Charter summit outlines challenge

Charter schools can play a crucial role in turning around some low-performing schools, according to Russlynn Ali of the U.S. Department of Education.

Ali was the keynote speaker at the Summit, held January 30 at the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) to address the rapid growth of charter schools in the county, and concerns about effects on neighborhood public schools.

Also speaking at the event was State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell (pictured), who acknowledged California’s rapid growth of charters, now numbering more than 850.

Visit SCCOE’s Web site to learn more about the Summit, and to see videos from the event.

Board approves charter petition, honors employees

Here’s a recap of the Santa Clara County Board of Education’s actions at its Jan. 13 and Feb. 3 meetings:

- Honored the Office of Education’s Employees of the Month: For January, Dena Lopez from the Human Resources Branch; and for February, Christian Munoz, office coordinator for Head Start.
- Recognized Diego Rodriguez, a student at San Benito High School’s Regional Occupational Program (ROP), for his outstanding achievements.
- Approved the charter petition for South Bay Preparatory Charter School for the period July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010.
- Announced Board subcommittee assignments
- Approved the resolution proclaiming the month of

Already numerous local school districts and organizations have shown formal support of SJ2020, the initiative launched recently by the County Office of Education, the City of San José, educators, business leaders and community organizations to close the achievement gap in San José by the year 2020.

Nearly half of all students tested in San José public schools are not proficient in their grade level skills. About 2,300 middle and high school students drop out annually.

This is the civil rights issue of our generation. We know what needs to be done; we know how to do it. The time to do it is now. If you’d like to help or just learn more, visit the SJ2020 Web site.

Dr. Charles Weis
County Superintendent of Schools
Upcoming at the County Office

2010 Santa Clara County Teacher Recruitment Fair

When: March 20, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for pre-registered candidates; 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for unregistered, fully-credentialed candidates.

Where: County Office of Education, 1290 Ridder Park Drive, San Jose, 95131

Why: Those seeking teaching positions can meet with those who hire teachers and other certificated candidates in districts throughout the county.

More information: Learn more about the fair, and pre-register by 5 p.m. March 16.

Learning communities event

Educators in Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito counties can save on registration fees at an upcoming San Jose learning communities summit featuring several noteworthy speakers if 300 people sign up by Feb. 12.

Those speaking at the Solution Tree's Professional Learning Communities at Work Institute include Rick and Becky DuFour, Anthony Muhammad and Austin Buffum. For more information about the July 21-23 event, visit www.solution-tree.com, and check out the 'July' events.

If 300 participants register in time, the fee will be $405 each - a total savings of $195. For more information, contact Edith Mourtos via email or (408) 453-6688.

Students excel in state fitness tests

Fifth-graders at Evergreen School District's four institutions participating in the SCCOE fit for learning™ program are more physically fit than their counterparts across the district, county and state, results from the 2008-09 state Physical Fitness Test show.

Though it's too early to attribute the San Jose students' test performance to their participation in fit for learning, the program that focuses on nutrition and physical activity likely contributed, said coordinator Michelle Mount.

Nearly 52 percent of fifth-graders in Evergreen's fit for learning schools met all of the criteria compared with 38 percent of fifth-graders at the other 11 Evergreen elementary schools.

Learn more about fit for learning and these students' success.

Board observes African American History month

The Santa Clara County Board of Education has recognized February 2010 as National African American History month.

The County Office of Education "recognizes the significant contributions and huge advances African Americans have made, and continue to make in our community, state and the world, in such areas as education, medicine, art, culture, public service, economic and development, politics and human rights," stated a resolution adopted Feb. 3.

In the 1960s, a week-long observance expanded into Black History Month.
job training and support at this new site.

History Month, celebrated in February, the birth month of African American leader Frederick Douglass. More information is available here.

**Student soars to Eagle Scout**

Visitors to Quail Hollow Ranch, a sprawling Felton nature preserve, can enjoy a much-improved equestrian area thanks to Leigh High School senior Duncan Lindberg's quest to become an Eagle Scout.

Only 4 percent of Boy Scouts of America participants make the accomplishment, and perhaps Duncan's achievement is even more remarkable because he is the only member of Troop 633 who is deaf.

Duncan has participated in the SCCOE program for deaf and hearing-impaired students since infancy. The program focuses on academics, social and vocational learning, and independent living for students through age 22.

Learn more about Duncan's achievement.

**Wan receives CABE honor**

Yee Wan, coordinator of Multilingual Programs at the Santa Clara County Office of Education, has been named Administrator of the Year for the 2010 annual conference of the California Association for Bilingual Education.

She will be recognized March 7 at the organization's Educator of the Year Awards Luncheon at the San Jose Convention Center.

At the SCCOE, Wan oversees a program with the primary purpose of providing training and resources to teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals to support instruction and achievement for English language learners.

Learn more about Wan's honor.

Since 1852, the Santa Clara County Office of Education has provided vital services and resources to the county's 31 K-12 public school districts and more than 250,000 students. The SCCOE strives to provide: advocacy and leadership on education issues, student programs that are models of excellence, and indispensable services to schools and community partners. The SCCOE takes pride in being a
premier employer and a champion for children, schools, and community.