



ABC UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Digest

November/December 2013 - Volume II - No 5



Message from the Superintendent - Dr. Mary Sieu

Twitter: @abcsupt

State Testing Overhaul

With the signing of Assembly Bill 484, the State is remaking the state's student assessment system to reflect the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The new law suspends most STAR (Standardized Testing and Reporting) assessments for the current school year, allowing school districts to prepare for and transition to the new California Measurement of Academic Performance and Progress assessments, which are slated for administration statewide in the 2014-15 school year.

The new assessments will be computer-based, allowing for a much broader range of test questions than the multiple-choice exams given under STAR. As a result, the new assessments are expected to emphasize critical thinking, reasoning, problem solving, modeling the kind of teaching and learning needed to prepare all students for the demands of college and the workplace.

For 2013-2014 school year, AB484 requires districts to administer field tests of the Smarter Balanced Assessments Consortium (SBAC) to students in grades 3-8th and 11th in either English language arts or math. Field tests serve as "tests of the tests" allowing experts to discern the accuracy and reliability of individual test questions before finalizing the assessments for full scale use. For a preview of the new SBAC assessments, please go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/smarterbalanced.asp>

There will not be any test scores for the students or schools taking the field test of SBAC this year.

It is not likely that there will be an Academic Performance Index (API) for the 2013-14 school year during this transition. The State is in the process of developing new criteria for the API that will include other factors besides test results.

In ABC, the suspension of the STAR testing has an impact on other areas where the results have been used for placement in classes between grade spans and special programs in the District. The District is in the process of selecting an alternative assessment for Whitney admission, qualifications for the Gifted and Talented Education program as well as guidelines for redesignation of English learners. We will continue to communicate these changes with the schools and community as well as post the information on the District's website. ▶



Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu and Principal Dennis Wilson at the Cerritos ES Education Foundation Pancake Breakfast

In This Issue

- News From Our Schools 2-4
- News Flashes From Freddie Middle, Cerritos High, Hawaiian Elementary, Artesia High. 2
- City of Hawaiian Gardens Awards Two Schools 3
- Schools to Watch Initiative 3
- 2013 Golden Bell Award Winners. . . 3
- ABC Award Winning Bands 4
- Tetzlaff MS SpringBoard Program . . . 4
- Community Involvement 5
- Lakewood Education Foundation Teacher Grants 5
- News Around the District. . . 5-7
- Transitional Kindergarten. 5
- Curriculum & Professional Learning . 5
- BRIDGES Program 6
- PAL 2 – Partnership with Administration and Labor. 6
- Employee Spotlight 7

Japanese Middle School Student Exchange Program

The District welcomed 30 middle school students from the City of Kakamigahara, Japan as part of our sister-school district relationship. This program is now in its 12th year. The students were paired with volunteer host families in the District. They were in the District from Oct. 29-Nov. 1 and spent time at Carmenita MS, Whitney HS, and Haskell MS. Thanks to our employees who served as host families for the Japanese students! ▶



News From Our Schools

Fedde International Studies Academy

Fedde International Studies Academy sent their Mock Trial Team to compete against other Los Angeles County middle school on Wednesday, November 6th at the L.A. City Courthouse. **Fedde is the only middle school in ABCUSD to have a Mock Trial Team.**

Ms. Camisha Tucker earned MVP from the Fedde team for her role as a prosecuting lawyer.

Cerritos HS

Cerritos Model UN attended the Bruin MUN (Model United Nations) Conference at UCLA on Nov. 9th. **Out of the approximately 80 students who attended the conference, 53 students received committee awards and even more received research awards! (One of our best percentage of students being recognized!)** They had eight students who received the gavel, the highest award given out in each committee. The students discussed a range of topics including the Dispute in the Senkaku Islands, the DR Congo, Syrian Refugee Crisis, Austerity Measures, the Millennium Development Goals, Child Marriage, Depleted Uranium in Military Applications, and Iranian Nuclear Weapons, all of which were topics in committees where the students were awarded the gavel.

Hawaiian Elementary School Sponsors First “Walk to School Day”

Hundreds of students, parents, and teachers from Hawaiian ES participated in the “Walk to School Day” event to remind the community about physical activity and the health benefits of walking. **The event was designed to encourage parents and students to participate in fun walking activities to promote a healthier lifestyle and to address physical challenges such as childhood obesity and asthma.** The students were accompanied by Hawaiian ES Principal Laurie Cordova, Mayor of Hawaiian Garden Victor Farfan, Mayor Pro Tem Mike Gomez, and Councilmembers Barry Bruce and Reynaldo Rodriguez. The “Walk to School Day” event was co-sponsored by the Cities of Artesia, Cerritos, Hawaiian Gardens, and the ABC Education Foundation.

This year, the District held four “Walk to School Days”. The other schools include Leal ES, Kennedy ES, and Carmenita MS.

Cerritos College / K-12 Partners in Education

On Friday, Oct. 18, Cerritos College convened a College and Career Readiness Summit with local school districts, including ABCUSD. **The purpose of the day was to learn and collaborate in sharing ideals on helping our students achieve college readiness and reach their academic and career goals.** Our District was represented by a team from the District Office and all high schools.



Dr. Gina Zietlow, Ann Griffo, and the Gahr HS Team

Manenberg HS Visitors

Six visitors from Manenberg HS in Cape Town, South Africa visited the District from Oct. 15-30. **Manenberg HS has a sister school relationship with Artesia HS that was established in 2011 through the American Federation of Teachers.** The Principal of Manenberg HS, Thurston Brown, along with four students and the MAPP (Manenberg–Artesia Project Program) Coordinator, Sydney Williams, was involved in activities at Artesia HS as well as in the District.



Dr. Mary Sieu and Board President Celia Spitzer welcome Manenberg HS Cape Town, South Africa students



Artesia HS Principal Sergio Garcia and Manenberg HS Principal Thurston Brown.

City of Hawaiian Gardens Awards Two Schools

The Hawaiian Gardens City Council presented an award of \$5,000 to Furgeson ES and \$2,500 to Melbourne ES for breaking 800 on the Academic Performance Index on Nov. 12, 2013. **Furgeson ES has an API of 800 and Melbourne ES reached 814 this year. The City of Hawaiian Gardens has supported our schools serving students and families in Hawaiian Gardens for many years.** This is only one of many ways that they have contributed to our District in advancing their City's theme of "Our Youth, Our Future."



City of Hawaiian Gardens Award to Furgeson ES for raising student achievement



City of Hawaiian Gardens Award to Melbourne ES for reaching 814 on their API.

Schools to Watch Initiative

Carmenita MS and Tetzlaff MS have been selected for visits in the Schools to Watch Initiative. **The Schools to Watch is an initiative sponsored by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform.** The National Forum identifies schools across United States that are well on their way to meeting the Forum's criteria in high performance. **According to the Forum, "the schools identified are ones that are academically excellent, developmentally responsive, socially equitable, and are organized to support and sustain their trajectory toward excellence"**. Each school submitted an application in October. As part of the process to be selected as a "School to Watch", visitors will be assigned to each school to examine data, conduct interviews with students, teachers, parents, administrators, and business partners. The visit at Carmenita MS is scheduled for Dec. 9th and Dec. 11th for Tetzlaff MS. We congratulate both schools for being selected for a school visit and wish them the best of luck during the visit in December!

2013 Golden Bell Award Winners

ABC Unified School District has been chosen as one of 59 recipients of the State's leading educational honor, the Golden Bell Award. The Golden Bell Award, now in its 34th year, is sponsored by the California School Boards Association (CSBA). The award recognizes public school programs that are innovative and sustainable, make a demonstrated difference for students, and focus on meeting the needs of all students. ABC Unified School District will receive its awards at a recognition ceremony to be held on Saturday, Dec. 7 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.**

The **JAM Sessions** provide opportunities for Nixon students to explore their particular strengths and talents. Students select from a variety of sessions offered by teachers, staff and community members. They occur Friday afternoons for one hour during a six week period. The goal of JAM Sessions is to engage students in their own learning through creative experiences that take place outside of the traditional classroom.

The **SMART Academy** focuses on increasing reading achievement by using academic language and a positive attitude toward school. The program focuses on African American and Hispanic-Latino students in 4th-6th grade attending Title I schools. Students receive extended learning time on reading comprehension strategies and academic vocabulary development. The parents of the students also participate in workshops on strategies to support and increase their child's learning.

This is the 12th and 13th Golden Bell Award for our District since 2002. **Congratulations to all those involved in both of these programs!**

“ABC Award Winning Bands”

GAHR HIGH SCHOOL Wins California State Band Championships! - Congratulations to the Gahr Marching Gladiators on receiving first place in the 3A Division at the 2013 California State Band Championships on Nov. 16th! After six years of not participating in field show competitions, this is a truly remarkable achievement.

Thank you to the hard-working students of the Gahr High School Marching Gladiators and Darren Loney for an incredible and unforgettable field show season!

CERRITOS HS MARCHING BAND – The Cerritos HS “Regiment of Gold” Marching Band received 1st Place at the WBA Competition located at Trabuco Hills HS in Mission Viejo. In addition the Band received caption awards in the following areas: Best General Effect, Best Music, Best Visual, Best Percussion, and Best Colorguard. The Band is currently undefeated and holds the highest score in all of Division 2A and will headed up north to Fresno for the 2013 WBA State Marching Band Championships.



Gahr HS 2013 California State Band Champions

TETZLAFF ACADEMY – Tetzlaff participated in the La Palma Days Parade on Sat., Nov. 9. **Their successful performance won them first place in Band overall, Colorguard received the sweepstakes award for best middle school Colorguard** in the parade, and their drum major received second place.

WHITNEY HS – Whitney HS band and colorguard also competed at the La Palma Days Parade and **received 1st place in both Band and Colorguard.** Currently the Colorguard is undefeated this season. ▶

Tetzlaff MS SpringBoard Program

Recently, **Tetzlaff was selected as a National Demonstration School by the College Board for 2013-15. It is the only school in California selected as a National Demonstration School.** Tetzlaff MS was selected because of the outstanding practices of teachers and administrators during the implementation of the SpringBoard Program. There were 18 schools selected nationally by the College Board as a National Demonstration School.

SpringBoard is the College Board’s college readiness program in English language arts and Mathematics. A research based program, SpringBoard is a pre-Advanced Placement Program that increases participation and prepares a greater diversity of students for success in AP and college by providing culturally and personally relevant activities designed to engage students in problem solving and critical analysis. ▶



Tetzlaff MS honored as a National Demonstration School by the College Board at the November 6 Board of Education Meeting.



Greg Porter, Teacher at Tetzlaff MS - National Demonstration School

News Around the District



Transitional Kindergarten

Transitional kindergarten (TK) is a school grade that serves as a bridge between preschool and kindergarten, functioning to provide students with time to develop fundamental skills needed for success in school in an age- and developmentally-appropriate setting. **Our ABCUSD TK team has been off to a great school year, working very hard in providing these children with an exciting, and new educational opportunity in order to provide them with a developmentally appropriate curriculum aligned with kindergarten standards.** The TK team has created TK science and social studies district outcomes. In addition, the TK team has had the opportunity to create ELA and Math District common assessments for Trimester I, and writing prompts that support these assessments. The TK team will continue to collaborate, and meet throughout the year, in order to give these students a head start that will yield huge payoffs in future academic success. ▶

Curriculum & Professional Learning

English Language Arts Fall Professional Learning Seminar

The month of November concludes the initial round of district wide training in the **Common Core State Standards for English language arts teachers**, Kindergarten through twelfth grade. The first two days of the training consisted of understanding why and how the Common Core State Standards for English language arts were written and the key content advances for effective implementation. On day three, teachers were given the opportunity to plan classroom instruction using the standards and ABC's three focus areas for this school year.

The three focus areas for ABC are:

- Text dependent questions
- Academic vocabulary
- Writing from sources

Content Area Course Planners: English Language Arts

The task of curriculum writing continues into the fall as Academic Services takes on an additional 20 teachers to help support existing course planners in their work. This brings the total number of the group to 75, which includes teacher representatives for each grade level and every school site in the district. **Course planners are undergoing the task of critically looking at their grade level curriculum to determine what existing resources support the new standards, and they are making recommendations on additional resources to enhance student learning. They are also being assigned the task of creating specific content area course work that directly ties to ABC's three focus areas.** As they continue to write units, extra professional learning opportunities are extended to this group to improve their curriculum writing efforts. The amount of time and commitment that has been given towards this work is enormous, and the teachers of ABC should be acknowledged and thanked for their work in this arena. ▶

Community Involvement

Lakewood Education Foundation Teacher Grants

On Nov. 12th at the 11th Annual Teacher Grant Presentation Reception sponsored by the Lakewood Education Foundation, **nearly \$48,000 was presented to 95 teachers to help fund art supplies, iPads, laptops, and unique opportunities for special needs students.** The Reception was held at the Monte Verde Park in Lakewood. Grants were given to teachers from ABC, Bellflower, Long Beach, and Paramount serving students in the Lakewood area. Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu and Board Members joined our ABC teachers from Melbourne ES, Palms ES, Artesia Children Center, Child Development, and Special Education who were awarded a teacher grant. ▶



Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu with ABC teachers who were recipients of Lakewood Education Foundation Mini-Grants

BRIDGES - Building Responsible Independent Determined Goal-Oriented Engaged Students

The **BRIDGES Program** is a new program offered in the ABC Unified School District that provides intensive social, emotional and behavioral services to eligible students in special education who require these services to access their educational program. The BRIDGES Program conducts social, emotional and behavioral assessments and provides educationally related intensive social, emotional and behavioral services. The continuum of services offered in the BRIDGES program may include individual counseling, group counseling, parent counseling, behavior intervention and/or placement in more intensive programs to meet student's social emotional or behavioral needs.

The **BRIDGES Program** provides support for two specialized classrooms at Kennedy Elementary School. This unique program offers a highly structured, relationship focused program with intensive positive behavioral interventions and intensive social and emotional supports embedded throughout the instructional day. Special education teachers, Jeff Peterson and Joy Dye, have brought a wealth of experience and expertise to this program and students are making positive gains.

The **BRIDGES program** also offers the **Teens with Means social skills program** at Gahr and Cerritos High School. This special social skills program incorporates the PEERS social skills curriculum and provides participating students with opportunities to learn and practice social skills and build positive and supportive relationships with peers and adults. This program also includes a parent component.



BRIDGES Staff

The BRIDGES program is lead by Kristin Guerrero, Social Behavioral Services Coordinator, and is made up of a specialized team of School Psychologists, Behavior Specialists, and Marriage and Family Therapists. ▶

PAL 2 – Partnership with Administration and Labor

A Recipe for Success: A Workshop for Classified Employees

On October 22, 2013, over two hundred ABC classified staff members attended a very special PAL 2 workshop entitled, “A Recipe for Success” at the Cerritos Public Library. The presenter of the workshop was Maureen G. Mulvaney also known as “MGM.” Ms. Mulvaney is a well-known professional speaker and author of several best-selling books including, “The Women’s Millionaire Club” and “Any Kid Can Be a Super Star.” Ms. Mulvaney provided the PAL 2 participants with a blend of researched based information, inspirational stories, and motivational techniques to help create a positive work environment. **The workshop participants committed to motivate and inspire our ABC students, the future leaders of tomorrow, because it’s the right thing to do!**



President Celia Spitzer,
Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu,
Board Member Maynard Law,
Director of HR
Dr. Susan Hixson,
Board Member Olympia Chen



PAL 2 Recipe for Success presenter Maureen G. Mulvaney

Pal 2 Presents: Technology Tips-Migrating to Office 2010

On November 12 and 13, 2013, Mrs. Mary White, retired ABC Teacher and Technology Specialist, presented the first of a four part series on Technology Tips for classified employees. **More than 80 participants attended the workshop entitled, “Migrating to Office 2010.” The participants learned basic new features and functions in the Word and Excel programs.** Each participant received a User’s Guide filled with useful information along with a list of shortcuts that can be used on a daily basis. **The PAL 2 participants look forward to the second Technology Tips workshop which will be held on January 14, 2014! ▶**

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Meg Jimenez, Niemes ES Principal

Meg Jimenez, Niemes ES Principal was featured on Forbes.com, recommended by Rose Kirk, Verizon Foundation President. The article is titled, The Top 5 Women Using Technology to Blow up Social Change. The link for the main page is: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/deniserestauri/2013/11/13/the-top-5-women-using-technology-to-blow-up-social-change/>
The link for the feature is: <http://www.forbes.com/pictures/elli45hfgi/meg-jimenez-principal-of-niemes-elementary-school-of-science-and-technology-2/>

Velia Paredes, Adult School CCAIE Award Recipients

Velia Paredes, Adult School ESL Teacher, is this year's CCAE (California Council for Adult Education) South Coast & Southern Section "Excellence in Teaching" award recipient. Winnie Wong, Adult School Accounting Technician, is the award recipient for the "Excellent in Support". The awards presentation was held on November 16 at the Annual Section Conference held in Palm Springs. Congratulations!

Rachelle Schultz, Adult School Employment Achievement Award

The South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) present an award to teacher Rachelle Schultz in the ABC Adult School's "Career Technical Education" department for Employment Achievement at their annual Alumni and Awards Breakfast on October 31.

Robert Castillo and Mayra Lozano

The City of Hawaiian Gardens recognized Principals Mayra Lozano, Furgeson and Robert Castillo, Melbourne at a special awards dinner on Friday, Nov. 15th. They were being honored as two of their "Community Heroes" along with other honorees.

Ruben Vasquez, SIA, Tracy HS

Ruben Vasquez is a Director and Mentor in the Youth Mentor program offered through the County of Los Angeles Sheriff Department, Youth Activity League. Through his leadership he seeks ways to improve the lives of the youth that he mentors by providing them a positive outlet to the reach their potential and fulfill their dreams through attending workshops, and educational excursions. The Youth Mentor Program provides safe and positive adult role models who offer support, guidance and friendship to help the youth make healthy life decisions. Mr. Vasquez takes pride in helping the youth become productive adults. The City of Hawaiian Gardens recognized him as one of the Community Heroes on Nov. 15, 2013. ▾



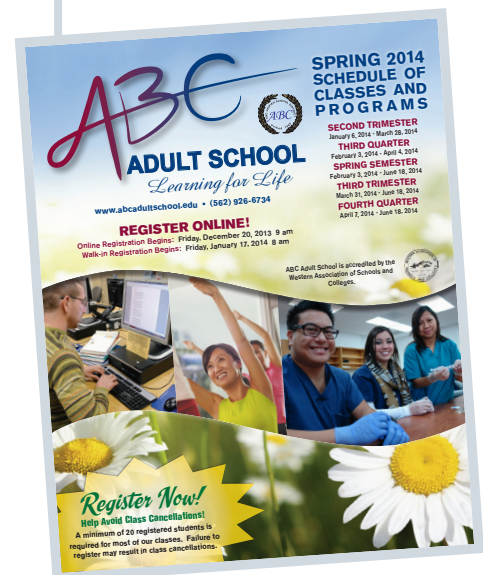
Visit our website for ABC USD schools' addresses, contact info, enrollment boundaries and more!

www.abcusd.k12.ca.us

ABC Adult School offers more than just ESL or Career Training classes!

Check out the Spring Catalog at

www.abcadultschool.edu mid December!





Board Members

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



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

Call 562-926-5566 to join the District's email list.