



ABC UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Digest

March/April 2020 - Volume IX - No 4

A Message from the Superintendent - Dr. Mary Sieu

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Stay Healthy and Safe

I'd like to begin by saying that I hope that our students, families, District staff, Board Members, and the communities we serve are safe and healthy. It's probably safe to say that the past several weeks have been among some of the most tumultuous and emotional that any of us can remember in our lifetime. The impact of the coronavirus outbreak has been felt by all of us in the ABC Unified School District.

However, our responses to this crisis have been extraordinary. I deeply appreciate the Board's decision to authorize me to close or dismiss schools during this time. Due to the current safety concerns and needs for ongoing social distancing, our students will not return to school campuses the remainder of this school year. This is in alignment with Governor Gavin Newsom, State Superintendent Tony Thurmond, and LA County Office of Education Superintendent Dr. Debra Duardo's recommendation to remain closed through the end of this school year.

This is not to suggest that school is over for the year. Instead, we have put all our efforts into strengthening our delivery of education through our Online Learning at Home (OLAH) Program. More information will be found in this edition regarding OLAH.

I recognize that this creates hardships for some of our students, families, and educators. However, we are urging a safety first approach out of an abundance of caution. During March and April, we have disseminated over 5,000 devices and 1,000 "Hotspots" for the students in our District.

We realize that we need to accelerate our efforts for the remainder of this school year. In addition, we have been able to provide "Grab and Go" meals at ten sites in the District. Over 18,000 meals are served in a week to students.

Although we are required to follow the guidelines of "social distancing", I realize that we all have a deeply felt need to be connected with one another. We realize that graduation is one of the moments that matter the most in our lifetime. We provided a survey to 1,700 seniors in the Class of 2020 as well as parents, PTSA, principals, and the Board of Education regarding their preferences for graduation. We know that this moment will not be the same as in the previous years. However, I feel that we will be creative in coming up with an outcome for the Class of 2020.

I also want to relay my heartfelt appreciation of our Cabinet Members, our teachers, classified staff, and their families. Thank you for all that you do every day for our students and families!

While much remains uncertain right now, one thing is for sure: this crisis will pass.

Please stay safe and healthy! ►



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The City of Cerritos honors Deborah Berlin, Principal of Carver ES and Fran Barron, Principal of Elliott ES as a 2020 California Distinguished School

News From Our Schools and Around The District

Online Learning at Home Program

The IT Department, in partnership with Academic Services and the Elementary and Secondary Curriculum Teams, have continued to push forward the District's **Online Learning at Home** program. This week marks the end of the 6th week of ABC's Online Learning at Home program.

ABC's Online Learning at Home plans utilizes the Google environment which includes Google Classroom, email, and productivity tools. Google statistics indicate a robust online engagement between students and teachers. From the time period of April 20 to April 27, **19,371** active, unduplicated staff and students have logged into their Google Classrooms.

18,640 students in ABC engaged this past week with Google Classroom or approximately 93% of all ABC students (20,080 TK-12 students).

ABC school administrators work with their teachers to identify students that are expected to participate online but have not logged in. Schools make personal contacts to determine issues at hand to remove barriers as may be needed.

Currently, approximately 1,000 Internet Hotspots have been checked out to ABC families that do not have the Internet at home. Hotspots are checked out by individual schools through the Library, just as they would check out a book. The District has done a good job proactively addressing the need for hotspots, with about a one-week turnaround from the time a family requests an Internet hotspot. Hotspots will be returned to the District from each family when the Online Learning at Home program has concluded.

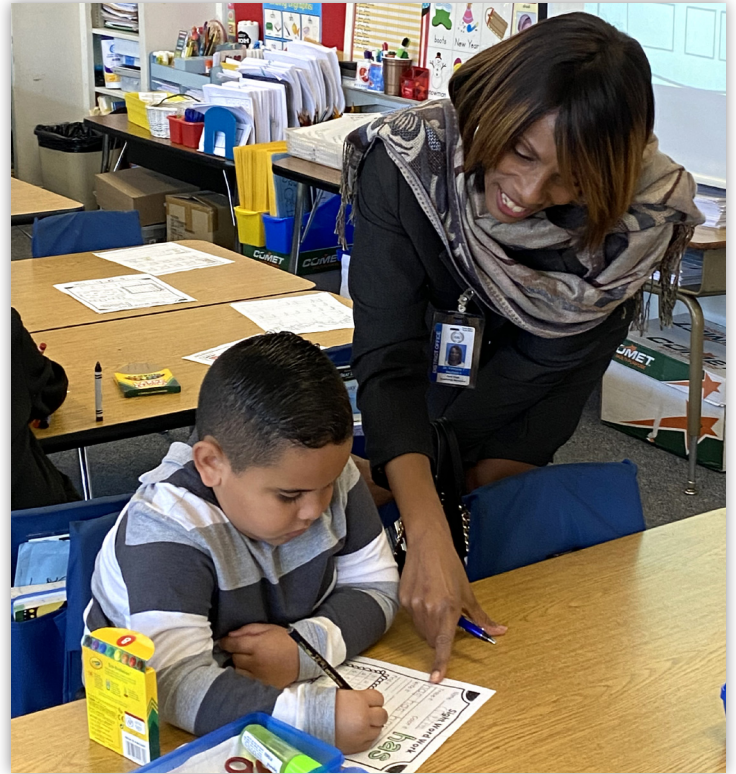
In addition, 5,800 Chromebook devices have been checked out to date for ABC students. The District has plenty of Chromebook devices within its schools' inventory to swiftly fill any future Chromebook requests. A student with a repair need is provided another device to prevent delays. Students are held accountable for the device(s) they check out, in the same manner they are for the care of textbooks, musical instruments, etc.

The District's technical support staff continues to operate the technical support telecenter daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., to provide ABC students, parents, and staff personal and professional one on one tech support service.

ABC recently launched Google Meet for teachers and staff as its official video conference technology for staff, students, and families. Video Conferencing is a powerful tool to bring teachers and students together online that can emulate real classroom interactions. ABC Teachers will begin to explore the use of video conferencing in earnest going forward within their online programs.

Every Tuesday, all ABC staff are invited to participate in a series of online professional development sessions hosted by various ABC technology and curriculum experts as part of the District's Tech Tuesdays. ABC staff participation has been extremely high each week of the program and serves as an excellent way to continually improve staff skills in all aspects of online learning. ▀

Willow Elementary is an AVID Showcase School



Willow ES was recently selected to be an AVID Showcase School for AVID Center. On Tuesday, January 28, over 40 teachers and administrators from surrounding schools and districts visited Willow ES to learn about their AVID success and how it has transformed the school's culture and instructional practices. Visitors walked through classrooms to see AVID in action and were able to observe the school wide practices of note-taking, inquiry, critical reading strategies, and collaboration across all grade levels, TK-6th. The showcase ended with a World Cafe, a collaborative discussion structure, where visitors had opportunities to interact with Willow ES teachers, students, parents, and administrators. Former Willow ES students, now in the AVID elective at Haskell MS and Gahr HS, also came to share how having AVID in elementary helped with their transition to middle and high school. ▀

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

www.abcusd.us

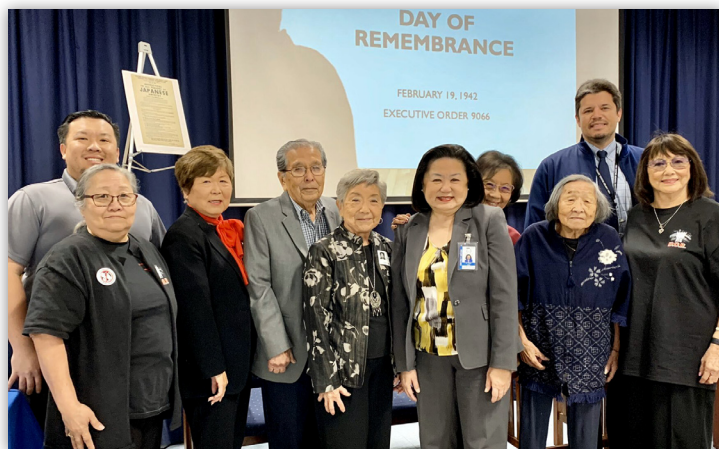
Civic Learning Award of Merit

On March 5, Wittmann ES and Carmenita MS, were again awarded the Civic Learning Award of Merit. Only 16 schools in Los Angeles County received the award and a total of 66 schools in California. Wittmann ES's focus for Civic Learning this year was to engage all students in different real world civic and legal opportunities. The program involved a student "town hall" forum during Constitution Day, where students could speak to civic leaders and legal experts about upholding the U.S. Constitution. Students held a mock impeachment trial, students functioned as impeachment managers and the President's defense. Students also visited Judge Laura Walton's courtroom during a criminal trial, where they got to speak with Judge Walton, attorneys, and other court officers. ▶



The Day of Remembrance

From February 18-25, the Day of Remembrance was commemorated at all high schools throughout the District. Assemblies were held at each high school where students learned about the more than 120,000 persons of Japanese descent incarcerated after the signing of Executive Order 9066 in 1942. Survivors and descendants of survivors shared their personal stories, answered students' questions, and encouraged students to use their voices to stand up to social injustice. It was a wonderful opportunity for students to engage with living history and understand their responsibility to preserve both human and civil rights for all. ▶



Day of Remembrance at Gahr High School



Day of Remembrance at Whitney High School

Whitney HS Olympiads

On Saturday, February 1, 45 students from Whitney HS went to Antelope Valley College to enter one of the two Los Angeles County Regional Science Olympiad Competitions. This was the first time the middle school entered the Science Olympiad Competition while the high school has entered it for three consecutive years. Whitney HS was called 37 times to receive various individual medals and team trophies. The high school team placed 2nd overall and the middle school team placed 3rd. Both teams earned the rights to enter the state level competition that will happen at Cal Tech University in April. ▶

News From Our Schools and Around The District

Elementary Spelling Bee

The 15th Annual Elementary Spelling Bee was held on Thursday, February 13, in the Brewer Theater at Cerritos HS. All 19 elementary schools were represented by their school's champions. In addition to the participant's families and friends, many teachers and principals were in the audience to support their Spelling Bee champions. Dr. Colin Sprigg, Director of Information and Technology, was the Spell Master for the evening. After nine rounds of competition, the field was paired down to two finalists. Jordan Faye, a sixth grade student from Niemes ES, was awarded as the runner up and Neha Agrawal, a sixth grade student from Leal ES, was named ABCUSD Spelling Bee Champion. Neha will go on to represent ABC at the Los Angeles County Spelling Bee. ▶



Neha Agrawal, ABCUSD Spelling Bee Champion



Jordan Faye, ABCUSD Spelling Bee Runner-up

Student Government Day

Students from Fedde Academy assumed the role of elected and appointed officials for the City of Hawaiian Gardens at this year's Student Government Day on February 25. The students faced challenges and weighed issues, learning about how local government works. Many thanks to the City of Hawaiian Gardens for hosting this enlightening and educational event. ▶



California Technical Education Incentive Grant (CTEIG)

On March 3, Dr. Crechena Wise and Sasha Leonardo received notification from the California Department of Education (CDE) that ABCUSD will receive \$614,840 in CTEIG funding for the 2020-21 school year to provide access for Career Technical Student Organization (CTSO's) opportunities, early college credit opportunities through articulation and dual enrollment agreements, student pre-apprenticeships, internships, and other Work Based Learning (WBL) opportunities. Additionally, this funding will be utilized to update our CTE equipment and give students more opportunities to attain an industry-recognized certification and/or credentials that qualify them for entry level employment. ▶

K12 Strong Workforce Program

On Monday, February 24, Dr. Crechena Wise, Director of Secondary Schools and Sasha Leonardo, Coordinator of Career Technical Education and Community Partnerships received notification that the CTE Department was awarded two grants under the K12 Strong Workforce Program (K12 SWP). Based out of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's office, the K12 SWP is designed to support K–12 local education agencies (LEAs) in creating, improving, and expanding career technical education (CTE) courses, course sequences, programs of study, and pathways for students transitioning from secondary education to postsecondary education to living-wage employment. ABCUSD will receive \$894,328 for the “ABC Stronger Workforce” program to ensure our CTE pathways are aligned with industry standards and provide opportunities for early college credit and work-based learning experiences. ABCUSD will also receive \$889,183 for the “ABC Equal Access to Patient Care - Sports Medicine” program to support Gahr HS in creating its first Patient Care pathway to support students interested in pursuing a career in physical therapy. ABCUSD has 2.5 years to expend this money. In total, the K12 SWP grants will provide \$1.78 million dollars to ABCUSD to ensure our students are both college and career ready! ▶

ABC Adult School Offers New Diploma Program

Adults and out-of-school youth have a new way to earn their high school diplomas at the ABC Adult School. The National External Diploma Program is a new online program developed for working students. Students must show mastery of ten content areas as well as an occupational or specialized skill by completing performance tasks. Those interested in learning more about the program should call the ABC Adult School. ▶



ABC Adult School offers great classes and programs!

Check out our website at www.abcadultschool.edu

All Southern California Honor Bands

Congratulations to Sunny Kim (clarinet - Cerritos HS) and Ella Tai (oboe - Tetzlaff MS) for auditioning and being accepted into the All Southern California Honor Bands for 2020!



The Southern California School Band and Orchestra Associations (SCSBOA) hosts these coveted Honor Band ensembles at the Annual Director's Conference in Anaheim. Thousands of Southern California's school level musicians audition for the opportunity to play with the best in the State. Sunny Kim, a junior clarinetist, is the Section Leader at Cerritos HS. Sunny was accepted into the High School Symphonic Honor Band and performed under the baton of world renowned composer, Brian Balmages. Ella Tai is an 8th grade multi-instrumentalist at Tetzlaff MS. She was accepted into the Middle School Symphonic Honor Band playing the lead part! She performed under the tutelage of Henry Miller, a celebrated music educator in Irvine USD. Both students represented ABC Unified with pride on Saturday, January 18, while performing in front of an audience of over 1,000 educators, parents, and supporters! ▶

Whitney HS and Cerritos HS Recognized by Newsweek

Both Whitney HS and Cerritos HS were recognized by Newsweek as two of the top 500 STEM High Schools in the nation. Whitney HS was ranked 81st with Cerritos HS ranked at 489th. Congratulations to the students, families, teachers, and staff who continue to focus on STEM education. The article can be found here: <http://bit.ly/35zsh6a>. ▶

News From Our Schools and Around The District

Artesia High School Wins the Girls Basketball Championship - Division 5



Many District representatives were at the Artesia HS's CIF Girls Basketball Finals Championship game for the Southern Section on Saturday, February 29, at Godinez Fundamental HS in Santa Ana. All celebrated their win against San Jacinto HS. ▶

Schools to Watch Ceremony in Sacramento on March 6, 2020



Carmenita Middle School



Haskell Middle School



Terzclaff Middle School

Community Involvement

2019-20 Cerritos Optimist Club Essay Contest

The Cerritos Optimist Club has officially announced the winners of the 2019-20 Essay Contest! This year's awards recipients are: 1st Place – Omar Orozco (Artesia HS); 2nd Place – Jaquelyne Porciuncula (Cerritos HS); and 3rd Place – Dayna Garcia (Artesia HS). The annual contest, sponsored by the Optimist International Club, asked high school students in ABCUSD and surrounding areas to submit an essay responding to the following prompt: "Is Optimism the Key to Achieving the Dreams You Imagine?" Counselors and teachers supported students through the writing process, and the top 10 essays from our district were submitted to the Cerritos Optimist Club for judging. The contest winners were celebrated along with their families and school administrators on Thursday, February 13, where they presented their essays and received a scholarship. Additionally, the essay from Omar Orozco of Artesia HS will be forwarded to the Optimist Pacific Southeastern District Essay Chair and entered into the District Level Essay Contest with an opportunity to win additional scholarship awards. ▶



Help for Homeless Families

District Social Worker Tina Porter has been in contact with the City of Hawaiian Gardens and has received notice that the Mayor and City Council of Hawaiian Gardens have designated funding to help our School District with items for families who identify with the community of Hawaiian Gardens and are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The following items are meant to provide some stability in their lives while they seek long term solutions: grocery cards, gas cards, food cards, laundry supplies, and school supplies. ▶

The Great Kindness Challenge

Below you will find the links regarding The Great Kindness Challenge and the designation for a certified District. The Great Kindness Challenge Week: January 27-31, 2020.

<https://thegreatkindnesschallenge.com>

<https://thegreatkindnesschallenge.com/kindness-certified-school-districts> ▶





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

Superintendent

Dr. Mary Sieu



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

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