

Bridging Communication



FROM YOUR DISTRICT OFFICE SUPPORT TEAM
SAN LEANDRO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

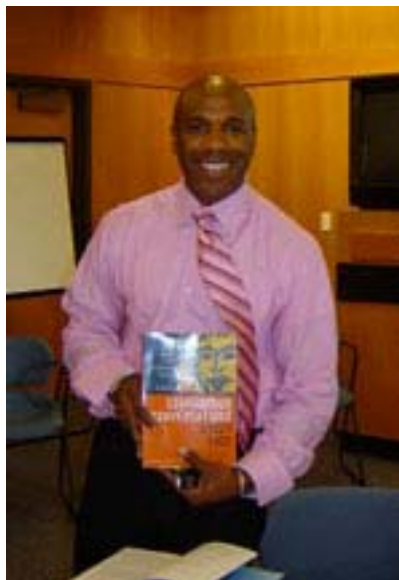
Newsletter No. 2 – March 2006

Dear Staff, Parents and Community Leaders,

The last few months have presented us with opportunities for growth: in our classrooms, schools, district and community. We have been *walking to the edge*, working together to provide rigor and relevance in education for our students, and a safe place where they can thrive.

Equity Training: Courageous Conversation and Courageous Leadership

We are forging ahead in our efforts to bridge the gap in students' performance and achievement. In our third year of equity training, through workshops such as *Courageous Conversations and Courageous Leadership*, we are learning to "Engage, Sustain and Deepen" interracial dialogue about race. This school year, 67 Equity Team members, representing each school in our district, including teachers, staff and administrators, have completed five full days of training in addition to school-site observations, and we will be continuing our journey through the next several months.



Glenn E. Singleton, Author and Facilitator



Courageous Conversations and Courageous Leadership Equity Training

As a natural progression of our Equity Training, we have mobilized our school-site Collaborative Action Research for Equity (CARE) 60-member team to take "Culturally Responsive Practices" into the classrooms. Please read more about CARE below, under "From the District Office."

Safe Schools Program

Central to our goals, the Safe Schools program, which addresses sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination, has involved a lengthy collaborative process, evoking a passionate exchange of ideas and vigorous dialogue. Mindful that we are mandated by the state specifically to address this area of discrimination, we are also aware of varying levels of discomfort with some staff and community members.

While we do not expect complete agreement among the broader community regarding the importance of and how to address LGBT issues, we do want to build as much support as possible to ensure the success of our ongoing effort.

Helping us to better understand the need to address these issues, I would like to thank our Safe School Support Teams and Cindy Cathey, assistant superintendent of Educational Services, along with Barry Chersky, our consultant, for the comprehensive and powerful Safe School presentation to the school board. Their courageous work over the past two months, as they prepared for this presentation, provided deeper insight into the importance of the Safe Schools program.

A key element to the success of the Safe Schools strategy involves our secondary and elementary Safe Schools Support Teams' collaborative efforts in creating a 6-month action plan and timeline. This plan for the elementary grade levels builds on the experiences and successes of the secondary schools, while modifying it for age-appropriate content. Over the next few months, we will continue our efforts in developing an age-appropriate action plan for our elementary schools that includes:

- ❖ Establishing a safe place for all students;
- ❖ Developing a series of meetings to provide parents/legal guardians with policies and legal requirements, opportunities to offer input and preview lessons, and receive progress updates;
- ❖ Developing guidelines for school sites on how to address discriminatory behaviors;
- ❖ Expanding the membership of the Safe Schools Support Team to include lower grade (K/1), upper grade members from each school site, and administrators;
- ❖ Researching outside resources and successful age-appropriate models; and
- ❖ Providing training for team members in age-appropriate curriculum.

Through all of this exciting growth in our district, we are raising our expectations and enriching the educational experience of all of our students.

Sincerely,

Christine Lim
Superintendent

How are we addressing academic rigor, relevance and excellence for all students?

FROM THE DISTRICT OFFICE

Collaborative Action Research for Equity - CARE

The district has begun its next phase of work on closing the achievement gap through CARE. Each school has a team of teachers and administrators who come together to do “action research,” the implementation and documentation of instructional strategies that work for San Leandro students.

The CARE teams have met twice with trainer Jamie Almanzan with the focus of building a strong working collaborative of teachers, supported by principals and CARE-trained teachers. The CARE-trained teachers will help to model culturally relevant teaching by sharing their lesson plans and observing others teach. During the month of February, CARE teachers planned culturally responsive lessons, taught the lessons to their students, and studied the impact of those lessons on their focus students’ learning. At the March training, teachers shared their successes and challenges, and began to identify effective culturally-responsive teaching strategies.

The CARE teams will continue their action research, which includes reading current research on closing the achievement gap, and they will meet again in May to share their learning. The teams’ final goal will be to create lesson plans that illuminate strategies for increasing student achievement, sharing them throughout the district’s schools. It was clear after the second day of CARE training that the district’s equity work had laid a solid foundation upon which the CARE work will be built. As a result, our teachers and administrators are better prepared to close the achievement gap. The work is inspiring!

Researching Equity and Achievement Project (REAP)

Both Cohorts I and II have been participating in intensive mathematics training with the EQUALS team of trainers. Each cohort has built a close knit professional learning community where issues related to instruction, math content, and equity are being discussed and solved. Many *kudos* go to their deep commitment to their work in this math grant! There will be an evaluation of the components in the REAP grant by an external evaluator this month.

Summer training for the cohorts is as follows:

- Cohort I: June 19-June 30, 2006
- Cohort II: July 5-July 18, 2006

Business Services

We are pleased to report that all of the 1997 Measure A bond projects, totaling over \$87 million in construction costs, were completed on June 30, 2005, including the new Jefferson Elementary School (with the exception of the field improvements and minimal punch list items). Through fortuitous strategic planning and timely execution, we enhanced the \$53 million bond with \$34 million in matching state funds and completed our projects 7 years ahead of schedule! The project highlights include:

- ❖ New *Jewel of San Leandro*: Jefferson Elementary School
- ❖ New science and technology building at SLHS
- ❖ New academic wing at Muir Middle School
- ❖ Playground structure added to all elementary schools
- ❖ Seismic, health and safety upgrades district wide
- ❖ New kitchens at middle schools and SLHS

Although we made great strides in facility improvements through the 1997 bond, we still have numerous facility issues to address, so we have been aggressively applying for

various grants and funding opportunities. To date, we have acquired over \$14 million to help address many of the remaining needs. These facility projects include:

1. San Leandro High School renovations to include but not limited to, (\$3,660,000/state funding):
 - a. Metal shop renovation
 - b. Technology classroom renovation
 - c. Nine new modular classrooms (replacing 4 dilapidated classrooms)
 - d. Security gate installation (to be completed)
 - e. Physical Education classroom additions and renovation
 - f. Pool house renovation
 - g. Classroom compliance upgrades
 - h. Tennis court renovations
2. Bancroft Middle School renovations, (\$248,660/state funding):
 - a. Gymnasium renovation
 - b. Entrance, hall and ceiling renovation
 - c. Technology wiring to every classroom
3. Muir Middle School renovation, (\$826,109/state funding):
 - a. Gymnasium renovation
 - b. Electrical upgrade
 - c. Lighting upgrade
 - d. New modular classroom for special-needs students
 - e. New P.E. lockers
 - f. Parent/student safety turnout
4. Madison Elementary School renovation, (\$841,475/state funding):
 - a. Parent/student safety turnout
 - b. Three new modular classrooms
 - c. Filed renovation
 - d. Parking lot renovation
 - e. Window renovation
5. Roosevelt Elementary School renovation, (\$397,568/state funding):
 - a. Technology lab renovation
 - b. Heater renovation
6. Port of Oakland window replacement project, (\$4,800,000/Port of Oakland funding), (Scheduled to begin in summer of 2006):
 - a. John Muir Middle School
 - b. Wilson Elementary School
 - c. Garfield Elementary School
 - d. Monroe Elementary School
7. Adult School new Education Center at Muir, (\$1,500,000/state funding; \$750,000/3rd party partner funding) (Scheduled to begin in April of 2006):
 - a. Construct state-of-the-art education center for our adult community
 - b. Partnership with Chabot Community college for academic excellence
 - c. Partnership with Child, Family and Community Services
8. Bancroft Middle School sports field renovation, (\$1,000,000/state funding; seeking additional grant of \$100,000 for track renovation):
 - a. Sports field renovation (combined soccer/baseball field; basketball court)

Total outside funding equals to date: \$14,023,812, with an additional funding of \$100,000 to be confirmed.

Grade 2-8 District Assessment System Using Edusoft

Our first 2-5 ELA and Math trimester assessments, and two quarters of middle school ELA and Math assessments were implemented thus far. Survey feedback from teachers was helpful in improving several procedures and providing clarification in the administration of the assessments. There will be revisions to both the ELA and Math pacing calendars, as well as refinements to the assessments. As teachers have analyzed the data from the assessments, it has been revealing to learn of specific areas with which students are having difficulty. Teachers are targeting those objectives through re-teaching, grouping, and differentiation.

K/1 Task Force

A task force of kindergarten and first grade teachers have begun an 18-month process to identify, prioritize and strategize around issues significant to these grade levels. Participants on the task force represent a considerable range of teaching experience, from a 2-year newcomer to a 36-year veteran, and include the following:

Virginia Quock	Garfield
Irene La Lupe Ornelas	Jefferson
Marlys Holmes	Madison
Yolanda Hidalgo	McKinley
Stacy Smitter Nancy Franke	Monroe
Patty Fishbaugh	Roosevelt
Anne Walter Sara Norris	Washington
Liz Marshall Aurora Sanchez-Perez Kathy Murray Tracey Lantz	Wilson
Jeannette Gross, Monroe Mike Hassett, D.O. Debbie Wong, D.O.	Facilitators

The task force held its first meeting on March 2, which began by covering goals and outcomes, as well as the *Cycle of School Improvement for Learning*. Afterward, the participants formed two breakout groups by grade level, tackling the ELA pacing guide and common assessments. Educational Services will be developing a testing booklet that includes the four common assessments for each student to use, beginning this coming fall.

We thank the task force for participating in this important work.

New Committees/Task Force Meetings

In addition to the current committees/task force meetings, Educational Services is also in the process of organizing the following new meetings. As we refine their scope, we will publish the timeline, as well as more details regarding the goal for each meeting.

Middle School ELA Task Force	Articulation on Pacing Calendar, assessments
Bilingual Task Force	Articulation, Curriculum Development
K-12 HSS Adoption Task Force	Recommendation of new materials for fall 2006
K-12 Visual/Performing Arts Curriculum Committee	Release day March 15 th to assess and plan progress along the 5-year arts education plan
K-12 Math Articulation	Articulation, Curriculum Development

Job-Alike Evaluation Committees

Pursuant to the agreement between the school district and the San Leandro Teachers' Association, the parties have established job-alike committees for the purpose of developing meaningful evaluation instruments for certificated staff in non-classroom positions. At this time, the committees are in various stages of their work with an anticipated completion date of March 31, 2006.

Evaluation committees were formed to address the following employee groups:

- Counselors
- Librarians
- Psychologists
- English Language Learner/Literacy Coaches
- Behavior and Program Specialists

Upon completion of the work, the district and the SLTA will negotiate the evaluation instruments with anticipated implementation of the instruments commencing in the 2006-07 school year.

Welcome Cathy Tatum – Site Coordinator for Bancroft and Muir Middle Schools

The District offers a warm welcome to Cathy Tatum, Site Coordinator for the after-school program at Bancroft and Muir Middle Schools. Cathy received her AA degree from Laney College in Oakland and is a senior at the University of California, Berkeley. Cathy has 5 years of experience in the field of education with youth of all ages from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Most recently, Cathy has worked for the Stockton Unified School District as an After School Site Program Coordinator. Welcome aboard!

SAFE SCHOOL SUPPORT TEAMS

The following action plan addresses work to be completed that is related to creating schools and classrooms that are safe for all students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender:

ACTION STEP	PERSON RESPONSIBLE*	PROJECTED COMPLETION DATE**
DISTRICT WIDE		
1. Establish the annual meeting calendar for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secondary Safe School Support Team meetings• Elementary Safe School Support Team meetings• A cross team meeting prior to the end of the school year• Parent and community feedback sessions• Board presentations	Asst. Sup. Educational Services	March 2006
2. Clarify and document the roles of those involved in this work: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safe School Support Team members• Staff at each school site• Principals• Community	Asst. Sup. Educational Services	March 2006

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Services • Consultant • Board Curriculum Committee 		
3. Develop informational flyer(s) explaining the need for this work, the goals of the work, a tentative timeline for completing the work, opportunities for community feedback, etc.	Asst. Sup. Educational Services	Ongoing
4. Determine the budget and funding source for completing this work for 2005/2006 and 2006/2007	Cabinet	June 2006
5. Develop a plan to gradually align this work with the district's racial equity work	Superintendent	June 2006
ELEMENTARY LEVEL		
1. Establish that every elementary school is a safe place for all students including our GLBTQ students, staff, and families (post Non-discrimination /Harassment policy and Board resolution #98-39)	Superintendent	March 2006
2. Schedule school site meeting(s) to provide parents/guardians: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With information regarding policy and legal responsibilities of districts related to this work • With updates regarding progress of this work 	Asst. Sup. Educational Svcs., Principals, ESSST	March 2006
3. Develop guidelines for school sites regarding how to address LGBTQ slurs, anti-bullying, discrimination/harassment including teachable moments, K/2, and 3/5 Safety Assemblies, counseling, and other consequences, including a letter home to parents explaining the above	Asst. Sup. Educational Svcs.	April 2006
4. Expand the membership of the Safe School Support Team to include one additional member from each elementary site so that there is: one lower grade (with higher representation from grades K/1) and one upper grade representative from each of the elementary schools and two elementary administrators	Principals	April 2006
5. Research outside resources and what other districts are doing at the elementary level related to this work and report back to the support team	Asst. Sup. Educational Svcs., ESSST	April – August 2006
6. Provide training for members of the ESSST regarding age appropriate curriculum	Asst. Sup. Educational Svcs., ESSST	April – August 2006
7. Identify age-appropriate books to be provided to every school site to support teaching respect, acceptance	ESSST	Summer 2006
8. Purchase school sets of identified books to support lessons	Asst. Sup. Educational Svcs.	Summer 2006

9. Identify common age-appropriate terminology to be used at the elementary level related to LGBTQ students, staff, and families	Asst. Sup. Educational Svcs.	Summer 2006
10. Develop age-appropriate lessons to provide information and education regarding respect, acceptance, and safety that ensure anti-gay/lesbian slurs, bullying and other forms of harassment are not tolerated in our schools and classrooms for all protected students including LGBTQ students	ESSST	Fall 2006
11. Display lesson plans at Professional Development Center, D.O.	Asst. Sup. Educational Svcs.	Fall 2006
12. Develop a poster for elementary schools and classrooms to reflect the message we want to communicate regarding this work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek community feedback regarding poster designs • Present poster design(s) to the Board for approval 	Asst. Sup. Educational Svcs., ESSST	Fall 2006
13. Pilot lesson plans	ESSST	Sept. – Nov. 2006
14. Provide training to staff regarding lessons	ESSST	Nov. – Dec. 2006
15. Implement lesson plans across district	Asst. Sup. Educational Svcs.	March 2007

SECONDARY LEVEL		
1. Administer the Secondary Safe Schools Survey to all 6-12 th grade students	Site administrators	March – April 2006
2. Schedule a meeting(s) to provide parents/guardians: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With information regarding policy and legal responsibilities of districts related to this work • With updates regarding progress of this work 	Asst. Sup. Educational Svcs., Principals, SSSST	March 2006
3. Compile and analyze results of the survey and use information to determine next steps in this work	SSSST	May 2006
4. Finalize 9 th grade curriculum for fall pilot	SSSST	August 2006
5. Pilot 9 th grade curriculum	Identified teachers	October 2006
6. Provide training regarding 9 th grade curriculum	Identified teachers	Nov. – Dec. 2006
7. Implement 9 th grade curriculum	Identified teachers	Spring 2007
8. Determine next steps for secondary work	SSSST	June 2006
9. Develop lesson plans for grades six - eight	SSSST	Fall 2006
10. Pilot 6-8 th grade lesson plans	SSSST	January 2007
11. Implement 6 th – 8 th grade lesson plans	Identified teachers	Fall 2007

*** This work will be guided by the district's consultant, Barry Chersky and a calendar of meetings with the consultant will be developed.**

**** Dates subject to change based upon actual progress of each action step.**

SSST Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (FQ&A)

SAN LEANDRO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING SAFE SCHOOLS WORK

In an effort to keep our staff and community informed as to the district's work in creating safe schools for all students and staff, we would like to share this list of commonly asked questions posed by some of our community members, along with our responses to those questions.

- **What is the Safe School work of the district?**

Every district is required to ensure that all students, staff and families feel welcome and safe in our schools. All districts are required to ensure that specifically all gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students, staff, and families also feel safe and welcome in our public schools. Nationwide data (such as higher suicide and drop-out rates, and likelihood to be assaulted), as well as school and district data show that harassment and the use of anti-gay and lesbian slurs take place in our schools daily. In response to this alarming data, the district has formed a team of elementary and secondary teachers, and administrators to address the issues. The Safe School Support Team members are working together to develop lesson plans to help teachers address the issues and create schools that are safe for all of our students.

- **Why are we doing this work?**

Our work around creating safe schools is to ensure that every student, regardless of the student's or family members' sexual orientation, feels safe in our schools and all students have equal access to a quality education. This work is in accordance with legal mandates (AB537), Board Resolution #98-39, and Board Policy 5145.3 Non-discrimination/Harassment. These laws and policies mandate that public schools prevent discrimination and harassment based on all legally protected categories. A lawsuit was filed against the district several years ago, and the settlement agreement of that lawsuit mandated that the district provide professional development for students and staff, and develop curriculum to address sexual orientation and gender identity issues district-wide, including each grade level. The laws and policies explicitly state that we must protect gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students and staff.

- **What are the needs within our district?**

There is evidence that homophobic behavior (anti-gay/lesbian harassment and slurs) occurs at each of our school sites, including our elementary schools. An anonymous survey was distributed to elementary teachers in spring 2005. The results of that survey indicated slurs and derogatory comment such as "that's so gay", "you're gay", "you act like a girl/boy", are being used on our elementary campuses daily. Teachers also stated that they needed training and resources to help them specifically address anti-gay/lesbian bullying and harassment. As part of an effort to conduct ongoing needs assessment to inform this work, an anonymous survey will be administered to middle- and high-school students this spring.

- **How will we define age-appropriate lessons?**

As in common practices, we bring together teams of grade-level teachers to work on the lesson development when they are not provided as part of the core curriculum. We also look at what other districts are doing, examine sample lessons, study state recommendations, review published curriculum, and evaluate age-appropriate picture books or literature to support teaching the lessons. The development of the lessons around creating safe, inclusive schools will follow that process as well.

- **Schools aren't supposed to teach sex education without parental approval. Why are we teaching sex/sex education without getting parent permission?**

As stated in the Alameda County Public Health Department 2004 report, *A Call to Action*, "there is a common misperception that a conversation about sexual orientation in schools involves a discussion about sex. A discussion about equity and respect for differences is not a conversation about human sexuality. For example, a discussion about heterosexual families is not a human-biology lesson; a discussion about sexually diverse families is not about sexual acts." Senate Bill 71 states that instruction and materials that discuss gender, sexual orientation, or family life, and do not discuss human reproductive organs and their functions, are not "sex education." Therefore, parent permission is not required. The focus of our work around Safe Schools is creating a safe school environment where all students feel safe, including our gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, staff and families. It is not about sex education.

- **What are the educational principles upon which these lessons are based?**

The principles upon which the lessons will be based are: 1) districts have a professional obligation to respond appropriately to ongoing needs that impact student safety, as well as harassment that impairs student achievement; 2) districts have an educational obligation to respond to a growing body of evidence that highlights the struggles sexual minority students (or students perceived to be in the sexual minority) and students with sexual minority family members often face at school; 3) a legal obligation to comply with recent changes in California law 4) as stated in Board Resolution #98-39 and as recommended in *A Call to Action*, "School policies must be specific in their language with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity. Slurs, epithets, threats, verbal abuse, and/or derogatory comments based upon sexual orientation or gender identity must be prohibited. Educators must address inappropriate language and confront stereotypes as they occur." It is based upon these principles that age-appropriate lessons will be developed.

- **What would the lesson plan consist of?**

Age-appropriate lessons will center around themes related to: respect, acceptance, anti-bullying, anti-putdowns, anti-discrimination, stereotypes that include boy/girl stereotypes, diverse families, community building, etc. More specificity will emerge as the lessons are developed.

- **Why are we taking on this effort right now?**

The need to address these issues is present on our campuses today, including our elementary campuses. Many teachers and administrators have been struggling to address these issues, and are asking for guidance and resources from the district.

- **What input will the parent/legal guardian have in this program?**

Before lessons are developed, we will hold meetings at the elementary school sites to seek input during the months of March and April 2006. Once we develop sample lessons, there will be opportunities for families to preview the lessons at the district office and provide feedback regarding lesson content.

- **Why doesn't the district just buy Soul Shoppe?**

Soul Shoppe is a program that is currently being used at one of our elementary school sites and was purchased by that site's parent organizations. The program costs approximately \$6,500 per school site. The district does not have the funds to purchase these materials for each school site. In addition, there are state approved programs similar to Soul Shoppe that would need to be evaluated if the district were to find the funds to purchase such programs. Any school site that is able to raise funds to purchase Soul Shoppe may certainly do so; however, we would recommend reviewing other similar programs as well.

- **What are we doing about the Safe School poster at the elementary schools?**

The Safe School poster, Exhibit 1545.3 designed by the San Leandro High School Gay Straight Alliance, will not be posted in elementary classrooms at this time. It is currently posted in secondary classrooms. Board Resolution #98-39 and the district's Nondiscrimination/Harassment Policy will be posted in every elementary school office in March 2006. At school site meetings during the month of March and April, we will seek

input from parents regarding what kind of poster they would like to see in our elementary classrooms. That input will be considered as the team develops several design options from which the Board can choose. We do not expect to have those design options until June of this year.

- **How will the community be informed about the on-going work?**

Meetings will be held at the school sites during the month April to allow parents to provide input. In addition, updates from the district regarding the district-wide work will be provided three times each year to parents and families through each school's site bulletin. Lesson plans will be available for preview by parents once they have been developed, which is projected to be in the fall 2006.

FROM OUR SCHOOL SITES

Garfield

Often visitors to the Garfield School campus comment on the respectful and friendly community of learners that walk our campus. They wonder what makes this such a special place for students. There are many ways to answer this question, with examples of programs and policies both from the past and present.

The Garfield School tradition includes a cheer for respect that each student and staff member knows and chants together when we all meet: **"RESPECT yourself; RESPECT others; RESPECT the things around you!"** Programs such as Conflict Resolution, Garfield Gator Guardians, Boys Making Advancements, Gator Sports and the Student Council are based on respect, inclusion and social skill-building. Each teacher forms agreements with each student in every classroom that includes building a "safe, supportive and accessible environment so that all students and adults are valued and respected for their unique qualities, strengths and contributions."

Our entire staff has been trained to use the skills from *Tools for Schools*, taught by Noah Salzman earlier this year. We met as a staff and quickly aligned our classroom agreements with the following four rules:

- Follow directions/instruction;
- Keep hands, feet & objects to yourself;
- No put-downs, teasing or bullying;
- Use positive language.

We revisit these rules throughout the day with students and make plans of support for those who have difficulty following them. Each teacher has designed a particular Student Achievement Plan to address those children who need extra support to achieve academically. We recognize students every month for their citizenship and progress in our whole-school Student of the Month assemblies and performances.

At Garfield School, it is cool to follow the rules. At Garfield, we have the tools and use them!

Jefferson

Following the professional development from Noah Salzman on *Tools for Schools*, Jefferson School's staff has held several meetings as follow-up. Together, we adopted five rules for classrooms that are school-wide. We also developed hallway, cafeteria and playground procedures. These procedures have been communicated to all students, parents and legal guardians via the school newsletter. We have also had several staff meetings to examine the Noah Salzman strategies through an equity lens. These discussions have been most valuable as we explore the ways in which policies and practices correspond with (or not) the traditions and experiences of the diverse families who send their children to our school. The consistency of these established rules and procedures appears to be most valuable. At the same time, we still have important work to continue in order to ensure that the manner in which we implement and enforce the procedures is culturally responsive. We will be continuing this important work in upcoming meetings.

Madison

Our teachers are using the Edusoft Assessment System to improve their instructional decisions. As teachers look at how their students have performed on their trimester assessments, they can adjust their planning to better support what needs to be taught next. It also allows teachers to better use their instructional time and collaborate with other teachers at each grade level, sharing best teaching practices. In addition, our school and district has another method to measure and communicate student success. By providing timely communication about what is being taught, when it was taught, and how well the child learned the subject matter, parents, students and teachers can engage in meaningful conversations. This is another great benefit from our district assessment and reporting systems. The Edusoft program will also be helpful in the next textbook adoption cycle by helping us better align our text books, assessments and instruction. The Edusoft system puts student data instantly where it has the most impact: in the classroom with the teachers.

McKinley

At McKinley, we have exciting news about our Blue Ribbon Attendance program, implementation of *Tools For Schools* (a school-wide behavior policy), and Edusoft (a powerful data analysis and assessment tool).

Our Blue Ribbon Attendance program is designed to increase attendance by rewarding those with excellent attendance habits. We will be having individual student awards for excellent attendance and class awards for those classes with the best attendance. Awards will be given in class at the end of each month, at the end of the semester, and at an awards assembly at the end of the school year. We are trying to emphasize the importance of regular attendance in helping all students reach the standards and keep up with their classmates. Remember, ***Success Is Our Way, Attend Every Day!***

We also are in the process of implementing a new school-wide behavior program called *Tools For Schools*. All of our teachers have been trained in this system, and we are experimenting with how best to use this system for the maximum positive impact on student behavior. The key components of this program are consistent expectations and consequences in all classrooms, and we have already seen a drop in referrals and an improvement in overall student behavior. We hope that we will have full implementation of *Tools For Schools* within the next month or two, after we have finished adapting to our current school programs and policies.

Perhaps the most exciting development at McKinley is our use of Edusoft. Through this data management system, we are able to look at school, class, and individual student data so that we can tailor our curriculum and instruction to our specific needs. Looking at STAR, district assessments, and other data such as CELDT enables us to really focus on what we need to do to improve the achievement of all students, while closing the achievement gap. This program has been implemented throughout the district, but at McKinley, we have ordered an additional module that enables us to create our own standards-based assessments, allowing us to assess student progress more frequently. We are thrilled that we now have access to specific information that will help us do a better job for our children.

We are proud of our staff, parents and students, and we look forward to continuing and building upon the success that we have shown in the past year.

Monroe

At James Monroe, we have been using our new Edusoft Data system to closely identify the areas in which our students need more support. Recently, on our January staff development day, teachers looked at detailed reports of how their students were doing individually and analyzed trends in the data. For example, they were able to not only see what students missed but also the answers that they chose incorrectly. With this information, they have been able to address students' misconceptions about questions and improve student understanding. At Monroe, we are finding Edusoft to be a valuable instructional tool.

Roosevelt

Roosevelt has been working diligently to improve overall student achievement. This process includes our ongoing equity work in looking at race and our role as educators in dealing with this critical issue. We have developed Student Achievement Plans with a focused lens on personal connections, culturally responsive teaching, and reflection around instructional practices. We have also formed Equity Buddies to foster personal contacts and provide collegial support around closing the achievement gap.

We support the Blue Ribbon Attendance Program knowing that students benefit from being in school on a regular basis. We are, therefore, proud of the fact that our students have maintained a year-to-date average of over 96 percent for school attendance. Students are being awarded with monthly incentives of a \$25 gift certificate from Target, for one primary/intermediate student selected at random, from a list of students who have demonstrated perfect attendance for that particular month. We continue to focus on high expectations for all students, while building a community of learners.

To support a safe-school climate, we have engaged in monthly assemblies that focus on anti-bullying and character development, while providing students with the tools they need in dealing with peer conflicts. Students in preschool through fifth grade are learning life-long skills around conflict mediation and respect for all. Roosevelt's highly involved community supports our work through volunteering daily; fundraising efforts; and attending weekly/monthly meetings in support of our Cuentos Familiares (Latino Family Literacy Project), GATE, Gay/Straight Alliance, and Resource focus groups. Roosevelt continues to be a thriving learning community where diversity is celebrated and every child is a learner.

Washington

At Washington, we have come to the realization that starting comprehensive school-wide reform takes tremendous effort. Then, as a school begins to document growth and addresses the challenges that the community finds to be most pressing, new challenges emerge that demand constant energy, focus and re-commitment. The demands of the tasks do not lessen but grow in complexity.

We are beginning to document our effectiveness in meeting the varied needs of our students. One way to gauge student achievement is through data. This year, the addition of Edusoft technology has been a big support, compared to last year when teachers invested many hours in tallying, counting and calculating student responses on a variety of assessments. Now the assessments are administered, answer sheets scanned and reports printed, leaving more time for analysis of the data, as well as the development of a plan of response. We have grown in our capacity to read Edusoft reports, as well as in our understanding as to which reports give us the most useful information. Our challenge and focus now are to determine the most valuable way to utilize the data, providing the greatest benefit to our students.

An example would be a recent situation when our staff development meeting focused on Houghton Mifflin data, and our Literacy Coaches, who usually guide this work, were both away at a vocabulary development seminar. Two teachers facilitated a staff development meeting, and teachers gathered with Edusoft reports from the last theme test, in hand. Each teacher had downloaded her own class report and worked in a grade level grouping to respond to the following questions:

- How many of your students are at Mastery? Below mastery?
- How did your FBB (Far Below Basic) and BB (Below Basic) students perform on the theme test compared to the summative test? (How many are improving? Staying the same?)
- On which standards do your students perform well (80% or above)?
- On which standards does your class (whole class) in general need review?
- How will you address the needs of specific groups of children? Who are these students?

As site administrator, I was called away from the meeting to attend to the needs of a student, and the work continued. The teachers worked diligently on the task because the outcome of the work is meaningful both to themselves and their students. I am incredibly proud of Washington's teaching staff for giving so much of themselves to this work, and am truly inspired by their daily commitment!

Wilson

The Wilson Staff and administration have embraced the Noah Salzman *Tools for Schools* program to help improve the instructional climate at our school. Back in August, we agreed to pilot a uniform set of classroom rules and consequences, along with an enhanced focus on giving positive attention to struggling students. The pilot program was made permanent this last month, just as we rolled out an administrative plan based on *Tools for Schools*.

The main emphasis of the plan is to expand positive programs on a school-wide level celebrating success. At the same time, we developed a separate plan for what is considered mischievous and severe behavior, with agreed-upon levels of consequences. After just a few weeks, the plan has greatly helped the administrators to track more systematically students' behaviors and intervene to maximize the students' focus on education.

Bancroft

Bancroft Middle School has fully adopted the Tools for Schools plan for discipline this year. Before the start of the school year, teachers and administrators participated in a full day of training in the method. The plan is based on the belief that expectations must be explicit and clearly communicated, consequences must be consistent and appropriate, and the same classroom rules must apply throughout the school. In addition, an administrative plan must complement the classroom plan, addressing students sent to the office after classroom interventions have been exhausted. So far this year, Bancroft has seen a dramatic reduction in the number of students sent to the office. We are excited about these results and continue to work with consultant Noah Salzman to refine and improve our practices.

Muir

JMMS students have completed their second benchmark assessments using Edusoft assessments in Math and English Language Arts. Math and English teachers with Educational Services department reviewed what needed to be modified before Edusoft assessments' first administration in the first quarter. As a result, they developed a plan to make the assessment more reflective of the standards-based pacing guide and instruction currently in use in the classrooms. Our JMMS students scored predominantly in basic proficiency level in both Math and English Language Arts in all grade levels. Soon after the first assessment, JMMS staff was provided training on how to manage the Edusoft reporting system. Teachers began to see how they could use the assessment reports to inform their instruction. Department chairs also provided feedback to Ed Services department. After the second quarter benchmark assessments, we found that although the majority of JMMS students remained in the basic proficiency level, groups of students showed improvement from first to second quarter in both math and English Language Arts. The percentage of proficient and advanced groups increased slightly. Based on identification of students' needs as a result of the assessments and the reports, targeted instruction helped us to monitor student growth and improvement. Conversations on the pacing guide and the reality of classroom instruction continue as teachers use the reports to guide their instructional planning to improve student learning.

San Leandro High

In our attendance program, we have targeted students with poor attendance, using our Student Responsibility Center as a means to counsel students, work with families, and set up student success plans. Students who are habitually truant are assigned a Saturday school. If they fail to come to Saturday school, instead of suspending them we assign them to our student responsibility center, where they spend the morning working with our student responsibility center teacher. In the center, their parents are contacted, and the teacher works with the parents and students to create a successful plan for change. All the barriers students and families face are addressed. For example, if the family needs financial assistance, students are given supplies, PE clothes, and contact information for social services and other assistance programs. Notes are sent to all their teachers outlining what has been done and whom to notify if the student is absent. Follow up phone calls and attendance checks are made to ensure continued success. Students who demonstrate a positive change in their attendance habits are rewarded with free dance or athletic event tickets. We hope that this program can continue to provide a safety net for all of our students and help them realize the benefits of regular attendance.

Lincoln/Lighthouse

School attendance is critical to a student overcoming academic deficits and working to graduate from high school. For students at Lincoln High School, our district's continuation high school, attendance is important for other reasons as well.

First, as a student nears the end of his or her high school experience, he or she needs to understand the importance of expectations in the work place. An employee who is irregular in attendance will not keep a job for long. Second, if there is a legitimate reason for the absence from work, it is important that the employee notify his or her employer before the job begins. Third, not only must the employee show up for work but also he or she must satisfactorily do the work in order to be paid. And finally, it is important that the employee do high quality work, as expected by the employer. An employee that does "D" level work will not hold a job for long.

To this end, our Blue Ribbon Attendance efforts have:

1. Provided students with regular updates on their attendance, in order to improve accountability;
2. Rewarded students with a pass to leave school 5 minutes early if they have attended school with 0 – 1 day of absence during an attendance month;
3. Changed our practice of calling parents from the end of the day to immediately after 2nd period so that parents know sooner when their child is absent or cutting school;
4. Encouraged us to record student tardies and absences, on report cards and progress reports for all students;
5. Implemented rewarding the top 20 students (in the 3rd quarter) who have made the most improvement in their attendance.

Adult School

According to the 2000 Census, nearly one quarter of California adult students lack a high school diploma. Adults *without* a high school diploma earn on average \$19,314 per year, whereas adults *with* a high school diploma earn on average \$29,821 per year. Adults without a diploma are typically employed in low-skilled jobs without career paths. This population often struggles with family, transportation, housing and health issues while striving to become economically self sufficient.

At San Leandro Adult School, we annually enroll about 300 diploma-seeking adults. This number represents 8 percent of our school enrollment. These adult learners are 18 to 70 years of age, with 26 as the average age. Of the 8 percent, six out of 10 are females. Due to their circumstances, they often "opt out" of school from time to time to take care of other pressing needs. Throughout this district, we are focusing on increasing attendance, and this year we are giving out \$5 gift certificates from donors to each student who continues to attend class and completes a course. To date, we have awarded 96 adult learners with \$5 gift cards for persisting and completing a high school course.

Hot off the Press

ACSA Honors San Leandro's Superintendent

Christine Lim, superintendent of San Leandro Unified School District, has recently been named the **state recipient** of the **2006 Valuing Diversity Award** by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), the largest umbrella organization for school leaders in the nation.

Serving more than 16,000 leaders, ACSA actively supports school leadership and education policy issues at the local, state and federal levels, ensuring that all students receive the necessary skills and knowledge to excel through public education.

Lim joined San Leandro Unified in 2003, bringing with her a strong background in diversity. In a district of changing demographics, San Leandro's school board recognized the need to address anti-discrimination in the educational milieu and believed that Lim would be a great fit for the district.

"We were fortunate to find someone with Superintendent Lim's strong commitment to diversity and our district," said Pauline Cutter, president of San Leandro Board of Education. "Chris welcomed the challenge of leading our school district toward equity in education for all students."

Nominated for the award by the San Leandro Unified School District Managers' Association (SLUSDMA), Lim's overarching goal has been to eliminate the achievement gap, addressing the predictability of student performance based on race.

"She has boldly encouraged us to embrace equity work district wide," said Debbie Wong, president of SLUSDMA. "Unafraid to voice what is unpopular, Christine Lim recognizes high-quality, culturally responsive instruction, and she provides the leadership, training and support that our educators need to deliver that instruction every day, in every school, for every child."



Christine Lim, Superintendent

Since 2003, Lim has developed long-term diversity programs, including: Equity Team training for teachers and staff, creating awareness, sensitivity and strategies to overcome issues such as racial discrimination; Collaborative Action Research for Equity, featuring culturally responsive instruction; Tools for Schools, teaching respect for others, property and self; as well as Safe Schools, addressing anti-discrimination by providing a supportive learning environment for all students to excel.

"I have found her vision for a democratic education in San Leandro to be one which not only inspires me to work harder and smarter on behalf of California's underserved student populations but also one which restores my hope in public schooling and educators," said Glenn Singleton, founder and executive director of Pacific Educational Group, as well as facilitator of *Courageous Conversations and Courageous Leaders*. "Approachable, strategic and knowledgeable, Chris is truly among the best superintendents with whom I have had the pleasure of working in my nearly two decades of service as an anti-racist educator."

With more than 30 years of service as a public school educator and administrator, including many years in the Berkeley school district prior to joining San Leandro Unified, Lim has seen a disparity in education linked to racial discrimination, as well as other areas of discrimination. As a result, her leadership incorporates a passion to deal with equity issues head on for all students.

"Through overwhelming commitment and support to embrace diversity from our school board, administrators, teaching staff and community, we are making real progress in closing the achievement gap in our district," said Lim. "We still have a long journey ahead, but with each bold action we take toward equity, we can be assured that the reaction will mean a better future for our children."

Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) will be recognizing Superintendent Lim at the State ACSA Conference in San Diego on November 4, 2006.