



Alum Rock Union Elementary School District

Educational Excellence

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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May 2006

A Message from Superintendent Anthony P. Russo, Ed.D.

This newsletter features Norma Martinez, Alum Rock's new superintendent; and highlights our Human Resources and Business Services Divisions. As the end of the school year approaches, it is important to recognize how our 1200 employees contribute to the education of our 11,300 students. Our teachers, Child Nutrition staff, bus drivers, and many others all work to keep our students safe, healthy, and focused at school. Some of their efforts are shared in the following articles.

The teachers and employees working directly with children and the employees who support their efforts deserve our appreciation for another year of school success. The families, community members, and friends of our schools deserve applause as well. Congratulations to all on your success.

New Superintendent Norma Martinez

The Board of Trustees announced that Norma Martinez is the next Superintendent of Schools. Thank you to all of the community members, district families, and school personnel who shared their input for the Superintendent search.

Prior to Ms. Martinez's current position as Deputy Superintendent, she served ARUESD as Principal, Director, and Assistant Superintendent. She also served at the Executive Cabinet level in both Fremont Unified School District and Hayward Unified School Dis-

trict.

The search process made clear that communication at all levels, interpersonal skills, and bilingualism/biculturalism were some of the most important attributes desired in the ARUESD Superintendent. Ms. Martinez possesses these attributes among the many other skills, relationships, and community experience that will help her lead ARUESD to greater success beginning July 1.

Please join the Board in congratulating Ms. Martinez on her selection as Superintendent. The

Alum Rock schools and community look forward to her continued leadership.



Norma Martinez begins her position as the new Superintendent of Schools on July 1.

School Wellness and Health Program To Make Positive Impact

Every year, thousands of ARUESD students eat hundreds of thousands of breakfast and lunch meals at their schools.

Understanding that student nutrition impacts long term health and academic performance, federal law requires that each

school agency enact a wellness policy by the first day of school for the 2006-2007 school year.

The ARUESD Board of Trustees will adopt a policy this year that meets the current state and federal laws regarding health and wellness in schools. The Child

Nutrition and Physical Activity Advisory Committee for the district invites you to its meetings on May 15, May 18, and June 8 to allow for input to this policy.

Current health research about child obesity, links between

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Alum Rock Works to Meet *No Child Left Behind* Requirements

The federal government requires Title I schools to have a staff of highly qualified teachers to help students meet their potential. By July 2006, Alum Rock will be able to meet the requirements by having a teaching staff that is fully credentialed or participating in a credential program to complete the teacher certification process.

The *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) Act also requires that classi-

fied staff working with children have specific qualifications. Instructional Aides and Special Education Paraeducators, for example, must pass approved tests or acquire a number of post-secondary education units to be considered highly qualified under NCLB.

As the deadline for highly qualified staff approaches, and to ensure future compliance, Alum Rock will provide information, test

dates, and workshops for classified and certificated staff to meet the requirements.

As next year approaches, the Human Resources Department is working to identify applicants with the proper qualifications for open positions. Any new hire who will work with students will meet the NCLB requirements and expectations of ARUESD.

New Teachers Receive Mentoring and Support

The requirements to become a public school teacher are rigorous. With all the preparation that is required, a teacher's first years are always challenging with a steep learning curve.

Alum Rock's new teachers have a system in place to help them meet the demands of the profession. Professional development is provided for all schools and is based on district initiatives and curriculum requirements.

As instructional leaders,

principals provide necessary coaching and mentoring for new teachers. Each site may also supplement district offerings with its own professional development. In this case, new teachers are supported with professional development that is focused on their school community's priorities and needs.

Additional support is provided for teacher interns (those earning their credential) and teachers with a preliminary credential. Alum Rock utilizes the skills and knowl-

edge of their retired teachers and the Silicon Valley New Teacher Project to serve these groups.

Some of the new teachers serve as Teach for America interns. These teachers serve at least two years in the classroom and receive support from Teach for America.

The new teachers of Alum Rock are the future of the district. Their accomplishments impact student achievement everyday and they are creating a bright future for all.

Classified Positions at Alum Rock Serve the Entire District

Classified positions are held throughout all departments and at all sites in the district. Instructional aides, office assistants, and Child Nutrition staff work at the sites. Bus

drivers, maintenance staff, and others are based at the district office.

The requirements for the range of positions are dependent upon the work responsibilities. For classified personnel working with students, the *No Child Left Behind* Act requires that they have at least an Associate of Arts degree or meet an equivalent requirement, a passing score on the Cooperative Organization for the Development of Employee Selection Procedures (CODESA), and are proficient in English.

Positions require that applicants pass a job position test. Bus

drivers, Child Nutrition Assistants and Campus Paraeducators take tests to make sure they are able to do their jobs effectively.

Other steps the district follows when hiring any personnel are related to state and federal law to ensure honesty and safety. Background checks, fingerprinting, and reference checks are a few of those steps.

If interested, please check the Alum Rock Union Elementary School District website at www.arusd.org for job opportunities or visit the Human Resources Department for job postings.



Open ARUESD positions are posted in the Human Resources Department at the district office.

Highly Qualified Teachers Bring Alum Rock Success

Alum Rock students have wonderful teachers who worked hard to become highly qualified educators. The requirements for California teachers have changed over the past years to ensure that students have teachers who are prepared to teach the subject matter and grade level they are assigned.

All classroom teachers have at least a Bachelors of Arts or Bachelors of Science degree plus an additional teaching credential. Beyond the units required for the credential, teachers passed the California Subjects Examination for Teachers (CSET). There is a general knowledge test for multiple subject elementary classroom teachers and single subject test for middle school teachers.

Teachers also have to pass the Reading Instruction Compe-

tence Assessment (RICA). Future teachers are also required to complete weeks of student teaching with the support of a master teacher.

Alum Rock also participates in the Silicon Valley New Teacher Project. This UC Santa Cruz program assists teachers to advance their skills and knowledge



Rebecca Stegeman is one of ARUESD's highly qualified teachers. As MESA advisor at Slonaker, she and her students realize success.

in relation to the California Standards for the Teaching Profession.

Regardless of experience, Alum Rock teachers participate in site and district-wide professional development. Teachers are supported individually or as teams by their literacy coaches to teach language arts. They are supported in math by the district math resource teacher and their colleagues in grade level and department meetings.

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing requires teachers to meet professional development requirements in order to renew their teaching credential and other certificates. The renewal process is one way the state and Alum Rock ensure the development of highly qualified teachers.

KinderCaminata Helps Kindergarteners Set Sights High

ARUESD kindergarten students participated in the first annual KinderCaminata at Evergreen Valley College on April 27.

The students were asked to think about their future while watching demonstrations about various career fields including engineering, medicine, and public safety. They explored a police car

and listened to a fireman explain his job. The young students also participated in an educational music presentation.

KinderCaminata was scheduled to coincide with El Día del Niño (Day of the Child) and is part of Evergreen Valley College's effort to introduce the "college dream" to young students in the area.



Kindergarten students listen to the fireman at KinderCaminata.

Educational Technology News

Each year, students become more aware of and more excited by the possibilities that computer technology offers them in school. In response to this interest and the realities of what is accessible and appropriate for students, ARUESD asks that each family complete technology use forms.

Produced by Information

Technology Support Services, the *Media Release Form* asks parents and guardians to decide whether or not photos and video of their child may be used by the district for school business.

The *Acceptable Use Policy Form* requires a parent or guardian signature if the student will be allowed to participate in online ac-

tivities at school.

These forms are critical to the district as it works to provide your child with a safe, productive, and challenging education. Prompt submission of these forms is appreciated by the district so that students are able to participate in various online activities throughout the school year.

Wellness (continued from page 1)

obesity and disease, and connections between academic performance and diet make it clear that such a policy is needed.

At ARUESD, the community will see breakfast and lunch meals continue to meet nutrition requirements. Food items available and sold at school will limit the amount of sugar and sweetener, fat, saturated fat, and calories while meeting other nutrition standards.

The work that goes into pro-

viding a healthy and balanced diet needs to be done at home and at school. With the new policy, the district hopes that families will help the students get excited for better nutrition by modeling good habits.

These good habits extend to what is eaten at school and what is learned in the classroom. Schools will meet expectations for physical activity, curricular standards related to health, and other school-based activities that promote wellness.

The 2006-2007 school year will see changes that keep ARUESD compliant with the federal law. Recess time, PE classes, after school activities, vending machine sales, concession stands, and classroom parties will meet the standards that will help keep Alum Rock students healthy and active.

To become involved in Wellness activities, please contact Amber Watson, RD, in Child Nutrition Services at 928-6905.

May 29

Memorial Day: No School

June 14-16

Elementary and Middle School Minimum Days

June 16

Last Day of School

Transportation Department Driven By Courtesy and Safety

Over 500 students take a yellow school bus to school every day. Thirty qualified and highly trained drivers transport these students on various routes by a schedule that is organized to the minute.

The transportation department begins each year by informing Special Education and regular education students and families of the schedule, rules, and expectations to

ride the bus. In order for the system to work well, families need to have their children at the bus stop on time, students need to wait appropriately at the bus stop, drivers need to keep to their schedules, and the bus zones at school need to be cleared of traffic for safe drop-offs.

The drivers work hard to keep the system working well. Each driver has to make multiple stops each morning so families have to keep to their scheduled pick-up and drop-off time. A bus that waits two minutes extra at one stop is two minutes late at the next stop.

ARUESD drivers have good personal driving records and pass a test with the CHP and the DMV. They earn their commercial driver license and are certified in first aid and CPR. They need to renew their training regularly and keep a clean

professional and personal driving record to remain a bus driver.

With this preparation, the drivers still meet challenges on the road. As they drive their routes, they are responsible for the passengers who enter, ride, and leave the bus. They are also responsible for pedestrians and the cars they share the road with each day.

As a courtesy to the driver and for the safety of all Alum Rock students, please stop and wait when the red lights are flashing and/or the stop sign arm is extended from the bus. It is the law to treat the lights and sign as a stop light at an intersection.

Alum Rock students and families are supported by the transportation department everyday. They are central to school attendance and academic success.



Bus driver Nam Nguyen works to bring students to school everyday and on time.