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Students return from Japanese cultural exchange

A half dozen students enrolled in the SCCOE's deaf and hard-of-hearing program recently returned from Japan, where they spent about two weeks learning about the country's culture and meeting their Japanese peers.

The group from Leigh High School in San Jose toured several major Japanese cities, where they visited significant landmarks such as the Hiroshima and Okinawa memorials, student Helen Yu wrote in an essay reflecting on the trip.

"What an amazing place!" she wrote. "We went to Tokyo, Hiroshima, and Okinawa - great city and very busy! We saw busy people, busy streets, tall buildings, great cultural diversity and an interesting variety of foods."

But the students also had the invaluable experience of meeting with deaf Japanese high school students. The SCCOE group taught American Sign Language to the Japanese students, who in turn taught the American students Japanese Sign Language.

"Japan was very worthwhile for me, because Japan offered me totally different, new experiences such as socializing with Japanese people, and learning about Japan's culture and language," student Duncan Lindberg wrote in his essay.

Read more about the students' trip and check out a photo gallery.

Tech Branch changes bring efficiency, flexibility

The SCCOE's Technology Services Branch has been reorganized to serve customers better and more efficiently.

The branch is now comprised of three departments: Digital Design and Media Services Center, which handles video,
One highlight: More of our students are taking rigorous math and science classes - and they are performing better in those classes.

Teachers and students are just now commencing a new school year in freshly decorated classrooms all across the county. I am confident that they will have another exciting and productive year of teaching and learning. Please give them your support.

- Charles Weis, Ph.D.

Community input sought on SJ2020 initiative

Are you ready to help close the achievement gap in San Jose?

Two community meetings will be held this month at the SCCOE to solicit public input on SJ2020, the office's joint initiative with the city of San Jose to close the achievement gap in city schools within the next decade.

The meetings run from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. Aug. 24 and Aug. 25, respectively focusing on one of SJ2020's focus areas: Home and Community, and Career/College Success.

There is no admission fee, but attendees are asked to register in advance online.

The SCCOE is located at 1290 Ridder Park Drive, San Jose.

Get more updates on SJ2020 through Facebook. Visit SJ2020's page and click "like."

Math enrichment program empowers teachers

More than 50 K-8 math teachers from about 10 county school districts are in the early stages of an in-depth mathematics enrichment program that will help improve mathematics content knowledge.

Participants in the program, Silicon Valley: A Laboratory for Learning (80-hour Intel Math), will focus on several principles including viewing mathematics as a second language, and the connection between arithmetic, geometry and algebra.

Through a partnership between the SCCOE, Silicon Valley Leadership Foundation and the Intel Corp., "Laboratory" began earlier this month, and will hold follow-up sessions through November.

The current session marks the fourth year of the program, which was piloted in Silicon Valley and Massachusetts in 2007. Participants in last year's program improved their knowledge in math on the program...
assessment by an average of 32 percent.

Next year's "Laboratory" is scheduled to begin in June.

Learn more about the SCCOE's mathematics department.

**Board accepts donations for student wellness program**

Here's a summary of the Santa Clara County Board of Education's actions at its July 21 and Aug. 11 meetings:

- Accepted checks from the city of San Jose and the Silicon Valley Leadership Group.
- Scheduled a special meeting for Wednesday, August 25.
- Conducted a public hearing on the revocation of South Bay Preparatory Charter School.

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.

**New leadership at local school districts**

The start of the new school year this month comes with new top leadership in three county school districts.

Jeffrey Baier now leads Los Altos School District, where he previously served as assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction. He replaces Tim Justus, who retired this summer.

Craig A. Goldman is at the helm of the Mountain View Whisman School District after about 12 years with the district. Most recently, he served as the agency's Chief Financial Officer.

Goldman replaces Dr. Maurice Ghysels, who left the district to become the SCCOE's Chief Schools Officer.

Dr. Vincent Matthews leads San Jose Unified School District, replacing retired longtime Superintendent Don Iglesias.

Most recently, Matthews served as state trustee for Oakland Unified School District. Previously, he was a regional superintendent of San Diego Unified School District.
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.

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