Ceremony celebrates college-bound AVID grads

A record number of county college-bound high school graduates celebrated their achievements at the SCCOE’s Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) recognition ceremony last month.

Punctuated by twirling Mexican folklorico dancers and gravity-defying acrobatics at San Jose’s landmark Mexican Heritage Plaza, the ceremony honored 488 graduates.

Virtually all the students earned admission to campuses of the University of California, California State University, community colleges or private institutions throughout the country.

Board OKs site improvements, server upgrades

Here’s a recap of the Santa Clara County Board of Education’s actions at its May 19 and June 2 meetings:

- Honored the achievement of Hugo Iboa, a student at Pathfinder Academy Community School
- Recognized Mike McGaughey as June’s Employee of the Month
- Honored Mike Delmonico, president and Chief Executive Officer of Santa Clara County Federal Credit Union, for the institution’s longtime SCCOE support
- Allocated nearly $1 million for improvements to Pathfinder Academy, and about $627,000 for upgrades to the SCCOE’s technology servers
- The Board of Education is the elected governing body of the Office of Education. 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.

SCCOE staff appointments

Recently I had the honor of speaking at the Student Recognition Ceremony of the Santa Clara County Alliance of Black Educators at the San Jose Convention Center.

This was the organization’s 21st annual ceremony, which recognizes African American students graduating from elementary, middle and high schools throughout the county. It was a truly inspiring event.

Nearly 300 students were recognized in areas such as Leadership, Academics and Spiritual Consciousness. Motivational speaker Wil Cason gave a stirring presentation to the enthusiastic crowd, and eighth grader Ashunte Hudson gave a wonderful reading of a Langston Hughes poem, “The Negro Mother.”
One could not help but be inspired by the achievements of the students, and the pride of their families and friends. It was a striking reminder that our students are accomplishing great things. It was a pleasure to play a small part in honoring them for those accomplishments. And what an inspiration it was to see high school graduates bound for Harvard, Stanford, Duke, Cal, UCLA and other prestigious universities.

To learn more about the event, click here.

- Charles Weis, Ph.D.

Several SCCOE staff members have earned recent commission and board appointments.

County Superintendent of Schools Charles Weis, Ph.D. was named to a state commission tasked with developing new language arts and mathematics content standards.

Weis is one of 21 educators to serve on the Academic Content Standards Commission, established under recently enacted legislation designed to make California eligible for federal Race to the Top funding.

Also, Kathy Sealana and Dr. Dave Matuszak have been appointed to the 2010 Board of Examiners for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

Edith Barrientos, a student in the SCCOE’s deaf and hard-of-hearing program, has faithfully attended high school in spite of considerable family hardships.

This month, she graduated from Leigh High School in San Jose, and soon after will be the first member of her family to go to college.

Edith was profiled in this month’s edition of Bay Area Magazine. In the story, Edith’s SCCOE English teacher, Jennifer Anderson, describes her student. “I liked Edith when I first met her,” she says. “But I really love who she’s become.”

The SCCOE will welcome a new executive team member next month.

Effective July 1, Dr. Maurice Ghysels, superintendent of the Mountain View Whisman School District, will become Chief Schools Officer.

Ghysels will lead the SCCOE’s Student Services Branch, which serves about 9,000 students daily in a variety of classroom settings. He replaces Joe Fimiani, who is retiring after 8 years in the position.

Fifty-two percent of county schools had a base 2009 API at or above 800, and two county schools achieved the top scores statewide.

For further details on county scores, read the analysis from the SCCOE’s Assessment and Accountability staff.

The SCCOE recently earned two rewards for its health and fitness efforts.

Kaiser Permanente Santa Clara awarded the SCCOE a $5,000 grant to support its year-long Coordinated School Health trainings in
open to K-12 library staff and is sponsored by the SCCOE and San Mateo County Office of Education. Registration costs $60 per day, and includes lunch.

Register online, and for more information, email Dollie Forney or call 408-453-6800.

Also, Steps to a Healthier Santa Clara County last month recognized the office for its fit for learning™ program to develop and implement training for schools on nutrition education, school wellness and coordinated school health.

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.

Links of Interest

Earthquake preparedness
Check out resources about earthquakes, tips, quake preparedness and special information for teachers and students.

Bullying Prevention
Learn more about how to prevent and identify bullying behavior in students.