

The Connection

San Bruno Park School District

December 2015, Volume 4

Superintendent's Corner

We have had an incredibly busy fall in San Bruno Park School District. We just celebrated Thanksgiving and I am very grateful for each family entrusted to our district, as well as the whole community that makes up San Bruno. I am blessed to be here and to be part of this beautiful, welcoming city. I trust each of you had a wonderful Thanksgiving and were able to spend it with family and friends.

I have appreciated getting to know community members and parents during the Coffee Hours so generously hosted by the Chamber of Commerce, the second Wednesday of the month, from 10:30-11:30 at the Entrepreneurial Center on San Mateo Avenue. Our next one will be December 9. We'd love to have you join us.

Looking ahead to January, CBO Sean McGinn and I will visit each site in January to share the current status of the budget, programs, and answer questions. Staff members may attend any of them that work for their schedules. **The school staff informational sessions will go from 2:45-3:45. These dates are as follows:**

Allen: Monday, 1/11
Belle Air: Tuesday, 1/12
El Crystal: Thursday, 1/14
Parkside: Wednesday, 1/6
John Muir: Thursday, 1/7
Portola: Tuesday, 1/19
Rollingwood: Wednesday, 1/20

Similar Informational nights and chat times for parents will be hosted at the district office from 6:30-7:30 on the following evenings:

Wednesday, January 6
Thursday, February 18

A warm thank you to all the families who donated coats to the San Bruno Coat Givaway during October! It was amazing to see all the coats and sweaters and sweatshirts available for San Bruno families on



November 18! Our schools collected many coats to help with this. WOW! Thank you for your giving hearts.

Our Education Foundation, with the teaching support of our Parkside music teachers, have begun orchestra and band for our district 4th and 5th grade students! We are very excited for them to learn how to read music and play an instrument before they enter Parkside's amazing music program. If you are interested or know of a business or group who could help fund instrument rentals or the deposit for a rental instrument for students who cannot afford it, please give us a call at our district office – 624-3109.



Our San Bruno Education Coalition is working together to develop a course continuum with common language and common learning targets from preschool through Skyline College. We are backwards mapping from Skyline to Parkside right now, and when that is completed, we will continue backwards mapping down to preschool. Our goal is to provide a seamless transition through the grade levels so our students are adequately prepared for each new level of schooling. That way, our students will be prepared for CHOICE! They can choose college or a career. Other goals for the group include the possibility of providing a summer bridge camp, hosted by Skyline, and housed at Capuchino. These camps would be at key junctures in students' lives, such as between 5th and 6th grade,

between 8th and 9th grade, and between 12th grade and entrance to college. We will also work to develop a cohesive plan to implement Restorative Justice principles across our schools, through the grade levels.

“San Bruno Park School District educates and empowers all students to thrive academically, socially and emotionally to be contributing members of society.”

SBPSD Goals:

- *Attract, develop and retain highly qualified staff*
- *Implement 21st century learning strategies and methodologies*
- *Become fiscally solvent*
- *Develop, expand and implement quality programs and courses to enable academic success for all students*

Thank you! Most Sincerely,

Cheryl Olson



From the Classroom

Fun Brain Facts

Did you know...



- Learning two languages before age five alters the brain structure.
- Every time you recall a memory or have a new thought, you are creating a new connection in your brain.
- The average number of thoughts humans are believed to experience each day is 70,000.
- Baby Talk Increases Vocabulary. A study showed when mothers frequently spoke to their infants, their children learned about 300 more words by

age two than did children whose mothers rarely spoke to them.

- Measures of brain activity show during the second half of a child's first year, the prefrontal cortex, the seat of forethought and logic, forms synapses at such a rate that it consumes twice as much energy as an adult brain. That furious pace continues for the child's first ten years of life.
- During the first month of life, the number of connections or synapses, dramatically increases from 50 trillion to 1 quadrillion. If an infant's body grew at a comparable rate, his weight would increase from 8.5 pounds at birth to 170 pounds at one month old.
- Reading aloud to children helps stimulate brain development, yet only 50% of infants and toddlers are routinely read to by their parents.
- Working Memory Stores Seven Digits. It's no accident that telephone numbers in the United States are seven digits long. Our working memory, a very short-term form of memory, which stores ideas just long enough for us to understand them, can hold on average a maximum of seven digits. This allows you to look up a phone number and remember it just long enough to dial.
- Reading aloud or listening to a story being told is one of the most “cerebrally” engaging experiences a kid can have. Watching TV for 15,000 hours only generates about 30 minutes of brain activity. However, with reading aloud, it fires up children’s brains because they have to use their imagination. This activity stimulates the electricity in the brain, promoting brain development by strengthening brain pathways.
- Sleeping at night is considered the most ideal time for the brain. It appears to enhance the connection between nerve cells in the brain. The brain process is believed to support the basis of memory and learning. In a recent scientific study, it is revealed the brain consolidates all the learned memories from the whole day while sleeping at night. However, one should get enough sleep in order to revive all those memories.

So, with all that brain growth and activity taking place at such an early age- how can you help develop your child's mind to its fullest potential? We learn first through our senses. Our first learning experiences are in response to touch, sight, and sound. Reading to your child in any language as well as engaging them in conversation will help your child grow and develop their brains. In the Student Services section of this newsletter, Ellen Merritt, the Director of Student Services references some work we are doing with our staff's around DOK- or Depth of Knowledge. You can support this work at home using some of these conversation starters- You can use them yourself to 'model' your thinking process and set an example as well as engage your child in a conversation by asking them to fill in the blanks.

- Make a prediction- *I think that.... because....*
- Ask a question- *Why do you think that... what makes you think that*
- Clarify something- *Now I understand because... at first I thought.... based on.... But now I think ... because of ...*
- Make a comment- *This is good because ... I don't like that because...*
- Make a connection- *This reminds me of ... because..., This is different because....*
- Summarize- *I wanted ... but now I ... because*

All of these conversation starters ask the thinker to recall information, analyze it and then report it out in a different way- This is a higher demand than just tell me about your day questions which just ask for simple recall. Instead you can ask, "Tell me the best part of your day and what made it the best part- or tell me about something you learned today and how it connects to what you thought before?" Their answers will also give you some insight into how your child thinks and how they are processing the world around them. An added benefit is it gives your child practice in more complex thinking as well as a feeling of being valued because you are asking them about their thoughts and feelings which is very rewarding and builds self-worth and confidence. So next time you are stuck in traffic, or have a moment- start a conversation- your child's mind will thank you.

Kim Harper, Director Curriculum and Instruction



Student Services



In 2014, Michael Yudin, Acting Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services at the U.S. Department of Education, reported that " too many of the 6.5 million children and youth with disabilities in this country leave high school without the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in a 21st century, global economy. While the vast majority of students in special education do not have significant cognitive impairments that prohibit them from learning rigorous academic content, fewer than 10 percent of eighth graders with disabilities are proficient in reading and math on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Too often, students' educational opportunities are limited by low expectations. We must do better".

In the past, the Department of Education has focused mainly on whether states were meeting the procedural requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In 2013, 41 states, including California, met criterion. Now the focus is on improving student results. When student success data using multiple measures was incorporated into the procedural compliance data, only 18 states met criterion.

To this end, Special Education Staff in the San Bruno Park School District have begun participating in trainings both in procedural compliance as well as in how to improve student performance.

For procedural compliance, which is important to preserve the rights of students and parents, ongoing trainings in observing timelines and writing IEPs is required. Karen Breslow, Program Coordinator for the San Mateo County SELPA, presented a two part training in November to Special Education Staff. Areas covered included an update on writing comprehensive IEPs, note taking during IEP meetings.

To improve student performance, Ms. Breslow reviewed with Special Education Staff how to write IEP goals for educational benefit. Kim Harper, Director of Curriculum, and I have presented the first two sessions of ongoing staff training regarding how to teach students using a Depth of Knowledge (DOK) format. DOK is a scale, or

continuum, of cognitive demand. The simplest, level one, requires a student to recall of information. The highest, level four, requires a student to investigate and process multiple parameters of a problem over time and produce a multi-step, cross curricular project. By modifying the content material, the highest DOK level of teaching is appropriate for any student age and developmental level. For younger students or those with significant cognitive impairments, planning a fruit salad, making a shopping list and figuring out how to get to the market, buying the food in specific quantities, and cutting and serving the food on a well set table, can be comparable in complexity to developing a business model using research on supply and demand, local resources, and making predictions of success using mathematical graphs or a developing a multi-media presentation.

Ellen Merritt, Director of Student Services & Special Education

Human Resources



The state of California is facing an extreme shortage of teachers and substitutes. As you may be aware, SBPSD is feeling that shortage too. We would like to encourage our families and community members to let us know if you know of anyone who has a teaching credential or has the qualifications necessary to be a substitute teacher. We will pay the fee necessary for individuals to take the CBEST test and also the fee necessary to file with the State for the credential to substitute. Please call Jennifer Peponis at the district office if you know of someone who may be qualified or interested! Our schools NEED them.

Thank you, Jennifer Peponis & Cecille Mendiola

Dollars and Sense!



Student Attendance

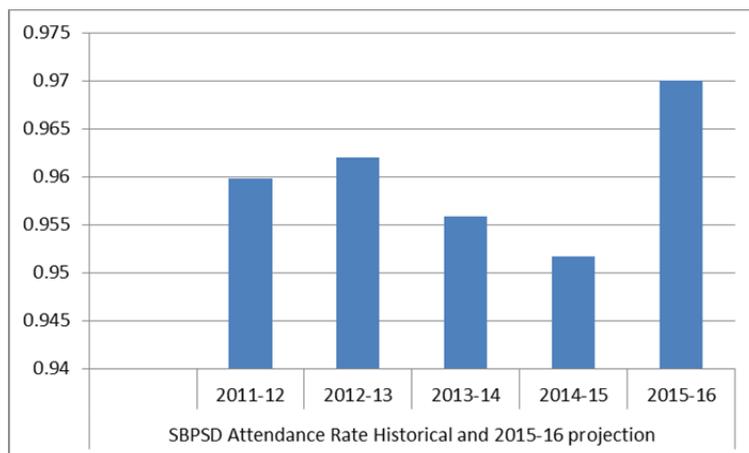
Good Attendance is vital to student success in school. Regular school Attendance is of utmost importance if a child is to achieve his or her full potential! Furthermore, the State only funds the school when your child actually attends school.

Here are a few Attendance facts:

- Attendance is taken daily for each student.
- If the student is enrolled but did not attend, the district will not receive funding
- District funding is based on the Average Daily Attendance
- Last Year San Bruno Park had an ADA rate of 95.5%
- Our goal is to have an ADA Rate of 97% or higher
- On average, each enrolled pupil missed 8 days of the 180 day school year, last year.
- 1/2 % of ADA rate is about \$100,000.

Attendance Initiatives in SBPSD

- Hire and Train Parent Liaisons at each school to do outreach with families
- Reinstate Wellness Committee to look at programs and support for students the areas of health and nutrition
- Investigate expansion of breakfast program at all schools and the dinner program at one school
- Attendance incentive programs being piloted at selected sites
- Developing parent/school compacts that urge parents to plan vacations on non-school days
- Training on mini-SARBs (School Attendance Review Boards) at the local level so each school site can do outreach sooner with families of students who are habitually late or absent



SBPSD has a goal to achieve a 97% Attendance Rate
So far, for the 2015-16 school year we are at 97% ADA.
Let's keep it there!

**Thank you,
Sean McGinn, CBO**

Student Nutrition



The months of October and November were placed under the sign of celebration! Our spooky Halloween menu, served from nicely decorated kitchens, brought us the highest participation in hot lunches ever! We also revived the Thanksgiving tradition by serving turkey and gravy with mashed potatoes and a special treat before the Thanksgiving break.

As 2015 draws to a close, we have started work on our new menus for 2016. We will offer a four week cycle menu that will change every three months. We will eliminate some items that students do not particularly like and will also introduce new foods each month. We will conduct tasting events of new items offered by our vendors, which will be fun. Stay tuned!

Thank you,
Fran DuBost, Student Nutrition Services



Tech as a Learning Tool



Televised Board Meetings: Thanks to Al Johnson, Rob Miguel & the crew at San Bruno Cable, the first stage of work has been completed in bringing our televised board meetings to Parkside, rather than continuing the use of the Crestmoor site. The cable crew installed new fiber optic cable on the Parkside campus to support the video feed and work continues on the endpoint connections. This project should be completed in time for the March televised meeting. We are grateful to San Bruno Cable for their ongoing support and partnership.

Thank you,
Don Hopkins,
Network Manager



We wish for each family
represented in our district to
have a wonderful December!

Enjoy family and friends
and all that is dear to you!

