



OCSBA
Orange County School Boards Association

SPOTLIGHT ON NEWS

February 2011 Edition

Orange County School Boards Association

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A Message from the OCSBA President – Shirley Carey

CHALLENGES

The school board members of every school district and community college are facing many challenges this spring. The common challenges are fiscal and include budget cuts, staffing and program reductions, as well as the unknown

indirect impact of cuts to other programs, such as mental health and early childhood. We are challenged by the times to be informed. The information you bring or the questions you ask may help your governance team arrive at a creative solution to a difficult problem. Although many decisions need to be made soon, board members need to work with a unity of purpose and maintain a long term vision, for the crisis will pass and the economy will improve.

A wise administrator has shared that a time of crisis might also be an opportunity as there may be programs that could be eliminated or revised and contract changes made that would not occur when money is available.

Staying informed is a choice because the information is readily available!

CSBA’s (County School Boards Association) website (www.csba.org) is a valuable resource. Topics presented on the website are timely, broad-based and well researched. Be sure to take the time to read the weekly updates such as each week’s summary on the state budget process, the update on the Education Coalition, or the research on Consolidation of Schools and Districts. In addition, be sure to sign up for CSBA webinars as they are topical, informative, and generally free. The ongoing training for board members is invaluable.

At the local level, the challenges are complex. It is critical that every budget decision is made with thoughtful analysis of the mission and goals of the district, and that a decision is made to identify the core curriculum, and fund it as a top priority. By this time, I doubt that anyone has any “extras” left to consider, and staff and programs will be the top items for consideration if continuation of the temporary revenue enhancements are not supported by the public in June. Tearing down strong programs that support education of the whole child is an emotional challenge!

It is important to educate your elected legislative representatives regarding the impact of previous and potential cuts on your students. The Governmental Relations Chairs

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Message from the OCSBA President – Shirley Carey



CHALLENGES

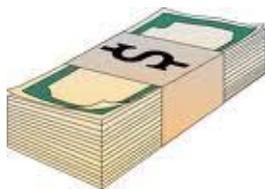
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(GRC) are scheduling meetings with both legislators and CSBA representatives during the month of February. If you would like to join your GRC for that visit, call them or e-mail Don Sedgwick (dmsedgwick@yahoo.com or call him at 949-885-6272) for contact information.

Another challenge is to educate your community. Because we continue to “hold-it-together” and do quite well on test scores, and other visible markers of student success, members of our communities do not realize that there have been dramatic reductions in public schools’ funding. A good way to demonstrate the impact for the public might be to gather a summary of previous budgets or cut lists, and two projected budgets for the 2011-2012 with potential cuts listed for each option. An invitation to visit your school for open house, etc., also provides a great teaching moment.

As a community leader, you need to get involved in advocacy, but be careful to follow all of the legal guidelines prohibiting use of public funds for political activities! One venue is the Orange County Education Coalition, an organization that is again becoming active and will be providing you with updates. Suzie Swartz is OCSBA’s contact person and she can be reached at suzieswartz@prodigy.net or at 949-830-5924. You can find a *Sample Resolution to Support Placing a Revenue Extension Measure on the Ballot* on the CSBA website. Boards can personalize the wording and pass it at their next meeting, and then use it to advocate for public education funding.

Investing in the education of over half a million Orange County children is the best way to improve their lives and to turn the economy of this area around. In 20 years, these students will be sitting in the Legislature, taking care of us, teaching our children, and running our businesses. You can make a difference in their lives, and I applaud your efforts to address the challenges we face.



The Future of Flexibility

There are a number of surveys and studies regarding fiscal flexibility that report how some districts have used flexibility during the 2009-10 school year. On January 21, 2011, University of California, Berkeley Professor and Co-Director of Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), Bruce Fuller presented findings from PACE’s recent study, *Experiments in Deregulating School Finance*. PACE’s work is a collaboration with the RAND Corporation, the University of California, and San Diego State University. The goal of this study is to answer questions such as, “How are districts making use of this fiscal flexibility? What forces are shaping resource allocation decisions?”

For more information about PACE and this study go to: <http://pace.berkeley.edu>.

Source: *The Fiscal Report, School Services of California, Inc., Volume 31, No. 2*



The Best Nine Colleges Anywhere

by Dr. David Chapel, Trustee, Rancho Santiago Community College District

Did you know that Orange County is endowed with nine of the best community colleges you can find? They are Cypress, Fullerton, Golden West, Orange Coast, Coastline, Santa Ana, Santiago Canyon, Irvine Valley, and Saddleback. As a matter of fact, community colleges are a tuition bargain for students, while saving precious tax dollars from the state budget. It costs far less for two years of education at a community college compared to a California state university or the University of California.

California's community colleges (there are 112!) enroll more than 1.2 million students annually. This is twice as many students as the California state universities and the University of California System combined. Actually 48% of the bachelor degree graduates in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics got their start at a community college.

Also, 80% of firefighters, law enforcement officers and EMTs are credentialed at community colleges, along with 70% of the nurses in California. Community colleges provide certificates and training that promote business in Orange County. As a result of employment growth and job promotions, a two year degree will give graduates approximately \$400,000 more in lifetime income than a high school graduate.

The Orange County Nine serve more than transfer students and students seeking to improve job skills. The colleges take seriously the "community" in community colleges. There are adult life enrichment classes because learning is a life long journey. Arts and cultural activities abound to make any weekend special. Finally, sports and athletics give the spectator a reason to cheer. Did you know that several local college teams are National Champions?

Visit the web sites for one of your local community colleges. You'll be amazed at what's happening just down the road.



Welcome New Chancellor

GARY L. POERTNER – *South Orange County Community College District*

Gary L. Poertner was appointed Chancellor of the South Orange County Community College District beginning December 1, 2010. He has over 40 years experience as an administrator in California public schools. He spent 11 years of dedicated service as deputy chancellor of the district, providing leadership in all business operations, including fiscal services, payroll, accounting, purchasing, and facilities planning. For many years, he supervised the operations of Human Resources and Information Technology, and provided developmental oversight for the district's newest campus, the Advanced Technology and Education Park in Tustin.



OCSBA/ACSA Joint Dinner Meeting

Wednesday, March 9, 2011
Irvine Marriott Hotel
PAGE 5:30, Social 6:00, Dinner 6:30 PM



Political Action Group Efforts (PAGE) Meeting

Michael Kilbourn, President

Legislative and Management Strategies, Inc.

presents

“Sacramento Scene”

Michael Kilbourn will provide insight into the Sacramento scene and the expected fiscal and legislative impacts to education. After more than 30 years of lobbying activity for the Orange County Department of Education and various school districts, Mike established Legislative and Management Strategies, Inc. to provide legislative advocacy services for districts and county offices of education throughout California. Mike will address your issues and concerns.

Dinner Speaker

Lucy Dunn

President and CEO
Orange County Business Council (OCBC)

Lucy Dunn is President and CEO of the Orange County Business Council, where she leads a dynamic organization of business members working with academia and government to ensure the county’s economic prosperity and high quality of life. Lucy will be sharing her perspective about the relationship between business and education and how working together will make a difference for our students. You won’t want to miss Lucy’s engaging, no-nonsense presentation. She will stimulate your thinking!



Through partnership with SchoolsFirst Federal Credit Union, OCSBA and ACSA are able to discount dinner prices from the usual \$51.00 per person to \$31.00 (tax, tip, self-parking included). We extend our sincere gratitude to SchoolsFirst for their ongoing support of public education.

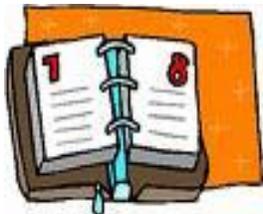


UNITED STATES EDUCATION DASHBOARD

The U.S. Department of Education launched a new website that provides access to key national and state education data. Known as the United States Education Dashboard, the new site is available at <http://dashboard.ed.gov>.

The Dashboard contains a range of cradle-to-career data. On a single webpage, those interested will be able to view indicators of the nation’s performance in education, gauge their state’s progress and see how their state is performing compared to others.

SAVE THE DATES!



OCSBA/ACSA Joint Dinner Meeting

Wednesday, March 9, 2011

OCSBA Annual Dinner Meeting/2011-2012 Board Elections

Wednesday, May 4, 2011, PAGE 5:30, Social 6:00, Dinner 6:30 PM

OCSBA Special Meeting

Wednesday, May 25, 2011, 3:30 to 5:30 PM

Speaker Ron Bennett, President and CEO of School Services of California