

San Diego City Schools Staff Bulletin – April 9, 2003

- **Reapportionment of Trustee Districts to Begin**

The process to begin reapportioning the Board of Education trustee districts is now underway. Reapportionment ensures fair representation of the district's geographic areas. An Advisory Committee on the Reapportionment of Trustee Districts was established by the Board of Education in March, and the board approved a preliminary report by the committee at its April 8 meeting. (*See report G.2*)

The outcome of the reapportionment process will be crucial in determining fair and appropriate Board of Education representation and will shape the governance of San Diego City Schools for the next ten years. As reflected in their April 3, 2003 open letter, Advisory Committee members strongly encourage public involvement in this important process.

Two websites have been established to provide information and opportunities for involvement: **Reapportionment of Trustee Districts**, which includes reapportionment criteria, demographic maps and statistics, and opportunities for feedback both online and through participation at key meetings; and a **Reapportionment Advisory Committee** page, that details committee membership and key dates. Both pages are accessible off the front page of the district website, www.sandi.net, and on the Board of Education page, <http://www.sandi.net/indices/board.htm>. For additional information, please contact Ricardo Soto at rsoto@mail.sandi.net or (619) 725-5639.

- **Junior League Supports First-Year Teachers and Literacy**

by Melissa Whipple

On a bright Saturday morning in March, Logan principal Flavia Soria and Parent Academic Liaison Josie Ramirez, looked on as 12 first-year teachers at Logan Elementary waited patiently for their new gifts to arrive. The teachers were eager to begin rearranging their classrooms to make room for the new "literacy centers" being delivered by Junior League volunteers.

The Logan teachers were not alone in their excitement. Another 60 first-year elementary teachers from the Focus Schools of Baker, Balboa, Chavez, Edison, Emerson Bandini, Kimbrough, King and Sherman each received one of the decorated bookshelves, containing about 20 new grade-level books, with extra space for more books or classroom items.

Meanwhile, at the Junior League House near Balboa Park, many Junior League volunteers had been up since dawn assembling and packing the bookshelves (with lots of help from the Boys and Girls Clubs of San Diego) in order to complete what they call a "Done-in-a-Day" project. Of course the fund-raising, organization and preparation for this annual Junior League project always starts months before the day of the event, but the actual physical work is all saved for one very busy day.

"The key to this kind of project is to have lots of volunteers show up and work really hard for a short period of time so that the project gets completed in one day," said Julie Schrady, chair of the Junior League Impact Committee. She added, "We love helping first year teachers and I guess this gift came at a particularly good time this year."

While one team of Junior League volunteers delivered the twelve bookshelves to Logan Elementary, the other 60 teachers (or teams from their schools) picked up their bookshelves from the Junior League House. As the teachers walked up the driveway, you could see the excitement and gratitude on their faces. The Junior League has been overwhelmed by the hundreds of thank you notes and posters and booklets sent to them from the teachers and their students. The Junior League estimates that each bookshelf (including the set of books) to be worth \$160.00, resulting in a total contribution that exceeds \$11,500 not including labor.

Rocio Ramirez, 3rd grade teacher at Logan Elementary put into words the feelings of many in her heart felt note to the Junior League. *"Thank you very much for the bookcases and books. As a brand new teacher (like any teacher), I need many books to support the learning of my students. Decorating it with friendly*

stickers was a great idea and it has really added to my classroom environment. My students are really enjoying the books! I appreciate your kind generosity."

Students were able to practice writing real thank you notes to express their appreciation also. A student from Edison Elementary wrote, *"Thank you for the bookcase and books. We love to read. We read everyday. I want to read one that you gave us called, Lizzie McGuire". Sincerely, Cyrecia.* A second grader at Logan Elementary offered the following, *"Thank you so much for the bookcase and books. We are very excited to have them. Because you're so very nice, I wish I could give a present to all of you."* Sincerely, Miguel

The Junior League of San Diego is part of an international organization of women committed to promoting volunteerism, developing the potential of women, and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable. The last two years have been focused on educational issues.

In 2002 the Junior League of San Diego initiated a partnership with the district's Parent Involvement Department to bring educational resources to the ten focus schools. At the beginning of the 2002-2003 school year Junior League volunteers delivered 2200 educational "toolkits" (backpacks containing school supplies and an instructional parent video) to every first grader at the ten focus schools (see page two of *Staff Bulletin*, October 25, 2002) Plans are already underway to repeat both projects in 2003-2004. Next year the Parent Involvement Department and the Junior League of San Diego plan to formalize their unique partnership.

As Richard Riley, the former Secretary of Education once said, "It is impossible to have an island of academic excellence in a sea of community indifference." "That is why," says Melissa Whipple of the Parent Involvement Department, "we are so absolutely thrilled to work with the women of the Junior League who are so caring, motivated and completely dedicated to improving the lives of children and families."

• **Mental Health Resource Center is Now Serving Students**

By Paula Williams-Hayden

The Mental Health Resource Center (MHRC) is the newest addition to the Health Services Department. Funded through a federal Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative grant, the MHRC focuses on violence prevention and mental health for children in pre-K through 12th grades.

A cornerstone of the program has been the development of services for ALBA (Alternative Learning for Behavior and Attitude) Community Day School where students who are expelled for Zero Tolerance behaviors attend. This high-risk population of students receives a variety of services including the evidence-based intervention called Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST). Mental Health clinicians work intensively at a student's home with all family members to change behaviors. In addition, traditional mental health treatment, Botvin Life Skills Training, and other intervention services have been provided. Transitional services provided by experienced district counselors are provided to each student as they leave ALBA and return to a comprehensive site.

According to ALBA Principal, Jolie Pickett, "ALBA means 'new dawn' or 'new beginnings' in Spanish and it is just this new beginning that the ALBA staff strives to offer students. Students have the opportunity to grow mentally and intellectually via decision-making coursework, counseling and therapy, in addition to the regular academic curriculum. An ALBA student is a child who has made a mistake and needs to be provided with the tools to learn to make better decisions. Our goal at ALBA is to help students develop not only academically, but also socially and emotionally."

The MHRC has developed a mentoring program for targeted middle schools. Research has shown that children who participate in positive interactions with adults and their peers have higher self-esteem and improved academic successes. "The feedback received so far from the students who are participating has been very positive," said Paula Lempert, Project Resource Teacher for the MHRC.

Middle school students are being served by a community-based agency that provides mental health services such as therapists and case managers who help families and children in need. The agency also has a probation officer that works in a proactive way to help children stay out of the juvenile justice system.

As for the real test of success for the program, SDCS Police Chief Tom Hall says, "Since implementing services at one of our schools that used to have some of the most problems and police calls, that school has now moved to the near bottom of the list of calls."

Healthy Start coordinators at the targeted middle schools receive referrals from school staff for students for whom they have concerns, including attendance issues or more significant behavioral concerns. The coordinator reviews referrals and a team of professionals makes recommendations as to the best intervention to remedy the situation. Parental consent is required before any services begin.

Mental health services have also been made available based on staff referral for students attending the target preschool and elementary schools. The MHRC has an assessment clinic complete with a child psychologist and case managers to help families and their children with mental health issues.

A violence prevention curriculum called Second Step is currently being taught to more than 600 children across 10 preschool campuses in the district. Second Step is supported by research as being very effective in teaching children appropriate social skills and how to handle their anger. This success is attributed in part to the parent component of the Second Step program. Parents learn the same skills as their children in order to be able to reinforce and role model the behaviors at home.

Additional funding has been obtained to add services for students in special education at the Riley and New Dawn sites. A collaborative partnership with San Diego County Children's Mental Health Services has resulted in the expansion of treatment services for students who are eligible for Medi-cal at approximately fifty SDCS campuses as well.

Shirley Culver, Program Manager for the MHRC reports, "The MHRC is exploring numerous funding and collaborative opportunities to expand and diversify mental health services for district students in order to expand to more school sites and serve students who are in need of service."

• News You Can Use

A student-run credit union at Hoover High School will be opening next month as the result of collaborative project development involving Hoover's **Regional Occupation Program (ROP) class** and **Mission Federal Credit Union**. Called the **Hoover High Campus Branch and Career Center**, the facility will open May 7 as full-service branch open to qualifying members in the City Heights community and the community at large. The students enrolled in the program receive classroom credit, unpaid/paid internship credit, community college credit at San Diego City College, and community service hours. The program is designed for students to participate in for one to two years. The program offers five class periods a day, although each student is only eligible to work in the branch during one class period per day.

• Hall of Fame

San Diego City Schools Life Skills team was honored with the **2003 Exemplary Achievement in Prevention Award** at the 8th annual **Substance Abuse Summit**. The award was accepted by John de Beck, vice president for the Board of Education, and Joanne Wall, executive director of Student Services. The award recognizes the work of the district's Health/Life Skills program in providing a comprehensive health curriculum developed and implemented by the Life Skills team. . This team provides demonstration lessons, instruction, consultation, and referral. Additionally, confidential substance abuse intervention services are available to middle and high school students. All the programs are research based and correlate to state and district health standards.

Hage Elementary Physical Education teacher Lynn Barnes-Wallace has been named the **Elementary School Physical Educator of the Year** by the **National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)**, Southwest District, at the NASPE National Convention last week in Philadelphia. The Southwest District represents a six-state area from New Mexico to Hawaii. Lynn has been a physical education specialist with the district for 12 years.

O'Farrell Community School has been recognized as an **AVID National Certified School** for the 2001-2002 school year. This status is awarded to AVID sites that have met the eleven AVID Program Essentials and Data Collection documentation that supports program effectiveness and student progress. This self-

study and validation process is designed to assist AVID sites with achieving desired benchmarks that are precursors for academic success in high schools and colleges.

The Fairy Godparents Foundation, a group of grandparents who get together to raise money specifically to help middle school students, recently provided a donation of \$1,000 to **O'Farrell Community School**. The money is to be used to give deserving students a free yearbook. Approximately 36 students will benefit from the generous donation.

- **Student Salutes**

Students at **Bell Junior High** are dedicating themselves to raising awareness about the issues of suicide prevention, homelessness and hunger for their **National Youth Service Day (NYSD)** project. NYSD, being held the weekend of April 11-13, focuses national attention on youth volunteerism. Students representing Bell's **Club Live**, a peer program designed to build partnerships for positive and healthy youth development, and the **Associated Student Body** will sponsor a **Homelessness and Teen Suicide Prevention Rally**. The rally will include guest speakers and class groups will be able to sign up for specific presentations.

Mission Bay High School student Bow Chinnapong was featured in the March 30 issue of "**Parade**" in the "Fresh Voices" column focusing on volunteerism and National Youth Service Day. Bow began volunteering in 7th grade, spearheading an after-school trash clean-up program. Bow says for this year's NYSD, she'll spend the day asking senior citizens to tell stories from their past. Then she and her co-volunteers will make a book for them with all their memories. To learn more about this year's National Youth Service Day, visit the *Save the Date* column or visit the National Youth Service Day website at <http://www.ysa.org/nysd/index.cfm>.

E.B. Scripps Elementary student Zachary Haist will soon be a published poet. Zachary and his fellow students in Mr. Shobar's class had participated in a program designed to promote creative expression among young people by submitting entries for publication in the 2003 edition of the ***Anthology of Poetry by Young Americans***. Zachary's was accepted for publication.

The **La Jolla High School Mock Trial team** placed 1st in the Regional Competition. They beat Carlsbad High School and will move to the state competition at the end of the month. Student participants include **Robert Rose, Suzy Price, Tim Hughes, Lauren Behr, Christian Ewton, Noa Simchoni, John Lee, Jacob King, Nicole Landguth, John Keller O'Hara, Arjun Lall, Max Waggoner, Kate Wegrzyn, Nick Oswald, Kevin Zeidler, Ann Gnanaratnem, Hannah Laiken and Peter Borgstrom**.

La Jolla's Speech and Debate team captured 2nd place overall in the State Qualifying Tournaments. Students who will be moving on to the State Tournament in May include **Matt Bohrer, Justin Glavis-Bloom, Ashley Fox, Dariush Nohaft, David Popkin, Eric Sefton, Michael Shih, Hilary Strong, Matt Valjii and Albert Wu**. Justin also received the Speaker of the Tournament award for being a finalist in all four events he entered.

Fellow Vikings **Harish Khadrika, Ryan Keane and Alex Kritchevsky** were named winners of the Exploravision Western Regional competition. Now they compete for \$10,000 each in the national competition.

- **Scenes from Schools**

Green Elementary School recently held its annual **Junior Olympics** – a weeklong celebration beginning with opening ceremonies where each class represented a country and performed a cultural dance. Each class was dressed in a cultural costume representative of their country. The event also included an Olympic Track Meet; a culmination of three units taught by the three physical education specialists in the daily physical education classes. This year's keynote speaker was Becky Jackman, a local swimming champion who'll be swimming across the English Channel this summer. Principal Jean Madden reports it was a wonderful, cultural event with lots of good sportsmanship demonstrated by all. Check out a photo from the event on the front page of the district website!

- **Save the Date**

This year's **National Youth Service Day (NYSD)** will be held the weekend of **April 11-13, 2003**. NYSD is the largest service event in the world, engaging millions of young Americans in community service and focusing national attention on the amazing leadership of young people. **Volunteer San Diego**, in partnership with the district's **Community Relations Department**, has been collaborating for weeks with various schools, student organizations and individuals to provide opportunities for volunteers to be engaged in a variety of projects countywide. For more information, click on www.volunteersandiego.org and the National Youth Service Day website at <http://www.ysa.org/nysd/index.cfm>. NYSD is being held in conjunction with **Family Volunteer Day**, April 12. Opportunities for families to volunteer on projects together are still available. To find out what some of our students are doing to promote volunteerism, be sure and visit the *Student Salutes* page!

Science textbooks proposed for adoption for several classes are available for parent and teacher review at the Eugene Brucker Education Center. The textbooks are for **Chemistry 1, 2** and **AP Chemistry** classes as well as general science textbooks for **grades 6, 7 and 8**. The books are currently on display in Annex 14 at the Ed Center from 8 a.m. to noon, and again from 1 – 5 p.m. Feedback forms are available there as well. Annex 14 will also be open from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 12. The **feedback deadline is April 22**, in order to include the information in a required report for the Board of Education. Forms should be submitted to Denzil Rexroad in Annex 14, (619) 725-7379. For information about access to Annex 14, please call Denzil or visit the front page of the district website for a map of the Ed Center. For additional information on the textbook adoptions, please contact Sue Weir at sweir@mail.sandi.net or Autumn Chapman at achapman@mail.sandi.net or visit the Science Textbook Adoption page off the front page of the website.

The 2nd **Annual "Celebrating Families" Parenting Conference** will be **Saturday, April 26**, from 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the Town and Country Resort and Convention Center. The conference involves over 30 workshops, educational exhibits and vendors, continental breakfast, lunch and door prizes. Workshop topics will include *"Raising Your Child's Self-Esteem," "Child Development and Health Issues," "Reducing Power Struggles," "Sharing Music With Children," "Communicating with Teenagers"* and *"Special Parenting Tips for Dads."* Conference sponsors include the Parenting Link, the YMCA, and the Parent Education Task Force of the county's Commission on Children, Youth and Families. Cost is \$5 per person, including breakfast and lunch. Parking is \$3. For more information or to register, please call Stephanie at (858) 514-4770 or visit www.informsandiego.org.

The **Superintendent's Art Exhibition open house** will take place **Tuesday, April 29**, at the Eugene Brucker Education Center. From 5:30– 7:00 p.m., students, staff, parents, and members of the community are invited to the Ed Center to view the showcase of student artwork that exemplifies the outstanding teaching and learning in the visual arts that occurs throughout our district. The work of 600 students from 36 schools has been selected for display by 52 art teachers. Want a sneak peek? Visit the March 26 Staff Bulletin to see an online slide show. For more information, contact Cindy Velline, visual arts specialist, at (858) 539-5353.

The **Secondary Instrumental Honor Concert** will be Tuesday, **May 20, 2003** at the San Diego Civic Theatre at 7:30 p.m. The event is free and open to the public.

- **Classifieds**

For Sale: '97-99 Honda Accord 4-door car cover, \$50/obo, 619-469-4343; Player Piano, Pianola, excel. cond., 70+ rolls, \$3,500/obo, 619-562-3388; All 4 U.S.D. extension CLAD courses video tapes, \$90, 619-216-8903; Plush beige carpet, 2 rls., 55-60 yds., new, cheap, 619-697-1095; '89 Acura Legend, excl. mech. cond., orig. owner, 619-295-0540; Reptile Cage, 8'1 x 2' w, \$200, 858-277-1134; Pool, 3' x 15' has everything, almost new, paid \$350, will sell \$150, used once, 858-565-1361; Brand new set of wire wheels, knockoff style, \$300/set, 619-262-7962; '97 travel trailer, "Thor" by Wanderer, 22 ft., excl. cond., \$8,500, 619-562-3388, '94 Toyota Corolla, burgandy, 162K, runs well, manual trans., AC, Kenwood CD, power, \$2,500, 619-865-1509.