ortiz
Euclid Elementary



Courtney Browne
Mann Middle School



Elizabeth Ward
Serra High School

For the district's three Teachers of the Year, teaching is a family affair. Rudy Jimenez Ortiz's mother is a retired pre-school teacher, Courtney Browne's mother is a former teacher and current school administrator, and Elizabeth Ward's grandfather was a high school teacher and coach at an all-boys prep school. These

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Support Our Troops Week

Showing Support for the Military and Their Kids in Our Schools

A postcard-writing campaign, art contest and chance to show off your patriotic colors are among the district activities marking "Support Our Troops Week," May 21-25.

Honoring troops overseas, the district's many military families, and our employees who are veterans, the event is being sponsored by the Xerox Corporation. The recognition is not only for enlisted men and women around the world – it's also about their children – our students – in our schools.

"You're acknowledging the sacrifices our children endure," said Marine wife Barbara Shortill, who has two children attending Mason Elementary. "Our children can stand tall and feel proud,

knowing that their teachers and classmates are there for them."

The big event of the week is a postcard-writing effort. The goal is to have one postcard from every student in the district sent to a member of America's military. Teachers are encouraged to set aside time to allow students to write a personal message to a member of the military.

Veterans are encouraged to wear their uniforms on "Show Your Support Day," May 22. Also that day, winners of the student art contest will be announced at the Board of Education meeting. Employees who didn't serve in the military, along with students, are encouraged to wear patriotic colors that day.



Student artwork from grades K-12 is on display at the Ed Center.

"We're asking district employees, students – everyone – to wear red, white and blue on May 22," said Dorothy Harper, the Associate Superintendent for Parent, Student and Community Engagement.

For more information, check with Edward Caballero at ecaballero@sandi.net.

Becoming America's Best

A Message from Superintendent Cohn



Thank you for doing your personal best this year for the students and families we serve. As we advance toward the goal of becoming American's best large urban school district, we need to take time to honor those who are making this possible. We deeply appreciate your conscientious, determined efforts to help our students learn and to accelerate their performance.

At May Board of Education meetings, outstanding teachers and classified employees are being recognized for their exemplary service. I am impressed by their total commitment to our students and schools. They work tirelessly to give all students the opportunity to make something wonderful of their lives.

Frequently, our self-effacing teachers and classified employees of the year give credit to others and emphasize that they are honored to represent their exemplary co-workers. For every outstanding employee we recognize, I know there are many other unsung heroes, showing up every day without fanfare or ac-

colades, just doing whatever it takes to help students learn.

You are the heart of the school district. You deserve our gratitude and the gratitude of parents and community for all that you do to make San Diego a better place to live, work and go to school. It is a privilege to work with you.

As we complete these final important weeks of the school year, I know that some of you are finishing your careers and will be retiring. Special thanks to you for choosing this district and devoting your lives to our children. There is great satisfaction and a sense of lasting impact knowing that you have shared your skill, your knowledge, your wisdom, your insights and, most of all, yourself with students and colleagues who will never forget you.

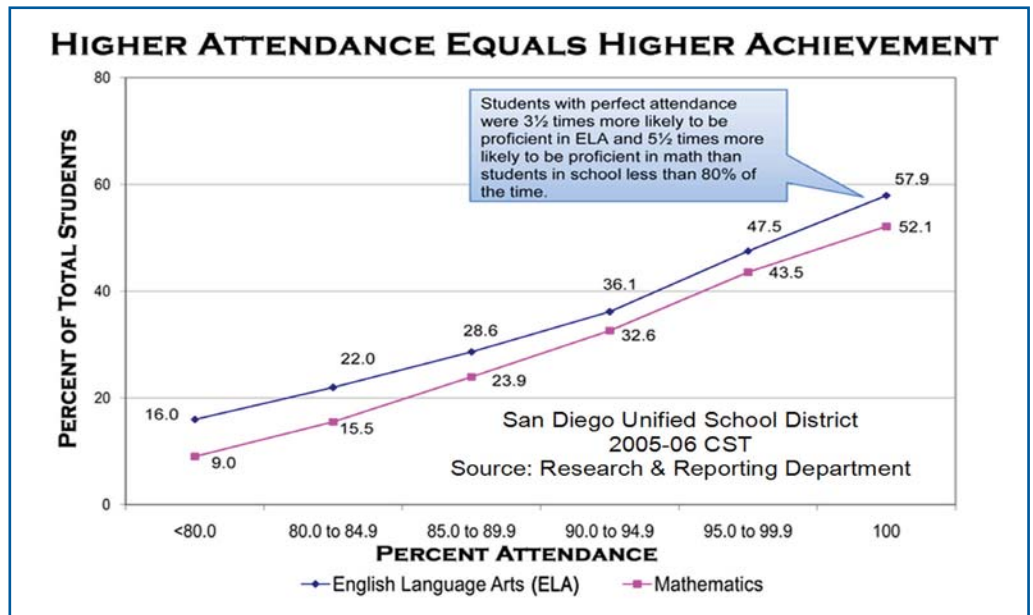
Best wishes for good health, happiness and all the rewards you so richly deserve. Thank you for doing the most important work in the world.

Every Day Counts!



Students in school every day are more likely to score higher on the CST in both English Language Arts and Math. Want to share this valuable information with parents? A parent flyer detailing how higher attendance equals higher achievement in our district is posted on www.sandi.net.

If you would like your school's latest statistics, email jbreister@sandi.net or call (619) 725-5598.



The Every Day Counts! campaign is supported by a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Well-prepared Teachers Boost Student Achievement

BTSA Offers Support to New Teachers



Monthly learning academies give teachers a forum for networking with other beginning teachers and a place to share their successes and challenges.

The Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) Induction Program provides new teachers with a high level of emotional support and a common framework for discussing teaching. This year, BTSA is helping 234 first-year teachers and 211 second-year teachers work through state requirements for their professional clear credential.

BTSA is a two-year, state-mandated induction program that includes standards, evidence and criteria. It helps new teachers

apply both theory and support provider collaboration in their classrooms.

At the end of their second year, teachers go through an exit interview where they have the opportunity to verbalize their professional development to a panel of experienced educators. BTSA guides and supports teachers as they move from developing to experienced educators, building confidence along the way.

News You Can Use

8th Grade Retention/Promotion Policy

On January 23, the Board of Education acted to: "retain eighth grade students with two or more Fs in core subjects (i.e., English,

Mathematics, History, Science) beginning this school year, 2006-07". Students failing two or more core subjects at the end of eighth grade will be retained in middle school and will not go on to high school in the fall. The goal of the policy is to increase students' preparation for and

success in challenging high school courses.

Students and parents were informed of this policy by their teachers, counselors, and school administration. Affected students will soon be meeting with school staff to go over the reten-

tion policy, the appeal process and to discuss options for summer school.

Guidelines and a flowchart of the policy are available at http://www.sandi.net/staff/forms/8th_retention/english.pdf.

Grade 8 Student	Parent	Summer School Outcome	Student placement in the Fall
Has 2 (or more) Fs in core subjects	Agrees to Retention Decision	Has no effect on placement	Retain in Grade 8
Has 2 Fs in core subjects	Appeals Retention Decision	Student makes up both Fs	Promote to Grade 9
Has 2 Fs in core subjects	Appeals Retention Decision	Student makes up 0-1 Fs or does not attend summer school	Place in High School Intervention Program
Has 3 (or more) Fs in core subjects	Appeals Retention Decision	Has no effect on placement	Place in High School Intervention Program

Our Schools as Jewels

Watching Roosevelt Students Garden & Grow

While Roosevelt Middle School students are growing academically inside their classrooms, there is a lot growing outside their classrooms as well. For the past seven years, the middle school students have honed their horticultural skills and knowledge while creating the "Roosevelt Schoolyard Garden," complete with a vegetable garden, a butterfly garden (plants), full greenhouse, solar-power, and worm and plant composting.

The gardeners include students in the school's Garden Club, the "6 to 6" Program and various classes. Besides gardening, the students learn to cook the food they grow. For the past five years, Heather O'Donnell, seventh-grade science teacher and science department chair, has been the Garden Club's advisor.



Roosevelt Middle School students maintain a garden box in the Roosevelt Schoolyard Garden.

Situated on school property that is shared with the San Diego Zoo, the garden is part of a joint venture with the zoo. The zoo pays for the utilities and provides occasional horticultural consulting in return for using part of the property for a picnic and camping area. For more information on this project, contact O'Donnell at hodonnell@sandi.net or (619) 293-4450, ext. 4807.

Here are excerpts from employees' informal conversation with the superintendent at the Cookies with Carl meeting held April 17.



There is a noticeable positive change in atmosphere throughout the district. What do you attribute that to?

I believe we are rebuilding the element of trust. We've had fewer work-related stress claims and parent complaints, plus expulsions have been cut in half. These indicate that good things are going on around here. My experience is that if you build trust that stands the test of time, over time, we will experience gains in student performance and improve employee morale.

How can we show the public all the wonderful things happening in the classroom when we are not so consumed with test preparation?

The first of my five superintendent goals is very deliberate in addressing gains in student performance, not just standardized tests. We're missing other elements of greater value if we only concentrate on test scores. I'll soon be meeting with Senate democrats to address concerns with No Child Left Behind (*occurred April 27, 2007). I truly believe that it will be easier to change at the local

level than fight the powerful interests of Washington. The people who can provide bright futures for our kids already exist within the local school district and not at the state and federal level. Good things are happening.

We just need to keep communicating this information.

What are your thoughts on the original Blueprint for Success and No Child Left Behind?

A "one size fits all" plan is stifling. Under the Blueprint, the pendulum started to swing towards a charter emphasis and now it's swinging back towards a concentration on our regular schools. I am unwilling to concede south of I-8 to charter schools. Our new Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Jennifer Cheatham, is working with the area superintendents to make sure there is support for all kids.

Would the district consider providing any financial incentives for National Board Certification?

I favor any program that recognizes additional professional development. We'll look into this further.

Next Cookies with Carl: Monday, May 21, from 4 to 6 p.m., at Pacific Beach Middle School

Hall of Fame

Two SDUSD schools have been named among the 18 finalists for the Intel Schools of Distinction Awards. **Balboa Elementary** and **KIPP Adelante Preparatory Academy** were recognized for Mathematics Excellence and are now in the running to receive a \$10,000 cash grant and an award package valued at more than \$160,000. For information, visit www.schoolsofdistinction.com.

Jim Trepasso from the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Department and **John Dally** from Pt. Loma High School are the 2006-07 recipients of the David Paul Schuchman Award for excellence in teaching instrumental music. District staff members were also recognized at the annual Fortissimo Awards, sponsored by the California Music Educators Association, Southern Border Section. Outstanding Elementary Music Specialist was **Mark Nadeau**, Outstanding Band Educator was **Matt Kalal** and Outstanding Multicultural Music Educator was **Serafin Paredes**. Board Member **John de Beck** received the "Fortissimo Award" for Outstanding Support of Visual and Performing Arts.

The first place winners of the Food Services annual essay, poetry and rap competition are kindergarten **Mataya Hernandez** from Dewey Elementary, third grader **Brianna Millar** from Juarez Elementary, seventh grader **Jenna Mackey** from De Portola Middle School, and tenth grader **Quintin Cummins** from SCPA. To see a complete list of winners, visit <http://www.sandi.net/food/Poetry2007Winners.HTML>.

Valencia Park, Webster, Hancock, Chesterton, Foster, Johnson, and Perry elementary schools have been named recipients of the first annual EDEquity Achievement Award. Based on 2006 California State Test scores, these schools ranked as California's top schools in academic achievement for African American students. For information, visit www.edequity.com.

Six Montgomery Middle School students have been accepted in the San Diego Museum of Art's "Young Art 2007" exhibition. **Janine Xiong, Gilberto Zavala, Victor Duarte, Cameron Denton and Derek Liensavahn** will have their work displayed at the Mission Hills Public Library. **Mark Mulugeta-Hagos** has his art on display at the San Diego Museum of Art until May 27.

In Memoriam

Karry Anderson

Special Education Technician at Crawford High Educational Complex, April 27, 2007.

Harriet Balle

Former Teacher at University High School, February 5, 2007.

Doris Brians

Former Instructional Aide at Crawford High School, April 8, 2007.

Marshall Ellis

Former Teacher at Mira Mesa High School, April 21, 2007.

Mary Helen Hubbard

Former Instructional Aide II at Pershing Middle School, September 28, 2006.

Charlotte Jahn

Former Teacher at Andersen Elementary School, April 27, 2007.

Dates to Remember

May 28

Memorial Day Holiday

June 19

Last Day for Students at Traditional Schools

Classifieds

For Sale

Greenwood Memorial Park, two side-by-side plots in "Evergreen;" retail for \$11,000, make offer. Call (619) 562-0382.

For Rent

One-week vacation time share condo at beautiful Pono Kai Resort on Kauai, Hawaii. Nov. 18-25, 2007. Up to 4 people allowed. \$900/obo. E-mail mgrantham1@sandi.net.

ADS RUN ON SPACE AVAILABLE BASIS - Email ads to communications@sandi.net or send to Communications Office, Room 2145, Education Center. Limit to 15 words (not including phone). Include work location and phone (for ID purposes only).

Getting to Know cont.

three outstanding teachers shared the spotlight with more than 155 school site Teachers of the Year at the Board of Education's Day of the Teacher celebration on May 8.

Euclid Elementary Pre-K teacher **Rudy Jimenez Ortiz** is the 2007-08 Teacher of the Year at the Elementary Level. A former Euclid student himself, Rudy has chosen to live in the community where he teaches. In fact, he lives in the house where he grew up, across the street from his school.

He is a proven leader and learner who invests his time, energy and passion in offering a quality program to the preschool children in his classroom and their families. He is a strong advocate for the Early Childhood Education Programs. He sums up his philosophy as an early childhood educator in the words of Bob Talbert, "Teaching kids to count is fine, but teaching them what counts is best."

Courtney Browne, seventh grade science, art and computer teacher at Mann Middle School of Expedition, is the 2007-08 Teacher of the Year at the Middle Level. Courtney spent many years teaching in informal settings before having what she called her "Eureka" moment. She realized she wanted to have her own classroom and get to know students over the course of the entire school year.

Today, she teaches students of varying ethnic backgrounds including Mexican, Sudanese, Somali and Cambodian. Regardless of the setting, her philosophy of teaching remains the same. All students possess unique talents and all students have the ability to learn. She abides by three rules: attitude is everything; enthusiasm is catching; and always makes others feel comfortable.

Serra High School English teacher and coach **Elizabeth Ward** has been teaching for nine years, all at the same high school where she once walked the halls as a student. A graduate of Serra High School, she teaches ninth grade and Advanced Placement (AP) English and coaches girls' lacrosse, field hockey and soccer. She credits her love of teaching to her grandfather who was a high school teacher/headmaster and athletics coach at an all-boys prep school in Connecticut. Her grandfather taught her the keys to inspiring young people to succeed: connect with students, be interested in their lives, and treat him or her as bright, capable, and worthy individuals. His lessons guide her own teaching today.

Runner-up honors went to **Celia Ramirez** from Cesar Chavez Elementary, **Lisa Hawk** from The Preuss School UCSD, and **Sylvia James** from San Diego High School of International Studies. All six teachers are in the running for San Diego County Teacher of the Year, which will be announced Saturday, October 7, 2007.

To read more about the Teachers of the Year, runners-up and to see a complete list of the school site Teachers of the Year, go to www.sandi.net.

Out and About Out and About Out and About



Students from **Central Elementary** had the opportunity of a lifetime when they spent the night at the Wild Animal Park on May 3. Thanks to a generous donation from The Jarrett Meeker Foundation and several other local donors, 40 lucky third graders slept in tents surrounded by wild animals.



On May 3, nearly 1,000 people helped the district's Partnerships in Education program celebrate its 25th Anniversary. A highlight of the event was an appearance by former Board of Education Member **Kay Davis** (right) and **Jeanne Jehl** (center), the first coordinator of the Partnerships in Education program, pictured with **Janet Delaney** (left), director of community relations.



Staff Bulletin

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Send all news items and classified ads to communications@sandi.net, Education Center, Room 2145 4100 Normal Street San Diego, CA 92103 or fax to (619) 725-5576.

Dr. CARL A. COHN
Superintendent of Schools

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