In This Issue

· New center augments COE environmental education program
· News program details Walden West
· Student honored for accomplishments
· Volunteers of the Year recognized
· 31 county schools named ‘distinguished’

From the desk of Charles Weis, Ph.D.
County Superintendent of Schools

Public education in California faces many challenges today. Predominant among them is a funding mechanism that has consistently underfunded education.

Fortunately, despite the challenges, schools in Santa Clara County continue to produce student results that often are the envy of the rest of the state. You'll find ample evidence of this in the 2012 edition of The State of Education, published by the Santa Clara County Office of Education.

And yet, as the report documents, there is much more to be done. Not all of our students succeed in school, and too many drop out. A recent study by the Public Policy Institute of California about the state's dwindling middle class came to this conclusion: The most important factor driving the gap between high- and low-income workers is education.

We hear more and more these days about "the gap" -- the income gap, the achievement gap, the opportunity gap. Our SJ2020

Field trip curriculum at the new green-built center provides up to 60 students with inquiry-based, half-day adventures that tackle a variety of subject matter.

Each program follows a similar format: After a brief introduction, students rotate through investigative stations where they explore the outdoors, participate in hands-on learning, and partake in lessons related to sustainability.

Led by a coordinator and team of experienced volunteers, lessons are designed for kindergarten through sixth-grade students, and more are under development.

The center is named after Abby Sobrato, the late president of the Walden West Foundation, which has supported Walden West for more than 15 years.

Online news show covers Walden West
initiative strives to provide every student in every school with the chance to succeed by eliminating these insidious gaps. Numerous schools in the county have made great strides in closing the achievement gap; the COE has been proud to honor those schools.

I invite you to peruse The State of Education to learn firsthand what we are doing well, and what we can and must do better.

Fair features TK resources, materials

Find materials and resources to support instruction in the Transitional Kindergarten classroom at an upcoming event at the COE.

The May 9 Transitional Kindergarten Instructional Materials Fair will include presentations and exhibits from vendors and publishers of products that can support student kindergarten readiness.

The free event is co-hosted by the COE's Learning Multimedia Center and Early Learning Services Department.

The event runs from 2 to 6 p.m. at the COE, 1290 Ridder Park Drive in San Jose.

Register online. For more information, contact Dollie Forney at (408) 453-6528.

Links of Interest

Who We Are

Watch a video that details the essential services that the COE provides students, teachers, districts and the community of Santa Clara County.

COE Alternative Education student honored

Robert Salas lay across a padded bench, gripped the barbell and took a deep breath. Slowly and steadily, the 16-year-old pushed the bar over his chest until his arms were fully extended and 225 pounds of disc weights hovered in the air.

The heavy lifting is an apt metaphor for Robert's recent hard work to transform his life from one of gangs and drugs into a world of healthy habits, perfect school attendance and academic success.

Read more about Robert.

The Snell Community School student's efforts have paid off in multiple ways -- including recognition from both the Santa Clara County Board of Education and a state organization for school administrators.

The Board of Education honored Robert on April 18. He will be recognized as a recipient of the Every Student Succeeding Award from the Association of California School Administrators at a regional awards dinner next month, and later this year at the organization's state conference.

Board celebrates Volunteers of the Year
For nearly 40 years, COE students have benefited from the generosity of local volunteers who provide individual guidance, mentoring and tutoring.

In turn, the Seniors Council Foster Grandparent Program has been named the COE's Volunteers of the Year for 2012, and received special recognition April 18 from the Board of Education.

About 50 volunteers with the organization spend 15 hours a week working with students served by the Head Start, state preschool and special education programs.

Here's a summary of other actions taken by the Board of Education at its April 4 and 18 meetings:

- Recognized Sandra Janisch as the April Employee of the Month
- Approved a resolution to provide short-term loans to county school districts
- Discussed the process and criteria for selecting a representative to serve on the Bullis Charter School Board of Directors

The Board of Education is the elected governing body of the COE. Its seven members serve four-year terms and are elected by different regions of the county. Learn more about the members, and view their meeting schedule, agendas and minutes.

35 county schools recognized by state for academic growth

Representatives of the 31 Santa Clara County elementary schools selected as 2012 California Distinguished Schools, as well as the four schools named recipients of the Title I Academic Achievement Award, will be recognized next month in a ceremony hosted by the COE.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson and Dr. Weis are slated to appear at the May 30 event.

The state Department of Education late last month announced the 387 statewide recipients of the Distinguished Schools award, which honors schools that have demonstrated educational excellence for all students, and progress in narrowing the achievement
Earlier this month, the state named the 117 Title I Academic Achievement Award winners. The accolade goes only to schools that receive federal Title I funds, and demonstrate that all students are making significant progress toward proficiency on California's academic content standards.

Additionally, the schools' socioeconomically disadvantaged students must have doubled the achievement targets set for them for two consecutive years.

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 COE 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 COE takes pride in being a premier employer and a champion for children, schools, and community.