

# INSPIRE

February 2020



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- ▶ Employees Donate Nearly 200 Gallons of Blood
- ▶ LLS Takes Learning to China
- ▶ SDCOE Supports the Census Effort
- ▶ South County SELPA Focuses on Equity and Disproportionality

Cover Photo: Nancy Yeh, Central Elementary School, Escondido

# Superintendent's Message

## We Can All Be Leaders

We honor two important leaders during February when we observe the births of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, our nation's first and sixteenth presidents, respectively. Both presidents are examples of passionate leaders who rallied people to make impactful changes that altered the course of history.

You don't have to be a president, though, to be a leader. We **all** can be leaders, no matter what role we fulfill at SDCOE.

For me, being a leader means helping people become better people. People follow people that they connect with, so leadership is all about relationships.

The most effective teachers are leaders because they're intentional and have high expectations of the children entrusted to their care. That may look like taking time to reflect on the history, teachings, and achievements of African Americans during National African American History Month (also celebrated in February), or it may mean giving high fives as students come into the classroom, or both, and so much more.

Strong school counselors (who we honor this month during National School Counseling Week) are leaders because they build relationships with the students and families they serve. Their efforts help students feel connected to school and can make children aware of all the possibilities available in life after K-12 education.

And I bet you didn't know that February is also National Children's Dental Health Month. The dentists who generously give their time to ensure our students have good oral health are leaders, too, in their field and their community. Their kindness, and the impact of their efforts, can never be overstated.

I encourage you to think about your place in our collective efforts to help children thrive. Public education can change the lives of children, and you have a role in public education. We can all be leaders in the fight against the status quo by centering your work on the fundamental question: am I making a difference in the lives of children?



# Internship Program Helps Bring Teachers to Special Education Classrooms



After years in the grocery business, **Joseph Sanchez** decided he wanted to become an educator, a goal he's pursuing with the help of an internship program offered by SDCOE's Teacher Effectiveness and Preparation team.

He's now teaching at Friendship School while working on completing his credential.

Sanchez originally enrolled at a local university, but the program there didn't work for him. He quit that program and a few months later signed up for the [Education Specialist Intern Program](#), which has been a much better fit.

"It's great," he said. "I just feel like it's more relatable to my work. We're getting paid to be teachers while we learn."

The internship program is specifically for people seeking to earn a special education credential, which is especially important

because schools often have a difficult time filling those positions. Participants in the two-year program work full-time as teachers in local school districts while taking classes at night to earn their credential.

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*"I always found that I had a special connection with kids with special needs. I have a heart for this career."*

— Nancy Yeh

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"This is a true partnership with school districts," said **Dr. Conni Campbell**, a coordinator with the Teacher Effectiveness and Preparation team. "Everyone is giving support."

That support includes goal setting, employment resources, classroom observation, and site mentorship.

There are about 30 interns currently in the program in 12 school districts across the county.

Another teacher in the program is Nancy Yeh, who is specializing in special education for preschoolers.

"I always found that I had a special connection with kids with special needs," she said. "I have a heart for this career."

She said Campbell and the team have been very helpful and encouraging as she interns at Central Elementary School in Escondido.

"It's challenging to go to school at night, but I'm learning a lot," she said.

Sanchez said he eventually hopes to become a school counselor, but that he loves working with the students at Friendship School. He started there as a substitute teacher in 2016.

"I fell in love with it," he said. "It's like a family. You can see that everybody cares about the students."



# Taking Learning International



Left to right are **Dr. Shannon Baker**, **Anne Worrall**, **Dr. Jeanette Chien**, and **Dr. Olympia Kyriakidis**.

Four team members from Learning and Leadership Services spent a week in China learning about education through the College Board's Chinese Bridge Delegation.

The program is for educators across the U.S. to help start or strengthen their institution's programs and partnerships related to China. Highlights include school visits, cultural activities, and educational workshops.

SDCOE's Assistant Superintendent **Dr. Jeanette Chien**, Curriculum and Instruction Senior Director **Dr. Shannon Baker**, Multilingual Education and Global Achievement Senior Director **Dr. Olympia Kyriakidis**, and Executive Leadership Coach **Anne Worrall** traveled in October. Each went to learn through a different lens.

During the trip, Baker focused on the method and practice of teaching and curriculum.



"China is making progress toward more interactive and inquiry-driven teaching, and students are now being expected to think, ask, collaborate, and actively research," she shared. "There is also a strong emphasis on a

balanced educational approach."

Baker explained that China is emphasizing art, academics, athletics and physical education, traditional Chinese culture, and integrated technology.

She observed that teachers are highly trained, and training rooms are equipped with mirrors, microphones, and videos.

Building spaces are designed to be innovative, inspire creativity, and be used for multiple purposes, she said.

Baker shared that China's educational approaches of inquiry, using technology, innovative spaces, and creative thinking were all clearly understood and communicated by Chinese officials, showing a coherent system.

One big difference, she explained, is China's education system is only required for nine years. After 9th grade, high school is available for students who score well on the national exam or if their family can afford to pay tuition at a private school.

"I'm grateful to work at an organization that prioritizes equity — where we work to ensure every student, regardless of whether they test well or their parents' income level, has the opportunity to succeed in college, career, and life," Baker said.

# 10 Minutes to Impact 10 Years: SDCOE Team Helps Census Effort

A group of SDCOE employees is working to keep California from losing a seat in Congress as well as nearly \$77 billion in federal funding for everything from special education to free and reduced-price lunch to highway improvements.

It all comes down to ensuring a complete and accurate count in the 2020 United States Census, which begins April 1. That's why the SDCOE team is working with districts and community partners to educate and motivate students and families to fill out the nine-question questionnaire, which is being offered online for the first time.

"Schools can play a powerful role in educating the community because of the trust families put in teachers and school employees," said Chief of Staff **Music Watson**, who is leading SDCOE's census efforts with support from **Stephanie Johnston Austin**, Juvenile Court and Community Schools (JCCS); **Dr. Evette Callahan**, Early Education; **Trinity Daniel**, Legal Services; **Matt Hayes**, Learning and Leadership Services; and **Dr. Leilah Kirkendoll**, JCCS.

"We know people will have questions about the new process, and maybe some fears, too, after a failed effort to place a citizenship question on the 2020 census form. That's especially true of members of hard-to-count communities," Watson explained.

Hard-to-count communities include African Americans, areas with limited or no broadband Internet access, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, families with children under 5, farm workers, families experiencing homelessness, households with

limited English proficiency, immigrants and refugees, Latinx people, and Native Americans and tribal communities.

Because of the breadth of SDCOE's responsibilities, our employees work closely with many of these communities. JCCS, for example, directly educates many children in these categories. Kirkendoll and Johnston Austin are working hard to ensure JCCS parents understand the importance of taking the census and are also working with principals to connect parents with job opportunities connected to the census.

In Early Education, Callahan is leading the charge to help preschool leaders learn ways to engage in conversation with families about the census.

Families often don't think to include their young children in the count, but they should. Every person living in your house most of the time should be counted; each person who is counted brings another \$1,250 in federal dollars for San Diego County schools, hospitals, roads, and other public services.

Hayes, of LLS, is focusing efforts on reaching teachers through a special training on curriculum developed by the Sacramento County Office of Education in partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Education. The curriculum is designed to teach students at the 5th-, 8th-, 11th, and

12th-grade levels about the census and get them excited to advocate for a complete count in 2020.

The final piece of SDCOE's campaign focuses on helping school districts publicize the census to reach families from hard-to-count communities. The SDCOE Communications team is curating and creating informational materials for use by district leadership and principals of schools receiving Title I funding. The team is also connecting schools with community partners that can provide presentations and staff booths at school events.

"It's really exciting to collaborate with so many different partners, from SDCOE employees to school principals to community groups," Watson said. "The more we can help people understand that the 10 minutes they spend taking the census will have a big impact on the next 10 years in California, the better. Our students and families are counting on us to get this right."



# New Project Takes Aim at **Equity and Disproportionality** in Special Education

## Effort Uses Human-Centered Approach to Develop Preventive Services and Tools for Students



Members of the South County Special Education Local Plan Area with a Butte County Office of Education representative at last month's Equity Conference. Pictured are, from left, **Russell Coronado**, **Olivia Rivera**, Lily Chang, **Marcus Jackson**, and **Ryan Estrellado**.

**I**t might be some of the most important work you've never heard about that's happening at SDCOE.

Employees at the South County Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) are months into the Equity, Disproportionality & Design project that aims to give all special education students the opportunity to live up to their full academic and social potential by reducing disproportionality and improving equity.

Disproportionality in special education is the over-representation of minority students identified with a learning disability or other type of disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Act. When a minority group's numbers in special education are statistically higher than they should be, they are considered disproportionate.

"Every child deserves to reach their potential," said **Russell Coronado**, South County SELPA executive

director. "Our goal is to remove as many obstacles as possible, such as inequitable practices that exist in current educational systems, so students are able to access that path to success."

The team's work is being funded by a five-year grant from the California Department of Education. As part of the grant, the South County SELPA was chosen to participate in the California Statewide System of Support and serve as the content lead to help SELPAs across the state reduce disproportionality and improve equity. The grant has nine deliverables that fall under the categories of awareness, action, and scale, including training, data tools, and an intervention framework.

The team right now is focused on raising awareness about equity and disproportionality and enlisting key stakeholders, including parents/guardians, educators, and community partners, to help design solutions and services.

"We believe that putting community stories and experiences front and center will sustain the emotional investment in preventing disproportionality, so we not only design for our community, but with our community," said **Ryan Estrellado**, SELPA executive consultant and content lead.

One such story the team hears often is when students display behavior that is deemed significantly challenging, many school districts enroll students in alternative educational programs outside of the their school/district of residence. When this occurs, it is difficult for these students to transition back to a comprehensive school site. This means that students with special needs are disproportionately denied the opportunity to be educated in an integrated environment with their general education peers.

The team is preparing to host its second of three creative design

workshops on Feb. 13. At the first workshop in October, participants were introduced to the design-thinking process and then chose to join one of three teams that would address awareness, action, or scale. Since then, some members have been conducting empathy interviews, talking with people who have been affected by disproportionality in school. Using student stories and taking a human-centered approach to developing preventive services and tools is an approach not often utilized in education, but one the team hopes will improve engagement and make implementing the solutions more successful.

In conjunction with the workshops, the team provides disproportionality awareness training, builds relationships with community partners and universities, and communicates frequently with SELPAs throughout the state to learn about the challenges they are facing. These interactions help the team get more people involved in their work.


**Olivia Rivera**, SELPA executive consultant and content lead, said that it's important to get an understanding of some of the challenges other SELPAs are facing and build a network of support so they all can get the help they need to address challenges around equity and disproportionality.

"Our goal is to shape our services to be their services," Rivera said.

"We are all doing similar work for students," added **Marcus Jackson**, SELPA executive consultant and content lead. "When we consult with other SELPAs who are just starting their equity work, it helps that they know there are many connections and networks to help them. Our job is to help them connect some of those missing pieces within our system of support."

Jackson has been working on issues around equity and disproportionality since 2015, focusing on building Multi-Tiered System of Support and positive behavioral interventions and supports programs for districts and schools served by the South County SELPA. The grant allows Jackson and the team to expand their work and engage more stakeholders to design solutions that help students.

"The stories of our families, students, and school staff are the key to nurturing our emotional investment in preventing disproportionality," said Estrellado. "We hope that having these stories at the center of our work honors these experiences and also inspires our community to shape their stories into one where all students reach their full academic and social potential."

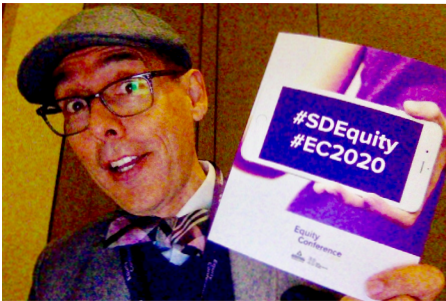


## *Nominate the Next Employee of the Year*

Honor your colleagues for all they do by nominating them for the [2020 SDCOE Classified Employee of the Year award](#).

Any staff member, certificated or classified, may nominate one or more classified employees by Feb. 19.





## Equity Conference Supports Inclusive Learning Environments

More than 900 leaders and educators attended SDCOE's first Equity Conference, which focused on supports for nurturing safe and inclusive learning environments for all students.

The two-day event was a time for county offices, districts, schools, community partners, and parents to collaborate and learn how to facilitate effective, systemic change. It featured nationally recognized speakers and sessions, highlighting current research and best practices in academics, culture and climate, family and community engagement, leadership, and mental health and wellness. Topics included: cultural responsiveness, disproportionate representation and access, and serving students who are experiencing homelessness, in the foster care system, LGBTQ+, multilingual learners, and who have disabilities. The conference focused on strengthening our systems to better respond to the linguistic, cultural, social-emotional, and mental health needs of all students.

## Career Technical Education in the Spotlight

February is Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month, a public awareness campaign that takes place each year to celebrate the value of CTE and the achievements of CTE programs. To honor the month, the SDCOE team will be sharing online resources and professional learning opportunities with educators, as well as activities and information for parents, students, and the community.

## Teacher Credential Grant Available

The Classified Employee Teacher Credentialing Grant is a partnership between the Orange County Department of Education, Butte County Office of Education, Imperial County Office of Education, and SDCOE. This grant provides \$3,000 per year to classified employees who are earning a teaching credential. Applications were recently accepted to serve 37 additional classified employees from 10 San Diego County districts and SDCOE. This will bring the number of San Diego County grant participants to 105. Gov. Gavin Newsom's proposed 2020-21 budget includes more than \$64 million to expand this program. For more information, contact [Dr. Sheiveh Jones](#).

## Students Connect with Colleges at Black College Expo

High School juniors and seniors across San Diego County connected with representatives from about two dozen historically black colleges at the Black College Expo on Jan. 29 in San Diego. Some students even received acceptances and scholarships on the spot.

The event was organized by the National College Resources Foundation in partnership with SDCOE to bring opportunities for students in the region.

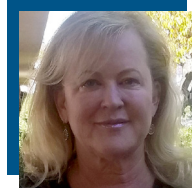
The Black College Expo was created nearly 20 years ago to help empower underrepresented students, demystify the college admissions process, and promote equal access to higher education by providing positive guidance and pathways.



# WELCOME New Employees



**Alejandra Amaya**  
English Language  
Development Assistant  
Juvenile Court and  
Community Schools



**Beckie Benson**  
Executive Director  
Enterprise  
Applications



**Charisma De Los Reyes**  
Project Specialist  
Student Support Services



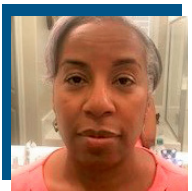
**Jamie Gonzalez**  
Behavior Specialist  
Special Education



**Fernando Gonzalez-Llamas**  
Custodian  
Maintenance and Operations



**Meghann O'Connor**  
Director  
Early Education



**Angela Stewart**  
School Nurse  
HOPE Infant Family  
Support



**Adina Sullivan-Marlow**  
Teacher Effectiveness  
Coordinator  
Human Resource Services

PHOTOS NOT  
AVAILABLE

**Samantha Istvanyi**  
Teacher  
Migrant Education

**Priscilla Partida**  
Teacher  
Monarch School

**Jennifer Vermillion**  
Project Specialist  
Student Support Services

## FIND IT . . .

### Branding and Style Information

Employees can get all of the information they need about how to represent SDCOE in a consistent and professional way by reviewing the [Branding and Style Manual](#).

SDCOE employees are expected to follow the manual for all official SDCOE communications.

Find the complete manual, a handy [Top 10 Tips sheet](#), a [Spanish-English Glossary](#), branded templates, and other resources on *Common Ground*.

Employees can get a printed copy of the *Branding and Style Manual* by either stopping by Room 507 on the main campus or emailing [Communications](#) to request a copy be sent to your work location.



FEBRUARY

### CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

**Nianza Thompson**  
Internal Business

“I have known and worked with Nianza since 2000, and I have always been impressed by her exceptional quality of service to everyone.”

— **Vy Nguyen**

Student Support Services

Learn more about Thompson and the Classified Employee of the Month program on [Common Ground](#).

# Photo Gallery



**Kathy Bowman**, Learning and Leadership Services, was busy during her winter break, traveling to Italy, Jordan, Morocco, and Egypt. She's pictured here visiting the pyramids in Cairo, Egypt.



South County SELPA Occupational Therapist **Sandra Clifton**, a University of Southern California alumna, and her children enjoyed December's Holiday Bowl Parade.

**Lucia Garay**, Early Education Programs and Services, enjoyed a hike at the Boo Hoff Trail near Indio over the winter break.





**Amy Tran**, Juvenile Court and Community Schools, joined her boyfriend for a family tradition of going to Universal Studios on Christmas Day.



**Mia Sneag**, Friendship School, enjoyed spending the winter break with her children, from left, Tobias, Gabriella, and Daniella.



**Tanya Bulette**, Curriculum and Instruction, went to Kauai during winter break with her family, and took a helicopter ride to Jurassic Falls.



**Erin English**, Innovation, visited the Festival of Lights at The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa in Riverside with her husband and mother.



Two co-workers joined **Joe Frescatore**, District and School Improvement, as he taught a class on how to make scallion and sea salt pancakes last month. Pictured are, from left, **Patricia Karlin**, Assessment, Accountability, and Evaluation; Frescatore; and **Staci Block**, Professional Learning and Technology Research.



**Tanya Bulette**, Curriculum and Instruction; **Bernadette Nguyen**, Curriculum and Instruction; **Jewyl Clarke**, Innovation; and a counselor from San Marcos visited Rancho Minerva Middle School in Vista to discuss college and career readiness.



Members of the PASS AmeriCorps team recently served breakfast to people experiencing homelessness in downtown San Diego. They are pictured here with Gov. Gavin Newsom, Sen. Toni Atkins, and California Chief Service Officer Josh Fryday.

**Mimi Seney**, San Diego SOAR Academy, participated in the Roomful of Pianos event at the annual NAMM Show last month in Anaheim.

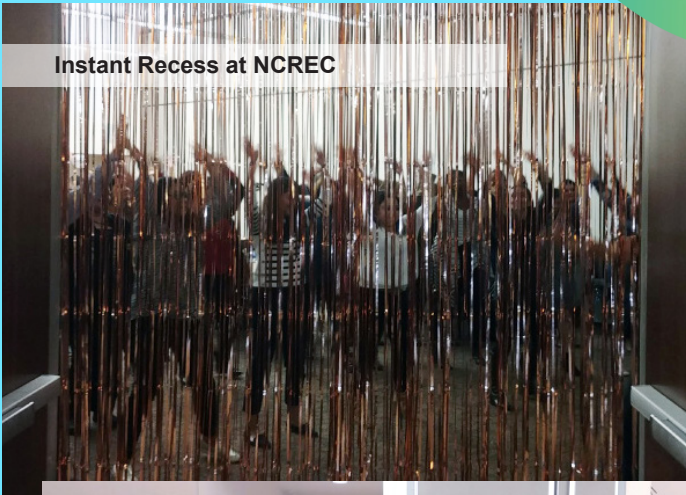


# WELLNESS @ WORK

## Wellness Week 2020

Employees enjoyed a variety of classes and activities as part of Wellness Week last month.

Instant Recess at NCREC



Self-defense at the main campus



Instant Recess at SCREC



Wellness Fair at the main campus



Dr. Leo Cole celebrated her upcoming marriage with a bridal shower at the main campus last month. She's pictured here with her fiancé and daughter.

