



Staff Bulletin

San Diego Unified School District

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Getting to Know

Sam Wong
Chief Human Resources Officer

Having been with San Diego Unified School District for nearly 35 years, newly-appointed Chief Human Resources Officer Sam Wong brings a variety of experiences to the job.

Many employees already know him as a teacher, vice-principal, principal and central office manager. His career path has spanned the district from Morse to University City High; Correia to Bell Jr. High; Muir Alternative to Challenger Middle; finally landing at the Ed Center in 2006 as the Director of Leadership Development.

In August, the Board of Education approved his appointment as Chief Human Resources Officer.

A Northern California transplant, Sam received his A.B. in Political Science and California

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Food Services – Becoming America's Best

Teaching Kids to Make Healthy Choices

"I wake up at 5 to start my daily routine...As I'm savoring for something sweet like ice cream...But I need an education for me...So I reach for the treat with the Vitamin C..."

So go the words to a rap song by SCPA 10th grader Quintin Cummins, one of four first-place winners in the 2007 Essay, Poetry and Rap Contest, "Why does eating a healthy breakfast and lunch help you do well in school?" The annual contest is one of several exciting developments from our Food Services Department.

For the second year in a row, the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine named SDUSD school lunches among the healthiest in the U.S. The district received the highest score in California and the second highest in the nation for offering fresh and healthful low-fat foods.

Vegetarian entrées are available every day. All elementary schools and most secondary schools offer a fresh salad bar daily. Each month the department's newsletter spotlights a Harvest of the Month item, grown in Cali-



fornia. Innovative programs include "Breakfast in the Classroom," which provides breakfast to students in their classrooms at six district elementary schools.

The Summer Food Program offers free lunches and snacks to children at 18 City of San

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Thanking Those Who Choose Our Schools

A Message from Superintendent Carl Cohn

Welcome back! I hope you had a restful summer and are ready for a remarkable school year.

As we start the new year, I have some encouraging news that I'd like to share. This fall, hundreds of parents are taking another look, seeing our improvements, and they like what they see. There are indications that hundreds of students from private, parochial, and charter schools have recently enrolled in our schools. Although we still expect our total enrollment to be down from last year, the decline is slowing.

Our recent parent survey contained more good news. Our parents — our most important customers — told us what they think about our schools. Take a look at some of the results:

- 95 % said their school respects parents
- 93% said they feel welcome at school
- 90% were satisfied or very satisfied with their children's school
- 90% said their child's school is safe or very safe

These positive responses are a direct result

of your good work. You are the ones who do your best for our students and show families how much we appreciate that they have chosen our schools.

Recently, I had the privilege of attending welcome-back events for our transportation team and school police. I am very impressed at the commitment of classified employees in making sure the start-up of school is as smooth as possible.

I also had the opportunity of greeting hundreds of new teachers, and again was very impressed. Many are choosing to come to San Diego Unified after a successful career in another field. The life experiences these "new" teachers will share with our students are a valuable gift.

In closing, I ask each of you to continue to do the right thing for students. All of the children we serve today are part of this nation's hope and future. We will continue to serve them all and turn no child away.

That is one way we can become America's Best. Have a great year!

Central Enrollment Center a Success

News You Can Use

Save Money on Back-to-School Supplies

Employees can receive the district's discounted Office Depot contract price on items purchased at any retail store by registering a personal credit card and e-mail address. Only items included in the contract are eligible and must be purchased as CREDIT not DEBIT.

Remember to give your school ID when shopping at Office Depot and the school will receive 5% back on qualifying school supplies. The store cashier can look up a school's ID at check-out.

For more information, contact John Groll at jgroll@sandi.net or (858) 522-5821.

Planting the Seeds of Hope for Our Children's Future

Tariq Khamisa Foundation (TKF), a non-profit organization, is now scheduling violence-prevention programs for the 2007-08 school year. Free services include Violence Impact Forum, presentations on gangs and Proposition 21, and Ending the Cycle of Violence video series. TKF-facilitated groups (at \$40/hr) are also available for Ending the Cycle of Violence and Peace/Leadership Clubs for all ages.

For more information, visit www.tkf.org or contact Mayra or Jenifer at (858) 565-0800.

This summer's pilot Central Enrollment Center at Roosevelt Middle School was a success. Preliminary statistics show that the center, which closed August 25 after five weeks in operation, served nearly 2,000 families and enrolled more than 1,000 K-12 and 100 pre-K students into 161 schools across the district.

Parents found the Center very convenient for enrolling multiple children attending different schools.



Making Each & Every Day Count in 2007-08



Whether your school's efforts to improve attendance are already successful or need a boost, the district's Every Day Counts! initiative provides helpful tools.

- **Every Day Counts! webpage in English and Spanish.** Updated to include the resources below, including the Every Day Counts! logo for school site use.
- **Higher Attendance Equals Higher Achievement charts.** District-wide charts in English and Spanish. Customized charts for individual schools can also be produced.
- **School Success Begins With Attendance flyer.** Showcases the effects of poor attendance on the student, classroom, school, district and community. Available in seven languages.
- **Test Strategies for Schools – Student Incentive Best Practices flyer.** Provides ideas to increase student attendance and motivation at test time.

- **Attendance Tips for Parents flyers.** Available for elementary, middle and high schools in seven languages.
- **School site support.** Additional resources, including a PowerPoint presentation with district-wide attendance information in English and Spanish, plus tips for finding business and community sponsors for attendance achievement rewards.
- **San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) Attendance Campaign.** Additional resources, including a helpful Attendance Improvement Resource Kit that can be customized for individual school sites.
- **Your Job / Your Child's Job banner** Available for purchase at a special district rate. (see graphic below)

Make Every Day Count and watch gains in student performance accelerate!

For more information, contact Jennie Breister at jbreister@sandi.net or log onto: www.sandi.net/programs/everydaycounts.

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

Your Job / **Your Child's Job**

Get them there. Keep them there.

Our Schools as Jewels:

New Secondary Schools Open Doors to Students

The new Abraham Lincoln High School and Thurgood Marshall Middle School opened their doors to students on September 4. Their



The newly rebuilt Abraham Lincoln High School

namesakes would be proud of what is being done to honor them and to honor education and the students in San Diego.

The newly rebuilt **Lincoln High School** sits on 24.4 acres and includes 323,196 square feet of facilities with state-of-the-art technology. Four comprehensive high schools - Lincoln 9th Grade Center for Social Justice, Lincoln Center for The Arts, Lincoln Center for Science and Engineering and Lincoln Center for Public Safety - make up the campus, which includes 84 general classrooms, an arts complex, library, 16 science classrooms and eight science prep rooms, seven technology classrooms, a Career Center, a 790-seat auditorium, and 376 onsite parking spaces. Athletic facilities include locker rooms, weight room, adaptive P.E. room, two gymnasiums, baseball field, softball field, track, football field, press box and concession stands. The building materials reflect the school's colors of green-and-

white and include roofs striped with green and light green standing seam metal.

The new **Thurgood Marshall Middle School** campus has three 3-story classroom buildings with state-of-the-art technology in each classroom, and 162,000 square feet of facilities on 36.5 gross acres/26 net acres. The energy-efficient designed campus features joint-use fields for soccer and softball, a comfort station on the joint-use field, a multipurpose building, library/media center, three lunch shelters, five elevators, kitchen, faculty lounge and workroom, administrative center, P.E. building, 298-seat performing arts theater, and 227 parking spaces.



The brand new Thurgood Marshall Middle School

Save the Dates:

A celebration of Lincoln's legacy will take place Saturday, September 29, from 9 a.m. to noon, with a dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony. School tours, alumni booths, and entertainment will also be part of the festivities.

Marshall Middle School will host a dedication and ribbon-cutting ceremony on Wednesday, October 24, beginning at 11:30 a.m.

HALL of FAME

Bus driver **Juan Calleros-Perez** received a Proclamation of Heroism from Representative Bob Filner for safely evacuating 34 students from his school bus on May 31. After his bus developed engine trouble on the freeway, Juan safely exited the freeway, found a safe street and evacuated the students on the bus. The vehicle later became fully engulfed in flames.

District bus drivers **Joshua Morgan, Corey Patton** and **Antonio Perez** were named 2007 California State Championship School Bus Rodeo winners at the 18th Annual State Championship School Bus Rodeo held in May. The state rodeo course consists of eight demanding driving events followed by a challenging written test. The trio then moved on to the national competition at the 37th School Bus Driver International Safety Competition held in Boston in July. Perez was honored as one of the Top 10 best school buses drivers in the nation. Morgan placed fourth overall in the conventional category.



(Left to right: Corey Patton, Antonio Perez, and Josh Morgan at the School Bus Driver International Safety Competition in Boston.)

Kumeyaay Elementary teacher **Robyn Bernstein** received a KPRI-FM Teachers Make a Difference award for the 2006-07 school year. She was one of nine county K-6 teachers selected for igniting a love of learning and enriching the lives of children. The radio station is now accepting nominations for the 2007-08 Teachers Make a Difference awards.

Food Services from Pg 1

Diego Park and Recreation Centers. The program, funded by the US Department of Agriculture, requires no enrollment, paperwork or income qualification to participate.

"We are pleased to score so highly among U.S. schools," says Joanne Tucker, Food Services Marketing Coordinator, "but the real satisfaction comes from the response we have gotten from students, parents, teachers and principals. These are changes we have been planning for a long time."



In Memoriam

Mary Borders DeWitt

Former teacher at Freese Elementary, March 11, 2007.

Stephen Isaac

former Evaluation Services Director, July 20, 2007.

Mary Miller

former Teacher at Green Elementary School, July 1, 2007.

Jean Sandeno

former Teacher at Hamilton Elementary School, January 30, 2007.

Classifieds

Wanted

Roommate to share beautiful Clairemont home/pool with teacher. Safe neighborhood. Pvt. studio/loft/bath. E-mail: cape2ca@att.net.

Dates to Remember

September 11

Patriot Day (Flags at half-staff)

September 12

Rosh Hashanah

September 13

Ramadan Begins

Sept. 15 - Oct. 15

National Hispanic Heritage Month

September 21

Yom Kippur

E-mail 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.

Standard Teaching Credential from University of California, Davis. He accepted his first teaching assignment at Morse High School in 1972. He earned an M.A. in Multi-Cultural/Cross Cultural Education and Clear Administrative Services Credential from San Diego State University.

Sam's relationship with the district reaches beyond employee / employer. He and his wife Katie, a former district employee herself, have three children who are products of the district. Their two older children attended Holmes Elementary, Kroc Middle, and graduated from Madison High School. Their youngest son currently attends University City High School, where Sam taught more than 25 years ago.

Staff Bulletin recently met with Sam to get his perspective on his new role.

What are you most looking forward to this year?

I am looking forward to a fun year. My first priority is to get to know everyone in the Human Resources Division on a personal level. I want to learn about the strengths of the division and areas where we can improve. From there, we can establish performance goals, develop best practices and focus on continuous improvement, using the principles of Baldrige. My ultimate goal is to make every experience with Human Resources a phenomenally good experience.

What unique background and strengths do you have that will have the greatest impact upon our students and our schools?

I have a deep background in leadership development. I'm excited to apply all that I've learned and know to helping HR staff build on their own leadership capacity. I believe that everything we do, from the classroom to the central office, is about and for our students. In HR, we have the opportunity and obligation to hire the best people to work in our district and with our students because only great employees can make us "America's Best Urban School District".

Who or what has influenced you most in your job?

I'd say being an SDUSD parent as well as an employee. It gives me an insight into what our various customers want and need. It will take everyone together - top down, bottom up - to do the best for our kids.

Out and About Out and About Out and About

Hamilton Elementary School hosted a Community Health Fair in June. Nearly 200 visitors attended the community event, which featured 33 stations related to health, fitness, and safety issues. Healthy food samples, prizes, and dance instruction captivated participants of all ages. This event took place thanks to a grant awarded to Hamilton school nurse Jessie Wallace from the Johnson & Johnson School Nurse Fellowship Program.



The business community helped make sure our students started the new school year right with tools for success. Pfizer presented Taft Middle School Principal Mike George and his staff (below left) with 68 backpacks stuffed with school supplies donated by the pharmaceutical company's employees. Road Rebel Entertainment donated 20 backpacks with supplies to Logan Elementary, Nokia donated 300 backpacks to Perkins Elementary, and Central Elementary Principal Staci Monreal (right) accepted backpacks and supplies donated by ROEL Construction.



SDUSD 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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