

***By Cindy M. Cathey***

*Superintendent of Schools*

It was with great excitement that we welcomed our students and families on the first day of school. To prepare for their arrival we have been very busy. To recap a few of our summer accomplishments, we put the final touches on our facilities by finishing the painting and lighting projects at five schools; completed the extensive renovations for the high school Career Technical Education Center; renovated Lincoln Alternative High School adding a multi-use room; cleaned and polished our classrooms and hallways, resurfaced several blacktops; completed the conceptual design phase for the elementary playgrounds and the Muir track and field project; started demolition of the high school swimming pool and fields project; and we are making rapid progress on the Pacific Sports Complex and Burrell Field. Thanks to the City of San Leandro we have a new stop light at the corner of 136th and Bancroft Avenue to ensure that our students cross safely when moving from one campus to the other.

To strengthen our instructional program we provided pre-kindergarten to 72 five year old who are now ready for kindergarten; established two Transitional Kindergartens classes for 50 four year olds who missed the new kindergarten age cutoff date; provided high quality professional development for teachers and administrators in the areas of English Language Arts, math, Professional Learning Communities, English Language learners, GEAR Up, and AVID strategies; upgraded our assessment system; partnered with Alameda County Behavioral Health Services to bring a cadre of mental health counseling professionals (at no cost to the district) to provide additional support to students and families; and we added one more Instructional Coach to provide on-the-ground support to our new and veteran teachers.

While we continue to focus on the opportunities that surround us, we also continue to face financial uncertainty due to drastic cutbacks to public education across the state for the past five years. To bring local control to school finances, the Board of Education unanimously approved placing a parcel tax (Measure L) on the Nov. 6 ballot. Measure L will provide emergency funding needed to protect and preserve such programs as core reading, math, and science programs, athletics and sports programs, campus safety, art, and music, technology, and small class sizes. We will be sharing more information about Measure L with our community in the coming weeks.

Reflecting back, we ended last year with many prestigious awards, some of which included: 2012 Model School Attendance and Review Board (SARB) Program, 2012 Model Continuation High School Program (Lincoln High School), Season of Service Period of Peace Promising Program National Award, National AVID Demonstration School for John Muir, and the National Jefferson Service Award for students at San Leandro High School.

We also ended the year with more than 180 seniors earning over \$1 Million in scholarships as they headed off to Harvard, NYU, Dartmouth, Holy Names, Saint Mary's College, Cal Poly, UC Berkeley, UC San Diego, UC Santa Barbara, Cal State East Bay and many other UC and CSU colleges. Many of our seniors went off to community colleges, entered the trades, and still others entered the military to serve our country. Whichever path our seniors took, we are proud of their accomplishments.

Looking forward, while I know that public education will face a number of fiscal challenges in the months ahead. I have absolutely no doubt that the 2012-2013 school year is going to be a great year filled with endless possibilities for our students. I am grateful for our partnerships with the City, the Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, our service organizations and foundations, our families, and our community. I am also grateful to our employee groups who have, yet again, made great sacrifices and concessions to minimize the impact of the state's budget situation on our students. There is no doubt; together we are most definitely better. Thank you for your continued support!