



ABC UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Digest

November/December 2012 - Volume I - No 2



Message from the Superintendent - Dr. Mary Sieu

ABC Academic Achievement Rates Continue to Climb

The California Department of Education released their Academic Performance Index results in October. **ABC Unified School District surpassed the statewide achievement target and scored 848. This is a 16 points growth from 2011.** Seventy four percent of all elementary schools scored above the state target of 800, marking a decade of steady growth. Four out of five middle schools met or surpassed the API target. All comprehensive high schools in the District met their school-wide API targets.



Dr. Mary Sieu and Dr. Beth Bray with the Burbank Elementary School Bulldogs

I believe that the District has set a high bar for schools and they have more than met the academic challenge, despite the fiscal challenges that have been put in our way. The incredible efforts of our students, teachers, administrators, support staff, parents and community serve as an inspiration to us all. **While there is still more work to do, I believe our District's growth is on the right trajectory.**

Although the API is only one indicator of how well our students are performing, the results reflect the continued improvement of students throughout the District. For a complete list of the schools API results, please check out our District's website.

I'm also pleased to announce that two secondary schools in the District are eligible for the 2012 California Distinguished Schools designation, Tetzlaff Middle School and Artesia High School. Their significant rates of improvement along with special programs at the schools have made them eligible for the highest honor in California. **In addition, this month, Gonsalves Elementary School was recognized with the National Blue Ribbon Award in Washington, D.C.** This is the highest honor given to a school at the national level. ▶

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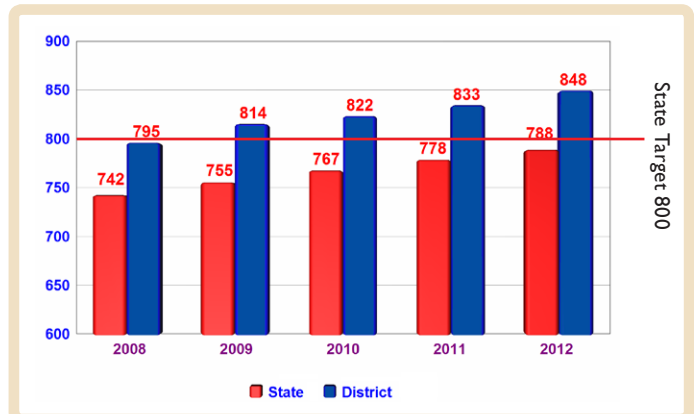
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*Academic Performance Index (API) State Comparison 2008-2012
ABC Exceeds the State Target of 800*

News from our Schools

Whitney High School's New Multi-Media Arts Center

Whitney High School's new Multi-Media Arts Center (MAC) has opened for classes this semester. The construction of the new Multi-Media Arts Center was sponsored by a Proposition ID Grant funded by the California Department of Education, District Facility Fund and the Whitney High School Foundation. **The purpose of the new facility was to feature state-of-the-art audio/video production systems, performance and production studio, a recording booth, a graphics lab and a 400 seat lecture hall/auditorium.** The facility will help enable Whitney HS students to explore pathways in media and design arts, production/managerial arts and the performing arts.

A grand opening is scheduled for January 11, 2013 for the Multi-Media Arts Center at Whitney High School.

According to Principal Dr. Rhonda Buss, "Whitney High School's vision is to help students discover their "element," which is a term coined by Ken Robinson, a well-known educational author. The term "element" refers to the place where natural aptitude and personal passion meet. When students find their "element," education becomes more meaningful and relevant to them. The new Multi-Media Arts Center (MAC) is truly the place where students are involved in activities that help them to discover their "element."

Currently, **English classes** participate in "College Fridays." The MAC Lab "A" is the lab where teachers may sign up their students to use



the state-of-the-art technological resources provided by this lab. The students in the English classes use this lab to take aptitude, interest, and personality inventories to lead them in the journey of discovering their "element." Furthermore, the students use this lab to research a variety of colleges, as well as careers, and for creating a variety of subject-specific projects.

The **Foreign Language department** also uses MAC Lab "A." The students use the recording devices to speak into, save, and e-mail their voice recordings to the teacher as an assessment to ensure they have correctly pronounced words. This process clearly leads students to learn the new language in an effective and efficient process.

Additionally, there are four regularly scheduled classes at the Multi-Media Arts Center. One of the classes, **Contemporary Media** focuses on broadening the student's foundation in critical thinking and creative expression through the generation of video projects. The second course is **Digital Photo**, where students learn to produce, edit, and evaluate digital photographs. The third class is **Multimedia Journalism**. It is a fast-paced class where students research, interview, write, and revise a variety of articles and produce the Whitney High School news on a weekly basis. The final class is **Stagecraft**, where students are trained in set construction and design, theater lighting and sound, and the technical aspects of stage productions.

A grand opening is scheduled for January 11, 2013 for the Multi-Media Arts Center at Whitney HS. It is anticipated that the facility will be completed and fully operational. ▶



Artesia High School's "Red Cross Club"

The Southeast ROP Emergency First Responder class at Artesia High school has a "Red Cross Club" with 140 student members.

The goal of the Club is to help youth develop good character, give students the tools and opportunities to succeed and to provide community service and leadership skills. On October 6, from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm, the Artesia High School Red Cross Club was invited to attend the **"Community Health Fair"** sponsored by Tri-City Regional Medical Center and the City of Hawaiian Gardens. Thirty-seven student club members along with their instructor, Mina Garcia, attended the event. The event was held in the parking lot of the Tri-Cities Regional Hospital and was free to the community. Over 500 visitors from surrounding cities attended. The club members assisted the city of Hawaiian Gardens and the hospital staff throughout the day with free various health screening services, hospitality services, event set-up, and clean-up. ▶



1st South Asian Leadership Seminar at Cerritos High School

Students from Cerritos and Whitney High Schools attended the **1st South Asian Leadership Seminar** hosted at Cerritos High School.



The students engaged in conversation about topics affecting adolescents as well as Youth Leadership, Social Justice, & Advocacy. At the end of the 3- day seminar students chose a cause they were passionate about and created a multimedia project to bring awareness. They presented to their parents and received a certificate of completion along with a "Stand up for Change" T- shirt. ▶

Congratulation to a Gahr Star!

On the evening of October 1st the CIF-SS held their annual **"Champions for Character"** awards at the Queen Mary. Students, coaches, and schools were recognized for their commitment to the standards values and ideals of the pillars of character.

The "Pursuing Victory with Honor" sportsmanship initiative was created in 1999—in partnership with the Michael Josephson Institute of Ethics.

This year, Jewelyn Sawyer from Gahr HS received the award. Ms. Sawyer is a multi-sport athlete with high academic standards. It is said that she has a smile a mile wide and genuinely care for and shows respect for everyone and a role model for her peers and teammates on and off the field. ▶



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Conversation Table at ABC Adult School

In order to better enhance the fluency of the adult students' English speaking skills, students from Whitney High School volunteered to converse with them in an everyday atmosphere, through the **"Conversation Table" Program**.

The sheer amount of history and wisdom that the adult students contained enlightened volunteers, who in turn, shared some of their own knowledge. Under the leadership of Michelle Whang, Whitney High School, **students will host the "Conversation Table" at ABC Adult School Room E-7 on Mondays and Wednesdays from 3:00-4:00 pm.** All ESL students at Adult School are welcome to join the conversation fun. ▶



Whitney high school students, Raji Ganapathy and Shannon Chou talking with ABC Adult School students.

Dr. Pao Ling Guo, ABC Adult School Principal (front right), welcomed Whitney High School students at the first Conversation Table meeting held Monday, October 8.

Adult School Principal Integral Part of Adult Ed Strategic Plan

On October 1, 2012, the Adult Education Office (AEO) released to the field a document designed to assist practitioners with implementing recommendations in the Adult Education strategic plan, *Linking Adults to Opportunity: The Transformation of the California Department of Education Adult Education Program*. The document is called the *Implementation Guide*, and it is presented in a format that outlines actions to be taken at both the state and the local levels. The guide was developed based on the strategic plan and on input from the field. The *Implementation Guide*, as well as the strategic plan, can be viewed on the Outreach and Technical Assistance Network for Adult Educators (OTAN) Web page located at <http://www.otan.us/strategicplanning>

Dr. PaoLing Guo, ABC Adult School Principal co-presented a workshop: *"Implementation of California Adult Education Strategic Plan"* with Christian Nelson, CCAE State President, (from left), Jodee Styler, Director, Corona-Norco Adult School, and Joseph Stark, Principal, Burbank Adult School at the CCAE (California Council for Adult Education) South Coast and Southern Section conference held at Palm Springs, October 26-28. ▶



Tracy Infant Center Early Start

The Tracy Infant Center Early Start center-based program provides services for eligible infants and toddlers with special needs who reside within the ABC/Norwalk-La Mirada SELPA.

The Early Start program supports 65 to 80 children per year between birth and three years of age. The curriculum is based on active learning and incorporates a variety of techniques (developmental, cognitive, communication, behavioral, adaptive, social-emotional and play) to meet each individual's needs. The Early Start team consists of early childhood teachers, para-educators, a school nurse, a physical therapist, a speech-language pathologist, an occupational therapist and a family resource specialist. The team encourages parent participation, as it is a key factor in the program's success in supporting growth for infants and toddlers.

"Circus Day" was the theme for the recent Open House for the Tracy Infant Center. This fun event was held on September 26, 2012. Parents and relatives



came with their infants and toddlers to watch puppet shows, chase bubbles, create circus inspired art work and eat snow cones. It was a wonderful opportunity for families to interact with their infants and toddlers and to see how the Tracy Infant Center staff provide rich and effective early intervention. ▶

Gonsalves Elementary School Named as National Blue Ribbon School



On October 12, 2012 State Superintendent Tom Torlaksen announced the 23 California public schools that were named by U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan as National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2012. **Gonsalves ES in Cerritos was one of only six National Blue Ribbon Schools in Los Angeles County.**

Gonsalves ES met the eligibility criteria as an exemplary high-performing school. This is defined as the achievement of the school's students in the most recent year tested on state assessments of reading (or English language arts) and math and disaggregated results for student subgroups, including student from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Blue Ribbon Schools were honored at a National Awards Ceremony on November 12-13 in Washington, D.C. where each winner received a plaque and flag. Principal Robert Benko, teachers Kim Penman and Nadia Jaser-Cendejas attended the National Awards Ceremony on behalf of Gonsalves ES.

State Superintendent Tom Torlaksen visited Gonsalves ES on October 28, 2012. Principal Robert Benko, Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu, President of ABC Federation of Teachers, Ray Gaer, President of the Board, Olympia Chen, Vice-President Celia Spitzer, Board Member Maynard Law, Board Member James Kang and Assistant Superintendent-Human Resources, Dr. Carol Hansen joined in congratulating Gonsalves Elementary School during his visit. ▀



(l-r) Rob Benko, Principal-Gonsalves ES, James Kang, Board Member; Olympia Chen, President-Board of Education; Maynard Law, Board Member; Tom Torlaksen, State Superintendent; Dr. Carol Hansen, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Mary Sieu, Superintendent; Celia Spitzer, Vice President-Board of Education.

New Technology Renovations at Hawaiian Elementary School

Hawaiian ES in Hawaiian Gardens recently completed major renovations of their technology resources throughout the school. **Due to a generous grant of \$100,000 from the Irving Moskowitz Foundation, the school was able to overhaul their Computer Laboratory for student use with new Mac computers.** Each classroom teacher was also provided with a new teaching station that included a Mac laptop computer, document camera and projector. The teachers indicated the new equipment has changed the way they teach.



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Staff from the District's Information and Technology worked tirelessly to get everything in place so the students and teachers would start the school year with the new equipment. Principal Laurie Cordova recently said, "Everyone at Hawaiian ES is very grateful for the support they have received from the Irving Moskowitz Foundation, Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu, Sal Flores of the Moskowitz Foundation, the City of Hawaiian Gardens and the wonderful District Information Technology Department!"



During CyberSafety month in October, all the students used the new computers to learn lessons on internet safety, issues related to cyberbullying and using social media responsibly. ▀

News Around the District

Technology Planning

On Tuesday, October 16, the Board of Education approved a contract with Tech Ed Services Inc. to help create ABC's Technology Use Plan for 2013-2016. Over the next 4-5 months, Dr. Colin Sprigg, Director of the Information and Technology Department, and Tech Ed Services will meet with ABC constituent groups to complete local needs assessments, and solicit contributions to ABC's vision for technology use in instruction. **The end result will be the completion of a State approved technology plan for 2013-2016 required for future grant eligibility and annual ERATE telecommunications reimbursements.**

An important objective of the collaboratively created district technology plan is to unify a vision for instructional technology that people understand and support. Even in tight budgetary times, opportunities for technology purchases will emerge over the next three to five years. **It's important that the district's limited funds are invested in a unified direction to ensure every ABC student experiences technology embedded curriculum that our 21st century learners expect, and that colleges and career opportunities require.**

In the summer of 2012, Dr. Mary Sieu, Superintendent, led a district contingent to Apple Inc., in Cupertino, California.

Apple hosted ABC with training sessions that illuminated the tremendous future awaiting classrooms across the country. **Apple shared a belief that the education sector may see more change over the next five years than has been experienced over the last one hundred.** The developments of the Internet, mobile devices, and falling prices

have converged to provide technology to students on a scale unprecedented in the history of education. ABC Unified believes that someday computers will become part of every student's arsenal of tools tucked away within their backpack pockets. Technology planning is especially important today considering this scope of change the district expects to sweep public schools.

Tech Ed Services will begin with Superintendent's Cabinet in December and will branch to all ABC representative groups including teachers, students, parents, administrators, support staff, and areas of special need, such as Special Education and English learners, for example. Each group will have a chance to provide needs assessment data and contribute their ideas towards a unified vision for instructional technology for 2013-2016. The process should take about 4-5 months, and the final ABC Technology Plan is expected to be complete by April 2013. ▸



Partnership with Administration and Labor (PAL) Events

On Wednesday, October 24th, the District collaborated with ABC Federation of Teachers to host its **4th West Coast Labor Management Institute**. The Institute was held at the Holiday Inn, Buena Park. The event was sponsored by an AFT Innovation Grant that the District received to support other districts interested in creating a collaborative labor-management partnership. Educators from out of state included St. Louis, Missouri, Toledo, Ohio, and Washington, D.C. District administrators and union representatives also came from Salinas SD, Fullerton SD, Newport-Mesa USD, Oceanview SD and Culver City SD.



West Coast Labor Management Institute participants included Board President Olympia Chen, Vice President Celia Spitzer, Dr. Mary Sieu, Superintendent, Board Member James Kang, and Rich Saldana, PAL Innovation Council Coordinator.



Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu addressing the PAL Conference attendees.

On Thursday, October 25th, the **13th Annual Partnership with Administration and Labor (PAL) Conference** was held at the Holiday Inn, Buena Park. Administrators and union representatives from the entire District convened to focus on raising student achievement. The PAL Conference held four breakout sessions: a) Getting Ready for the Common Core Standards; b) Creating Classrooms for 21st Century Learners; c) Fierce Conversations for 21st Century; d) Beyond Detentions and Suspensions. In addition to the breakout sessions, Dr. Saul Rubinstein, Associate Professor at Rutgers University provided preliminary findings of the research on our partnership efforts and its impact on student achievement. The study will soon be made available to the public.



The PAL Conference is coordinated each year by representatives from the District and members of ABCFT. Each participant received the new handbook called “*The ABCs of Partnership*” describing the history of the District’s partnership and elements that have contributed toward its success. The handbook may be accessed on the District’s website at www.abcusd.k12.ca.us ▶

Dr. Saul Rubinstein shares findings from his research on the District’s partnership efforts.



Ray Gaer, President of ABCFT sharing the new Handbook, “The ABCs of Partnership” published by AFT.

Common Core State Standards – Update

The California State of Board of Education has adopted the California Common Core State Standards. These new national standards will replace the previous California standards for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. The Common Core ELA standards include literacy standards for history/social studies, science, and technical subjects. **These kindergarten through grade 12 standards provide a progression of knowledge and skills that prepare students to graduate from high school and be ready for college and careers.** The standards are research-based and internationally benchmarked.

The goal of the Common Core is for all students graduating from the public school system to be life-long learners that will have the skills and knowledge necessary to assume their positions in the 21st century global economy. **The new standards are designed to be relevant in the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills students need for success in both higher education and career.** Our communities will be stronger if students graduate with the skills and knowledge needed in today's job market.

Preparing Secondary Math Teachers for the Common Core Transition

ABCUSD's Academic Services in partnership with Loyola Marymount University (LMU), Center for Math and Science Teaching (CMAST) is in the process of embarking upon a new venture to identify and train 7-12th grade math *Teacher Leaders* in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The standards are internationally benchmarked and structured to prepare students for college and career. Included in the math Common Core State Standards are eight Standards for Mathematical Practice, which describe the level of expertise mathematics educators will need to develop in their students. These standards represent a significant instructional shift for teachers as districts across the United States proceed with implementing the CCSS.

In ABC, the Common Core Math Study Team, consisting of elementary and secondary teachers, recommend focused professional development on the Standards for Mathematical Practice. With this charge in mind, Academic Services in partnership with LMU is committed to expanding school and the



district leadership capacity by identifying a cadre of teachers to receive explicit training by practitioners who are also faculty members in the CMAST program at Loyola Marymount University.

As districts throughout the United States begin the implementation process, we are confident that Teacher Leaders are critical to the successful transition and full implementation of Common Core Math Standards in ABC.

New Tests for the New Standards

California is part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. Smarter Balanced is developing an assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards. **The consortium is working to develop next-generation assessments that accurately measure student progress toward college- and career-readiness.** These new assessments are scheduled to be administered in the spring of 2015.

Transitioning to the Common Core: More information

Parents and guardians are crucial partners in laying the groundwork for a smooth transition to the new standards. Parents and guardians can:

- Review the new standards at the California Department of Education CCSS Web Page: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/cc/> (select "Students/Parents" tab)
- Review the K-8 California's Common Core Standards Parent Handbook: http://www.ccsesa.org/sysadmin/documents/CCSParentHandbook_020411.doc
- Review the new assessment information at SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium Information: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/smarterbalanced.asp> ▶



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EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Esther H. Nguyen, Paraeducator

Esther H. Nguyen is a candidate to be recognized as the "2013 CABE Paraeducator of the Year" from the California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE). The winner will be honored on Thursday, February 14, 2013 during the Awards Luncheon during the Annual CABE 2013 Conference at the Long Beach Convention Center.

Esther became a candidate for the state-wide honor after being named *CABE 2012 Long Beach Region Paraeducator of the Year* on April 5, 2012 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Esther has worked 33 years with Vietnamese students and their families. She currently provides individual academic support for 24 students in 8 schools, kindergarten through fifth grade.

Paul Killian, Program Specialist

A new Boeing Grant of \$20,000 was recently approved for ABCUSD. The money will fund the *Teaching Learning Collaborative for Middle School Science Teachers* in our District. This project is coordinated by Paul Killian, Science/Health Program Specialist - Academic Services. Thank you Paul.

Jean Rose, Adult School Teacher

Jean is this year's CCAE (California Council for Adult Education) South Coast & Southern section "Excellence in Teaching" award recipient. The award presentation was held on Saturday night, October 27 at Palm Springs. Dr. Pao-Ling Guo was co-presenting a workshop with two other Adult School principals and accepted the award on Mr. Rose's behalf.

David Saavedra, Adult School Instructor

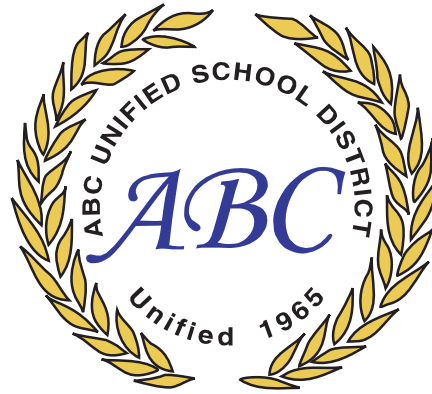
Mr. Saavedra has been selected as the President for the California Council of Adult Education (CCAЕ) ABC Chapter and the Vice President for the Regional Chapter for the South Coast Section. David has been teaching ESL at the Adult School for the last twelve years. As the CCAE Chapter President for ABC Adult School, Mr. Saavedra monitors legislations concerning Adult Education. ▶

ABC Holds First Superintendent's Community Forum

Over fifty people attended the District's first Community Forum held on October 9, 2012 at Tetzlaff Middle School. The focus of the Community Forum was on the "State of the District Budget." Dr. Mary Sieu, Superintendent presented information about the impact of the State's budget on ABC during the past four years. Toan Nguyen, Assistant Superintendent-Business Services and Chief Financial Officer addressed the issues of two tax initiatives on the November ballot. Celia Spitzer, Vice-President of the Board of Education spoke about the Board resolution approved in September endorsing both Proposition 30 and Proposition 38. Other Board Members who attended were President Olympia Chen, James Kang and Lynda Johnson. ▶



(l-r) James Kang, Lynda Johnson, Olympia Chen, Dr. Mary Sieu, Celia Spitzer, Toan Nguyen.



Board Members

Olympia Chen - President
Celia Spitzer - Vice President
Sophia Tse - Clerk
Lynda Johnson - Member
James Kang - Member
Maynard Law - Member
Armin Reyes - Member
Dr. Mary Sieu - Superintendent



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