April 27, 2012

Teaching and Learning

**LGBTQ Conference**

Dozens of educators from around the region attended SCUSD’s “No Time to Lose: A Professional Conference to Activate Change for LGBTQ Youth” today at the Serna Center. Nationally recognized bullying expert Dr. Elizabeth J. Meyer, author of “Gender, Bullying and Harassment,” gave the keynote address. A professor at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, Dr. Meyer was recently a guest on National Public Radio’s “Talk of the Nation” during a discussion of whether teachers can be reprimanded for posting opinions – or information about their private lives – online. Her comments today covered strategies for ending homophobia and sexism in schools. The conference is a key component of SCUSD’s comprehensive approach to combating bullying in schools and in cyberspace. SCUSD is the first public K-12 district in the region to pass a tough new anti-bullying policy – ahead of current state efforts to adopt similar legislation – and the first to employ a full-time Bullying Prevention Specialist.

**Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program**

SCUSD’s window to administer STAR tests to students in second through 11th grades is now open. The STAR Program consists of several key components, including:

- California Standards Tests (CSTs), which include English-language arts (ELA) and mathematics in grades two through 11; science in grades five and eight through 11; and history-social science in grades eight through 11.
- California Modified Assessment (CMA), an alternate assessment that is based on modified achievement standards in ELA for grades three through 11; mathematics for grades three through seven, Algebra I, and Geometry; and science in grades five and eight, and Life Science in grade 10. The CMA is designed to assess those students whose disabilities preclude them from achieving grade-level proficiency on an assessment of the California content standards with or without accommodations.
- California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) includes ELA and mathematics in grades two through 11, and science for grades five, eight, and 10. The CAPA is given to those students with significant cognitive disabilities whose disabilities prevent them from taking either the CSTs with accommodations or modifications or the CMA with accommodations.
- Standards-based Tests in Spanish (STS), includes reading/language arts (RLA) and mathematics assessments. The STS allows English learners whose primary language is Spanish to demonstrate their knowledge of the California content standards by taking an assessment in their primary language.
The assessments under the STAR Program show how well students are doing in relation to the state content standards. On each of these assessments, student scores are reported as performance levels: 1) Far Below Basic, 2) Below Basic, 3) Basic, 4) Proficient, and 5) Advanced.

**Operations**

# Fields First Scheduling Meeting

Representatives of five area youth football organizations and 16 youth soccer clubs attended SCUSD’s inaugural Fields First Scheduling Meeting held last Friday at the Serna Center. All middle and high school athletics departments were also represented. The event progressed smoothly and resulted in the creation of balanced field-use schedules for summer and fall that accommodate both school and community needs. The district is now working to streamline and improve the scheduling process even further through a combination of scheduling meetings and online sign-ups.

**Layoff Hearings**

An administrative law judge began a series of statutory hearings this week on the certificated employee layoff process. The hearings are being held at the Serna Center. Those testifying include teachers and district administrators.

**HBO Donates Salad Bar**

HBO next month will debut a new documentary series on America’s obesity epidemic titled “The Weight of the Nation.” The four-part series begins to air on May 14. As part of an awareness campaign coinciding with the series launch, the cable network and two partners are donating and installing 100 salad bars and permanent water tap stations in schools across the country. (Partners are Whole Kids Foundation and GLOBALTAP.) SCUSD has been selected to receive a salad bar.

**Community Engagement**

**Leadership Academy Graduation**

Ninety people attended a graduation reception held on Monday, April 23 at the Serna Center in honor of 20 participants who successfully completed the School, Family and Community Leadership Academy’s nine-week leadership training, a partnership program with the Sacramento Council of PTAs.

The graduates were given congratulatory and send off remarks by Superintendent Raymond; Chief, Family and Community Engagement Officer Koua Franz; Colleen A.R. You, President-Elect, California State PTA; Lily Williams, President of the Sacramento Council of PTAs; and Manuel Guillot, Director, Office of School, Family and Community Partnerships.
In addition, three graduates, selected by their classmates to speak on behalf of the class, also spoke. Their comments expressed appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the program and their commitment to take what they have learned and apply it to serve the children in the district and for the betterment of the schools. In addition, the participants of the program have made a commitment to work to realize the projects they developed during the program such as the Volunteer Network Project. These 20 outstanding program graduates will now join the larger pool that makes up the Leadership Academy’s alumni.