



Staff Bulletin

San Diego Unified School District

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December '07 Issue:

Page 1

Superintendent's Farewell
Becoming America's Best
Getting to Know

Page 2

Title 1 Schools Announced
Every Day Counts!
BOE's Holiday Greeting
Hall of Fame

Page 3

Our Schools as Jewels
News You Can Use

Page 4

Out & About
Classifieds/In Memoriam



Getting to Know

Drew Rowlands
Director of Physical
Plant Operations

The 07-08 school year marked the arrival of Drew Rowlands, the new director of Physical Plant Operation (formerly Maintenance & Operations). Rowlands oversees Custodial Services, Landscape Services, Maintenance Services and Support Services. These departments plan, organize, control and direct all the maintenance and operational functions for the district's 200-plus facilities.

He came to San Diego Unified from the private sector where he managed an engineering consulting firm's San Diego office. He spent 20 years as a civil engineer for the U.S. Navy, maintaining, managing and building naval installations. He lives in Carlsbad with his wife, Kim, and 12 year-old twins.

see **G2K** pg 4

A Farewell Message from Superintendent **Carl Cohn**

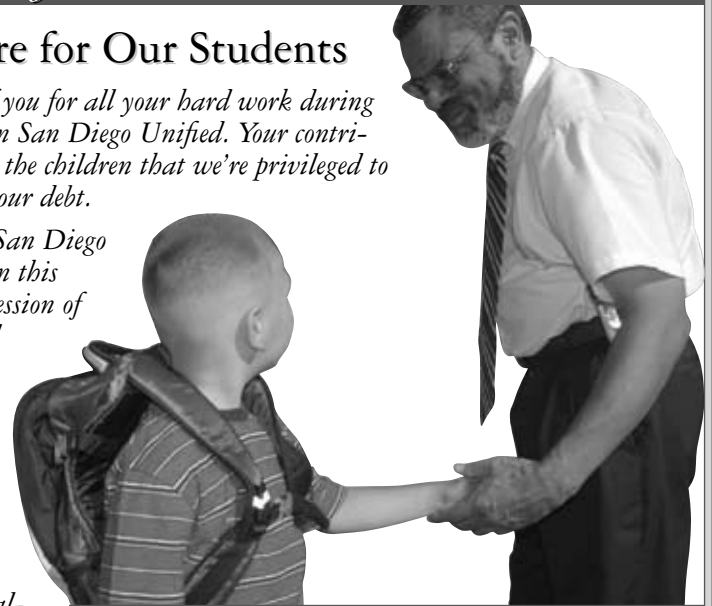
Creating a Bright Future for Our Students

Before I go, I want to thank each of you for all your hard work during my time as your superintendent here in San Diego Unified. Your contributions to creating a bright future for the children that we're privileged to serve are much appreciated. I am in your debt.

Like most tourists who had come to San Diego for conventions at water-front hotels in this marvelous city, I had no lasting impression of the real people, the neighborhoods and the places that come together to make this city and district work. Living here and getting to know you have left me with a profound sense of gratitude for all of our accomplishments these past two years.

I am especially proud of improved employee morale, leadership among California's large urban school districts in meeting NCLB targets and our stunning enrollment growth, which suggests that families are taking a new or second look at our district schools.

No superintendent can will these developments into reality. They can only come about because teachers, classified staff, administrators and central support staff are working together in the belief that a better school system results from our efforts.



As I take my leave, I want you to know how grateful I am for having had this extraordinary honor and privilege. God willing, I'll be here in your midst for a long time to come.

So long!

Becoming **AMERICA'S BEST**

Big Yellow Classrooms Carry Our Students

It's an impressive sight. On the east side of Interstate 805, between Clairemont Mesa Boulevard and Balboa Avenue: 18 acres, nearly completely covered with bright yellow school buses.

It's the heart of a bus system that serves 419 routes, 22,000 students every day, using 502 buses and 600 employees. Another 93 routes are run by a contractor, First Student.

Walk around the yard with director Alex Robinson and you'll see staff on hand from 4 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily, shops buzzing with ac-

tivities, staff mapping routes and monitoring traffic, drivers getting the latest information. It's the largest school bus facility in the nation.

But it all comes down to that individual passenger, the student. Robinson's mantra: "The school bus is an extension of the classroom," she says.

In many ways, our bus system is even more of an extension of the classroom than a traditional school bus system. While the yellow coaches are a familiar sight around the nation, San Diego's -- with a few exceptions --

See **Becoming America's Best** Pg 3

Title I Academic Achievement Schools Announced

A dozen San Diego Unified schools have received Title I Academic Achievement Awards from the California Department of Education for 2007.

The schools are: **Dewey, Ericson, Euclid, Jackson, Fletcher, Florence, Jones, Miller, Oak Park and Perry Elementary**, as well as **Kearny High School Digital Media and Design**, and **International Business** schools in Linda Vista.

To be eligible, schools must satisfy several criteria, including surpassing the growth target in Academic Performance Index (API) test scores, as well as meeting the targets in 2005-06 and 2006-07. The elementary schools honored all had API scores of at least 758 and high schools topped 646. The Index is one of the measures required under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Connect-ED Goes District-Wide Schools, Parents Stay Connected with New System

Connect-ED, the outbound voice messaging service, is now available district-wide, just in time for winter break. All schools now have an effective tool to remind parents to have children back in school, ready to learn, when classes resume in January. The user-friendly system has received high marks from schools that have already used it. Parents have also applauded the new system that keeps them 'connect-ed' with their child's school, whether at home or "half-way around the world on vacation," as reported by a parent at Dailard Elementary School.



More than 500 school and central office leaders have been trained on the new system. Additional training sessions will be held in January. In addition to being a valuable emergency response communications tool, as demonstrated during the October wildfires, Connect-ED will be used for district communication to employees and families. Messages ranging from payroll notifications and staff mobilization, to transportation changes and food services billing, can be sent in minutes using the system.



For information on Connect-ED, contact jbreister@sandi.net or (619) 725-5578.

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

A Holiday Greeting from the Board of Education

As the end of the calendar year quickly draws near, we would like to take this opportunity to wish all employees and their families a happy holiday and a healthy New Year. Thank you for your continued

dedication to making sure that every student in San Diego Unified receives the opportunity for a high-quality education. Each one of you have an important impact on the education of our students.

Please accept our warmest greetings and best wishes for a holiday season filled with joy and peace.

Board of Education:

- Katherine Nakamura**, President
- John De Beck**, Vice President
- Luis Acle**, Member
- Shelia Jackson**, Member
- Mitz Lee**, Member

SDUSD TEACHERS GET NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

The number of district teachers becoming National Board Certified Teachers more than tripled over last year. This year, 19 teachers achieved certification; there were six last year. Congratulations to **Wyvona Barret**, Whitman Elementary; **Lucinda Bernardino**, Roosevelt Middle; **Alys Braun**, Marshall Elementary; **Michael Cook**, Memorial; **Antionette Curtis**, Audubon Elementary; **Sharon Fargason**, Jackson Elementary; **Heather Harris**, Edison Elementary; **Aida Hernandez**, Ibarra Elementary; **Nicole Hyde**, Knox Elementary; **Colleen Keefe**, Joyner Elementary; **Alice McClintock**, Marshall Elementary; **Glenn Morgan**, Lincoln Arts; **Renee Oswald**, Normal Heights Elementary; **Jeanine Pugliese**, Balboa Elementary; **Darciann Samples**, Knox Elementary; **Molly Stewart**, Hamilton Elementary; **Janet Styres**, Darnall Charter; **Kristina Teesdale**, Jackson

HALL of FAME

Elementary; and **Erin White**, Ibarra Elementary. National Board Certification is a recognized symbol of professional teaching excellence that attests to the teachers' significant commitment to professional growth and development.

Montgomery Middle School Principal **Jonathan Ton** and Vice Principal **Myra Perdomo-Melendez** are recipients of the 2007 Bayside Community Center Leadership Award. The award recognizes outstanding risk-takers and innovators who make a positive difference in advancing the common good. Jonathan and Myra were selected for their commitment and leadership in making the Family Success Center at Montgomery a reality.

Our Schools as Jewels:

Edison Elementary School “Sparkles”

As part of Prop MM, Edison Elementary School underwent an extensive whole-site modernization and landscape project that made the school a City Heights jewel. Thanks to district landscapers, the jewel “sparkles.”

The Edison landscape team, which includes Jhon Allen, Luis Andujo, Roberto Bugarin, Pete Chenard, Jim Comstack, Jonathan Fong, Mark Lowrey, George Nunez, Crewleader Ed Mashburn, and Supervisor Dan Gonzalez, has been nurturing and maintaining the grass and plants around the school. Principal Sheari Taylor said that there is a significant difference in what the grounds crew is accomplishing this year.

“This (landscape) crew really cares about our school,” she said. “I’ve noticed a huge difference. Before, they were only able to mow the grass and clear out the weeds occasionally. Now, they are here on a regular basis maintaining the grounds.”

The improvements around the school are having an impact on the community as well.

“It makes a big difference to have a fresh and clean campus,” Taylor said. “Parents and children feel they are in a special place. It also makes a statement to the neighbors. Parents and neighbors are picking up trash in front of the school. Neighbors in the area are sprucing up their homes and yards. We’re all working together to provide a safe and beautiful environment for our children.”



The efforts by the grounds crew at Edison Elementary School this year have had positive effects even beyond the schoolyard.



Becoming America’s Best from Pg 1

are only used by special education students and those whose parents have exercised a school-choice option. All drivers are trained on the needs of special education students.

Robinson is proud of her staff and her drivers, which she says don’t fit the average across America. “Between 75 to 80 percent of our drivers have college degrees; about 30 percent have graduate degrees,” she said. “They’re here as second careers, because they like getting out, working with kids.”

Drivers are not only trained on emergency procedures for their students and every-day routine, they’re part of the region’s emergency response system. Several district buses were on call during the recent wildfires.

Walk through the doors at Transportation headquarters and you’ll see real pride... walls lined with trophies from bus rodeos over the years. San Diego’s legacy continues. Most recently, drivers placed fourth and tenth in the National Safety Rodeo Competition.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

A Holiday Message from the Safety/Health Action Committee: **BE SAFE!**

Statistics show that more accidents occur during the holiday season than the rest of the year. People are preparing for the holidays and traveling more. The secret to a safe holiday is start early.

Travel to the mall early while traffic is light. Come home early from the mall to **avoid congested highways** and the danger of people driving from party to party without a designated driver. **Check all decorative lights** and extension cords for any exposed wires. Discard any defective lights or electrical cords. Is your **smoke**

detector equipped with a new battery? Is your fire extinguisher fully charged? Do you know how to operate it?

Stop and think about your safety and the safety of the people around you now. It will make for a happy holiday season and safe New Year.

For more safety tips and information on the district’s Safety/Health Action Committee, visit the Risk Management website at www.sandi.net/risk.

Best wishes for a safe and restful winter Break and, of course, have a **Happy New Year!**



Dates to Remember

Dec 24 - Jan 4:

Winter Break. All Schools, Central Offices Closed.

Jan 7: Traditional Schools, Central Office Re-open. Year-round Schools Closed.

Jan 21: Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday Observed. All Schools, Central Offices Closed.

Jan 22: Year-round Schools Re-open.

Classifieds

For Sale

Kenmore mobile washing machine. Attaches to kitchen sink. Regular capacity. No special attachments, detergents required. One year old. \$150. Call Ursula at (619) 264-3179.

Dachshund puppies. 2 M, 4 F. \$350 each. 10 weeks old. Mom/dad also for sale. \$200 each. Call Beverly Conner at (619) 266-8434 (home) or (619) 534-1022 (cell).

For Rent

1br/1ba remodeled condo in Mission Valley. Beautiful complex w/ tennis, pool, spa, gym. Convenient location. Call (619) 885-5616.

Vacation getaway in Idyllwild, 4 br, mountain views, seasonal river, quiet. Weekend/weekly/monthly. Call (800) 297-1410.

Furnished room in spacious townhouse near UCSD. \$750/mo, incl. utilities, wireless internet. Pvt. garage. Share w/female teacher. Call (858) 455-7036.

Staff Bulletin accepts classified ads from district employees only. Submit ads by e-mail to communications@sandi.net or send to Communications Office, Room 2145, Education Center. Limit to 15 words (not including phone number). Include work location and phone number (for ID purposes only).

GtK from Pg 1

Staff Bulletin recently sat down with Drew to get to know him better.

What attracted you to San Diego Unified?

It was a good opportunity. I liked the idea of managing a large plant. And, at the expense of sounding cliché, it's very fulfilling to have such an important purpose—educating children."

How does your team impact teaching and students?

When we solve a problem for a school principal, or when we repair something in a classroom, that behind-the-scenes work allows teachers to continue teaching and students to continue learning.

What are some of the challenges of such a large district?

We have a large workforce working multiple shifts while spread across an extensive geographic area. Communication and coordination with our workforce and our customers is a challenge. We need to consistently provide the best level of service possible. In the 'facility business,' there is never enough funding to do everything we want to do. We need to make informed decisions and do the best with the resources we have. We have a lot of dedicated, hard-working, experienced people. It's great to see them work together to solve problems.

How do you see your role as PPO Director?

I'm here to help others to do their jobs by giving them the resources they need; be it personnel, funding, training, etc. My immediate priority is to oversee the PPO reorganization process that started in February 2007. We're also working on continuous improvement in all PPO processes and coordinated customer support. ■

Mary Gault, former Teacher at Jefferson Elementary, September 29, 2007.

Louise Hightman, former Aide at Brooklyn Elementary, September 3, 2007.

Catherine Hopper, former Assistant Superintendent, November 5, 2007.

Edward Johns, former Teacher at Point Loma High, October 7, 2007.

Dorothy Linthicum, former Teacher at Chollas View Elementary, October 14, 2007.

Amelia Martinez, former Teacher at Bell Junior High, November 21, 2007.

Carl Robbins, former Teacher at Serra High, October 11, 2007.

Robert Wise, former Teacher at University High, October 26, 2007.

Joyce Yeldell, Teacher at Nye Elementary, November 11, 2007.



Out and About Out and About Out and About



Students from Farb Middle School attended the Chargers vs. Ravens game courtesy of Chargers player Kassim Osgood and The Athletes For Education (AFE) Foundation. The students were rewarded for their good grades and improvements in academics and citizenship.



Thurgood Marshall Middle School held its dedication ceremony on November 28, after rescheduling it due to the October firestorms. Cutting the ribbon at the dedication are, from left: Gordon Boerner, Scripps Ranch Civic Association president; Chelsea Smith, Area 2 superintendent; Rick Novak, Thurgood Marshall Middle School principal; Dorothy Leonard, Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee chair; Bob Ilko, Scripps Ranch Planning Group chair; and Bob Dingeman, community activist.



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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.

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