

Staff Bulletin

For the employees of San Diego City Schools



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GETTING A FOOTHOLD....AND A HANDHOLD - Students at Silver Gate Elementary navigate a unique traversing and climbing wall, complete with realistic mountain mural, put in at their school. The project has drawn attention from other schools wishing to build something similar. The how-to article on page two.

Independent Review Shows Reforms Moving Students In Right Direction

Report faults certain implementation steps; says key stake-holders must collaborate and find ways to work together to benefit students

A much-anticipated report by an outside evaluation company suggests that educational reform efforts in San Diego City Schools are moving our students in the right direction, but that it is too early yet to tell whether the initiative will be successful in its stated aim of raising achievement for all students across the board in our district.

Researchers with the American Institutes for Research (AIR), a Palo Alto-based firm hired by the Board of Education to monitor progress of the *Blueprint for Student Success*, noted that the educational reform effort in San Diego is sufficiently broad-based and included indicators necessary for success.

AIR researchers also said, however, that their research, which included surveys and interviews of district employees and visits to sites, suggested district leaders need to make mid-course corrections in implementing the reform, including improvements in

communication with key stakeholders, especially teachers and parents. Noting that these reforms are taking place in a highly politicized atmosphere, researchers also suggested that all stakeholders “lay down the rhetoric” to allow the reform to take root.

“A great deal of careful thought and effort have gone into the design and implementation of the reform, and it is grounded in research on effective practices,” AIR researchers stated in the report. “While all stakeholders can surely find ways to communicate more effectively, it may be more important to suggest that they find ways to collaborate – to work together for the benefit of all children in the district.”

Superintendent Alan Bersin said district leadership was pleased that the review acknowledged progress, and that district staff, principals, teachers and other

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Pilot Begins For Office Depot Desktop Delivery

Coming soon to a desktop near you – direct office supply delivery! A pilot program starts next month to test desktop delivery of office, teaching and custodial supplies to the school site by Office Depot.

Business Services Chief Ronne Froman said the pilot will allow the department to be more customer service-oriented.

“The bottom line is: our schools are our customers, and it is our obligation to serve them and be responsive,” she said.

“This pilot will allow schools to order supplies on-line, and have them delivered within 24 business hours. Not days. Hours.”

Traditionally, schools submit requisitions or use the district’s online ordering system, a process can take days or even weeks before supplies are delivered to the site. Under the pilot program, schools will order directly from Office Depot’s website. The pilot schools are: Rosa Parks and Tierrasanta elementaries, Lewis and Wilson middle schools, Bell Jr. High and Garfield, Hoover and Point Loma high schools.

“We’re also excited that the district will be able to take advantage of online rebates the way traditional businesses do,” said Froman.

The rebate program, which she said was developed with the help of Sol Price of the Price Foundation, will return rebates of up to 7% back to the school or office, depending on order value and order frequency. Long-term, the agreement with Office Depot is expected to provide substantial savings, although initially there will be some costs related to overlapping systems.

“Much of the long-term savings will be derived from the fact that right now we are

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- New Desktop Delivery Program
- Climbing the Walls at Silver Gate

Student Salutes

Marston Middle School 7th grader **Brett Malec** has been named “**Ambassador of the Year**” out of 15,000 students in the **President Eisenhower People to People Student Ambassador Program**. Brett traveled to Australia as part of the San Diego delegation, led by **Farb teacher Jeannette Lisiak**. This summer, Brett will travel to Europe. Other district students honored as student ambassadors include **Megan Bowles, Standley Jr. High; Katie Brady, Challenger Middle School; Amanda Goulart, Farb Middle School; Kristen Green, Marshall Middle School; Brenna Huntley, Challenger Middle School; Ian King, Marshall Middle School; Blake Lawless, Standley Jr. High; Kaya Malone, Kroc Middle School; and Wei-Ning Sun, High Tech High**. For more information on this program, please contact Jeannette Lisiak at jlisiak@mail.sandi.net.

Patrick Henry High School's Academic Decathlon team scored 2nd overall in the county. The team scored 1st in Language & Literature, 2nd in SuperQuiz and 3rd in Math. Second place student overall in the county was **Erin Hatch**, and the top Henry team scorer was **Brittin Romero**. A record 13 individual medals were earned by team members including **Kelly Chase, Chloe Gates, Erin Hatch, Brittin Romero** and **Anna Simpson**. Other team members included **Alex Bastian, Mike Karesky** and **Gabe Roseman**. **La Jolla High School's boys' JV and Novice water polo teams** concluded great seasons, finishing with winning records and Novice placing second at the end of the season's countywide tournaments. The Varsity posted a big win against Carlsbad, the #1 ranked team in Division 1. La Jolla's girls' Tennis Team won the CIF Division II Team title. Students **Lisa Shih** and **Jenny McGory** were noted as #1 in the CIF Individuals Tournament. La Jolla's boys' Varsity Cross-Country Team was ranked fifth in the state of California and eight students were winner and finalists at the Aztec Invitational: **Albert Wu, David Cohen, Nick Ande, Michael Shih, Ashley Fox, Nikhil Cooper, Yunna Mirolyan** and **Alex Smith**.

Hickman Elementary has several published student authors on campus! Students **Michelle Hough, Allan Camas, Richard de los Reyes, Travis Hardesty** and **Kathy King**, students in **P.J. Jeffrey's** fifth grade class, all have poems in the upcoming book, “**Anthology of Poetry by Young Americans**.”

A' Climbing They Will Go....

A climbing wall installed at Silver Gate Elementary has been attracting all kinds of attention, with the repeat query being “how DID you do that and how do I get one at my school?” Principal Karen Mitchell and her physical education teacher Geoff McCloud are happy to pass along their construction costs and timeline, but warn that the process can take about a year from start to finish.



McCloud's first bit of advice is to check with the district's risk management department to determine if the project is feasible at your campus. “Silver Gate's wall was built on the side of an existing building. After ensuring the wall was safe, a climbing wall consultant was hired and designed the layout in about two hours,” he said.







Then, in the course of one afternoon, McCloud and a group of parents and students applied the foot and hand holds to the wall. Each hold is attached with a bolt that goes completely through the wall to a back plate and is reinforced with epoxy.



To make the wall more attractive, a local muralist was commissioned to paint a scenic mountainside. Finally, mats were arranged on the ground for cushioning. The total cost was approximately \$10,000 — Prop MM funds were used for the mats but students and parents held a fundraiser to raise the rest of the money.

McCloud wanted the wall as a tool to help build student's upper body strength. Because it is a traversing wall and not a climbing wall (students climb side to side instead of up and down), the highest foot grab is only 14 inches off the ground. “This makes it safe for younger children and they get the same workout whether they are 14 inches or 14,000 feet off the ground. They're getting an upper body workout,” he said.

Students are putting the wall to use during gym class and at lunch, when a supervisor is available. “It has also become an attraction after hours when many students and children in the neighborhood use the wall after school and on weekends,” said Mitchell, adding that with the outstanding mural the wall has both beautified the school and become a community attraction.

Length of wall (ft.)	36	
# of Hand holds	67	
# of Foot holds	38	
		
Mats \$6,000	Mural \$3,000	Grabs \$400

People & Places

Roosevelt Middle School Language Arts teacher Stacy North has been selected as one of nine people to receive the **Award for Classroom Excellence** by the **California Association of Teachers of English**. Stacy received her award at the annual CATE conference in Oakland earlier this month.

Dana Middle School physical education teacher Jean Marmet recently concluded two dance clinics at the 12th annual National Girls and Women In Sports Day held at San Diego City College. The event, celebrating 30 years of Title IX, included the participation of more than 400 girls in grades 4-8.

Correction: **Marston teacher Brenna Baringer's** name was misspelled in the January 16 Staff Bulletin. Baringer was among 37 teachers certified by the **National Board for Professional Teaching Standards**. All 37 teachers were recently honored by the board of education.

Reforms: Right Direction But Collaboration Needed

(Continued from page one)

instructional leaders were working on the right types of strategies to achieve real achievement for all students across the district. He also acknowledged that the AIR report confirmed much of what district leaders were already aware of through other feedback methods.

“We have had bumps in implementation to be sure, but that’s to be expected in a reform of this scale,” Bersin said. “If you don’t have bumps, you aren’t really doing comprehensive education reform. But you must pay careful attention as a community to smoothing out the bumps over time.”

“That said, we need to do a better job of communications, of gathering feedback, and of making sure that everyone in the system understands the goals of the educational strategies that were put in place over the past four years. We also know that the pace of introduction of new reform strategies needs to be dialed back so that principals, teachers and other instructional leaders can work together and perfect implementation of the strategies already introduced.”

District leaders found the AIR conclusion that there was a “climate of fear and suspicion clearly in evidence” troubling, Bersin said. District leadership also regrets the finding that some teachers feel a lack of professional respect for their work, and that parents and other stakeholders report feeling “disenfranchised” from the reform process.

“Clearly, the polarization evident on the board and with the SDEA leadership is counterproductive,” Bersin said.

“The key to educational reform is to have all those who influence a student’s life pulling in the same direction, including principals, teachers, parents, board members and union leaders. Therefore, we want to redouble our efforts to reach out to these key people in order to further progress in academic achievement for all our students. Above all, we need to remain child-centered and student-focused,” he added.

“Our teachers, likely using enhanced materials provided under the reform plan and drawing upon lessons from the \$60-million per year now spent on teacher professional development training, have helped our students post steady progress in achievement since 1998. Our challenge as

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Educational Reform Outreach Strategies Outlined

Recognizing that a great deal of interaction around educational reforms takes place daily at the school site level between instructional leaders, principals, teachers and parents; district leadership is heeding the call for additional avenues of outreach and communication in order to address implementation issues around the strategies.

In the past month, Superintendent Alan Bersin and other district leaders have taken a series of several steps to broaden the district’s outreach programs in order to provide more opportunity for discussion, feedback and cooperation between principals, teachers, parents and community leaders in order to improve implementation of reform efforts. These increased efforts include:

- “ An ever-improving focus on site communications between principals and parents.
- “ Teacher focus groups designed to provide feedback on programs.
- “ Creation of a new parent advisory committee and a re-energized relationship with the district’s standing parent advisory councils.
- “ Stepped-up opportunities for district leaders to confer with parents, principals and teachers in various settings.
- “ Programs designed to encourage community leaders to come into schools and see for themselves how reform strategies are changing the way students are educated.
- “ Enhanced outreach to the community at large to ensure everyone who is interested has an opportunity to learn the details of the San Diego City Schools reform efforts

While acknowledging that there is always room for improvement, Bersin rejected the notion that the district intentionally disregarded other points of view and moved too fast in order to institute reforms.

“As district leaders, perhaps we have not always been sufficiently sensitive when it came to communicating the need for and direction of reforms, but it was clear in 1998 that much needed to be done, and done quickly, in order to help all our students to learn,” Bersin said. “As a group, we moved fast, and together implemented tried-and-true strategies designed to begin the long process of reform. We did so in spite of the implacable opposition, seemingly since day one, by some proponents of the status quo.

“Along the way, we inevitably stepped on toes, and that is as regrettable as it was unavoidable in a process of large-scale change. But we pressed ahead knowing that if we had to stop and gain the assent in every aspect of the reforms from every stakeholder group, the district would never have achieved the kinds of academic improvement shown since 1998.

“Having said that, we can do better and we will,” Bersin said. “Teachers, parents, principals and the community at large need to keep pressing for improved student achievement. The key to finding common ground and working as a team with those who have opposed the reform is the ability to discuss issues and, if necessary, options. Just coming in and saying ‘no’ without offering alternatives cannot be an option, because the price for dragging our feet, or standing in place, is too high for our students and the San Diego community now and in the future.”

Office Depot Desktop Delivery

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paying a substantial markup on any given item from having to warehouse and deliver it,” Froman said. As an example, if the district pays a dollar for an item, the school site is also charged a dollar, but it costs the district as much as 75 cents extra to warehouse and then deliver the item to the school. “By going through Office Depot, our costs will be only 30 to 40 cents per dollar or roughly a saving of 50%.”

“It looks like the school pays more, but long-term, the district realizes substantial savings,” she said, adding that budgets for office and custodial supplies would be adjusted to accommodate the difference in cost.

“This will be a 90-day pilot program and will be considered successful if it helps us meet our goal of providing increased customer service to school sites, better response time for needed products and a higher level of product quality,” Froman said.

AIR Reform Report

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leaders is to make sure they have the support they need to keep the effort moving as quickly as possible.

"The road to reform, as noted by AIR and others, is long, and time is not on our side. Our children are growing older each year, and we need to ensure that they are growing smarter as well," Bersin said. "This can only happen if the quality of our instruction for all students gets better and better."

For the complete text of the report, the first of three annual evaluations, see <http://www.sandi.net/board/reports/2002/br.020212/br.020212.html>

Partnerships Honored

The district's **Partnerships in Education Program** has been honored not once, but twice by the **California Partners in Education (CAPIE)**, an affiliate of the National Association of Partners in Education (NAPE).

The district program received the California Partners in Education 2002 **Outstanding Partnership Involving Students** for both K-5 and 6-12 categories. The awards are given to partnerships that have demonstrated program goals that are clearly defined and measurable, have sustainability, and have activities that are clearly aligned to partnerships goals and contribute to student success.

Details are available on the CAPIE website <http://www.capie.org>.

The next Staff Bulletin will appear Mar. 20. Deadline for submissions is Mar. 12. Please note that deadlines are final and cannot be extended. Staff Bulletin is on the web site.

Staff Bulletin

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Looking Ahead

Submissions are still being accepted for the **San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Business Roundtable for Education 2002 Best Practices** project. The Best Practices project looks at outstanding K-8 programs taking place at schools with other educators and with business leaders. For information and a nomination form, visit the Best Practices page at: www.thechamberfoundation.org or call (619) 544-1327.

Last-minute registrations are being accepted until March 7 for the **Association for African American Educators Annual Conference**. The conference will be held March 7-10 at the San Diego Marriott in Mission Valley and will feature over 50 speakers, workshops and exhibits. For information, please call Dr. Juel Moore at Oak Park Elementary, (619) 264-3179. **The AB496 California Mathematics Initiative** offers up to \$7,500 for tuition and books to teachers who are working toward or wish to obtain mathematics credentials. The program is open to credentialed teachers, interns and pre-interns. For information and application forms, see Administrative Circular #33 on the district's website, or contact Marty Stultz at (858) 496-1875 or mstultz@mail.sandi.net. The deadline for 2001-2002 coursework reimbursement is March 4, 2002.

Memorial Academy will host its 2nd **International Women's Day Celebration** on March 8 from 6-9 p.m. in the auditorium. There will be poetry, dance, theatre and music.

The **Human Resources Services Division** and **Cor-O-Van** have joined together in conducting a book drive to benefit district students. Employees can drop off books in designated boxes placed in the lobby of the Eugene Brucker Education Center until March 8, 2002.

The deadline for applications for the **Immigration Museum for New Americans First Annual Essay Contest** has been extended until March 15, 2002. The contest is open to district students in grades 6-12, and community college students who have immigrated or whose relatives have immigrated to the U.S. since 1945. For contest and application information, email newamericanessaycontest@hotmail.com or call (760) 741-5678.

The **Elementary Instrumental Honor Concert** will be held Tuesday, March 12, at 7:00 p.m. in Point Loma Nazarene University's Brown Chapel.

The **Choral Honor Concert**, featuring Elementary, Secondary Treble and Secondary Mixed Honor Choirs, will be held Saturday, March 16, at 7:00 p.m. at the College Ave. Baptist Church.

Classified Ads

ADS RUN ON SPACE-AVAILABLE BASIS - Send to Communications Office, Room 2145, Eugene Brucker Education Center. **Limit to 10 words (not including phone) or ad not accepted. Include work location and phone (for ID purposes only).**

FOR SALE: '88 Jeep Wrangler, 4 cyl, 5-speed, runs and looks good. Extras. (858) 274-6858. **'89 Toyota Camry**, 147k miles, very good cond. \$4,500 (858) 467-1015. **'93 Ranger Supercab**, shell carpet kit, 92k miles, excellent cond, \$4,800. (858) 277-1599. **'94 Ford Taurus**, huge sound system, new engine \$6,500 (858) 467-1015. **'96 Toyota Camry LE**, mint cond., 86k miles, taupe, spoiler, \$9,100 (619) 303-3220. **'01 Ford Mustang**, white, V6, manual, 9100k, perfect condition, \$14,200 (858) 569-6847. **Oak wall unit**, \$70, girls pecan dresser w/mirror, \$40, (3) office chairs, \$10 and \$15, CD oak rack \$5 (619) 475-7633, (619) 261-6903. **Wall bed**, with cabinet and new mattress, like new, \$800 (619) 583-3034. **Frigidaire washer/dryer**, white, 2 yrs old, large capacity, \$500/obo (619) 225-5762. **Whirlpool washer/dryer**, gas super capacity, newer excel. cond. \$500/set, (619) 384-1508. **Whirlpool refrigerator/stove**, \$350/obo. **Fast Track exercise machine w/ video**, \$30 (619) 441-3329. **Technics 60 cd disk changer/ dual tape deck w/ remote**, \$150 (760) 433-5551. **Sony car cassette & cd changer**, transferable warranty \$250 (858) 483-7096. **1935 Tenor Sax Aristocrat Buescher**, excellent cond. \$1,500/obo (760) 643-1157. **Nancy Drew books**, 21 first printings and much more, (304) 428-5367. **Shar-pei puppies**, female and male, black, d.o.b. 12-22-01 (619) 469-1400. **Snake**, 6' red tail boa, w/cage, light, heating rock, water dish. \$175/obo (619) 475-7633/ (619) 252-2528. **Free horse manure fertilizer**, bring your own container, (619) 263-6228.

FOR RENT: Ocean Beach studio apartment, w/ enclosed yard, inc. utilities. \$650 (619) 223-5248. **La Jolla cottage**, 1 bd./1 ba., lg. yd., pking, \$1500 (619) 847-6968. **Beautiful Lake Tahoe chalet**, sleeps 6-12, by Heavenly, NV (619) 218-4389. **House sitters**, retired teacher & wife available to house sit this summer. K1BGD@winlink.org. **2-3-4 Bedroom homes**, zero down (619) 542-2433. **Mission Valley condo**, 1bd/1ba., no pets, near trolley (760) 476-0396.

WANTED: Cash paid for any estate & old items you'd like to get rid of (619) 772-6903.