

For the
CUSD Board & Staff
 A DESTINATION DISTRICT

Upcoming events/reminders

- District Budget Committee Meeting February 1, 4:00 PM
- CHS Academic Decathlon SuperQuiz February 5, 2:30 PM, West Hills College
- Board Meeting February 8, 6:30 PM
- Technology Board Subcommittee Meeting February 10, 3:30 PM
- Finance Board Subcommittee Meeting February 17, 3:30 PM
- Board Meeting February 22, 6:30 PM

*Every
 Corcoran
 Student
 Can
 Achieve!*

✧ **District Update** ✧

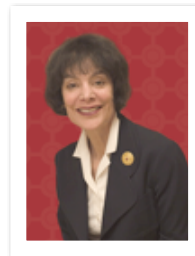
This document is to keep you abreast on upcoming items, current issues, and public relations on the many things happening in the District.



POWERFUL LEARNING & TEACHING

How Can Teachers Develop Students' Motivation -- and Success?

Question and Answer of Carol S. Dweck who is a leader in the field of motivation, personality, and developmental psychology, and her research contributions have been widely recognized.



Education World:

Some students are mastery-oriented; they readily seek challenges and pour effort into them. Others are not. Have you been able to pinpoint in your research any direct associations between students' abilities or intelligence and the development of mastery-oriented qualities?

Carol Dweck: This is a really interesting question, and the answer is surprising. There is *no* relation between students' abilities or intelligence and the development of mastery-oriented qualities. Some of the very brightest students avoid challenges, dislike effort, and wilt in the face of difficulty. And some of the less bright students are real go-getters, thriving on challenge, persisting intensely when things get difficult, and accomplishing more than you expected.

This is something that really intrigued me from the beginning. It shows that being mastery-oriented is about having the right mind-set. It is not about how smart you are. However, having the mastery-oriented mind-set will help students become more able over time.

mastery-oriented students -- students who will face a challenge rather than be overwhelmed by it?

Dweck: Students who are mastery-oriented think about learning, not about proving how smart they are. When they experience a setback, they focus on effort and strategies instead of worrying that they are incompetent.

This leads directly to what teachers can do to help students become more master-oriented: Teachers should focus on students' efforts and not on their abilities. When students succeed, teachers should praise their efforts or their strategies, not their intelligence. (Contrary to popular opinion, praising intelligence backfires by making students overly concerned with how smart they are and overly vulnerable to failure.)

When students fail, teachers should also give feedback about effort or strategies -- what the student did wrong and what he or she could do now. We have shown that this is a key ingredient in creating mastery-oriented students.

In other words, teachers should help students value effort. Too many students think effort is only for the inept. Yet sustained effort over time is the key to outstanding achievement.

In a related vein, teachers should teach students to relish a challenge. Rather than praising students for doing well on easy tasks, they should convey that doing easy tasks is a waste of time. They should transmit the joy of confronting a challenge and of struggling to find strategies that work.

Article by Gary Hopkins
 Education World® Editor-in-Chief
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EW: What can teachers do to help develop

BOARD BELIEFS

The following is from:

The Essential School Board Book, Better Governance in
the Age of Accountability

Nancy Walser, Harvard Education Press, 2009

BOARD PRACTICES IN “WELL-GOVERNED” DISTRICTS



*The Board and Superintendent
Form a Team*

Another significant study of school board practices was published in 1997 by the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) and the Educational Research Services (ERS), according to the Land review. Recommendations from this study were issued in 2000. This group conducted 132 interviews across 5 states in 10 different districts with high and low levels of student achievement as measured by dropout rates, the percentage of students taking college entrance tests, and the percentage of graduates attending 2- or 4-year colleges.

The resulting report identified six characteristics of “well-governed” districts associated with higher student achievement. High quality boards stood out for their (1) stability (members served at least six to eight years) and desire to serve students rather than seek higher office; (2) short regular meetings coupled with annual or biannual goal-setting retreats; (3) effective management that resulted in referring complaints to the administration, lack of separate subcommittees, and joint discussion of problems with the superintendent as a “governance team”; (4) a communicative board chair who functioned as a critical go-between for the superintendent and his or her colleagues; (5) focus on student achievement as evidenced by policy, the budget, facilities, and support for the superintendent as the district’s CEO/ educational leader; and (6) an ability to work collaboratively, resulting in a “high degree” of trust.

Board behavior in the low-achieving districts apparently wasn’t hard to miss. These boards were “riddled with conflict,” engaged in “bickering” and “nit-picking” and allowed their operations to be “overshadowed by personal interests,” the authors wrote. “Over and over board members complained that they were not spending their time on what they thought should be their priorities . . . Such as micromanagement – usually by one or two members of the board - was criticized by both board members and superintendents as their most common cause of frustration.”

"Look at a man the way that he is, he only becomes worse. But look at him as if he were what he could be, and then he becomes what he should be."

Goethe

"There are countless ways of attaining greatness, but any road to reaching one's maximum potential must be built on a bedrock of respect for the individual, a commitment to excellence, and a rejection of mediocrity."

Buck Rodgers

Quotes and Proverbs, This week's quote:

*It isn't that they can't see the solution.
It is that they can't see the problem.*

Gilbert K. Chesterton

How can we solve a problem if we do not appreciate the fact there is one. How does this pertain to all of us as educators? Do we have a problem? Every institution and organization has problems, but which one is in our focus and in the foremost of our thinking? If have our priorities correct, we focus on the problem of student learning. Are all students learning, are all students achieving and are all students prepared for some type of schooling outside of high school? The simple and short answer is no. This is a reality that should hit us every day, and it is a reality that can be viewed in its right perspective. That is, it is a challenge we can become passionate with, and it is a challenge that can be met over time.

From this we ask ourselves the two questions: 1.) Is this a problem we see and 2.) Is this a problem we are passionate about in addressing? These are our challenges for the New Year!



iPad for 6th Graders

The following article in last week's Hanford Sentinel pretty much says it all concerning our sixth-grade iPad rollout:

Fulfilling the "anytime, anywhere" learning vision of the Corcoran Unified School District, teachers and administrators handed out new classroom tools Wednesday night: brand new iPads.

"You can do anything you want to do with these tools in your hands," said Kathy Jones, one of the sixth-grade instructors of math and science.

Five years ago, the district began implementing a technology plan for its students. It has since acquired laptops for classroom use for fifth- through 12th-grade pupils, but the plan always envisioned providing students with computers they could take home, and the iPad helped fulfill that goal, Steve Brown said. Each night, students will take their iPads home, and every morning they're required to bring them back to use in the classroom.

"We're making educational history," said district technology coach Kathi Felder. "[The iPads are] taking the place of a lot of pencil-and-paper applications." The iPads have access to more than 250 apps and have a wireless connection to the Internet using the device's custom-made router. Because Web access is provided through a partnership between the district, the users and the Kings County Office of Education, filters assure appropriate content is being viewed, Felder said. If a student finds a way to violate the rules, they'll lose the privilege of having the iPads, she said.

"For some students, this will be their only means of Internet access," said science and math teacher Dean Adalian. "I think this will be an excellent way to get the kids excited about learning," he said. "It will allow me to cut out paper, cut expenses and provide new avenues for kids to explore."

John Muir's Principal Ken Spencer said his four children quickly picked up on using apps, and he has no doubt his students will do the same.



Caught in the Act



Tammie Airheart

Mrs. Airheart is in her sixth year of teaching for Corcoran Unified. She started her tenure with the District teaching three years of 7th and 8th grade math at John Muir prior to transferring to the high school. Mrs. Airheart has been a great addition to the high school teaching a variety of Math courses. She has skills in teaching Algebra I and Geometry, and this year has taken on a new course being offered at the high school: Integrated Math.

Integrated Math includes parts of Algebra 1 and Geometry standards in one course. Mrs. Airheart wanted to teach this class to develop a technology curriculum and incorporate project-based learning into this course. The technology portion of this class is working well: students utilize the laptops approximately 90% of the week! Geometry students are also using the laptops in the same manner as students in Integrated Math.

Project-based learning is still a work in progress. However, students have responded working with Mrs.

Airheart to create a high performance learning environment. Students not only respond by becoming engaged in the assigned projects, but they are involved in giving Mrs. Airheart feedback on how to improve the project learning. It is totally a team effort!

Mrs. Airheart also provides tutoring after school and serves as the designated teacher for Algebra 1 credit recovery (part of the after school program). Additionally, Mrs. Airheart has been coaching track for two years and will be the new head track coach for this school year! She looks forward to track season and is always impressed on how the athletes improve each year.



Gina Becerra

Mrs. Becerra serves as a Special Education Paraprofessional at John Muir Middle School. She is excellent at translating during IEP meetings and parent conferences. Gina is a very responsible employee who can be counted on to be at work, do her job with the students, and take care of extra duties well. The teachers she works with can entrust her to instruct in the SRA reading intervention program for the special education students.

Additionally, Mrs. Becerra participates as a tutor for two supplementary service companies, working with students after school. She maintains communication with the parents regarding the progress of the students in the tutoring sessions.

Mrs. Becerra has focused her energies to learn and understand the new technology that has been implemented in the special education classrooms, namely the MacBook computers, the iPod touch devices, and the document camera's. She is a great asset to John Muir!

Down the Road



District Budget Committee

The next date for the District Budget Committee is

February 1 at 4:00 PM in the TLC.

By the way, one of the questions that came out at our last meeting was:

Question: Why did the District hire more teachers this semester?

Answer: Three of our schools have received grants through the Quality Education Investment Act, (QEIA). They are Fremont, Mark Twain and Corcoran High School. Some of the criteria and program evaluation were changed this year, and as a result, we had to meet some of the QEIA goals sooner than what was written. In order to meet these class size criteria, the District had to add staff. The decision was simple: spend a limited amount of dollars now or lose part or all of the \$1.7 million dollars in 2012-13.



Congratulations to Kathi Felder

District Academic Technology Coach Kathi Felder has been selected to present at the Apple Computer special regional event for K-12

superintendents. The conference focuses on integrating the best in learning practices with the best in learning technology. Kathi will be presenting one of the breakout sessions. She is being recognized as one of the successful educators who will detail how technology is helping solve some of the most important issues

facing school districts and enabling students to learn like never before. Kathi was selected among the best presenters in the State and went through an interview and screening process prior to be selected.

EETT Grant Round 9

We are just completing a grant application to receive funding from the State and Federally sponsored Enhancing Education Through Technology Grant (EETT). This is a very competitive grant that is limited to \$500,000 for this very large region. If the District were to be awarded this grant, the full amount funded would be \$231,600. The grant is geared toward 4th-8th grade, and only districts with poverty rates exceeding 40% are eligible to be awarded.

Our grant requests funding to continue and complete the 1:1 learning program that was initiated with 6th graders this year. The plan is to provide effective and sustainable staff development for John Muir staff as well as provide the necessary hardware and software for student use of these powerful technology tools at school and at home.

Leadership Symposium 2011

