



IUSD Today

News and Notes from around the Irvine Unified School District

Volume 3, Issue 1

September 2008

Looking Ahead:

Sept. 16: Board of Education meeting

Sept. 24: IUSD to break ground on new Stonegate campus

Oct. 7: Board of Education meeting

Oct. 15: IPSF's 2nd Walk to School Day

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Northwood 2 Elementary takes its first Blue Ribbon

Athletes are 3 urged to get 'Hydrated & Healthy'

IUSD sites 4 continue to improve on state tests

School board 5 seats to go uncontested in November

Funds from City, IPSF paying big dividends

For schools on the traditional calendar, Sept. 4 marked the return of our students, many toting brand new backpacks and looking rested and ready for the challenges ahead.

This is indeed a special time for us. As in years past, we have kicked off 2008-09 with an impressive group of young scholars, the best and brightest staff, the highest of expectations and unrivaled community support.

And the latter has perhaps never been more

important.

During the last school year, the Governor threatened to strip millions of dollars in funding from our schools, prompting elaborate cut lists that looked to impact class sizes. With a bipartisan budget possibly in sight, it looks like education has been spared some of the Draconian cuts that were initially proposed. Yet funding for our schools remains inadequate, posing some real challenges in our increasingly competitive global environment.

That said, I am pleased to report some good news locally.

As you may recall, the City of Irvine re-

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Gwen Gross
Superintendent

Who's New in IUSD?

Some principals have new roles, and three are new to the district

In what has become an annual rite of summer in IUSD, a number of familiar faces have relocated or taken on new assignments this year.

Former Turtle Rock Elementary Principal ChrissAnn Shane, for example, is now principal at Woodbury Elementary School. Stan Machesky, who was principal of Plaza Vista, has moved about 4 miles northeast to West-



Meet three principals who are new to Irvine: From left to right, Karen Catabijan is now principal at Turtle Rock Elementary; Tamara Brown is Greentree Elementary's new principal; and Alan Schlichting has taken the reigns at Santiago Hills Elementary School.

wood Basics Plus. And assistant principals Heather Phillips and Jason Vilorio have been promoted to lead Plaza Vista and Woodbridge High schools, respectively.

But there are three principals who are both new to their schools and new to IUSD, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise to Irvine.

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And the Blue Ribbon goes to...

... Northwood Elementary, which is one of 320 sites to earn the nation's top honor for public and private schools

It's a little known fact that Northwood Elementary School is the "Home of the Highwheelers" — its mascot referring to those old bicycles with the colossal front tires.

These days, however, Northwood may be better known as the home of high-achievers, as the IUSD school was one of 320 campuses in the United States to earn the prestigious designation as a 2008 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon School.

Widely considered the top national honor for public and private schools, the No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon list annually recognizes those sites that perform at extremely high levels or make significant strides toward bridging the achievement gap.

This year's announcement, made Sept. 9 by U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, was cause for celebration at Northwood, which scored 911 on the state's most recent Academic Performance Index. The API measures achievement on a scale of 200 to 1,000.

"I'm so proud of our students, our staff and our parents for supporting high levels of learning for all students," Principal Stuart Payne said. "We are honored to receive this prestigious award, and will continue to strive for academic excellence at Northwood Elementary."

The Irvine Unified School District has now produced 13 Blue Ribbon schools since 1983, with Venado Middle School taking the honor twice.

Northwood Elementary and the other 2008 winners are scheduled to be celebrated at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 20 and Oct. 21.



Did You Know?

The Irvine Unified School District has produced 13 Blue Ribbon schools since 1983, with Venado Middle School taking the honor twice. For more information about the No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools program, or to find a list of the 2008 winners, visit the U.S. Department of Education's website at www.ed.gov.

IUSD's Blue Ribbon Winners	Years
Brywood Elementary	1991-92
Canyon View Elementary	2004
Deerfield Elementary	2007
Irvine High	1988-89
Meadow Park Elementary	1998-99
Northwood Elementary	2008
Northwood High	2006
Rancho San Joaquin Middle	1997-98
University High	1986-87
Venado Middle	1982-83, 1994-96
Vista Verde	1996-97
Westwood Basics Plus	1998-99
Woodbridge High	1986-87

Get healthy, get hydrated

The Orange County Department of Education has partnered with IUSD, the Orange County Fire Authority and a number of other agencies to educate the public about the importance of staying hydrated during physical activity, particularly in warmer weather.

The “Hydrated & Healthy campaign,” which launched over the summer with a news conference, posters, wristbands and videos, was developed by a committee of Orange County health experts and educators, including IUSD Board member Sue Kuwabara, Health Services Coordinator Marcia Noonan and Yvonne Dina, IUSD’s director of Administrative Services.



The message is this: Hydration is the key to preventing heat-related illnesses, and anyone who participates in any sport – regardless of the season – should be drinking adequate flu-



Did You Know?

Hydrating before, during and after exercise is essential for a young athlete’s health and safety during bouts of exertion that exceed 60 minutes. Because thirst is not a reliable indicator of fluid replacement needs, adults need to make a plan, set a schedule and supervise young athletes.

ids before, during and after physical exertion.

Student-athletes are encouraged to hydrate one to two hours before exercise, drink 5 to 9 ounces every 20 minutes during exercise, and to continue to hydrate within two hours after exercise to adequately replace fluid losses.

The Hydrated & Healthy campaign also stresses the importance of recognizing the warning signs of dehydration, including fever, muscle cramps, nausea and fatigue. In fact, experts say as little as 2 percent dehydration can have a negative effect on endurance.

A new website features information and useful tools, including educational videos, tips and factsheets. Parents, students and coaches are encouraged to check it out at <http://hydration.ocde.us>.

IUSD, City team up again to trade ‘Cans for Cash’

IUSD and the City of Irvine are teaming up once again for this year’s “Cans for Cash” recycling challenge, which pits like-sized municipalities against one another in a contest to see which can collect the most aluminum cans throughout the month of October.

The national recycling challenge is sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Novelis Corporation and Keep America Beautiful. Families will again be encouraged to recycle their aluminum cans through their local schools, and for each pound of cans collected, one dollar will go directly to those schools.

But that’s not the only cash at stake. Irvine will be competing against similarly sized cities for up to \$10,000 in award money, which could benefit the Irvine Public Schools Foundation and its commitment to expand recycling programs at Irvine schools.

Last year, more than 50 cities across the country participated in Cans for Cash. Irvine residents, business and schools tossed nearly 900,000 cans in the recycling bin, ultimately helping the City win the “Most Innovative” award and a cash



prize of \$5,000.

Community members can help this year by recycling their aluminum cans through the City’s existing curb-side recycling service or by dropping off cans at local redemption centers. For more information on Cans for Cash, check out the City’s website at www.cityofirvine.org.

IUSD earns high marks on state tests

Students continue multi-year trend of steady gains

Students in IUSD continue to post high marks and show steady improvement on tests administered through the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting program (STAR), according to scores released in August.

In addition, IUSD recently posted the highest passing rates in Orange County on the California High School Exit Exam, with 98 percent of first time test-takers passing the math portion and 96 percent meeting the English requirement. Passing both sections of this test is mandatory beginning with the class of 2010.

"We are extremely pleased to see these numbers continue to rise," said Cassie Parham, IUSD's Assistant Superintendent of Education Services. "While test scores are not the sole measure of achievement for a school district, our students, parents and staff should be very proud of these results."

The California Standards Tests (CSTs), which measure student knowledge of the state's rigorous content standards in grades two through 11, are considered the cornerstone of the STAR program, which assessed approximately 4.75 million students in

the spring of 2008. CST scores are divided into five levels of achievement: advanced, proficient, basic, below basic and far below basic.

In English/language arts, the rate of IUSD students deemed proficient or advanced in 2008 varied by grade level. Fourth-graders posted the highest rate, at 87 percent.

Comparing this year's English/language arts proficiency rates to figures from the previous year, the largest gains were made in the 10th grade, which jumped by four percentage points, as well as in the fourth, seventh and ninth grades, which increased by 3 percentage points each. The only year-to-year decline, a 1 percentage point

drop, occurred in the second grade.

Students in grades four and seven also wrote essays as part of a writing test that was included in the English/language arts assessment, and each was later assigned one of four scores – 2, 4, 6 or 8. According to the state results, the percentage of IUSD

(Please see TEST on page 7)

California Standards Tests

A Five-Year Look at IUSD's Proficient and Advanced Percentages

English/language arts

Grade	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	One-year change	Five-year change
2	72	75	78	81	80	-1	8
3	65	70	69	70	71	1	6
4	77	83	83	84	87	3	10
5	74	77	77	79	80	1	6
6	74	75	77	80	82	2	8
7	72	78	79	81	84	3	12
8	67	73	79	78	80	2	13
9	73	77	76	79	82	3	9
10	70	70	68	68	72	4	2
11	62	63	62	62	63	1	1

Mathematics

Grade	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	One-year change	Five-year change
2	85	86	85	85	86	1	1
3	79	83	83	83	85	2	6
4	78	81	82	82	86	4	8
5	72	79	81	82	80	-2	8
6	73	75	78	79	80	1	7
7	72	78	79	78*	81*	3	9
8*	77	78	83	83	86	3	9
9*	65	73	69	73	78	5	13
10*	55	63	59	58	63	5	8
11*	42	49	47	45	46	1	1

* Scores are averaged based on all tests offered at that grade level

Scanning our District

IPSF plans its second Walk to School Day

The Irvine Public Schools Foundation will hold its second annual Walk to School Day on Wednesday, Oct. 15. Just as the name implies, students and their families will be encouraged to walk or bike to school, and to consider ways to make walking a part of their everyday routines.

KIA motors will sponsor this year's event, which will also receive support from the City of Irvine, the Irvine Police Department and The Irvine Company.

IPSF's Walk to School Day kicks off the foundation's annual corporate and community campaign, which will raise critical funds for everything from large class-size support and health clerks to after-school programs and fine arts. The event also supports international efforts to annually promote walking and bicycling around the globe as a means to advance health, improve air quality and establish safe routes to school for kids.

Schools help make Irvine one of best cities in U.S.

The secret's out.

Money magazine recently ranked Irvine No. 4 on its list of America's Best Small Cities, citing "topnotch schools" along with great weather and ample green space in its rundown of the pros of residency.

"Families say Irvine is pretty close to perfect," the magazine reports in its August edition. "The school district has won national recognition, and not just because of stellar test scores."

Money says IUSD's classrooms, innovative curriculums and year-round schedules "all win kudos."

So who ranked ahead of Irvine in 2008?

Money magazine places Plymouth, Minn., in the top spot, followed by Fort Collins, Colo., and Naperville, Ill.



WELCOME BACK: Students in Rebecca Nakagawa's fifth-grade class pose with new Plaza Vista School Principal Heather Phillips. Plaza Vista and IUSD's three other year-round sites began school on July 23.

Franklin Township, N.J., trailed Irvine at No. 5.

School Board seats will go uncontested in November

The filing period for this year's Board of Education election closed in August with only incumbent trustees Sue Kuwabara, Carolyn McInerney and Mike Parham submitting the necessary paperwork to run for office.

The lack of challengers means IUSD's seats will be left off the November ballot and the current Board will remain seated until the next election in 2010.

"We appreciate the confidence the public has in this district and our leadership," IUSD Board of Education President Carolyn McInerney said.

"Though we had welcomed the opportunity to state our cases for successive terms, we are grateful that the Irvine Unified School District will be spared the cost of an election, particularly as the state endures a budget crisis that threatens to strip our schools of critical funding. These dollars can now be put to better use on behalf of our students."

An election this year would have cost between \$115,000 and \$137,000, according to estimates from the Orange County Registrar's Office.

IUSD boasts 99 of 16,000 potential Merit Scholars

Approximately 16,000 of the nation's best and brightest seniors were recently named as semifinalists in the pursuit of scholarships through the prestigious National Merit Scholarship Corp.

Astonishingly, 99 of them are from IUSD's high schools.

As juniors, more than 1.5 million students entered the 2009 National Merit Program by taking the 2007 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. The highest scoring entrants were named semifinalists – an elite group that represents less than one percent of all U.S. high school seniors.

These scholars now have an opportunity to pursue 8,200 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$35 million. To be considered for these awards, semifinalists must become finalists by fulfilling several requirements, including earning outstanding marks throughout high school, securing the recommendation of their principals and posting high SAT scores.

About 90 percent of the semifinalists are expected to become finalists, and approximately half of all finalists will win a National Merit Scholarship and earn the title of "Merit Scholar."

PRINCIPALS: Meet IUSD's three new leaders

(Continued from page 1)

Here's a brief introduction to Karen Catabijan of Turtle Rock Elementary, Tamara Brown of Greentree Elementary and Alan Schlichting of Santiago Hills Elementary.

Catabijan, the new Turtle Rock principal, arrived from the Ocean View School District, where she most recently served as principal of Oak View Elementary School in Huntington Beach.

Before becoming principal, Catabijan spent 12 years as a classroom teacher and took on a variety of leadership roles, serving as vice principal, School Improvement Plan (SIP) coordinator and bilingual/Title I coordinator.

The Irvine resident, whose sons attended IUSD schools, has a master's degree in educational administration from Cal State Dominguez Hills and a bachelor's degree from Loyola Marymount University.

Catabijan said she feels fortunate to be working with a staff so committed to making sure students are happy and prepared to exceed the community's high expectations.

"I strongly believe in the power of collaboration," she said, "and I look forward to working closely with teachers and parents to provide the best instructional program possible for the students at Turtle Rock."

Brown said she feels like she's "gone to heaven" as the new principal of Greentree Elementary.

"The staff is so committed to what they do," she said. "They are so focused on kids and learning."

Married with two young daughters, Brown received her master's degree in educational administration from National University and her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Minnesota State University Moorhead.

She most recently worked for the Lynwood Unified School District, where she served as an elementary assistant principal, a multilingual program Teacher On Special Assignment (or TOSA), a resource teacher and a GATE teacher.

Now in Irvine, Brown said she's eager to work with the community on behalf of its youngest residents.

"Everybody has been so helpful and supportive since I walked in this door," she said. "It's amazing."

Schlichting comes to Santiago Hills Elementary by way of Kansas City, Kan., where he served as an elementary principal for five years.

Yet he began his career in San Bernardino County, teaching grades three and six in addition to GATE. He also worked in the Colton Joint Unified School District, where

he was a certified cognitive coach and a principal for five years.

Schlichting, who was a senior associate with the California School Leadership Academy, earned his bachelor's degree from Concordia University, spending a summer semester along the way at the University of Tel Aviv. He received his credential and his master's degree in curriculum leadership from the University of Redlands.

In Colton, Schlichting opened a new campus and served as principal of schools on year-round and traditional calendars. He said he was immediately impressed by the level of support from the Santiago Hills staff and community.

"I'm very excited about both the district and the school," Schlichting said. "There are things that happen in this district that just amaze me."

On the move... A look at who's where in IUSD



	...is the new principal at...	...after having most recently served...
Tamara Brown	Greentree Elementary	in a comprehensive range of assignments for the Lynwood Unified School District
Heather Phillips	Plaza Vista School	as assistant principal at Plaza Vista
Alan Schlichting	Santiago Hills Elementary	as an elementary principal in Kansas City, Kansas
Kara Rydman	University Park Elementary	as assistant principal at Rancho San Joaquin Middle School
Stan Machesky	Westwood Basics Plus	as principal of Plaza Vista
ChrissAnn Shane	Woodbury Elementary	as principal of Turtle Rock Elementary
Keith Tuominen	Venado Middle School	as assistant principal at Irvine High School
Jason Vioria	Woodbridge High	as assistant principal at Woodbridge



“providing the highest quality educational experience we can envision.”

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Got a story?

Have an idea for an *IUSD Today* story or a submission? Contact Public Information Officer Ian Hanigan at ihanigan@iusd.org or call (949) 936-5002.

Don't forget to check out the Irvine Public Schools Foundation at www.ipsf.net.

The Irvine Unified School District

BUDGET: Additional funds making an impact

(Continued from page 1)

sponded to the state crisis by pledging up to \$900,000 in matching funds to help minimize impacts on class sizes. That means for every dollar raised on behalf of our district, the City has promised to contribute another dollar. In turn, the Irvine Public Schools Foundation has committed itself to leveraging as much of these funds as possible.

This added revenue is already paying tremendous dividends in our classrooms, surpassing our own optimistic expectations.

Fourth- through sixth-grade classes with 30 or more students are benefiting from additional support, including new instructional aides, effectively reducing student-to-teacher ratios.

In grades seven through 12, approximately \$700,000 has been allocated to add new certificated teaching positions, also serving to lower student-to-teacher ratios in critical middle and high school courses.

What impact has this made?

At Sierra Vista Middle School, class sizes in science were lowered from 36 to 33 thanks to these funds. South Lake Middle School was able to add another section of eighth-grade math and restore an elective section. University High School reports that

its English and math classes would have been two to three students larger without these dollars.

Success stories like these abound, demonstrating the incredible power of collaboration. Our friends from the City of Irvine, in conjunction with IPSF, our amazing PTAs and others, have exhibited a level of investment and generosity that is simply unprecedented, and their work continues.

IPSF, for example, has said it will continue to seek donations to make the most of the City's offer, and I encourage all who value Irvine's world-class schools to visit the foundation's website at www.ipsf.net.

As I've said in the past, dollars alone are not the key to offering an exceptional education. It takes first-rate teachers, a dedicated staff, involved parents and a supportive community to build upon prior successes. Fortunately for IUSD, we already have the latter ingredients in the mix, along with students who are engaged and committed to learning.

On Sept. 4, many of those students streamed back into our classrooms, their mere presence serving as an annual reaffirmation of our primary mission and responsibility – making sure every moment with every child counts.

TEST: Scores exceed the state, federal standards

(Continued from page 4)

fourth-graders who scored a 6 or 8 spiked from 43 percent in 2007 to 74 percent in 2008; seventh-graders improved 1 percentage point, from 88 percent to 89 percent.

In math, grade-level CSTs were given to all students in grades two through six, as well as a majority of seventh-graders. (A smaller number of seventh-graders took the algebra I exam instead.) Of those who took grade-level math exams, the percentage of students considered proficient or advanced ranged from 80 per-

cent in the fifth and sixth grades to 86 percent in grades two and four. All lower grades outperformed their 2007 counterparts with the exception of grade five, which dropped two percentage points.

In grades eight through 11, students took end-of-course math exams in subjects such as algebra I, geometry and algebra II. When averaged together, scores again ranged, with a high of 86 percent of eighth-graders reaching proficient or advanced levels. The largest one-year gains were in the ninth and tenth

grades, where the percentage of students in the proficient/advanced range jumped 5 percentage points.

Based on these scores and other criteria, all traditional campuses, including IUSD's four comprehensive high schools, had scores well above 800 on the state's Academic Performance Index, which measures achievement on a scale of 200 to 1,000.

In fact, eight of the top 20 highest-scoring schools in the county – and 27 of the top 100 – are in the Irvine Unified School District.