



ABC UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Digest

March/April 2019 - Volume VIII - No 4

A Message from the Superintendent - Dr. Mary Sieu

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Awards Season in ABCUSD

As the entertainment industry is winding down their awards season, organizations in the education community are ramping up numerous awards for outstanding leaders, programs, and schools. We are very fortunate to be recipients of these awards that showcase the work of our professionals and schools. As you will see in this District Digest, a number of schools have been highlighted as a model at the state and national level. This is a testament to the commitment of our Board of Education, staff, students, and community in maintaining our focus on excellence at every level.

Ross MS Academy was Redesignated as a 2019-22 Schools to Watch by the California Department of Education in Sacramento. They will also be recognized in Washington, D.C. as a National Model Middle School at the end of June.

The District includes the recognition of two high schools who were selected as 2019 California Distinguished Schools. They include Cerritos HS and Whitney HS. In addition, Tracy HS was selected as a Model Continuation High School and honored for their Exemplary Program for the Teen Parent Program. All three high schools will be honored at the California School Recognition Awards Program at the Disneyland Hotel on April 5, 2019.

Two schools, Carmenita MS and Wittmann ES were recognized in the state's Civic Learning Awards Program co-sponsored by State Superintendent Tony Thurmond and Chief Justice of California Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye. Only twenty-eight schools in Los Angeles County were honored for this effort to engage students in civic learning.

Four of our schools namely Bragg ES, Elliott ES, Furgeson ES, and Palms ES were selected in the first "Top Los Angeles Public Schools for Underserved Students." This is in collaboration with the University of Southern California Sol Price Center for Social Innovation and the Rossier School of Education Center for Education Policy, Equity and Governance. An Awards Program will be held at USC on May 4, 2019 to honor our schools.

In addition, two administrators in ABCUSD were selected for the 2019 ACSA Region XIV Administrators of the Year Awards. Dr. Beth Bray, Supervisor of Elementary Curriculum and Professional Learning, was selected as the "Curriculum & Instruction Administrator of the Year" and Eveline Huh, Principal at Willow ES, was chosen as the Elementary Principal Administrator of the Year. They will be honored at an Awards Ceremony in Long Beach on May 1, 2019. On March 23, Dr. Rhonda Buss, Director of Secondary Schools, was honored as a "Women of Achievement" by the 32nd District State Senator Bob Archuleta. Scott Smith, President/CEO of the Cerritos Regional Chamber of Commerce, nominated Dr. Buss for this recognition. It was an inspirational program honoring women for their profession and voluntary work.

Congratulations to all our schools and professionals for their major accomplishments! ▶



Ross MS Academy Honored with a Schools to Watch Award

*(l-r) Amanda Silvas, Assistant Principal; Claudia Serrano, Teacher;
Priscilla Rodriguez, Principal; Dr. Mary Sieu, Superintendent;
Luisa Nunes, Teacher; Ernie Nishii, Board President*

News From Our Schools and Around The District

Carmenita MS

Congratulations to the students in the History Distinguished Scholars Program and their teachers who competed on January 26 at the Whitney HS MUN Conference. Teachers and students representing Carmenita MS came away with several awards including the award for Best Middle School! ▶



2019 Civic Learning Awards

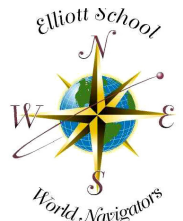
ABC Unified School District has two schools who earned the Civic Learning Awards this year. They include Carmenita MS and Wittmann ES. The Civic Learning Awards is co-sponsored by State Superintendent Tony Thurmond and Chief Justice of California Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye. Only 28 schools in Los Angeles County were honored for their efforts to engage students in civic learning. The schools that received this award engage students through unique classes, clubs, and programs. The awards are designed to celebrate successful efforts to engage students in civic learning and to identify models that can be replicated. Congratulations to Carmenita MS and Wittmann ES! ▶



Top Los Angeles Public Schools for Underserved Students

ABC Unified School District was notified that four of our schools will be recognized this year in the first Annual Report called "Top Los Angeles Public Schools for Underserved Students."

This is in collaboration with the University of Southern California Sol Price Center for Social Innovation and the Rossier School of Education Center for Education Policy, Equity and Governance. Four schools made the list based on their strong results in English and or Math Proficiency for low-income African American and/or low income Latino students in 2017-18.



Artesia HS Athlete of the Year

Please visit <https://vimeo.com/320029259> for the Lakewood Connect eMagazine highlighting Artesia HS student, Heder Gladden, who was selected for Lakewood's Hall of Fame - Athlete of the Year! ▶

The four schools recognized this year include Bragg ES, Elliott ES, Furgeson ES, and Palms ES. They will be honored on May 4 at the University of Southern California Tutor Campus Center Grand Ballroom. It will be a unique opportunity to connect with other educators from top schools and celebrate the success of our schools at USC! ▶

Equity Institute Workshops



In collaboration with CSEA, about 80% of the District's permanent paraeducators participated in half-day Equity Institute Workshops on March 6 and 7. Our paraeducators were engaged in learning about implicit bias, the cultural proficiency continuum framework, and a protocol to disrupt stereotypes. The workshops energized our paraeducators to better understand and work with students and staff from different cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. The workshops were facilitated by Dr. Daniel Moirao of Generation Ready.



On January 25, an Equity Workshop was provided for the Transportation Bus Drivers at Haskell MS. These workshops, presented by Generation Ready, were engaging and interactive with a focus on looking beyond the faces of students, parents, and co-workers to provide ongoing support and quality service. ▮



The District's Student Intervention Assistants (SIAs) and Gym Attendants from the middle and high schools enjoyed participating in the PAL 2 SIA/Gym Attendants Workshop. The workshop was held during the Secondary Student Free Day on January 25 in the District Board Room. This year's workshop focused on Equity and Cultural Proficiency and was facilitated by Dr. Daniel Moirao of Generation Ready. The SIAs and Gym Attendants took away valuable lessons in better understanding one's own biases to better understand and serve others. Many participants expressed their desire to delve deeper into the Equity Institutes in the future.

Measure BB Next Steps

A Special Board Study Session was held on March 9 from 9:00 to 11:30 am. The focus of the Session was on our "Measure BB Next Steps." We discussed the three major areas we needed to focus on. This included our Communication Plan, Finance Program, and Construction Program. We went over our Communication Plan with proposals on how to enhance our communication structure in the District. Tim Carty, Financial Adviser of Piper Jaffray, reviewed the Finance Program including the issuances of the bond funds. Toan Nguyen, Assistant Superintendent-Business Services/CFO, and Terry Tao, construction legal counsel, went over the Construction Program with recommendations from the school sites. ▮

Transportation Department

The new buses that were purchased through a grant were full of students going to the mountains on February 5 in the falling snow. The drivers were able to deploy "OnSpot" Automatic Tire Chains without leaving their driver's seat! Other school buses were on the side of the road getting dirty and cold. That's when our drivers engaged by flipping a switch for the automatic chains. Our drivers shared that the other district's drivers were pointing and cheering! These automatic chains keep the buses on schedule and reduced any risk to our drivers of getting injured on the ice while trying to manually apply the old style chains. It's nice to know that ABCUSD is a trend setter with our modern state of the art equipment! ▮

News From Our Schools and Around The District

Ross Academy MS Redesignated as a “Schools to Watch”

Board President Ernie Nishii and Dr. Mary Sieu were in Sacramento March 14-15 to celebrate with Ross Academy MS for earning the Redesignated Schools to Watch Award by the California Department of Education. Prior to the Awards Luncheon, we were recognized on the Assembly floor by Assemblymember Cristina Garcia. President Nishii and Dr. Mary Sieu were recognized at the Luncheon with an award for the District leadership supporting middle schools. On Friday, Ross MS was honored with their Redesignated Schools to Watch Award at the opening of the California League of Middle Schools Conference (CLMS). The Ross MS team including Principal Priscilla Rodriguez, Assistant Principal Amanda Silvas, Math Teacher Luisa Nunes, and AVID Teacher Claudia Serrano presented a workshop during the CLMS Conference. Congratulations Ross MS! ▶



Whitney High School

Sixteen Whitney Model United Nations delegates traveled to New York City for the 45th Annual National Model United Nations Conference held at the United Nations and the Hilton Hotel. The Whitney HS Delegation was awarded the Distinguished School Award, the highest honor there for their work. In addition, Whitney HS Delegates Ananya Narayanan and Meghan Lee won the Distinguished Delegate Award for their work as the United Kingdom in the Security Council Committee.

Students debated from March 1st to 3rd on a variety of topics spread out over a dozen committees. Among the topics discussed and voted on were: Combatting Terrorism in Southeast Asia, Refugee Displacement from Climate Change and Natural Disasters, Violence against Indigenous Women, and The Situation in Myanmar.

Students toured the United Nations on their first day there and later attended opening ceremonies in the General Assembly Chamber itself. The closing ceremonies included a speech and question and answer forum with the former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice.



Whitney HS Advisor Steve Rosenberg was honored in the General Assembly for his service to Model UN. Assistant Advisor Megan Nicholson was indispensable for her invaluable help. ▶

Leal ES Alumnus

Matthew Scammahorn, Leal ES Alumnus and Cerritos HS graduate, has been elected as one of the youngest CA Delegates to represent the 58th District! Thank you to Mr. Clinton and Ms. Lacher, for his early and positive public school experiences. ▶



Fedde Academy

Fedde Academy continued its tradition of success at History Day L.A. 2019. Headed by their Teacher Mr. Chad Laines, the team traveled to San Gabriel High School on March 9 to compete against teams from across Los Angeles County and earned top honors in several categories. The History Day theme for this year was, "Triumph and Tragedy."

The following teams at Fedde MS were the best in their categories during History Day L.A. and will represent Los Angeles County at National History Day California: Bacha Pham was the junior individual exhibit winner with, Harlem Hell Fighters; Jessa Reyes, Jaidyn Clark, and Christina Sabari wrote and performed Birmingham Children's March and placed as the junior group performance winner; and The History of Tobacco, written and directed by Ashley Batting and Wendy Aguilar, placed as the top junior group documentary winner. We are very proud of these hard working students and wish them the best of success at History Day California, and beyond! ►

Community Involvement

23rd Annual Parent Leadership Conference

On March 16, the District held the 23rd Annual Parent Leadership Conference at the Sheraton Cerritos. Almost 400 parents and staff members attended this special event focusing on the theme "Leading Together: A School-Family Partnership." The keynote speaker was Julie Adams, author of #Fully Charged. It was a riveting presentation that inspired parents and family members to "Charge" up our students and not "Drain" our students! Ten separate workshops were provided for the families who attended. Thank you to all those who contributed to the 23rd Annual Parent Leadership Conference including Adult School, PTA District Council, the Planning Committee, and the workshop presenters. It was a dynamic day of learning for everyone! ►



Woman of the Year

On March 8, in commemoration of Women's History Month, Assemblymember Cristina Garcia honored eleven women leaders from District 58. Serina Yuan, parent in ABCUSD, was honored for her work in Cerritos including being the Chairperson of the District Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, Treasurer of the ABC Education Foundation, and Board Member of the JC Culture Foundation. Serina Yuan also volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis and participates in reading programs in various schools. Congratulations Mrs. Yuan! ►



Board Members

Ernie Nishii - President
Dr. Olga Rios - Vice President
Sophia Tse - Clerk
Chris Apodaca - Member
Maynard Law - Member
Leticia Mendoza - Member
Soo Yoo - Member

Superintendent

Dr. Mary Sieu



ABC Unified School District's **District Digest** is published bimonthly by the Superintendent's Office.

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