



ABC UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Digest

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A Message from the Superintendent - Dr. Mary Sieu

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“Attendance Matters”

School officially opened in the ABC Unified School District on Monday, August 31, 2015. The opening days of school conjured up images of backpacks stuffed with notebooks and unsharpened pencils, bulletin boards freshly decorated by teachers, and students showing off new clothes to old friends. But even in these early days of the new school year, some students may be heading toward academic trouble. They're missing too many days of school. Across the country, as many as 7.5 million students miss nearly a month of school every year—absences that can correlate with poor performance at every grade level.

This trend starts as early as kindergarten and continues through high school, contributing to achievement gaps and ultimately to dropout rates. In the ABC Unified School District communities, our District's attendance rate is approximately 96% and our high school dropout rate is 2.3%. It may appear that our District already has high levels of average daily attendance.

Why the need to do more? Even an average daily attendance rate of 96% can mask the fact that a percentage of students are chronically absent. A data analysis may point to pockets of chronic absence that could be pulling down achievement for particular schools or populations of students.

ABC School District recognizes the importance of attendance. It is a part of a nationwide movement intended to convey the message that every school day counts. Many Cities we serve have issued a Proclamation at their City Council Meetings to join in this effort. We can't afford to think of absenteeism as simply an administrative matter. Good attendance is central to student achievement and our broader efforts to improve schools. All of our investments in curriculum and instruction won't amount to much if students aren't showing up to benefit from them.

A key step is letting families know about the critical role they play in getting children to school on time every day. It's up to parents to build a habit of good attendance, enforce proper sleep routines, and avoid vacations while school is in session.

We will be taking a closer look at our attendance rates to see if we have students missing 10% or more of school days and who they are. Just as we use test scores to measure the progress that students and schools are making, we will look at chronic absence rates as well. The goal of increasing our attendance rate at all schools is part of our Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) for 2015-16.

Our schools can not do this alone. We ask the communities we serve to help us.

Please join us as we begin a new school year in our effort to make every day count! ►



Dr. Rhonda Buss, Director of Secondary Schools, Captain Joseph Nunez of the Cerritos Sheriff's Station, Bill Hundley, Coordinator of Child Welfare and Attendance, and Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu welcomes in a new school year.

News From Our Schools and Around The District

STEM Grant Training

This was the second year for the ABC STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) Grant summer training. Fifty two secondary science teachers attended seven days of training at the District Office and Whitney High School from July 23 - July 31. A major focus of the training was on embedding engineering into the teachers' science content based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The engineering sessions were provided by faculty from CSULB, CSUSB, and ABC high school science teachers. ▶



ABC secondary science teachers wear safety helmets they engineered to withstand a six foot fall with a paintball inside.

Summer Professional Learning

The Curriculum and Professional Learning Department offered a variety of opportunities this summer to prepare for a busy year. The secondary ELA Teacher Leaders participated in a two-day session on performance tasks including scoring and developing student tasks. An elementary Writing Rubric Team came together to review a draft format for district writing rubrics aligned to the Smarter Balanced rubrics. This team provided valuable input on a new style of scoring writing. The draft rubrics for both secondary and elementary will be rolled out district wide this fall. Also, principals and teacher leaders previewed the important new additions to the math curriculum for this year. Elementary principals and math teacher leaders learned about the new pacing guide and a research-based lesson design. New secondary math teachers participated in an implementation training of Carnegie Learning to prepare them for their new teaching assignments and secondary principals met with the District Math Coach to review their goals for math for the upcoming year. An exciting learning opportunity, Collaborative Coaching, was presented to both elementary and secondary teacher leaders and district coaches. This two-day session included the research behind educational coaching, adult learning theory, educational change, and the essentials of collaborative coaching. These summer learning opportunities set the stage for a year of learning for administrators, teachers, and students. ▶

Whitney High School

Newsweek Magazine ranked Whitney High School first in California and 6th in the nation as a top high school. See the Newsweek Magazine link. <https://www.yahoo.com/parenting/the-top-10-high-schools-in-america-127034331392.html> ▶



Linked Learning Training

Linked Learning Training at the District with our own staff took place as part of the first step of moving forward with our expanded career pathways initiative. The facilitators included Rob Atterbury, Director of ConnectEd, The California Center for College and Career Program, and administrators of the Linked Learning Program at Long Beach Unified School District. Linked Learning connects strong academics with real-world experience in a wide range of fields such as engineering, arts and media, and health sciences. In a growing number of school districts throughout California, Linked Learning has been the framework by which they are connecting their learning in the classroom with real world experiences.

We will be working with all our high schools on the Linked Learning framework and present at an upcoming Board Meeting the elements of this model framework. ▶

State Board for California Adult Education

Dr. PaoLing Guo, Principal of Adult School, has been elected to serve on the State Board for the California Adult Education Administrators Association (CAEAA) for the 2015-2019 term. Congratulations to Dr. Guo, who we're sure will serve the Board well and provide our District the latest information on Adult Education. ▶



ABC Unified School District Selected for Two Golden Bell Awards

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary Sieu announced that ABC Unified School District has been selected as finalists for two 2015 Golden Bell Awards by the California School Boards Association. The two programs include the ABC Youth Leadership Summit and the Multi-Tiered System of Support. Each year, over 300 applications are submitted for the prestigious Golden Bell Awards Program in California.

The goal of the ABC Youth Leadership Summit is to promote a positive school culture by increasing student's attendance and engagement in school leadership opportunities and decreasing the number of disciplinary referrals and participation in high risk behaviors. The Youth Leadership Summit is innovative and exemplary because it is the collaborative effort of the ABC Unified School District and the USC School of Social Work since 2010. Following the Youth Leadership Summit held at USC each year, over 200 middle and high school students are expected to share the workshop information with their classmates and to encourage school participation in their service projects. Examples of student service projects include the National Kick Butts Day, pledge campaigns to dispel perceptions that risky behaviors are "cool", peer conflict resolution workshops, and elementary tutoring.

The Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) is a coherent continuum of evidence based, system-wide practices to support a rapid response to students' socio-emotional needs. The MTSS provides support in classrooms teaching socio-emotional skills; support the transitions during grade changes through youth leadership programs; increased home-school connections; early intervention services and facilitation of student and family access to effective social services. Since 2005, the ABC Unified School District has had a Community Resource Team to provide intensive, one to one services with the student and their families. As the years passed, the Community Resource Team evolved from primarily a network of agencies providing early mental health services to the current Multi-tiered System of Support providing school based supports from early interventions to more intensive interventions. The number of students served each year has increased ten-fold with over 2500 students served each year. Today, the District works with almost twenty community based agencies and county departments to provide these services.

ABC Unified School District has received thirteen Golden Bell Awards from the California School Boards Association (CSBA) since 2002. The Golden Bell Awards will be presented at the 2015 Awards Luncheon held on December 5, 2015 at the Marriott Marquis in San Diego. It is the closing event for the 2015 CSBA Annual Education Conference. ▶

New Teachers Orientation

On August 25, 2015 the New Teachers Orientation was held in the Board Room where we welcomed 39 new teachers in the District as well as seven teachers who began mid-year in 2014-15. The New Teachers Orientation is a collaborative program organized by Dr. Susan Hixson of the Human Resources Office and ABCFT. Principals were in attendance to welcome the new teachers, along with District staff. The new teachers learned about resources available through ABCFT, the District technology resources, the Teacher Induction Program and expectations for professional conduct and mandatory reporting. ▶



Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu welcomes new teachers in ABC.

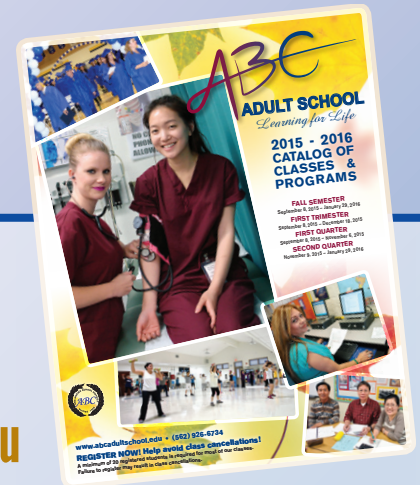


Dr. Susan Hixson and Stacy Hamagiwa welcome the new teachers.



**ABC Adult School offers
Great Classes!**

Check out the Fall Catalog at www.abcadulthood.edu



News From Our Schools and Around The District

ABC Council PTA Unit Officers Training

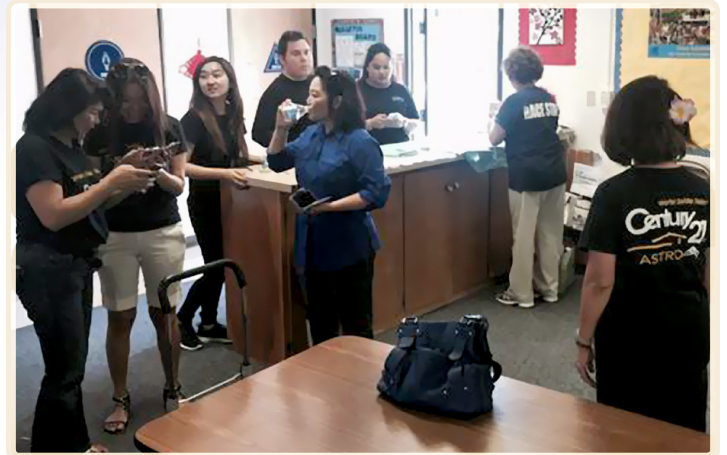
On Monday, August 24, 2015 the ABC Council PTA in collaboration with the District held their Unit Officers Training & Vendors Fair at Burbank ES from 5:30 to 7:45 pm. The Training was designed to give the tools and resources for the PTA officers in our schools to be successful in the new school year. Local vendors were available for fundraising purposes as well as programs for family nights. Principals were also invited to this Training. ▶



Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu and the PTA Unit Officers.

ABC USD Education Foundation Backpack Donation

Thank you everyone who helped stuff backpacks! Over 1,300 backpacks were distributed to low-income students district wide! ▶



ABC Ed Foundation Board Members and Volunteers gathered at the Willow Community Resource Center preparing backpacks for distribution.

Welcome Wellness Coordinators

Welcome Wellness Coordinators and support staff for being a part of ABC to provide added support for our students! ▶



Wellness Coordinators and Support Staff

California Business for Education Excellence



CBEE - SCHOLAR Schools: Carmenita MS, Cerritos ES, Cerritos HS, Gonsalves ES, Leal ES, Whitney HS, and Wittmann ES.



CBEE - STAR Schools: Artesia HS, Bragg ES, Burbank ES, Carver ES, Elliott ES, Gabr HS, Kennedy ES, Nixon ES, Palms ES, Ross MS, Stowers ES, and Tetzlaff MS.

Teacher Induction Program



2015 teachers completing the Teacher Induction Program.

Community Involvement

Attendance Awareness Month - City of Hawaiian Gardens

Mayor Bruce presented a Proclamation for Attendance Awareness Month at the City of Hawaiian Gardens Council Meeting to the ABC Unified School District. The purpose of the Proclamation is to put a spotlight on the joint effort between the City of Hawaiian Gardens and the District in promoting attendance in schools throughout the year. President Law, Vice-President Chen, Principals of Aloha ES, Furgeson ES, Hawaiian ES, Melbourne ES, Fedde MS, and Superintendent Dr. Mary Sieu was there to support this nationwide initiative. Parents and students also joined us on the stage to support the Proclamation. Since the opening of school, the City of Artesia and the City of Lakewood have also joined in collaborating with the District on promoting Attendance Awareness Month with a Proclamation. ▶



Attendance Awareness Month - City of Artesia

City Council of Artesia Recognizes Attendance Awareness Month with ABC Staff on September 24, 2015. ▶



State of the Union Luncheon

The "State of the Union" address by Congresswoman Linda Sanchez was held on August 20, 2015 at the Cerritos Regional Chamber of Commerce luncheon. ▶



Cerritos College

Our ABC team enjoyed meeting the new Cerritos College President Dr. Jose Fierro at the Welcome Reception for him at Cerritos College on August 19, 2015. ▶



Reading Plus Program

At the September 1, 2015 Board of Education Meeting, the *Spotlight on Teaching and Learning* focused on the Reading Plus Program in the District. The Reading Plus Program is a web based reading intervention program that has been used in a number of secondary schools in the past several years. It is now in every middle and high school as part of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP). Staff from Academic Services, Artesia HS, Tracy HS, and Fedde MS shared the positive impact of the program on English language learners and struggling readers.

As a result of the positive results of the Reading Plus Program in our secondary schools, the City of Hawaiian Gardens City Council has committed to provide financial support for 1000 licenses for four elementary schools serving students in Hawaiian Gardens over the next three years. They include Aloha ES, Furgeson ES, Hawaiian ES, and Melbourne ES. City Councilmen Mike Gomez and Victor Farfan were recognized at the Board Meeting for this significant contribution of \$110,000 to the District. ▶





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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