



LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT:

Dr. Gary Thomas—San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools



What led you to become County Superintendent?

There was a natural progression for me in becoming the San Bernardino County superintendent in 2008. I was a former superintendent in two school districts in the county, as well as a chief business officer at the district level and deputy superintendent at County Schools. When I was appointed county superintendent to fill out the term of Dr. Herb Fischer six

years ago - and subsequently elected to the office in 2010 - I saw the county superintendent position as an opportunity to continue the outstanding programs and services offered through County Schools, as well as support our county districts weather difficult economic circumstances.

What inspired you to enter the field of education?

The reason I started in the education profession more than 35 years ago in the Charter Oak School District as a middle school teacher was that I felt like I could make an impact in the lives of students. Over the years, as I advanced in my career to be a site principal, district administrator, district superintendent and ultimately county superintendent, that same feeling of making a difference in the lives of students still drives me in my daily work.

Do you have a particular goal that drives you?

The focus always has been on doing what is in the best interests

of students. As San Bernardino County's superintendent, a strong priority has been in providing support to districts so that they could remain fiscally solvent through the roughest economic conditions since the Great Depression.

What objectives do you hope to achieve?

As an advocate and educational leader for the 411,000 students in more than 530 schools in our county, our office's priorities have been to boost graduation rates, while reducing dropout rates. During the last four years of cohort data, we have seen our county graduation rate rise from 70.4% to 78.3%. Conversely, dropout rates in the county have fallen over that four-year span from 19.1% to 12.2%. In our region, giving students the ability to make a seamless transition from high school to college- and career-readiness is vital to the long-term economic viability of our region.

What are your interests?

I enjoy spending time with my family and in the outdoors camping and off-roading. I am an avid reader. Education issues are topics I follow closely.

Who are the special people in your life?

My wife, Bev truly inspires me. As a primary-grade teacher in the Victor Elementary School District, I often say she is the real educator in the family! We are blessed to have three terrific children and four grandchildren. I also consider my work "family" at County Schools very special to me. They are the finest group of professionals I have had the opportunity to work with.

COUNTY OFFICES RECEIVE CAREER PATHWAYS GRANTS

After a months-long application and interview process, the recipients of the first round of Career Pathways Trust funds have been announced by the California Department of Education, and we are pleased to report that several county offices of education have been awarded funds for their own regional work-based learning projects. Over 120 school districts, county offices of education, charter schools, community colleges and consortiums of all four submitted applications for a share of the funds describing how they would use the grant money to leverage existing public-private partnerships and support work-based learning. Of the applicant pool, 39 applications were approved for funding.

The Orange County Department of Education and Sacramento County Office of Education were each awarded regional grants of

\$15,000,000, the largest grant amount available. The Sonoma and Tulare County Offices received \$14,999,690 and \$14,790,007, respectively. The Contra Costa, Los Angeles and Mariposa County Offices of Education also received a share of the Pathways Grant funding, and several awardees, including Ventura, Merced and Stanislaus, applied and were selected as part of a consortium.

We commend all recipients of these funds for showing determination and innovation in their applications, and we look forward to seeing the progress that will be made as a result of the funding. For more information on the Career Pathways Trust program, click [here](#).

FROM THE DESK OF:

Peter Birdsall, CCSESA Executive Director

The results of the June 3 primary election made it clear that there will be run-off for the important position of State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Tom Torlakson received 46.6% of the vote, while Marshall Tuck came in second with 29.1%.

Both candidates will speak to the county superintendents at our General Membership meeting in South Lake Tahoe on June 23. This will not be a debate format. They will be speaking independently at different times during the day.

We have asked both Torlakson and Tuck to speak for up to fifteen minutes, and to allow at least fifteen minutes for questions and answers.

CCSESA does not endorse candidates, but we know that individual county superintendents will be asked to make endorsements. Further, this race is particularly important to county superintendents because of the many ways in which county offices must collaborate with the California Department of Education to effectively serve our school districts and students.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

June Quarterly Meeting:

The next CCSESA quarterly meeting will take place in Lake Tahoe in El Dorado County from June 22-24. If you have questions regarding registration and/or hotel reservations, please contact Jessie Kroll-Yoas at jyoas@ccsesa.org.

New Superintendent Orientation:

This year, CCSESA will welcome 15 new county superintendents. The 2015 New Superintendents Orientation will take place on September 8-9 in Sacramento. Please contact Christina Marcellus or Sandra Morales if you have any questions about the event: cmarcellus@ccsesa.org, or smorales@ccsesa.org.

AESA Annual Conference:

Registration is now open for the 2014 AESA Annual Conference, which is planned for December 3-6, 2014 at the San Diego Hilton Bayfront. You can register for the conference and reserve your hotel room [here](#). Contact Peter Young if you have any questions: pyoung@aesa.us.

CCSESA Staff Addition:

Please join us in welcoming our newest staff members, JaConya Merchant. JaConya will be responsible for the Association’s meeting planning and logistics.

CCSESA STAFF

Peter Birdsall

Executive Director

Sandra Morales

Assistant Executive Director

Sarah Anderberg

Arts Initiative Director

Cindy Ridley

Business Services Coordinator

Amanda Dickey

Project Coordinator

Christina Marcellus

Project Coordinator

Jessie Kroll-Yoas

Executive Assistant

JaConya Merchant

Executive Assistant

ELECTION SUMMARY: JUNE 3 PRIMARY

The June 3 Primary Election was an exciting day for both current and hopeful county superintendents across the state. We were expecting 13 new members as a result of resignations or retirements, and this year we will welcome a class of 15 incoming superintendents. Due to the nature of the four-year term of the county superintendent position, this number, which accounts for over 25% of our membership, is not surprising. The election resulted in outright winners in most counties, although a November run-off will decide the winners in Alameda, Mendocino and San Joaquin.

June 3rd Winners-

Two incumbent county superintendents lost their re-election bids—Anne Mallory (Imperial) and Rich DuVarney (Lassen). The newly elected superintendents are Todd Finnell (Imperial) and Patty Gunderson (Lassen).

New superintendents were elected to succeed nine retiring county superintendents who did not seek re-election. The retiring county superintendents and those elected to succeed them are: Kay Spurgeon (Colusa) - Mike West was elected; Joe Ovick (Contra Costa)- Karen Sakata was elected; Wally Holbrook (Lake) - Brock

Falkenberg was elected; Mike Sanchez (San Benito) - Krystal Lomanto was elected; Gary Thomas (San Bernardino) - Ted Alejandre was elected; Julian Crocker (San Luis Obispo) - Jim Brescia was elected; Larry Champion (Tehama) - Charles Allen was elected; Joe Silva (Tuolumne) - Margie Bulkin was elected; and Jorge Ayala (Yolo)- Jesse Ortiz was elected.

November Run-Offs -

In Alameda, a run-off will take place between Karen Monroe and Helen Foster to replace Sheila Jordan. In Mendocino, Paul Joens-Poulton and Warren Galletti will run-off to replace Paul Tichinin. In San Joaquin, a run-off will take place between James Mousalimas and Jeff Tilton to replace Mick Founts.

We will also welcome Robin Hopper as the new Mariposa County Superintendent of Schools, who will replace Interim Superintendent John Stafford on June 19. We expect the Santa Clara County Board of Education to soon designate a new county superintendent to replace Xavier de la Torre. Congratulations to all incoming and outgoing superintendents. We look forward to welcoming our newest members, and we bid a fond farewell to those pursuing new challenges and adventures.

PRESIDENT’S COMMITTEE ON ARTS AND HUMANITIES LAUNCHES TURNAROUND ARTS PROGRAM IN CALIFORNIA

The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) recently announced the expansion of the successful Turnaround Arts initiative, a program designed to help low-performing schools narrow the achievement gap, and increase student engagement through the arts. The program expanded to six additional states this year including ten California schools. The Committee also announced that artists including Jason Mraz, Forest Whitaker, Kerry Washington, Frank Gehry and Russell Simmons will “adopt” California Turnaround Arts schools and work directly with students to support their arts education.

Turnaround Arts is funded through a public-private partnership, and will receive more than \$5 million over the next three years from the U.S.

Department of Education, the National Endowment of the Arts, the Ford Foundation and others. Local program partners will provide an additional \$12 million to hire new arts and music teachers, bring teaching artists, art supplies and music instruments into schools and support arts integration into core subject areas.

First Lady Michelle Obama, Honorary Chair of PCAH said, “With the help of this program and some School Improvement Grants, math and reading scores have gone up...attendance is up...parent engagement is up...suspensions have plummeted...and two of the schools in our pilot improved so dramatically that they are no longer in turnaround status.” To learn more about the Turnaround Arts CA and what schools were selected in CA, click [here](#).

ALL IN CAMPAIGN PROMOTES HEALTH CARE ENROLLMENT

ALL IN FOR HEALTH is an information and outreach campaign developed to equip schools with the tools and resources necessary help families and community members learn about new affordable health care options and assist schools in providing enrollment opportunities.

From October 2013 to April 2014, ALL IN reached no fewer than 150,000 California education leaders, community stakeholders, families and individuals through newsletters, webi-

nars, presentations, social media, and other partner and educational activities.

While it is difficult to know how many people signed up on their own as a result of ALL IN’s outreach efforts, 386 individuals enrolled in coverage through one of the 11 enrollment events. The ALL IN campaign is still actively promoting Medi-Cal and Covered California enrollment if an individual has faced special circumstances. For further information, please visit www.allinforhealth.org.

Thanks to our Business Partners (Click to Visit):



Be Sure to Sign Up to Receive our Monthly Newsletter and Website Posts!

Sign up for our newsletter distribution list [here](#), and subscribe to email notifications of new website posts [here](#).