



ABC UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# District Digest

November/December 2014 - Volume IV - No 2



**A Message from the Superintendent - Dr. Mary Sieu**  
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## The Work Continues...

I'm reminded often that **"Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly."**

Although the election outcome was disappointing and we lost on Measure AA, I want to express my appreciation to the majority of the Board of Education for putting the measure on the ballot and allowing the voters to decide on this important issue. Throughout this process, we all learned a lot about the communities we serve. I felt that the District staff, parents, students, and many supportive community members unified with us in a special way that will continue in the future.

It's encouraging to learn that 89 of the 113 bond measures for school improvement throughout California were approved by their communities. In Los Angeles County, almost all but a few won their bond measures. **We conducted a positive campaign and I am very grateful to all those who helped support this effort.**

Despite the outcome, we clearly have needs for improvement at our school sites. **During the past several months, each school refined their list of facility needs with their site committees comprised of principals, teachers, support staff, parents, and community members.** Toan Nguyen, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services/Chief Financial Officer, Dr. Colin Sprigg, Director of IT, and Robby Kaye, Manager of MOT, spent countless hours working with all our schools this year in refining the schools' project lists and areas of priority for improvement. The list of projects will be used in our long range planning. **We welcome the community at large to engage with us as we move forward.**

It was apparent in talking with community members that there are many voters who have no connections to our schools or the District. Perhaps, their children have already graduated and moved on or they are seniors on fixed incomes with no relationship with the school district. **Reaching out to the communities at large is a challenge but one that needs to be addressed in the future.** We invite input into how to reach out to those who are not connected to the District.

**To learn more about ABC Unified School District, please continue to find updates about the District on our website at: [www.abcusd.k12.ca.us](http://www.abcusd.k12.ca.us) or follow me on Twitter: @abcsupt. ▶**

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*The Board of Education recognizes Whitney HS in being selected a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School.*

# News From Our Schools and Around The District

## Gahr Marching Gladiators Win 1<sup>st</sup> Place!



**The Gahr High School Marching Band at the San Clemente Field Tournament won 1<sup>st</sup> Place!! The Marching Gladiators took top honors for Music Effect, Visual Performance, Visual Effect, Percussion, and Color Guard!** For more information about the Gahr Instrumental Music Program, please visit us [www.gahrband.org](http://www.gahrband.org) or like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/gahrband](http://www.facebook.com/gahrband). ▶

## Whitney High School Winner of the 2014 National Blue Ribbon Schools Award

**On November 11<sup>th</sup>, Whitney High School in Cerritos was honored as a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School.** ABCUSD Superintendent, Dr. Mary Sieu, Whitney HS Principal Dr. Rhonda Buss, and Whitney HS teacher Jodi Improta attended the National Blue Ribbon Schools Awards Ceremony held at the Omni Hotel in Washington, DC. The event was sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education and has been held each year since 1982. Whitney HS was one of 24 California public schools that was recognized as a 2014 National Blue Ribbon School. **Whitney HS has the special distinction of having earned this award the most number of times in the country—five times!**

The California schools, which are either high achieving or made significant academic improvement are among 337 schools in 47 states. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan opened the Awards Ceremony in Washington, DC. Each winner of the National Blue Ribbon School Award received a beautiful plaque and flag as a mark of excellence from Aba Kumi, Director of the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program in the U.S. Department of Education. ▶



*(left-right) Jodi Improta, Whitney High School teacher; Aba Kumi, Director-National Blue Ribbon Schools Program; Dr. Rhonda Buss, Principal-Whitney HS; Dr. Mary Sieu, Superintendent-ABCUSD*

## Cerritos HS Regiment of Gold Marching Band

**On Saturday, November 1, the Cerritos HS Regiment of Gold Marching Band received 1<sup>st</sup> Place at the Western Band Association Competition in Mission Viejo.** The Band also took top honors in the following captions: Best General Effect, Best Music, Best Visual, and Best Percussion. **Congratulations Cerritos HS Gold Marching Band!** ▶



# Tetzlaff MS Trojans

The Tetzlaff MS Trojans finished the season with the La Palma Days Parade on Saturday, November 8, where the Band finished 1<sup>st</sup> in their division and 3<sup>rd</sup> overall net score. Colorguard finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in their division and Assistant Drum Major John Ryan Bautista had a great run through with a score of 84/100! Of the 24 high schools in attendance, the Tetzlaff MS Band received a higher band score than 18 of them. Great job Tetzlaff MS Trojans and Band Director Matt Gullett! ▶

## Southeast ROP Program

In 2013-2014 school year, SEROP served approximately 10,000 high school students (4,683 unduplicated) between ABC and NLM school districts, and currently has 75 classes/sections on the high school campuses in ABC. Especially with the implementation of Common Core, SEROP plays an important role in supporting students to be college/career ready and is an invaluable resource to the District. SEROP offers many career-technical education courses that are University of California (UC) approved. **Last year 36 ABC high school students earned their Pharmacy Technician License from the State of California, and 10 students are enrolled in a direct entry Pharmacy College/University. Many of the Pharmacy students are also enrolled in nursing programs at various colleges.**



*Pharmacy students from Cerritos High School*

SEROP is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). SEROP also has articulated courses with local community colleges. High school students are able to participate in these courses at no charge. We also offer many internship opportunities for certain programs at our high schools and offer summer school to high school students. SEROP also has an extensive nominal fee-based program for adults. At SEROP all teachers are credentialed and are required to have actual industry experience in their field of expertise. The Southeast Regional Occupational Program has enjoyed a partnership with ABC Unified School District since 1970. Southeast ROP continues to focus on providing rigorous career technical education to high school students. ▶

## Child Development News

On Friday, October 24, 2014, teachers of the Extended Day Program (E.D.P.) collaborated for a district wide “Curriculum Share”. For this “Curriculum Share” event, teachers at various schools came together to share crafting ideas and activities for a specific theme based on literature.



*Decorate your own Calavera (left) and Create your own Candy Skeleton Game (right)*



*Paper Mache Calavera Mask*



*Felt Calavera Pin*

The theme for this month was, “El Dia de Los Muertos,” or Day of the Dead. First celebrated in Mexico, El Dia de los Muertos is now celebrated in many other countries. It is a day dedicated to joyous celebrations honoring the memory of those who have passed. Typically, festivities include decorating or painting one’s face to depict an elaborately colored “calavera,” or skull; the iconic symbol associated to El Dia de los Muertos. Among other joyous activities, festivities include, festively decorating grave sites and preparing favorite foods of those who have passed are also common practice. ▶

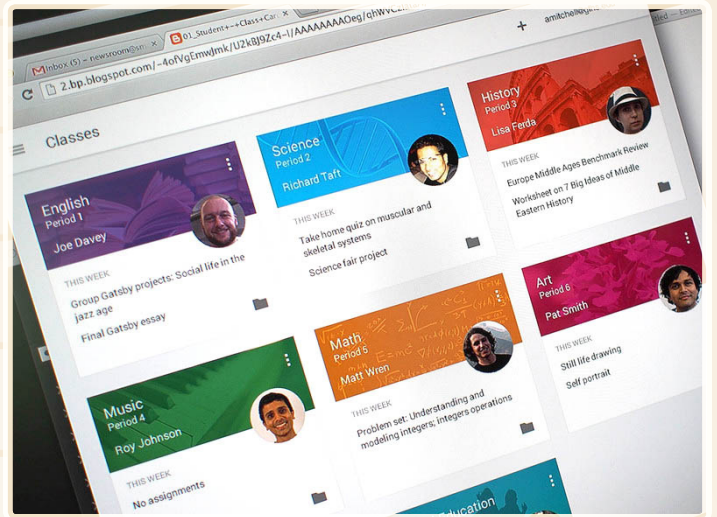
# News From Our Schools and Around The District

## Google Classroom in ABC!

Google released a very popular new app over the summer called Google Classroom. Google Classroom has gained traction in ABC ever since. It is a powerful workflow solution for teachers who want to digitize the process of creating and distributing assignments to students online. Digital classroom workflow means a drastic reduction in paper, and a transformation of how teachers and students interact!

In September, the IT Department offered twelve Google Classroom training sessions with high teacher interest and attendance. Google Classroom integrates with our staff's existing Google email accounts, as well as with the new Google student email accounts that were provided to students this year.

Google classroom allows teachers to create and organize assignments online, provide written feedback to students, and to easily communicate with students online. Students receive their own digital copy of an assignment to view, edit, and store online. Each student's collection of assignments is neatly organized in digital folders, which means no more messy backpacks with the loose unorganized papers! Google Classroom is an amazing 21<sup>st</sup> century digital tool that empowers the teacher and the student. ▶



## NAEP News

This year students from Ross Middle School & Artesia High School will represent the ABC school District for the upcoming National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), sponsored by the California Department of Education (CDE) in January, 2015. The CDE periodically conducts assessments in reading, mathematics, science, writing, U.S. history, civics, geography, and other subjects. NAEP collects and reports academic achievement at the national level, and for certain assessments, at the state and district levels. NAEP has two major goals: to compare student achievement in states and other jurisdictions and to track changes in achievement of fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-graders over time in mathematics, reading, writing, science, and other content domains.

To meet these dual goals, NAEP selects nationally representative samples of students who participate in either the main NAEP assessments or the long-term trend NAEP assessments. The national results are based on a representative sample of students in public schools, private schools, Bureau of Indian Education schools, and Department of Defense schools. Private schools include Catholic, Conservative Christian, Lutheran, and other private schools. The state results are based on public school students only. The main NAEP assessment is usually administered at grades 4 and 8 (at the state level) plus grade 12 at the national level. The long-term trend assessments report national results (in mathematics and reading only) for age samples 9, 13, and 17 in public and nonpublic schools. ▶



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

[www.abcusd.k12.ca.us](http://www.abcusd.k12.ca.us)



# West Coast Labor Management Institute

On Wednesday, October 22, over 100 guest educators attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual West Coast Labor Management (WCLM) Institute hosted by ABCUSD and ABCFT. The WCLM Institute was held at the Holiday Inn in Buena Park. The guests included educators from the South African Democratic Teachers Union, the Director of Mexico's National Association of Labor Issues, teams of administrators, and union representatives from Clark County, NV; Culver City, CA; El Rancho USD, CA; Fullerton School District, CA; Daly City, CA; Lawrence Public Schools, MA; Ocean View School District, CA; Omaha Education Association, NB; Salinas Union HS District, CA; St. Louis, MO; Rutgers University, NJ; and fellow colleagues from the AFT Office in Washington, DC.

The purpose of the WCLM Institute is to network with other districts and share best practices related to labor-management relations. Helping to kick off the event was President of AFT, Randi Weingarten. She postponed going to Brussels, Belgium, to specifically join us for the day at the Institute! She spoke passionately about the need to partner for success and highlighted ABC as a model of labor-management collaboration. Josh Pechthalt, President of CFT, and Dean Vogel, President of CTA, also provided opening remarks and strong support for the work we are doing in ABC. ▶

## Partnership with Administration and Labor (PAL)

Thursday, October 23, approximately 200 people participated in the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual PAL (Partnership between Administration and Labor) Retreat held at the Holiday Inn in Buena Park. Most of those who participated in the WCLM Institute stayed the second day for the PAL Retreat. All 30 ABC principals and their site union representatives attended along with department teams including Child Development, Special Education, Academic Services, and School Services. The theme of this year's PAL Retreat was "Power through Collaboration". Breakout sessions were provided by teams comprised of administrators and teacher union representatives. ▶



(left-right) Celia Spitzer, Board Member; Randi Weingarten, President-AFT; Dr. Mary Sieu, Superintendent; Ray Gaer, President-ABCFT

## PAL 2 Retreat CSEA's True Colors

The third annual PAL 2 Retreat titled CSEA's True Colors was held on October 21, 2014 at the DES Portuguese Hall in Artesia. Approximately 200 classified employees enthusiastically participated in the interactive workshop. In attendance were: Sophia Tse, ABC Board President; Maynard Law, Clerk of the Board; Celia Spitzer, Board Member; Olympia Chen, Board Member; and Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu. Also in attendance were Ray Gaer, ABCFT President; Laura Rico, ABCFT Past President and five South African education delegates.



(left-right) South African Education Delegate Jonavon Rustin, Flor Crist, Elliott ES; Priya Venkat, Testing Technician; Dr. Susan Hixson, Director-HR; Kathy Simoes, Cerritos ES; Karen Pierce, Human Resource; Dr. Carol Hansen, Assist. Supt-HR; Alice Garcia, Burbank ES

The True Colors workshop offered an easy and entertaining way for participants to better understand themselves and others. True Colors uses the concept of color association to create a simple but powerful vocabulary for discussing and describing personality differences and similarities. Once a person is able to recognize the True Colors in himself/herself and others, the awareness becomes a KEY TO SUCCESS in their personal, professional, and social activities.

This workshop was a huge success thanks to all of the participating classified employees. Thank you to the following PAL 2 Council members for organizing this special event: Rebecca Michel-Macias, Fil Macedo, Elizabeth Garcia, Evelyn Lopez, Danielle Weseman, Lourdes Johnson, Georgeanne Schwecke, and Dorothy Garcia. Everything is awesome, when you're part of a Team! ▶



# Community Involvement

## Superintendent's Roundtable with Congresswoman Linda Sanchez

On October 29, Congresswoman Linda Sanchez held the Superintendent's Roundtable at the Santa Fe Springs Town Center Hall with about a dozen local superintendents and the presidents of their board. President Sophia Tse and Dr. Mary Sieu joined in the Roundtable discussion that focused on issues affecting our school districts and the impact of federal legislation on education. ▶



## Japanese Exchange Program

On October 29, ABC welcomed over thirty middle school students from the City of Kakamigahara, Japan. This program is part of our District's sister-school relationship with the City of Kakamigahara established almost 15 years ago. The Japanese students were introduced to their host families who are employees and or parents in the District. The Japanese students performed a dance as part of the welcome reception. The Japanese students visited Carmenita MS, Whitney HS, and Haskell MS during their stay. The program is coordinated by Stacey Hamagiwa, Program Specialist-Academic Services, and supported by teachers Kim Suzuki-Gahr HS and Eilene Oyama-Whitney HS. ▶

## Lakewood Celebrates



On October 28<sup>th</sup>, ABC was honored at the City of Lakewood with a Proclamation for commemorating Red Ribbon Week throughout the schools in Lakewood. Mayor Todd Rogers presented the Proclamation to Board Member Olympia Chen. She was joined by Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu, Principal of Artesia HS Sergio Garcia and administrators from AHS. ▶

## Walk to School Day

Kennedy Walk to School Day held on October 8 is sponsored by Kaiser Permanente to promote wellness activities in the school district. ▶



# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

## Teresa Campbell and Louis Feliz

Southeast Regional Occupational Program (SEROP) teachers at Artesia High School, Teresa Campbell in Theater Performing Arts and Louis Feliz in photography, each **received \$500 grant awards from the Lakewood Foundation**. Mr. Feliz will be purchasing five point and shoot cameras for students who do not have access to any type of digital cameras. Ms. Campbell will be using the award monies to purchase wireless microphones for theater performances in time for the upcoming student performance of “*You are a Good Man, Charlie Brown*.”

## Terri Villa McDowell

**Congratulations and thank you to Terri Villa-McDowell, Coordinator of the Safe Schools Office, and Alice Luck for helping to obtain the following grants for the District! The grants total \$3,422,463 of external funds to support our schools in the District.** Here is a summary of the five grants that we have received funding for:

1. The Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Grant of \$1,171,779 is from the U.S. Department of Education. This three year grant will fund a licensed social worker at each of our five high schools.
2. Kaiser Foundation Hospitals, Southern California has funded the Thriving School Partnership Grant of \$100,000 to support the ABC/Kaiser Active Living Initiative. This two year grant will help support the PLAYWORKS Program in at least 11 elementary schools. It will also support the “Walk to School Days” in the District.
3. The U.S. Department of Education has awarded us \$1,950,684 for the School Climate Transformation Grant. This five year grant will help to support the Positive Behavioral Intervention System (PBIS) and Restorative Justice Program that is part of the District’s Local Control Accountability Plan.
4. The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services has funded our application for Project AWARE of \$100,000. The two year grant will provide training and capacity building of a cadre of trainers to provide Mental Health First Aid for early interventions to students experiencing a mental health or substance abuse crisis.
5. The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health has funded our “Outreach and Education Pilot: Underserved Population Prevention Program” of \$100,000. This two year grant will help support and sustain the Primary Intervention Program (PIP) in our elementary schools.

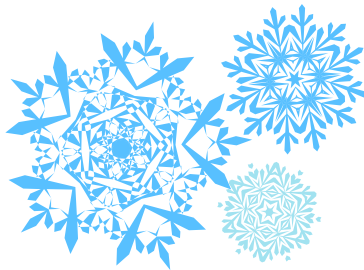
## Nzuj De Magalhaes

**ABC Adult School instructor, artwork has been chosen and will be permanently placed at the new Bundy/Exposition LA Metro station in Santa Monica.** Nzuj De Magalhaes taught piano and singing at ABC Adult School this past summer and will be teaching the Book Illustration, Comic Book, and Story Boarding this Spring at Cabrillo Lane on Thursday nights. She is a MFA graduate from the University of Southern California and a professional Mixed Media artist that incorporates both visual arts and music in her work. She exhibits vastly in Los Angeles, New York, Pennsylvania, and recently Munich, Germany, in both art galleries and museums. Recently her work was presented at the first Hammer Museum L.A. Biennial and also was a public art finalist for the L.A. Metro Station at Exposition and Bundy Drive. Congratulations Nzuj! ▶



## Board Members

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



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