

SPOTLIGHT ON NEWS

February 2007 Edition



**Orange County
School Boards
Association**

P.O. Box 9050
B-1008
Costa Mesa, CA
92628-9050

2006-2007

Editor:

Sheila Benecke,
Capistrano Unified
School District

OCDE Liaison:

Ellin Chariton
Executive Director

Editorial Staff:

Blanca Zimmerman
(714) 966-4313
bzimmerman@ocde.us

A Message from the OCSBA President – Suzie Swartz

January 8th marked the fifth anniversary of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), the bipartisan legislation signed into law by President Bush. This year, Congress will consider the reauthorization of NCLB, and as locally elected school board members we have a new opportunity to lend our voices to this critical debate and help effect change for the better.

US Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings considers NCLB to be almost perfect. She was quoted as saying last year, “I talk about No Child Left Behind like Ivory soap: It’s 99.9 percent pure There’s not much needed in the way of change.”

On the other hand, the new Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid released a statement saying, “It is clear, five years later, that changes need to be made. No Child Left Behind has been vastly under funded ... accountability measures have proven far too punitive and states have been given little flexibility in implementing the law’s requirements.”

Accountability for student achievement is a top priority for all of us. Last year, our Orange County pupils outperformed their peers on California math and English tests. Even so, many of our schools were tripped up by some of the problematic requirements of NCLB especially where it relates to a subgroup’s participation rate and/or performance.

As the reauthorization debate picks up steam in the months ahead, it is incumbent upon all of us to be well-versed in how NCLB positively and negatively affects our individual school districts. We must also clearly communicate this knowledge to our community and encourage their voice in lobbying Congress and President Bush to improve NCLB by building upon its strengths and addressing its shortcomings.

To learn more about NCLB, talk with your superintendent, district administrators and teachers. Also go to the US Department of Education website at www.ed.gov and to the CSBA website www.csba.org and click on No Child Left Behind.

I look forward to seeing you on February 21st.

Suzie Swartz

(Note: This column was written prior to the Governor presenting his proposed budget.)

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2006 CSBA Conference Notes



Several board members from Orange County who attended the recent CSBA conference in San Francisco, have submitted their impressions and some information that they have consented to share.

- I found this CSBA Convention excellent. One interesting session discussed the role of our State Board with the Chinese government in efforts to bring Chinese teachers to California. There is a relationship in which the Chinese will provide trained educators and help with the funding. Excellent!
—*Hilda Sugarman, Fullerton School District*
- Keynote speaker Erik Wahl reminded us how crucial the arts are to keeping the right side of the brain thriving - not just for creativity's sake but for strengthening critical thinking skills, too.
—*Suzie Swartz, Saddleback Valley Unified School District*
- One thing that I really enjoyed at the conference was Scott Plotkin's history of the CSBA. It was entertaining and informative. It was a history of an organization that has grown to meet the needs of its members and is vital and adaptive in support of education in California.
—*Meg Cutuli, Los Alamitos Unified School District*
- One of the sessions I attended in San Francisco was presented by a team from South Bay Union School District. Their topic was about Professional Learning Communities and was prefaced by Robert Marzano and Rick DuFour's ideas on what really works in schools. The overview of what's happening in South Bay clearly illustrated why it's important to make fundamental changes to do whatever it takes to make students successful. One very important observation I came away with was that this cannot be "top down," but instead developed on-site by the team of teachers and their principal as they explore, design, and implement their plan for their individual school. We, as board members can help by setting direction and giving support, but then we need to give the schools time to gain momentum as they formalize plans and begin to grow to full potential. As shared by South Bay, this collaborative process developed over a four-year timeframe. In my district, the Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District, we are developing Professional Learning Communities, and my views have been further reinforced by the results experienced in South Bay.
—*Karin Freeman, Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified School District*

New Orange County Superintendent ***JANE RUSSO – Santa Ana Unified School District***

Jane Russo was chosen as the new Santa Ana Unified School District Superintendent on January 9, 2007. Ms. Russo had served as the district's interim superintendent since August. She had previously worked as the district's deputy superintendent.

Since 1973 Ms. Russo has held every level of education in both Arizona and California, including classroom teacher, reading specialist, assistant principal, principal, curriculum and instruction leader, area administrator, assistant superintendent and deputy superintendent. She has been a member of the San Gabriel Valley Instructional Leaders, Santa Ana College Teacher Center Advisory Board, Valley High School Global Academy of Finance Advisory Board, Santa Ana's Reading City Committee and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Visiting Team.

Ms. Russo and her husband Ken have lived in the city of Santa Ana for 18 years. They have one son, Darryn who lives with his wife in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

***Orange County Board of Education President,
John “Jack” W. Bedell, Ph.D., Elected to State Association***

Orange County Board of Education President, John, “Jack” W. Bedell, Ph.D. was elected President-elect of the California County Boards of Education (CCBE) at the organization’s recent annual conference in San Francisco.

Bedell has served as a member of the Orange County Board of Education and been active in CCBE for almost four years.

A career educator and sociologist for more than forty years, Dr. Bedell is Chair of the Anthropology Department at California State University, Fullerton. He is a graduate of Franklin and Marshall College and has both an M.A. and Ph.D. from Case Western Reserve University where he was a National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Fellow. His active community service includes President and member of the Board of Directors of the Fullerton Civic Light Opera, President and member of the Church Council of St. Paul Lutheran Church, and Chair and member of the Board of the Orange County Area Agency on Aging. He is a former President and member of the Fullerton School District Board of Education. Jack lives with Susan, his wife of 42 years, in Fullerton.



WILLIAM M. HABERMEHL
County Superintendent of Schools

Education In the News

Each day the Orange County Department of Education posts a brief summary of the articles from the Orange County Register, the Los Angeles Times, the Sacramento Bee, the USA Today, the New York Times, CNN, and the Washington Post that are of interest to the educational community. These article summaries are posted on the OCDE website at <http://news.ocde.us> For those who wish to read the entire article, a link to the actual article follows at the end of each summary. The summaries remain on line so past articles can also be viewed.

After each day’s articles have been posted, an email with the link to the current articles is sent to a list of subscribers. Many Orange County superintendents and board members already subscribe to receive this daily email, and this service is very much appreciated by many subscribers.

If you are not already on the list of subscribers and would like to receive these daily emails, please contact jtrop@ocde.us You can add as many subscriber email addresses as you wish.

Can District Offices Help Schools Improve? Three-Year Study Says Yes

WestEd researchers concluded that leaders in successful districts align their efforts to a shared theory about how to achieve school improvement; engage in frequent, open communication and establish a common vocabulary with each other and their schools; and maintain focus in the face of external demands and distractions.

Schools working to raise student achievement need the help of an organized, focused central office. Yet many districts lack unified direction, agreement on the central office role in supporting school improvement, and coherence and alignment between goals and strategies.

Drawing on the findings of a three-year study of several districts focused on improving their schools, Central Office Inquiry: Assessing Organization, Roles, and Functions to Support School Improvement is intended to help central office leadership and staff examine their organizational arrangement, their enacted roles, and their day-to-day activities, critically questioning both their theories of action and how their work is concretely helping the schools they serve. For more information, please go to:

<http://www.wested.org/cs/we/view/rs/814>



Political Action Group Efforts
 February 21, 2007
 5:30 to 6:00 p.m.

“Sacramento Scene”

Presented by

Michael Kilbourn, President

Legislative and Management Strategies, Inc.

Michael Kilbourn will provide insight into the Sacramento scene and the potential budget and legislative impact to education. After 24 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.



PARKING

While construction is going on at the Irvine Marriott, hotel parking is markedly reduced. Please carpool to the dinner meeting if at all possible.

**JOINT OCSBA/ACSA REGION XVII
 DINNER MEETING**

February 21, 2007
 Dinner Speaker

“The Healing Power of Humor”

Presented by

Dr. Stuart Robertshaw, “Dr. Humor”

Dr. Stuart Robertshaw, whom the press refers to as “Dr. Humor,” currently serves as President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Association for the Humor Impaired. Dr. Humor will share with you what he has learned about the psychological and physiological benefits of humor as it relates to taking care of ourselves through laughter and humor. He is an attorney and Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Education at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse.

Dr. Robertshaw received his bachelor’s degree in education from MacMurray College, a master’s degree in psychology from Illinois State University, a doctorate in special education from the University of Kansas, and a law degree from the University of Wisconsin Law School.

DATES TO REMEMBER

2007 Marian Bergeson Award
 Nominations Due
Friday, March 16, 2007



2007 - 2008 OCSBA
 Board of Directors Applications Due
Wednesday, February 28, 2007



**Congratulations!
 2006 No Child Left Behind
 Blue Ribbon Award
 Winning Schools**

Troy High, Fullerton Joint Union High

Northwood High, Irvine Unified

Oak Middle, Los Alamitos Unified

El Dorado High, Placentia-Yorba Linda Unified

Orange County High School of the Arts,
 Santa Ana Unified

SAVE THE DATES

**OCSBA/ACSA JOINT DINNER MEETING
 Wednesday, February 21, 2007**

**OCSBA ANNUAL DINNER MEETING
 2007-2008 Board Elections
 Wednesday, May 9, 2007**

PAGE 5:30, Social 6:00, Dinner 6:30