



ABC UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Digest

September/October 2013 - Volume II - No 4



Message from the Superintendent - Dr. Mary Sieu

Student Achievement Continues to Climb in 2013



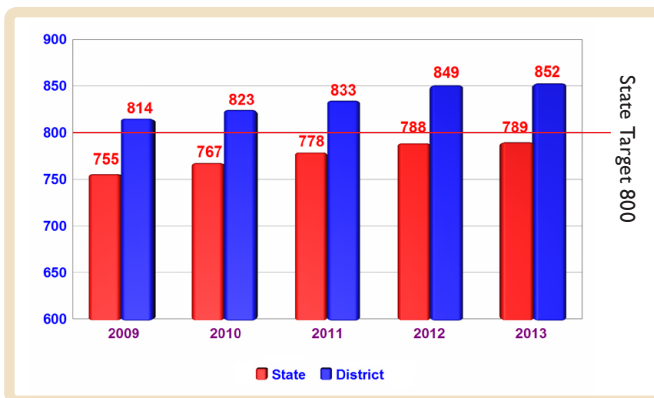
Welcome Back to School with the Backpack for Kids Program at Elliott ES.

Welcome to a new school year! We have done a lot of work this summer to spruce up our campuses and District Office. Some of the projects focused on improving security throughout our District, facilities improvement and field renovations. We thank our MOT Department for all their work in the summer. Notwithstanding these

improvements, we know that an outstanding education starts with high quality staff to support our students. We strive to support our staff by providing meaningful professional development. In the summer, we held a 3 day training for over 400 teachers in order to be prepared for the Common Core State Standards and new assessment, Smarter Balanced Assessment.

In ABCUSD, we take great pride in our student achievement. We continue to celebrate the District's rise in student achievement as confirmed by the release of our latest California Standards Test results. Our teachers, staff, students, families and community can take pride in their work throughout the past year.

I applaud the success of ABC Unified School District in reaching increased levels of student learning on the Academic Performance Index (API) from 849 in 2011-2012 to 852 in 2012-13. Although overall, the statewide API declined, ABCUSD continued to rise. **Test results indicate we made great progress especially in the south end of the District serving Hawaiian Gardens and east Lakewood.** The following schools made significant gains on the API: Aloha ES (786) with a 15 pts growth; Furgeson ES (800) with a 32 pts growth; Hawaiian ES (752) with a 12 pts growth and Melbourne ES (814) with a 17 pts growth.



Academic Performance Index (API) State Comparison 2009-2013
ABC Exceeds the State Target of 800

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Other notable gains with schools in Cerritos included Tetzlaff MS (858) with a 13 pts growth; Haskell MS (831) with a 12 pts growth and Gahr HS (802) with 12 pts growth.

As we usher in a new year for the students of ABC Unified School District, our resolve remains steadfast to: 1) Challenge ourselves to improve an already outstanding system of delivering high quality instruction to our students; 2) Use data to inform us where we need to improve; 3) Dedicate resources and time to transition to the new Common Core State Standards and prepare for the new assessment.

With the continued hard work of our teachers and students and the support of our parents and community, ABCUSD will continue to be a District recognized at the State and national level for its outstanding student achievement. ▀

News From Our Schools

2012-13 Honor Roll Schools

The California Business for Education Excellence has named a record number of schools in ABC to the 2012-13 Honor Roll. **The Honor Roll includes public elementary, middle and high schools recognized for demonstrating consistently high levels of student achievement, improvement in achievement over time and reduction in achievement gaps.** For high schools, Honor Roll recognition includes measures of college readiness.

The 7 STAR Schools in ABC include: Artesia HS, Bragg ES, Ross MS, Kennedy ES, Burbank ES, Palms ES and Gahr HS.

The 9 Scholar Schools include: Carmenita MS, Stowers ES, Cerritos ES, Cerritos HS, Leal ES, Whitney HS, Wittmann ES, Gonsalves ES, Nixon ES. A total of 16 schools in ABC were recognized on the 2012 Honor Roll by the California Business for Education Excellence. Congratulations to all our Honor Roll schools! ▶

Leal ES Selected as National Blue Ribbon School



It's official! Leal ES has been selected as a National Blue Ribbon School for 2013. They will be recognized in a recognition ceremony on November 18-19 in Washington, DC. **Leal ES is only one of 3 schools selected in Los Angeles County and 15 in California.** Congratulations to the entire Leal ES school community for this prestigious national recognition! ▶

Melbourne Elementary's New API of 814!

On Friday, August 30th, Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu, Board Clerk Lynda Johnson, and Mayor Pro Tem Mike Gomez joined Principal Robert Castillo and the entire Melbourne ES staff members at the Road House Grill Restaurant in Long Beach to celebrate their groundbreaking **new API of 814. Melbourne ES, serving the students in Hawaiian Gardens and east Lakewood, is to be congratulated for this remarkable achievement!** ▶



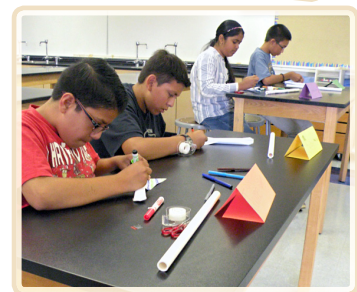
STEM Summer Institute

Jointly with Cerritos College, ABC Unified School District hosted the 1st STEM Summer Institute designed to educate, engage, and inspire students on how **Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)** can be fun and lead to rewarding careers.

In an effort to create a generation of problem-solvers, students learned how to work in teams and use the critical thinking concepts that engineers and other science fields share.

This year's STEM Summer Institute was held at Tetzlaff Middle School, July 9th - August 15th, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Students participating in the Institute were from Carmenita, Fedde, Haskell, Ross and Tetzlaff Middle School. **Students were treated to exciting STEM explorations and discoveries through hands-on problem solving activities such a building javelin rockets, learning about moon power, moon rovers, earthquakes, building bubbles and having fun with chemistry.** The Cerritos College Teacher TRAC Program provided instruction to approximately 100 middle school students.

We look forward to next year's STEM Summer Institute that will introduce more students to science, technology, engineering, and math through creative and innovative hands-on activities! ▶



Backpack for Kids Initiative

The Backpack for Kids Program provides almost 700 free backpacks with school supplies to all our schools who requested them.



ABC Ed Foundation Board of Director Mark Anthony Ruiz, Foundation Chair Sal Flores, Bragg ES Principal Annette Janeway, First Choice Bank Representative Margelina Lizano, Bragg Teacher Judith Smith, First Choice Bank EVP/CFO Yvonne Chen, Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu, Senior HR Administrative Assistant Jose Bravo, and Bragg students



Carver ES Principal Debbie Berlyn, Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu, and Carver Staff

A special thanks to the Board of Directors of the ABC Education Foundation and especially, Terri Villa-McDowell for organizing this event for the second year. ▶

Family Band Night

At the Family Band Night at Gahr HS on Thursday, September 12th, hundreds of families with elementary students visited with our Band Directors to learn about various instruments in the District Band Program. It was a great way to introduce and recruit students into the Band Program. It was a very successful first Family Band Night held in the District.



Band Director Mike Hogue introducing a xylophone to students and their family.



Thank you to all the Band Directors and especially Sue Kesinger for coordinating this event. ▶

ABC Board of Education President Celia Spitzer and Band Director Kathy Harris



Cerritos HS Class of 2014 Cheers on the First Day of School

"First Day of School" photo from Sal Bommarito, Cerritos HS Teacher

News Around the District

Welcome New Principals

New principals Ricardo Lois at Fedde MS and Christine Balbuena at Juarez ES are off to a great start at their schools. Both new school leaders have been in other leadership positions in the District prior to being a principal. **We look forward to great things happening at Fedde MS and Juarez ES! ▶**



*Christine Balbuena,
Juarez ES Principal*



*Ricardo Lois,
Fedde MS Principal*

New Teacher Orientation 2013

The ABC Unified School District in partnership with the American Federation of Teachers (ABCFT) hosted the New Teacher Orientation (NTO) on August 27, 2013 at the District Office. **Forty eight teachers new to ABC participated in the annual event.** The NTO was facilitated by Dr. Carol Hansen, Assistant Superintendent-Human Resources. Teachers from all levels and subject areas were present including several special education teachers.

The participants received a warm ABC welcome from Celia Spitzer, Board President, Mrs. Sophia Tse, Board Vice President; and Dr. Mary Sieu, Superintendent. The event began with a presentation by Dr. Hansen and Ray Gaer, ABCFT President who shared information regarding the partnership between the District and the union and the many benefits of everyone working together on common goals. Valencia Mayfield, Assistant Superintendent-Academic Services and Rich Saldana, PASS Coordinator presented information regarding the Common Core Standards. **The teachers received information regarding payroll, fringe benefits, and the importance of safety in the workplace.** Lastly, the teachers were escorted to the ABC Adult School computer lab for a lesson on the ABC USD Web Site and Google Mail.

It was a great and inspiring day in ABC USD! We wish all of the teachers new to ABC the best of luck this school year. **Go Team ABC! ▶**



Common Core Technology Plan

by Dr. Colin Sprigg, Director of Information & Technology

ABC Unified is moving forward with the Board approved Technology Plan. The Plan provides teachers Common Core professional development, instructional materials, and emphasizes school technology upgrades.



California schools are in a process of transition from the traditional paper and pencil State STAR assessment to a new computer-based Smarter Balanced Assessment scheduled to begin in the Spring of 2015.

The Plan specifically calls for schools to upgrade their school computer labs in preparation for the administration of the new Smarter Balanced Assessments. In addition, the Plan calls for the integration of mobile device computers into the classroom as tools for students to meet the new Common Core standards.



California provided school districts with significant funding to support the implementation of the new Common Core standards. **ABC Unified School District received \$4.25M restricted for this purpose.** Based on the number of students at each school, the Common Core monies for technology were equitably allocated to ABC schools.

School technology committees are provided latitude to choose what computer platforms to integrate into their school computer labs and classrooms. In June of 2013, all schools attended a district sponsored Common Core Computer Technology Fair that displayed the various approved technology options. School decisions makers were in attendance, and vendors had a chance to demonstrate their technology. ▶

Visit our website for ABCUSD schools' addresses, contact info, enrollment boundaries and more!
www.abcusd.k12.ca.us

Curriculum and Professional Development

As schools throughout the state prepare to implement the California Common Core Standards in the 2014-15 school year, ABC USD has taken several proactive steps to ensure that teachers and students have the tools to be successful with these standards.

First, the Curriculum and Professional Learning team has been working closely with teachers in the area of **English Language Arts** by providing training and creating Units of Study aligned to these standards. Teacher representatives from each school site have worked collaboratively to write Units of Study that emphasizes key instructional shifts for English Language Arts. In addition, **over 350 teachers attended a 3 day Summer Seminar training in which teachers had the opportunity to expand their knowledge of the Common Core Standards.** They worked together to create Common Core aligned lessons that can be implemented in the classroom. This training will continue to occur throughout the school year. Teachers will be focusing on three Common Core shifts this year:

1. Text dependent questions
2. Writing from sources
3. Academic Vocabulary



Elementary teachers receiving professional learning on Common Core at Artesia High School.

Furthermore, in order to prepare stu-

dents for the new assessments associated with the California Common Core Standards (known as Smarter Balanced Assessments), **the district is transitioning to exams that allow students to practice with the types of questions that will be included in the new statewide assessments.** These End of Unit assessments are currently being piloted and will be extended throughout the district by spring of 2014.

In the area of **Mathematics**, all Secondary Math teachers will receive training this school year as we prepare for the implementation of the new Mathematical Practices associated with Common Core. These practices describe varieties of expertise that mathematics educators at all levels should seek to develop in their students. **The goal is to create critical thinkers and problem solvers that have long term knowledge**

and application of Mathematical skills. These standards look to build student's math reasoning, strategic competence, conceptual understanding, and practical application abilities. In partnership with Loyola Marymount University's Center for Math and Science Teaching (C.M.A.S.T), ABC Teacher Leaders and Coaches will provide ongoing support to secondary math teachers during the school year.

It is also exciting to report that the State Board of Education recently adopted a new set of Science standards known as the **"Next Generation Science Standards". These new standards place an emphasis on STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.** It ensures that students experience an integrated approach to Science, using projects and activities to apply to real life learning. The district's annual STEM Olympics is a reflection of these new STEM based standards. We look forward to this event towards the end of the school year.

Additional information to assist parents as we transition to the Common Core is available at the ABC Unified Website, http://www.abcusd.k12.ca.us/pages/ABC_Unified_School_District

We look forward to working with the community during these exciting times. ▶

Community Involvement

"State of the Nation" Presentation

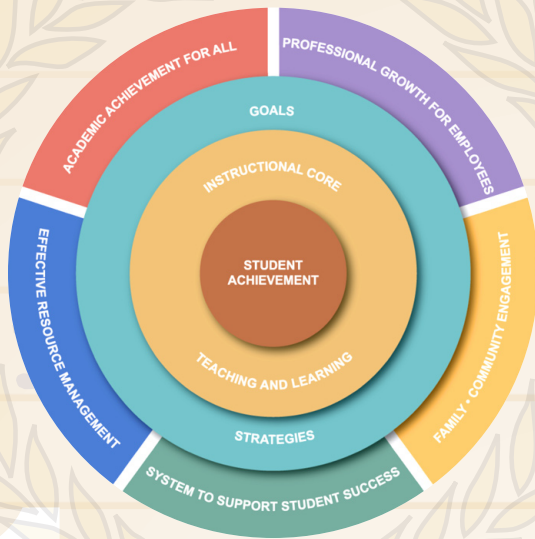
ABC Board Members and Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu joined Congresswoman Linda Sanchez in her presentation "State of the Nation" at the Cerritos Regional Chamber of Commerce on August 21, 2013. ▶



ABC Board of Education Vice President Sophia Tse, Board Clerk Lynda Johnson, Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu, Congresswoman Linda Sanchez, Board President Celia Spitzer, Board Members Olympia Chen and James Kang.

Strategic Plan Directions 2013-16

Schools for 21st Century Learners



Direction 1

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL

Provide all students with equitable access to rigorous curriculum with aligned instructional materials and assessments

- 1.1 Transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics
- 1.2 Promote extra support for students who lack the skills necessary to be academically successful
- 1.3 Develop a multi-year plan for providing strong Career Technical Education (CTE) in the District
- 1.4 Increase access for students to rigorous curriculum through Advanced Placement course work and completion of A-G courses
- 1.5 Increase support to improve academic progress of English Language Learner students
- 1.6 Assess and support schools' technology infrastructure to be able to meet the new CCSS and Smarter Balanced Assessment needs

Direction 2

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH FOR EMPLOYEES

Recruit, support and retain effective professionals at all levels of the organization

- 2.1 Provide teachers and schools leaders with high quality professional development
- 2.2 Strengthen school leadership with opportunities for professional growth
- 2.3 Work with institutions for higher education, community organizations and the cities to build a pool of potential candidates for teaching and school leadership positions
- 2.4 Provide professional development for classified professionals based on needs assessment
- 2.5 Provide training and support for staff on the use of assessment data to guide instruction

Direction 3

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Build a district culture based on high expectations for all students

- 3.1 Increase family and community partnerships to support student learning
- 3.2 Implement plans to enhance family and community understanding of the Common Core State Standards and new assessments
- 3.3 Develop partnerships with corporate and higher education communities to support Career Technical Education
- 3.4 Promote ongoing and open communication among our key stakeholders

Direction 4

SYSTEM TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

Ensure a safe, caring and nurturing environment for all students

- 4.1 Provide high quality customer service to our students and their families
- 4.2 Provide mental health and counseling opportunities for students through partnerships with local community agencies and collaborations
- 4.3 Develop, implement and monitor a coherent and equitable student discipline system
- 4.4 Implement CyberSafety Month and School Safety Programs
- 4.5 Promote wellness for students, parents and staff

Direction 5

EFFECTIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Operate an effective and efficient organization

- 5.1 Optimize resources to support district goals
- 5.2 Foster prudent management of fiscal resources
- 5.3 Ensure safe facilities by upgrading security systems at the schools and District Office
- 5.4 Communicate regularly with the cities in the District and law enforcement agencies regarding safety and security issues
- 5.5 Refine emergency operations protocol at all levels of the organization

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Golden Bell Award Finalists

The California School Boards Association (CSBA) has selected two programs in ABC as finalists for the 2013 Golden Bell Award Program. The CSBA Golden Bell Awards Luncheon will be held on December 7th as part of the CSBA Conference. The finalist are:

- Nixon Academy's JAM Sessions (JAM-Jaguars in Arts and Media) coordinated by Melinda Ortiz, Principal; Nadja Ellis, Magnet Schools Coordinator; Kimberly Perez, Assistant to the Principal; Marissa Barbiero, Fourth Grade Teacher; and Meghan Darby, Fifth Grade Teacher.
- District's Saturday Morning Academic Reading Time (SMART) Academy coordinated by Valencia Mayfield, Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services, and Christine Balbuena, Juarez ES Principal and former coordinator of the SMART Academy.

Rhonda Buss, New ABC Management Association (ABCMA) President

As the new ABCMA President, Dr. Rhonda Buss and the ABCMA representatives goals are to advocate for all matters pertaining to education and its leaders, provide compelling learning experiences to develop capacity of all educational leaders, build vibrant, purposeful networks in the educational community, and cultivate transformational technologies.

Cheryl Bodger, Director of Schools, has been appointed by ACSA (Association of California School Administrators) to serve on the State Equity, Achievement and Diversity for Success Committee for a three year term.

Carolina Rios, Division Assistant for Support Services, was instrumental in coordinating the District Office new roofing/HVAC project this summer. She worked with Robert Kay, Supervisor of MOT, Sue Highland, Supervisor of Grounds and Custodians, and IT staff to temporarily relocate District Office staff/departments, their computer, phones, and office furniture. The project started July 1 and finished on August 18.

Paul Killian

Congratulations to Paul Killian, Lead Teacher and Science Program Specialist, for successfully obtaining a Boeing Grant of \$20,000 to support the District's Middle School Science Teacher Learning Collaborative. This is the fourth year that we have been successful in obtaining the Boeing Grant to support professional learning for middle school science teachers. ▶



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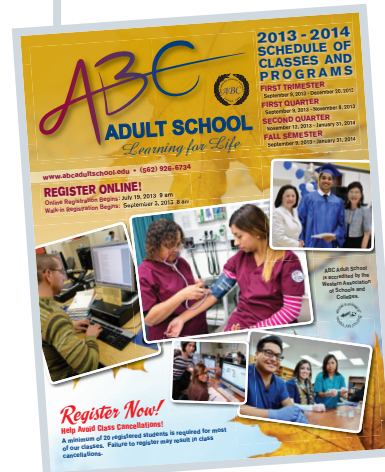
www.abcusd.k12.ca.us

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

Check out the Fall Catalog at www.abcadultschool.edu for exciting courses like:

- Accounting
- Social Networking
- Fitness/Zumba/Yoga

- Dancing
- Painting/Ceramics
- Baking/Cooking
- and more!



ABC Unified School District



*You are
invited!*

Superintendent's Community Forum

"What Every Parent Needs to Know About the
Common Core State Standards and new State Tests"

October 3, 2013

6:00 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Ross Middle School

17707 Elaine Ave

Artesia, CA 90701

Presenters: Dr. Mary Sieu, Superintendent
Valencia Mayfield, Assistant Superintendent,
Academic Services

Board Members will be available
to participate in this forum.



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.

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