

NATIONAL EXPRESS



GREETINGS

Dear National School District Teachers and Staff,

2013-2014 is shaping up to be an exciting year! A question that we have heard often during the first quarter of our year has been regarding CST testing this year. Well we, or won't we? We now know the answer. Governor Brown signed SB484 last week, making it official that we will only have CST testing in fifth grade science in Spring 2014. That being said, we will most likely be piloting the new SBAC assessments. This change in long standing practice will usher us into the world of Common Core standards, while allowing us some time to really prepare.

You'll find articles in this newsletter that address assessment, Common Core, our Wellness Policy and much more. Happy reading, and let's have a great second quarter of our school year.

Thanks for all you do,

PJ Whitney and the Ed. Services staff



WELLNESS POLICY

The new Student Wellness Brochure focuses on healthy choices in three major areas: classroom celebrations, physical activity, and adult modeling of healthy behaviors. The new Wellness Policy approved by the Board includes the following requirements:

- The use of non-food items for fundraising, such as jog-a-thons, sale of school items such as pencils, school supplies, raffles and other innovative strategies adopted by schools.
- Use of healthy foods during classroom celebrations such as fruit, high fiber items like granola, ready-made healthy treats such as whole grain bars, yogurt, etc.
- NO non-healthy food fundraising can occur before school and after-school. These foods may only be sold 30 minutes after dismissal.

The Wellness Committee will be meeting four times this year to discuss implementation of these requirements and develop tools to assist.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

PJ Whitney
Assistant Superintendent

Cindy Vasquez
Director, Educational Services

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Jaime Tate-Symons
Director, Student Support Services

Meghann O'Connor
Coordinator, Student Support Services

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

Charmaine Lawson
Director, Early Childhood Program

Noemy Salas
Coordinator, Student Support Services



UPCOMING DATES

- October 7, 2013
Schools Resume
- November 1, 4, 5, 6, & 8, 2013
Parent Conferences
- November 11, 2013
Veteran's Day- Holiday
- November 25 - 29, 2013
Thanksgiving Break
- December 23, 2013 -
January 10, 2014
Winter Break
- January 13, 2014
School Resumes

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development opportunities will continue through the grade level leadership teams sponsored by San Diego County Office of Education, and also through individual schools site plans. Our Learning Headquarters Common Core training will be completed in October and November with the exploration of the narrative and expository text types. In the winter and spring, workshops on lexile levels, close reading, text dependent questions, and creating thematic units will be available for all staff.

LEARNING HEADQUARTERS SCHEDULE

Date	Grade	Location
October 15	TK & K	SCREC
October 16	5th	Board Room
October 22	1st	SCREC
October 23	6th	SCREC
October 29	2nd	SCREC
October 30	3rd	SCREC
November 20	4th	SCREC

SCREC– South County Regional Center
800 National City Blvd.
8:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

2013-2014 is the year of transition to Common Core Standards in English Language Arts. With the training provided by SDCOE, all teachers have been trained in the basics of ELA Common Core. Teachers have the standards, have experienced the organization all the content standards and the seamless way they articulate vertically, and had opportunities to collaborate using some performance based writing tasks. In 2014-2015 our transition to Common Core math will begin, along with a focus on the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAC).

SYSTEMATIC ELD

Systematic ELD is coming to Central, Kimball, El Toyon, Palmer Way, Rancho, and John Otis. Teachers will receive the materials in December, and grade level training will occur in January. The training will be one day, with follow-up training offered in the spring and summer. We are pleased to announce that our own employees were trained by EL Achieve this summer, and they will be providing the training. Dr. Cindy Vasquez, Debbie Hernandez, Erika Valverde, Dalilah Gil-Dang, and Sarah Peterson will be providing learning experiences that are tailored to the unique needs of NSD students.

An additional day has been added for anyone who would like an off the clock option. Thursday, January 9 is for anyone who would like to be trained during the winter vacation. More information on this training will be sent in an email to the staffs of those six schools.

SYSTEMATIC ELD SCHEDULE

Date	Grade	Location
January 22	1 st	Board Room
January 28	6 th	Board Room
January 29	5 th	SCREC A-C
February 4	3 rd	Board Room
February 18	2 nd	SCREC Labs 2&4
February 19	TK & K	SCREC Labs 1& 3
February 26	4 th	SCREC A-C

ASSESSMENT TEAM

Because it doesn't seem possible that NSD can have one more committee, the teachers and principals who volunteered to learn more about balanced assessment practices are calling themselves the Assessment Team. The goal of this group is to become more knowledgeable about how assessment can become part of instruction and not just one more thing for teachers to do. Using tools from the San Diego County Office of Education's Assessment website, the group will be examining the theory and practices behind formative assessments, performance tasks, and how these types of assessments will become an important part of our transition to Common Core standards. Our first meeting was held September 12, and we will meet again on October 10. Once the team members have grown their expertise, then the process of making recommendations for a balanced assessment plan will begin. Stay tuned!

COMMITTEES

The ELA, math, and writing committees continue to meet this year. The work they are engaging in includes: 1) developing sample lessons to share with grade levels, 2) exploring and publishing resources that can be used by all teachers, 3) creating **new curriculum guides** that are aligned to Common Core, and 4) growing their expertise in order to become our internal trainers for CCSS.





COMMUNICATION PLAN

Have you ever sent out information and assumed that it was understood, but really it wasn't? Communication with large groups of people is always difficult, and the Ed. Services Department is committed to improving our communication practices. Working with the NCETA Consultation Committee, the following plan is being implemented:

- **Emails:** Will contain one subject per email, and the subject line will be as descriptive as possible. Emails will be sent when there is an action that teachers need to take. For example, instructions on how to access the Synergy Report Card system.
- **Bulletin:** Ed. Services will send out a periodic bulletin, which will provide information on upcoming events, much like your school bulletin. This will be an attachment to an email, and the subject line of the email will reflect the contents of the bulletin.
- **National Express:** The newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis, and provide an overview of what has happened during the last quarter, and the big picture look at what is coming next.
- **Website:** The NSD website now has many more resources, and items that are permanent in nature, such as the schedule for Common Core Committee meetings, will be located in the "Teacher Resources" section.
- **Ed Modo:** This is an interactive teacher media site where we can share resources. As we grow more sophisticated with our use of Common Core and technology, Ed Modo will prove to be a valuable tool.

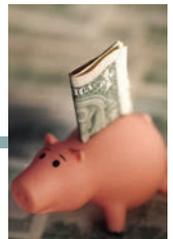
Ed. Services thanks you in advance for your suggestions on how these new practices are working. Please feel free to email PJ Whitney with any other ideas.

SPENDING PLAN

For the past several weeks, Ed. Services has been collecting input from all stakeholder groups in order to create a spending plan for the one time Common Core Implementation Funds. This one time grant of approximately one million dollars, can be spent three different ways:

- the acquisition of technology needed to teach and assess the CCSS
- professional development
- instructional materials

As soon as the plan is completed, it will be published on the NSD website.



2012-2013 TEST SCORES

In District CST scores for last year, we see that scores in English Language Arts remained the same, while there was a 4% increase in mathematics. When we compare the District with the State and the County of San Diego, we see that we are slightly below the State and County in English Language Arts and Above the State and County in mathematics. English Learners do better than both the State and the County in both content areas.



TEST SCORES FOR 2012-2013

School Year	Language Arts	Math
2010	48%	60%
2011	51%	60%
2012	51%	64%

All Students	NSD	San Diego	California
Language Arts	51%	63%	56%
Math	64%	55%	61%
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EL Students	NSD	San Diego	California
Language Arts	48%	32%	27%
Math	61%	49%	44%

DISTRICT PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

When No Child Left Behind was first authorized, the prevailing opinion was that all schools and districts would eventually be in Program Improvement. Although that hasn't come to pass yet, all of the Districts in the South Bay are now in Program Improvement. This may seem like bad news, however, there are actually some positives that should be mentioned. First, NSD has stayed out of District Program Improvement longer than 70% of the districts in San Diego County. Next, Program Improvement requires districts to stop and reflect on current practices, which often reveals systemic issues that can be improved upon. Finally, the State provides districts money to do this work.

At the November 6 and 7 State Board of Education Meeting, the Board will determine if NSD receives a designation of high, moderate, or light need of assistance. Once the designation is determined, then the process of rewriting the District Plan commences.

Teachers will be involved in the work at each step. From taking surveys to consulting on components of the plan, voices from the field will be part of the improvement process. To find out more about District Program Improvement requirements, you can go to the California Department of Education website at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ti/leapireq.asp>.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND SARB

Students who are between the ages of six and 18 are required to attend school on a daily basis (EC 48320, EC 48321). Students are classified as truant when they have three or more full days of unexcused absences or tardies of more than 30 minutes within one school year without a valid excuse. Letters are sent on the third truancy, and every third thereafter prior to a student being brought to the Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) processes.

What do we do with students who are not yet six years of age and have significant attendance issues? Our transitional kindergartners and many of the kindergarten students are not yet six years of age, which poses a different challenge.

Myrna Ramirez, the District Welfare and Attendance Specialist, has refined an attendance letter directly targeting our students who are not yet six years of age.

The letter cites the Education

Codes but also addresses the importance of regular and timely attendance and the development of good habits in school. Additionally, the District is considering holding a meeting for parents regarding the importance of instilling good attendance habits for the parents of these young students.



CLASSIFIED TRAININGS

Student Support Services continues to provide trainings for classified staff in order to build shared knowledge and capacity. Within the first months of the school year, participants from special education and transportation received initial or update trainings in Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI). Additionally, training was provided in CRP, first aid, and automated external defibrillator (AED).

School Resource Officer, Javier Cornejo, provided training for school crossing guards. This training had not been provided in several years and it reviewed the important aspects of street safety and students. Participants were able to ask specific questions and receive feedback from Officer Cornejo.



BUILD-A-BIKE EVENT

Palmer Way, Lincoln Acres, and John Otis participated in a collaborative event between National School District, the National City Police Department, and an anonymous corporate donor. Fifty students from each of the participating schools received brand new Schwinn bicycles, helmets, and locks at the event that was held at the Hotel del Coronado over the fall break. Each of the schools also received a monetary donation from the corporation. NC Police Chief and Deputy Fire Marshall were also in attendance.

PRESCHOOL CENTER

For the first months of school, preschool children have been getting to know their classroom, playground, and new friends and teachers. It is important to create a safe space, have fun and inviting learning centers, establish class routines, and start and end the day through community activities. Teachers have worked hard to prepare their classrooms and set up an environment to ensure a successful school year.

Preschool has also focused on bringing families and the community together to help children build a strong foundation in literacy and learning. Teachers have offered orientation to each family, held parent conferences where they review pre-assessments with families, offered parent meetings, and set up field trips around the community. Using the Scholastic Big Day curriculum, classrooms introduce vocabulary, read stories, develop reading strategies and skills, and explore math concepts.



Family Quilt

Learning new vocabulary



FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS



The National City Collaborative (NCC) is a partnership of over 50 organizations formed to improve the overall well-being of families and the community. The Collaborative operates two neighborhood-based Family Resource Centers (FRCs) in the National School District. These sites are school-based and are the primary office location to 30 staff members at FRC West/Kimball and FRC East/Lincoln Acres. The staff is paid by multiple agencies that, together, create and provide an array of accessible, integrated, seamless services to individuals and families.

Services include emergency food, adult education classes, leadership classes and opportunities, health and mental health programs, health insurance, counseling, childcare, legal services, after school programs, volunteer training and opportunities, programs specific to adults, teens, and youth as well as gender, and programs that focus on prevention and early intervention.

