



La Cañada Unified

June 2010

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Message from the Superintendent

by James Stratton, Superintendent



As we come to the end of a turbulent and unpredictable year, I would like to thank all of our students, staff members and parents for a steadfast commitment to quality education in the La Cañada Unified School District. Some of our upheavals were prompted by nature and others by personality, politics or the economy, but through all of it, the schools stayed focused on teaching and learning.

We opened the year two days late because of the fires that raged in August and September. The flu season and floods added to the hardships and severely impacted attendance rates. As the community came together to assist victims, teachers adjusted instruction to accommodate affected students and to maintain a sense of normalcy. To mitigate the hit on our ADA funding, we applied successfully to the state to receive full credit for the two missed days and for the attendance rate decline caused by the floods.

No such state relief was forthcoming, however, for the K-12 public education budget shortfall. Despite careful management of resources, ongoing support from the Foundation and the successful passage of our parcel tax, the district has been forced to begin some multi-year reductions to our classified and certificated staffs. These lost positions and the talented people who filled them are sorely missed and we value the contributions those staff members made to the district.

Adjusting to this year's funding cuts from Sacramento and bracing for still more in 2010-11 and future years, our staff and students maintained an extremely high level of academic, athletic, artistic and extracurricular achievement. Unlike many districts, we preserved our K-3 and 9th grade class size reduction programs, our electives, our robust arts curriculum, all of our athletic teams and our K-12 counseling program. In addition, we increased API scores, added PCR and LCE to the district's roster of California Distinguished Schools and fostered an amazing array of individual student accomplishments.

2009-10 has also seen major changes in our site administrative staff. As a result of retirements and acceptances of new positions in new districts, we are welcoming new leadership at four of our five schools. Jackie Luzak and Anais Wenn have already begun planning for next year as the principals of 9-12 and 7/8 respectively.



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LC Newsline

Summer School Opportunities

This summer, La Canada Elementary School is hosting summer school opportunities sponsored by the Assistance League of Flintridge. The ALF program consists of classes for students in grades one through six, depending on the student's grade level in the fall. Classes are offered in across a wide spectrum of interests, including Math, Reading, Writing, Science, Art, Drama, Music, Physical Education, Cooking, Technology, Games, and Needlework. The ALF program is designed to be both fun and educational. Applications will be accepted until the classes have reached maximum enrollment or until the start of classes on June 28th.

In addition to the ALF program, the district offers a summer school program for students in Special Education.

- Elissa DeAngelo, LCE Principal



Construction at LCHS

The LCHS Building "A" modernization project is in its fourth and final phase. We have just completed our third phase and will begin phase four the Monday after school is out. In the first three phases we have added two new classrooms as well as a new laboratory classroom. Additionally we have modernized the Administration area, the nurse's office, five existing science labs and fourteen classrooms. When completed, classrooms will be equipped with new casework, A.V. equipment as well as upgraded flooring and ceilings. Phase four will modernize the remaining science lab and two classrooms in building "A". We are currently on schedule to complete the project at the end of the summer.

We have just approved a bid for the modernization of the LCHS auditorium, room 100 and the cafeteria restrooms. Work will start the Monday after school is out and all interior work will be completed by the end of the summer. The modernization includes the addition of a mechanical lift for ADA requirements that will be located between the auditorium stage and room 100 and additional ramping outside of the foyer. The men's and women's restrooms in the auditorium foyer will be modernized along with painting, lighting and flooring. The project also includes increasing the number of stalls in the restrooms located outside of the cafeteria and a single stall restroom for staff in the student store area. The cost of the project is less than the 100% estimate and all monies are coming from the 2004 Bond.

- Mike Leininger, Assistant Superintendent



Helpful Links from
the LCUSD website:

Governing Board
Meeting Schedule

<http://www.lcusd.net/board>

LCUSD Master
Calendar:

<http://www.lcusd.net/cal>

LCUSD GATE
Advisory Council

<http://www.lcusd.net/gate>

LCUSD Bond
Oversite Committee

[http://www.lcusd.net/
facilities](http://www.lcusd.net/facilities)

Special Ed Conference

On May 15, 2010, La Canada High School hosted the Foothill SELPA Community Advisory Committee 6th Annual Parent Conference and Transition Forum. This year's conference was entitled "Parent-Professional Collaboration." The conference focused on issues of Special Education and was open to all parents, educators and community members from the Foothill SELPA (Special Education Local Planning Area) which includes Glendale, Burbank and La Canada Unified School Districts.

Dr. Michael Escalante, superintendent of Glendale Unified School District, was this year's keynote speaker. There were 13 break-out sessions throughout the day. A few of the topics were: Laws Every Special Education Parent Needs to Know, Inclusion, Supporting Social Skills in the Home and Community, ABA Principles, and Working with Behaviors in the Home. The Community Advisory Council sponsors several events throughout the school year. Special Education parents receive information on upcoming events by mail and they can also check the District Website for upcoming events.

- Tamara Jackson, Director of Special Education



Congratulations to LCUSD BTSA Teachers

One of the professional development opportunities that the La Canada Unified School District coordinates for teachers is the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) program. The two-year program is designed for teachers who are new to the profession or who have not taught in public schools before. It is an intensive and systematic professional development program designed by the California Department of Education, which allows teachers, upon completion, to clear their credentials with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC). Beginning teachers partner with mentor teachers and engage in a series of inquiries on their instructional practices, emphasizing action research, data analysis, and reflection and revision of teaching strategies to improve how they facilitate student learning.

This year seven La Canada Unified School District teachers completed their second year of BTSA training and have been recommended for a clear credential to the CCTC. The District would like to congratulate Julie Hong, Jamie Lee Lewsadder, Lindy Lowe, Susan Moore, Holly Russell, Andrea Stalder and Megan Washburn on this important achievement! Four LCUSD teachers completed their first year of the BTSA program, and will continue with their professional development next year. The first year training is rigorous, and their accomplishments are laudable, so the District would also like to congratulate Erin Corralejo, Kyle Smith, Stacy Yung and Tiffany Zupan.

And, finally, many thanks to our BTSA Support Providers, the mentor teachers without whom this program would not be possible. The time, support, and training that the mentor teachers provide are truly an investment in the teaching profession and in fostering the quality education and instructional best practices so valued by the District. Our support providers this year were: Sharon Barker, Jim Cartnal, Jackie Castro, Linda Hamrick-Moravec, Ingrid Jaimes, Rick Mohney, Jodi Newman and Vicki Sheff. Our sincerest thanks to each of these outstanding educators.

- Wendy Sinnette, Assistant Superintendent



Administration Changes at LCUSD

The La Canada Unified School District will experience many administrative changes or transitions during the summer months of 2010. While we say goodbye to veteran and relatively new members of our administrative team, we also welcome new administrators to our staff and herald others into their new positions.

After seven years of service, assistant principal, Kevin Buchanan, will leave his post at La Canada High School to become the principal of Oak Park High School. Kevin's dynamic leadership and multi-faceted contributions to the daily operations of LCHS have been invaluable to the high school, and he will be greatly missed. On behalf of the entire school community, we wish him every success in this next stage of his career path in education.

Additionally, after only one year of service, La Canada Unified School District says goodbye to La Canada High School's current principal, Audra Pittman. Audra leaves LCUSD to accept a position as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the San Mateo County Office of Education. We wish her the best in her new county-level position and appreciate all of her contributions to LCHS during the 2009-10 school year.

Ms. Pittman's vacancy has generated the opportunities for two of our finest administrators to move into new positions. Dr. Jackie Luzak, current principal of La Canada High School 7/8, will assume the principalship of La Canada High School 9-12. After two years of exemplary service in the District, Jackie has distinguished herself as an educational leader of the highest caliber. Her experience as a principal on the combined 7-12 campus, as well as her exceptional talent and vision, gives the District great confidence and enthusiasm for her success in this high profile position.

Dr. Luzak will be missed by her LCHS 7/8 staff, but she'll now only be next door to the 7/8 principal's office – so, her former staff will not have to go too far to say “hello.” Moving into the 7/8 principalship is Mrs. Anais Wenn, who has served the District with distinction for the past four years as the principal of Palm Crest Elementary School. Anais, too, will be missed by her current staff at PCR, but at the June 15, 2010 Governing Board meeting, the LCUSD Governing Board approved Mrs. Karen Hurley as the new PCR principal.

Mrs. Hurley spent the first 10 years of her educational career in Canada teaching 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th grades. She moved to California in 2000 and was employed by Pasadena Unified School District as a 5th grade teacher, literacy coach, teacher specialist and English language development resource specialist. In 2003, she was offered an assistant principal position in the Saugus Union School District and has worked there to build and enhance programs at the two elementary schools where she has served.

Karen currently oversees curriculum alignment and implementation, as well as the analysis of student achievement data. Her responsibilities also include student discipline, budget control for categorical programs, the implementation of summer school, and the organization of staff development programs. Her school site received the California Distinguished School Award, and has served as a team leader for school site visits to validate schools for California Distinguished School status – most recently at Paradise Canyon Elementary School.

Karen holds a bachelor of education degree in early childhood education from McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Mrs. Hurley began her teaching career immediately after receiving this degree in 1988. In 2000 she was awarded a master of education degree in administration from the University of Louisiana.

The District's final administrative "goodbye" for the year is to our beloved principal at Paradise Canyon Elementary School, Mrs. Donna Robinson. Donna is retiring after ten years of dedicated service and caring leadership at PCY and with LCUSD. Dr. Debra Craddock will be joining the administrative team of La Cañada Unified School District in 2010-11 as the principal of Paradise Canyon Elementary School. Dr. Craddock is coming to us from the Whittier City School District, where she has held the position of principal at Christian Sorenson Elementary School since 2006. Prior to this she served in 2 positions with the Los Angeles Unified School District. From 2003 to 2004 she was employed as Assistant Principal at Belvedere Middle School, and from 2004 to 2006 she served as the Secondary Literacy Coordinator for Local District 5. Her resume also includes 6 years of teaching experience with Pasadena Unified School District. She taught first, second and sixth grades at Longfellow Elementary, and later held the positions of literacy coach and curriculum resource teacher at McKinley School.

In 1994 Dr. Craddock earned a Bachelor's of Science degree in business administration from the University of Southern California. In 2001 she completed the Master's of Art degree program in educational administration at California State University, Dominguez Hills, where she also completed the coursework for her multiple subject teaching credential. Dr. Craddock returned to USC and was awarded a Doctorate of Education degree in educational leadership in 2004.

Debra is a former LCUSD student, and we are pleased at her return home. Most recently, during her tenure with Christian Sorenson Elementary School, her site has seen an increase in student achievement marked by a rise of 49 points on the Academic Performance Index (API). With this, and with all of the other accolades she brings, we anticipate Debra's great success in guiding the PCY staff.

Replacing Kevin Buchanan as assistant principal at LCHS is Mr. Aaron Dover. Aaron has come up through the ranks in the Duarte Unified School District from teacher to assistant principal. Mr. Dover started his teaching career in 1999 as an English teacher at Duarte High School. In 2003 he accepted the position of Director of Activities at the high school and held this position for 2 years. Mr. Dover was promoted to the position of assistant principal at the high school in 2005. He is currently responsible for the areas of curriculum, guidance and instruction.

Mr. Dover holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Literature and Culture from the University of California, Los Angeles, which he earned in 1999. In 2004 he was awarded a Master's of Science degree in Education Administration from the University of La Verne.

With the collaboration of Mr. Dover, Duarte High School has experienced increased student success. Key to this achievement was a transition program of his design to aid students promoting into the middle school or high school. He successfully implemented a new school-wide assessment system, along with redesigning benchmark assessments and coordinating curriculum alignment. Mr. Dover also designed a data analysis protocol to assist teachers in analyzing assessment data to inform instruction. His training and weekly feedback for math teachers resulted in the doubling of students scoring proficient in math on the CST. We welcome Aaron to La Canada High School.

It is with fondness and best wishes that we say goodbye to exiting administrative staff. And, as the District looks to the future, it is with great enthusiasm that we welcome new and current administrative staff to their posts within the District.

- Wendy Sinnette, Assistant Superintendent



Every 15 Minutes

Every 15 minutes is an annual program put on at the high school to underscore the dangers of drinking and driving. The following are some student reflections on this year's program, as well as some photos from the reconstruction of a car crash fatality that was staged at the high school as part of the program.



What moment impacted you the most?

Personal stories told by the participants; showed that these kinds of accidents can actually happen in real life unexpectedly. Very realistic. - Jessica L.

At the Coroner's office, seeing every day normal people laying in the morgue that died in these accidents. Made me feel scared and sick. - Cera A.

Seeing Ali Kolbe in the jail cell. Realized that anyone can make a poor decision or even an honest mistake and end up ruining his/her life and lives of others.
- Kevin H.

Talking to the "real" inmates at the jail. When one thinks about criminals, you think about hardened criminals, gang bangers. But these were regular people who made a bad choice to drink and drive. - Anubhav S.

The presentation given at the mortuary drove home the realistic consequences of drinking and driving for others that you leave behind by your actions. The burden is left on them and not on you. - Luke C.

The assembly impacted me the most; reading letters of loved ones that passed away and watching the video. The entire program impacted me! - Sarah R.



Website Shortcuts

<http://www.lcusd.net>

[/lchs - High School](#)

[/lchs78 - Jr. High](#)

[/lce - La Canada Elem](#)

[/pcr - Palm Crest Elem](#)

[/pcy - Paradise Canyon](#)

[/cal - District Calendar](#)

[/govboard - Board of Ed](#)

[/news - Newsletter](#)

[/sarc - School Accountability Report Cards](#)

[/SpecialEd - Special Education](#)

[/teachers - HS teachers](#)



Has it changed your philosophy about drinking and driving?

I always knew that drinking and driving were wrong but this experience reinforced this knowledge. - Jessica L.

Absolutely has changed my philosophy about drinking and driving. Never thought about the consequences before and the program brought the realities to life. - Cera A.

Yes. Now I feel more personal responsibility to make sure that those around me do not drink and drive. - Kevin H.

Yes. Adults always tell you not to drink or drive and it does not really hit you until something happens such as taking a life by your poor choice. - Anubhav S.

Yes. We have been taught that drinking and driving is bad for our health and could kill us. This program showed us that it is not just your burden to bear; it affects both the families of yourselves and the victims. - Luke C.

I was never going to drink and drive and being involved in this program intensified my beliefs even more. - Sarah R.



Spring Sports Teams Enjoy Most Successful Season In Years

The late coaching legend John Wooden once said, “Teamwork is not a preference, it is a requirement.” This spring, the La Canada High School athletic teams proved that when the “required” team work is achieved, success is bound to happen. While the game of golf is typically an individual sport, the LCHS golf team collectively came together to achieve team success. The team won its 6th consecutive Rio Hondo League Championship with a 14-2 overall season record. Team captain Anton Arboleda earned the title of Rio Hondo League Champion and found success in the post season as well. “Anton made it to the CIF State Semifinals, but missed qualifying for the state championship by one shot,” said head golf coach Richard Tetu. Anton averaged 34.5 for nine holes this season, and the team was 59-7 during Anton’s reign. “Anton simply put, is the best golfer in the history of La Canada High School,” contends Tetu. Freshman golf sensation Jennifer Kim was the first female ever to play in the Rio Hondo League Championship. Several other members of the golf team also excelled this season earning top honors in the Rio Hondo League Championship. Junior Derek Patao finished 3rd, while Freshmen Noah Bernstein and Daniel Rhee both tied for 5th place in league.

“We had a fantastic season,” said head softball coach, KC Mathews. The Lady Spartans played in the CIF Semifinals game for the first time since 1995. The team was crowned Rio Hondo League Champions for the second year in a row with a 10-2 league record. They were also Champions in the Duarte Tournament in March. Junior Anna Edwards was named Co-Player of the Year in the Rio Hondo League after demonstrating that she is arguably one of the best female athletes in the history of the school. Edwards led the team in all of the major categories. She had a .580 batting average, with 51 hits, 9 homeruns, and 15 stolen bases. “Anna only struck out 4 times in 107 plate appearances,” declared Mathews. “She is one of the best athletes I have had the opportunity to coach here at LCHS.” Everyone knows pitching in softball is the key to any team’s success, and this past year, it was truly an embarrassment of riches on the LCHS softball team. Both starting pitchers, Lauren O’Leary and Lauren Cox, were named Co-Pitchers of the Rio Hondo League. The Laurens had a combined 326 strikeouts, only giving up 23 walks and 14 earned runs all season. The Laurens success was assisted by some great pitch calling by the LCHS assistant coach, former Crescenta Valley High School and Long Beach State star pitcher, Meredith Cervenka. Catcher and Rio Hondo All League First team member, Catherine Horner also had a hand, or should I say a ‘glove’ in this year’s successful season. “Horner did an amazing job of handling the pitching staff,” said Coach Mathews. “Seven out of 11 stolen base attempts were called out due to Catherine’s tough play, and it is a real tribute to Catherine that few teams even tried to steal bases with her behind the plate,” Mathews also said. Solo senior Megan Martin was named to the Rio Hondo League first team, as was Kayla McCue. The Drange sisters, Shirley and Kelsey, were both named, along with Selena Mohr, to the Rio Hondo All League second team. “The girls played well individually and as a team, and deserve all their success,” concluded Mathews.

Similar to what Mathews did in softball three years ago, first year boy’s volleyball head coach David Woo, revitalized a staggering program his first year as head coach. Woo’s vast experience and gentle manner were key in his team’s success this past year. The varsity team earned second place in the Rio Hondo League and played in CIF playoffs for the first time since 2006. Team leaders Tim Lee and Jamie Pierce were named to the First Rio Hondo League Team while standouts Sean Mintie and Jeff Facer were named to the Second Rio Hondo League Team. “I believe beating South Pasadena and Gabrielino both times in League for the first time in 4 years was the highlight of the season,” said Coach Woo. “I am hopeful that the team will do even better next year,” Woo added.

“What a great year!” exclaimed long time boy’s tennis coach Will Moravec. The netters were 16-5 in regular season play and finished 3rd in Rio Hondo League play. Seniors Grayson Frazier and Trent Jones finished

second in Rio Hondo league double play. Freshman Joshua Kim finished 3rd in Rio Hondo league single play. Seniors Greg Lee and Aidan Lynch were named to the Second Rio Hondo All League Team. “We had just the right blend of senior maturity and freshman energy,” said Moravec. “Plain and simple it was the most successful season in 24 years.”

This past swim season was quite successful. Both Varsity teams repeated as Rio Hondo League champions. Five team records were broken, fifteen All American times were earned, and three individual events were won at CIF. This year’s boys’ team was in a rebuilding period after graduating six CIF team members last year. They were given a task that was nearly impossible, winning a fifth straight CIF title, and they almost achieved it. Tough goals were given and the boys’ team rose to the occasion and accomplished them all. Alex Campbell won the 100 freestyle at CIF, while Brandon Nguyen broke the team record in the 100 breaststroke. Head Coach Art Lopez said, “They did what I asked, and then some. I’m very proud of their accomplishments and look forward to the challenges that lie ahead.” The girls’ team did a phenomenal job at CIF this year. Four girls swam for La Canada and took fourth place in the team standings, beating out teams that had double the roster size. Katy Campbell took two first place finishes at CIF, the 200 & 500 freestyle. She broke her own team records from last year with these victories. The girls also broke the 200 & 400 freestyle team records that were set last year. The future looks bright since all four girls will be back next year.

- Joanne M. Davidson, LCHS Assistant Principal



Superintendent

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Joining them are Debra Craddock as PCY principal, Aaron Dover as LCHS assistant principal and Karen Hurley as PCR principal

Many thanks to all of the teachers, students, parents, classified staff members and administrators who sat on the various interview panels and screened our many impressive candidates. This was extremely important work and critical to the continuing success of the district.

We have important tasks and goals going forward as well and we know how to go about that work. We need to continue to prudently manage our fiscal resources. We need to more fully implement our Every Student Succeeds plans and to complete the revisions of our quarterly anchor assessments. We need to more closely analyze all of our assessment data and to adjust and differentiate our instruction accordingly.

These are not easy goals, but if the dedication and resiliency displayed this year are any indication of the future, I am sure we will get there.



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