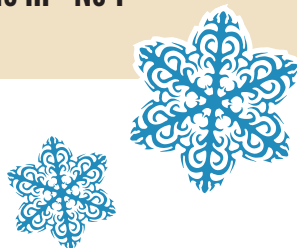




ABC UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Digest

January/February 2014 - Volume III - No 1



Message from the Superintendent - Dr. Mary Sieu

Twitter: @abcsupt

A New Year of Changes

At the Board of Education Meeting on January 7th, the Board and I rang in 2014 by ringing the 13 Golden Bell Awards that we've received since 2002. The Golden Bell Awards are given for exemplary programs in school districts by the California School Boards Association. **We have been honored to have received a Golden Bell Award almost every year since 2002. More importantly, the ringing in of a new year with the Golden Bells demonstrates our commitment to celebrate our accomplishments each year as well as look toward continuous improvement in the District.**

It was an exceptional year for ABC in 2013. We celebrated with two schools honored as a National Blue Ribbon School, two secondary schools recognized as California Distinguished Schools, two programs awarded the Golden Bell Awards, seven schools honored as STAR Schools, and nine schools in Cerritos recognized as Scholar Schools by the California Business for Education Excellence. We celebrated with the City of Hawaiian Gardens when Artesia High School became a 2013 California Distinguished School and two of our elementary schools serving Hawaiian Gardens met the State's benchmark of 800 or above on the Academic Performance Index. School leaders celebrated with the City of Artesia when seven schools serving Artesia were recognized for meeting or exceeding the State's benchmark.

In looking ahead at 2014, we recognize the enormous changes ahead of us. This includes the transition to the Common Core State Standards that the State has adopted, piloting a new State assessment called the Smarter Balanced Assessment, developing a new Local Control Accountability Plan, and implementing the Local Control Funding Formula. **Work has already begun in many of these areas but thoughtful implementation and communication will be required in order to be successful.** Last November, our Board of Education approved to change from an at-large election to a trustee area election system beginning 2015. Numerous steps will be undertaken throughout 2014 in order to make this transition. In addition, this year, the Board and I will be discussing and exploring putting a bond measure for November, 2014. This will require considerable input from the community and transparent communications regarding why additional funds are critical to the success of the District in the years ahead.

We are fully aware of the significant changes in front of us in 2014. As with any highly effective organization, we believe in collaborating with our key stakeholders as we move forward. Please check our website for additional information and the various public forums that will be held to get input as well as to keep the community informed. ►

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2013 Golden Bell Award Winners - ABC Unified School District received its twelfth and thirteenth Golden Bell awards at a recognition ceremony held on December 7, 2013 at CSBA's Annual Education Conference in San Diego. The two programs honored include Nixon Academy's JAM Sessions (Jaguars in Arts and Media) and the SMART (Saturday Morning Academic Reading Time) Academy.

News From Our Schools

Artesia High School

Artesia HS has earned membership in the National Honor Society. As a chapter, students have a variety of outstanding opportunities available for them academically. This is the first time in the history of Artesia High School that they have been awarded membership in this esteemed institution. Dr. Don Bronkhurst and senior students Kyle Gilhuys and Sydney Salazer were responsible for getting Artesia's new chapter of the National Honor Society.

Leal Elementary School

On December 17th Leal ES team of teachers and Principal Laura Makely were recognized by L.A. Supervisor, Don Knabe for being a National Blue Ribbon School. Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu and President Tse also attended this special event held at Hahn Administration Hall in Los Angeles.



Leal ES Recognized by LA Supervisor Don Knabe for their National Blue Ribbon Award.

Kennedy Elementary

- *Healthy Bodies*
- *Healthy Minds*
- *Healthy Adults*



In line with Kennedy's continuous commitment to Healthy Bodies - Healthy Minds, they now have incorporated Healthy Adults. With this in mind, Kennedy organized a Healthy Weight Loss Challenge and invited all district staff and others to join. On Friday, January 10th, 83 eager participants signed up and are now on their way to a healthier lifestyle. The focus is to eat healthy and exercise while developing long-term healthy habits along the way. There is a \$1,000 prize for the top female winner and \$400 for the top male winner. **This is no doubt a win-win situation; a healthier way of life for all participating.** The results weigh-in is scheduled for June 13. Good luck to all the participants and we commend you for taking positive steps toward a healthier lifestyle!

Niemes Elementary School



Meg Jimenez, Principal Niemes ES, was recognized with a Certificate of Recognition by the City of Artesia City Council on Tuesday, Dec. 10th for her work at Niemes ES. She was joined by Dr. Cheryl Bodger, Director of Schools, at the City Council Meeting

Cerritos High School



Cerritos High School "Regiment of Gold" Marching Band has been selected by Marching Apparel to be the main high school band to be featured in their showcase booth (#462) at the Mid-West Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, IL. Thousands of people every year attend this prestigious clinic.

Tetzlaff Middle School



Congratulations to the Tetzlaff MS Basketball Team for winning 2013 State Championship on Saturday, Dec. 28, 2013. Mike Mendez, Tetzlaff teacher, is the coach for the team.



Visit our website for ABCUSD
schools' addresses, contact info,
enrollment boundaries and more!

www.abcusd.k12.ca.us

Whitney High School Magellan Scholarship Recipients

Whitney High School has five Megellan scholarship winners! Anshika Bagla, Kimberly Phong, Amy Lee, Hannah Park, and Daniela Lee, have each been awarded a \$3,000 scholarship to help cover costs of studying abroad in Spain for one month during the summer of 2014. Their study abroad experience includes a full immersion language course, a home stay with a family, and other cultural activities and excursions during their month abroad. Magellan Study Abroad offers language and cultural immersion programs for students during the summer ranging from two-week to two-month programs. Whitney High School community members are excited about the unique opportunity these ladies have been awarded!

Whitney High School Mock Trial Luncheon

Whitney High School Mock Trial students participated in a Federal Court Power Luncheon held at the Edward R. Roybal Federal Building and Courthouse in downtown Los Angeles on December 13, 2013. As the only group of students invited, taking part in the Power Luncheon was a prestigious honor for Whitney students. **It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to "pick the brains" of some of the most influential judges in the nation.** Small groups of students were placed at lunch tables with several attorneys and judges where they were able to discuss major laws and cases, in addition to gaining invaluable career advice. The Honorable Sandra R. Klein facilitated the group learning experiences and several esteemed judges spoke, both inspiring students and helping them understand the federal court system.



Whitney HS Mock Trial Power Luncheon group photo

Two ABC Schools Celebrate Selection as California's "Schools to Watch"

On February 5th, students, staff, parents, district leaders, board members, and community members will celebrate the selection of Carmenita Middle School and Tetzlaff Middle School as two of California's 2014 Schools to Watch—Taking Center Stage model middle schools.



"We are thrilled to have this recognition" says Kester Song, Principal of Carmenita MS. "Our students and staff have worked very hard in an exciting middle school program to demonstrate strong academic achievement. This ceremony is an affirmation of the fine work so many have done in the school, district and larger community." Principal Crechena Wise added "Tetzlaff MS has been on a trajectory toward academic excellence. The school was recognized as a 2013-16 California Distinguished School. We recognize what works for our students and we're excited to share with others."

The celebration at both schools on Feb. 5th will feature an address to the student body on their school's selection as a model and the presentation of a banner. Dr. Irvin Howard, President of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform, noted, "**Both Carmenita MS and Tetzlaff MS are models of what an outstanding middle school can be.** School leaders from across the state will now turn to both of these schools for guidance on improving their programs to better serve their students."

According to Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu, "Carmenita MS and Tetzlaff MS serve 7th and 8th grade students in ABC Unified School District. California's Schools to Watch—Taking Center Stage Program uses a competitive, rigorous review process to identify high performing, high impact middle schools so that all middle schools may have models of real world success. Carmenita MS and Tetzlaff MS are two of just 59 model schools that have been identified statewide since 2003. This is the first time ABC schools have been selected for this recognition".

The program is provided by the California Middle Grades Alliance, which includes the California League of Middle Schools, California Department of Education, and other statewide educational organizations who are partners in the California Middle Grades Alliance.

6th ABC Youth Leadership Summit

The 6th ABC Youth Leadership Summit was held at USC's Ronald Tutor Center co-sponsored by the School of Social Work. **Over 200 students representing all our middle and high schools participated in this year's event.** Each year, our middle and high schools identify 20 students at each school to participate and are accompanied by an adult mentor. The adult mentor could be the counselor, SIA, or co-administrator at their school. **The goal of the Youth Leadership Summit is to build youth leadership skills.** The breakout sessions included Bullying/Cyberbullying; Relationships/Avoiding Teen Pregnancy; Tools to Deal with Anger; Self Love & Respect; and Anti-Tobacco, Alcohol, Substance Abuse Education. Following lunch, the students took a tour of the USC campus.



Terri Villa-McDowell, Safe Schools Coordinator, Sheila Loranger, Division Assistant, and Valencia Mayfield, Assistant Superintendent, in front of USC's "Tommy Trojan."



Artesia HS student leaders presented a workshop on "Relationships."



Asian Drug Abuse Prevention Program Staff presenting a session on anti-tobacco use.



ABC 6th Youth Leadership Summit Breakout Sessions

News Around the District

Curriculum and Professional Learning

Smarter Balanced Assessment System

With the recent passing of Assembly Bill 484, districts are required to administer field tests to students in grades 3-8th and 11th in English language arts and math. A small sample of ninth and tenth grade students will also participate. These field tests will replace the STAR (Standardized Testing and Reporting) assessments beginning this year, but no test scores will be released to students, schools, or districts. **The purpose of the Spring 2014 Smarter Balanced Field test is to test the performance of over 20,000 newly developed test items and evaluate the test delivery system.** Final testing determinations will take place after the testing window, and full implementation of the assessment will begin in the Spring of 2015. Please visit www.smarterbalanced.org for detailed information.

The Smarter Balanced Field Tests will take place between March 18 and June 6, 2014. Each school site has been assigned a specific testing window within those dates. Students will be assessed via computer in both English language arts and math. Participation in these Field Tests will allow valuable exposure for students, teachers, administrators, and local education agencies in the following areas:

- Hands on experience maneuvering through the technology-enhanced items and the newly designed performance tasks.
- Identifying academic and structural technology gaps that may exist at the school site to better prepare for next year's implementation.
- A practice "run through" opportunity for schools to determine new testing schedules, administration of the computer-based test, and other logistics.

Practice Tests are available online and are open to the public. These tests provide a preview of the Smarter Balanced Assessments in grades three through eight. Although the practice tests do not provide any feedback to the test taker, it demonstrates a variety of question types and allows for valuable exposure to the new testing design. Please visit <http://sbac.portal.airast.org/practice-test/> to preview the practice tests. There is no sign in information required.

District departments, such as Academic Services and Information and Technology, have been working very closely with school sites to help determine best practices for the upcoming Smarter Balanced Field Tests. ABC Unified School District is committed to making sure this field testing opportunity helps to better prepare our schools for a smooth implementation to the new Smarter Balanced Assessment in the Spring of 2015. ▶

Partnership with Administration and Labor with CSEA (PAL2)

Technology Workshops

On Jan. 14th and 15th a Mail Merge Workshop was provided as part of the PAL2 Academy. On February 18-19 Intermediate Excel will be offered. The workshop will be conducted by Mary White at the District Office Computer Lab.

Student Intervention Assistants (SIA) Workshops

Workshops for SIAs were offered on Jan. 31 from 10 am - 2 pm in the District Office Boardroom. The focus will be on "Other Means of Correction in Disciplining Students" by Tim Catlin, Supervisor of Child Welfare and Attendance. ▶

Community Involvement

Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE)

Throughout the first semester, hundreds of parents at Juarez ES, Melbourne ES, Willow ES, and Fedde MS participated in the Parent Institute for Quality Education. PIQE hosted a ten-week parent education workshop series for the parents in English and Spanish. Topics ranged from understanding the common core standards to effective means of supporting student academic achievement. The workshop series included a Principal dialogue with parents to address burning questions, discuss ways for parents to be actively involved in the school, and encourage active engagement in parent leadership roles. The entire program culminated with a graduation where parents received recognition awards and a certificate from the California State University certifying parent participation in the program. This special certification allows for student priority consideration on college admission to the California State University system. The PIQE Program will be offered to other Title I funded schools in the second semester this year and next year. ▶

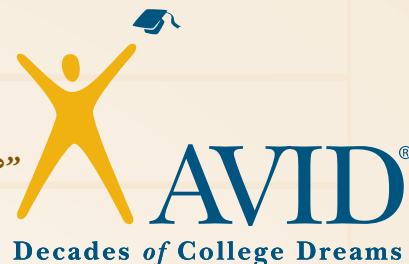


Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu, Melbourne parent Yolanda Lopez, and Board Member Celia Spitzer

AVID: Advancement Via Individual Determination

"I think I want to go to college but don't know how to get there. What should I do?"

Answer: "Take the AVID route!"



What is AVID? The short answer is it is a program that identifies students who have the potential to go to college and provides them with the academic and social support to make that goal possible.

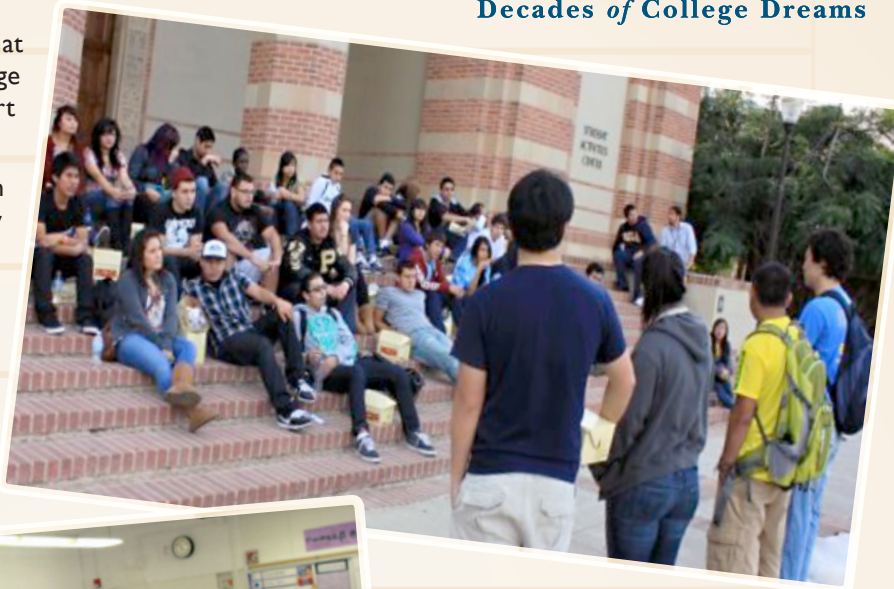
AVID, now a national organization, was developed in 1980 at San Diego's Clairemont High School and is now in 4,891 schools nationally, 1,578 (32%) of those in California. **Haskell Middle School was the first school in ABC to implement the program in 2006, followed by Artesia High School in 2009, Gahr High School in 2011, and Tetzlaff Middle School in 2012, Fedde Middle School is implementing the program this year, as is Palms Elementary School who is the first ABC site to implement the AVID Elementary program!**

AVID targets students who volunteer to be in this college readiness program, who are considered "in the middle": often the average student with the potential for better grades, and ones who will be the first in their family to go to college.

All AVID students take rigorous classes designed to make them eligible for a four year university. They are supported through the AVID elective class and the dedicated teachers who teach those classes. The elective classes focus on research-based, highly effective teaching and learning strategies that AVID calls "WICOR":

W Writing: includes strategies for writing content area papers, college application essays, and the use of Cornell Note-Taking to record key learning concepts and study for tests from those notes and other materials. Middle school students claimed, "My teachers used to tell us to take notes and study for a test, but I did not know how to do that. Now, with Cornell notes, I know exactly what to do and my grades have gone up!"

I Inquiry: includes twice weekly Tutorials focused on their academic class assignments and led by college tutors, many of them former ABC AVID students, and Socratic Seminars and Investigations that encourage higher-level thinking skills. One student, after a very lively debate on morality and revenge, proclaimed, "This is great! I wish all my classes were like this!"



C Collaboration: working with and supporting other AVID students in learning activities such as Philosophical Chairs, Tutorials, and Service Learning projects. Students at Gahr talk about their "AVID family" and the benefits they give to and receive from each other.

O Organization: establishing academic plans to meet college entrance requirements, reinforcing

Cornell Note-Taking, use of planners/agendas, and the infamous Friday notebook checks! An Artesia student said it was "...embarrassing when the teacher shook your notebook and loose papers fell out! I now keep myself organized!"

R Reading: including vocabulary building, deep reading strategies to help students comprehend the language of textbooks, and summarizing strategies. AVID students at Gahr stated they are more comfortable and successful taking AP courses after learning and using these effective strategies.

Throughout the AVID elective classes, COLLEGE remains the primary focus. Elective class teachers hang banners from local and other well-known colleges on their classroom walls. Two or more field trips to local colleges let the students (and occasionally their parents) experience a university campus. Parent meetings are held to provide information on the college selection and application process. Junior and senior students are guided in selecting appropriate colleges, registering for and taking the PSAT, SAT, and ACT exams, and how to fill out the college and financial applications.

Want to go to college and be sure to get there? Take the AVID route! ▶

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Cerritos HS AP Teachers

Monty Armstrong, AP World History Teacher, and Cindy Carlson, AP Calculus Teacher, were selected to serve at the College Board's 2014 AP Reading. Participating in the AP Reading is an opportunity to exchange ideas with faculty, teachers and AP Development Committee members, establish lifelong friendships with other professionals in your discipline, and become familiar with AP scoring standards, which provide valuable knowledge for scoring your own students' essays. Mr. Armstrong will participate in Salt Lake City on June 12-13, 2014 and Ms. Carlson will participate in Kansas City on June 10-18, 2014.

Marc Purchin, Early Alternate Dispute Resolution Consultant

Marc Purchin is new to ABCUSD as an Early Alternate Dispute Resolution Consultant. He will be working with special education teams and parents to arrive at positive and creative resolutions to challenging situations. Marc has many years of experience as a Special Education Hearing Officer and Mediator. We are looking forward to his participation in collaborative discussions to help us move forward in supporting students and student achievement.

Dennis Wilson, Principal of Cerritos ES

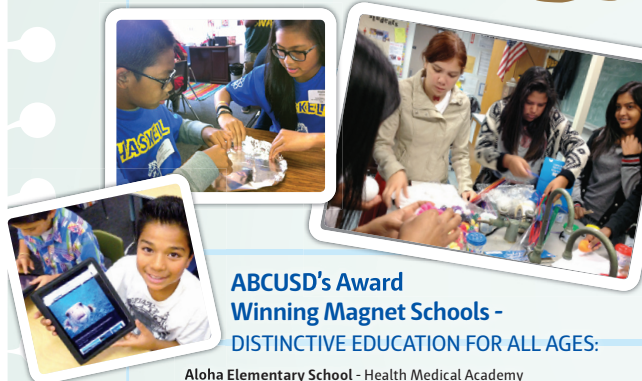
Dennis Wilson, Principal of Cerritos ES, kissed a pig on Wednesday, December 11th. "Cerritos Elementary School Principal Dennis Wilson is a man of his word. Wilson had agreed to kiss a pig in front of students and faculty if the PTA exceeded its fall fundraising goal for the school. It did, raising \$56,000, and Wilson kept his promise. He donned red lipstick and kissed Oinky the pig, on loan from La Habra High School, on Wednesday afternoon at the school basketball court, much to the enjoyment of his students and staff." Source: <http://www.ocregister.com/articles/school-541324-wilson-pig.html> ▶

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Applications to ABCUSD magnet schools are available to families & business employees residing in or outside the District. There is no cost to attend ABC magnet schools.

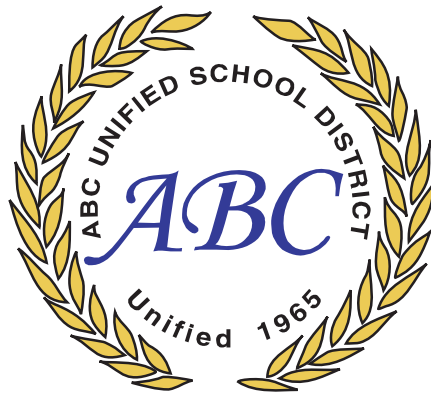
Aloha Elementary School - Health Medical Academy
Burbank Elementary School - Visual, Performing and Folk Arts Magnet
Carver Elementary School - Academy of Communication Arts
Elliott Elementary School - World Navigators
Furgeson Elementary - Academy of Communications & Technology
Leal Elementary School - Visual and Performing Arts
Niemes Elementary School - Environmental Science & Technology
Nixon Elementary School - Academy of Multimedia Arts
Palms Elementary School - Accelerated Learning Academy **Mem**
Stowers Elementary School - School of International Studies
Fedde Middle School - International Studies Academy
Haskell Middle School - Science, Technology, Engineering, Math Academy (STEM) **Mem**
Ross Middle School - Academy of Creative and Media Arts
Tetzlaff Middle School - Accelerated Learning Academy
Artesia High School - Accelerated Learning Academy
Gahr High School - STEAM Magnet High School (STEM plus Arts)

**For more information please call the District Magnet Office:
(562) 926-5566 ext. 21075 www.abcusdmagnetschools.com**

ABC
ADULT SCHOOL
Learning for Life

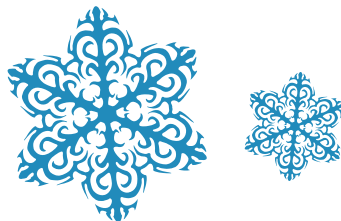
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Dr. Mary Sieu - Superintendent



ABC Unified School District's **District Digest** is published
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