

October 2004



# Nine New Classes Open for 2004-05 School Year



NEWPORT - MESA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# EVERY CHILD IS SPECIAL

A Publication of the NMUSD Special Education Department

We are excited to announce the formation of nine new classes within the special education program. These new classes were developed in an effort to begin to return students to NMUSD from Non-Public Schools and provide classrooms where students can effectively work and learn. We want to extend a warm welcome to the teachers staffing those classrooms! The classes include:

- Severely Handicapped Class (Grades K-6) at Newport Heights. This class is being staffed by John Morrison. John has worked for many years in the Newport-Mesa Unified School District as a long-term substitute. He is now enrolled in the intern program at Cal State Long Beach. Prior to coming to Newport he worked as a commercial airline pilot and taught overseas.
- Moderately Handicapped Class (Grades 9-12) at Estancia taught by Kerry Parsons. Kerry joins us from San Diego. She is in her third year of teaching and has experience in both MH and SH. She relocated to this area at the end of September.
- Severely Handicapped Class (Grades 9-12) at Estancia taught by Mary Strizi. Mary is in her first year of teaching. She comes from a family of educators and is excited to have her own classroom.
- Moderately Handicapped Class (K/1) at Victoria taught by Erin Gordon. Erin is no stranger to NMUSD. She has taught for many years at Sonora Elementary. Victoria welcomes her!
- Learning Handicapped Class (Grades 7-8) at Costa Mesa High School taught by Ryan Schacter. Ryan is in his second year of teaching. He worked in the Irvine School District prior to joining our NMUSD team. He will also be joining the CMHS coaching staff.
- Learning Handicapped Class (Grades 7-8) at Corona Del Mar High School taught by Jennifer Mancini. Jennifer grew up on the East Coast and taught in the New York school system She recently left Mardan, a local non-public school to teach in Newport-Mesa.

- Learning Handicapped Class (Grades 9-10) at Estancia High School taught by Rebecca Spohr. Rebecca has been teaching for the past few years in our Adult Education program. We are happy she chose to work with special needs students.
- Autism Class at Eastbluff taught by Maria Babba. Maria has a broad background in the area of Autism. She will be a great asset to our Eastbluff program.
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Class at Kaiser taught by Caryn Weinstock. Caryn recently relocated to Newport Beach from New York. She has taught many years in the New York school system. She is thrilled to be spending her first winter in sunny CA!

We want to extend a special thank-you to the site administrators who worked positively and cooperatively with our department to ensure a smooth transition for our new staff. Both students and staff felt welcome as they started the 04-05 school year in their "new" home.

### New Staff to our Special Education Team!

Surobhi Saikai	Harper/California/Pomona
Susan Morabito	Harper
Alexis Reichert	Teacher Assessment Ctr.
Julie Ann Smith	Anderson and Kaiser
Linda Galardo	Kaiser
Brad Runsick	Eastbluff
Shannon Seaton-Brown	Eastbluff
Mara LaMagma	Paularino
Meredith Kaufmann	Paularino
Kari Richardson	District-wide
Jim Michealson	Estancia
Jean Chapin	CMHS
Karyn So	District-wide
Barbara Bisel	Sonora
Robert Redding	CMHS/Whittier
Patti White	Victoria/Ensign
Barbara Hudson	TeWinkle
Katherine Schat	Kaiser/Ensign/Newport Ht.
Nazish Jafri	District-wide

We want to extend a warm welcome to our new staff! As you can see we had a BUSY summer working with the HR department to get a total of 28 certificated positions filled by September 7<sup>th</sup>!

# Reorganization of the Special Education

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I am very pleased to report the progress we are making on the reorganization of our Special Education program. I feel very encouraged by the amount of positive feedback I've received from both the teaching and administrative staff. During the summer months I worked collaboratively with our current coordinators and Susan Astarita to address staffing needs in order to provide additional support at the site level. Our zone reorganization is in the development stage and will evolve as needs continue to be identified throughout this inaugural year. It is our belief that the new zone configuration will provide a clear understanding for both site level staff and parents as to who they contact when they are in need of assistance. Detailed below is our zone configuration, identifying the Coordinator(s) assigned to the zone, the Office Assistant III and the contact phone number.

## **Assessment Center and Harper Pre-school**

**Office Location:** Near HOPE Resource Room: Harper Site

**Coordinator:** Gina Cataldo

**Office Assistant III:** Janet Hernandez

**Receptionist:** Bea Martineau

**Office Phone #:** (949) 515-6631

**Email:** gcataldo@nmusd.us

**Schools:** Harper Pre-School, Regional Center, Home Programs

## **Estancia Zone**

**Office Location:** Estancia High School (Near Room 200)

**Coordinator:** Candy Barela

**Office Assistant III:** Melissa Espinoza

**Office Phone #:** (949) 515-6533

**Email:** cbarela@nmusd.us

**Schools:** Adams, California, Pomona, Rea, Victoria, TeWinkle, Estancia High School

## **Costa Mesa Zone**

**Office Location:** Davis Education Center

**Coordinator:** Laura Rydell

**Office Assistant III:** Bea DeLaTorre

**Behavior Specialist:** Kayrn So

**Office Phone #:** (714) 424-4760

**Email:** lrydell@nmusd.us

**Schools:** College Park, Davis, Killybrooke, Paularino, Sonora, Costa Mesa Middle/High School

## **Harbor Zone**

**Office Location:** Kaiser Elementary

**Coordinator:** Sally Sweatfield

**Office Assistant III:** Linda Fisher-Harris

**Office Phone #:**(949) 515-6650

**Email:** ssweatfield@nmusd.us

**Schools:** Kaiser, Newport El., Newport Heights, Mariners, Whittier, Newport Harbor High School, Woodland, Ensign, Back Bay/Monte Vista, STEP

## **Corona Del Mar Zone**

**Office Location:** Lincoln Elementary

**Coordinator:** Diana Hernandez

**Email:** dhernandez@nmusd.us

**Coordinator:** Mary Shields

**Email:** mshields@nmusd.us

**Schools:** Eastbluff, Harbor View, Anderson, Lincoln

**Office Assistant III:** Debbie Kerwin

**Inclusion Specialist:** Sharon Calvo

**Office Phone #:**(949) 515-6594

**Schools:** Corona Del Mar High School and Newport Coast Elementary

# "How to Build a Quality Program"

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The entire Newport-Mesa Unified Special Education Department will be participating in a 2 day training by former North Anaheim SELPA Director Dawn Walsh. The training will provide staff insight into the current trends taking place within special education today. Ms. Walsh has worked with Districts throughout the State, most recently Manhattan Beach, to provide guidance and support in reorganizing their special education program. She will share strategies of how to align program and services to individual needs. The development of compliant and meaningful IEP's will be another focus throughout the 2 day training. Schools have been invited by zone so that school teams, including the site administrator, can hear the same message and return to their site with meaningful information. We look forward to seeing you in the next few weeks!

## Session I

**WHEN:** Thursday, October 14<sup>th</sup> and Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup>

**TIME:** 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** National University Conference Room (Costa Mesa)

**Sites/Staff that will Attend:** Diana Hernandez, Mary Shields, CDM Middle/High School, Andersen, Newport Coast, Lincoln, Harbor View, Eastbluff, Laura Rydell, Costa Mesa Middle/High School, Davis, Killybrooke, Paularino, Sonora, Patrick Ryan, Susan Astarita, Gina Cataldo, Assessment Team, half of the Harper staff.

## Session II

**WHEN:** Thursday, November 4<sup>th</sup> and Friday, November 5<sup>th</sup>

**TIME:** 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** National University Conference Room (Costa Mesa)

**Sites/Staff that will attend:** Sally Sweatfield, Harbor High School, Kaiser, Mariners, Newport El., Newport Hts., Whittier, Woodland, Ensign, STEP, Back Bay, Candy Barela, Estancia, Adams, California, Pomona, Rea, Victoria, Wilson, TeWinkle, College Park, Enterprise, Kathryn Hofer, half of Harper staff.

It is imperative that administrators attend with their site team.

Psychologists, SLPs, APE, OTs and some District level staff will be divided among the two sessions. They will be notified by an administrator at the site(s) in which they work.

## The Special Education Task Force

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The Special Education Task Force was created at the end of the 2003-2004 school year. The purpose of the task force is to provide a forum where site level staff can work collaboratively with administrative staff to address issues that have negatively impacted the Special Education Program. This is a solution-oriented group whose purpose will be to prioritize issues that need to be addressed and develop solutions to resolve these issues. Site level members were selected by their job-alike group, whose initial contact came from NMFT President, Jim Rogers. Members of the task force include: Barry MacPherson, Brenda Shirley, Diana Hernandez, Ted Williams, Gale Kirk, Gail Routledge, Denise Knutsen, Terrilee Stevenson, Amy Morgan-Rogers, Charlene Hommerding, Melinda Overton, Debra Foosaner, Karen Nedza, Jan Potter, Jim Rogers, Jan Marquardt, Lisa Fertig, Sharon Calvo, and Margaret Porter.

The first meeting of the 04-05 school year was held on Tuesday, October 6<sup>th</sup> from 3:30 p.m. to 5:10 p.m. in the NMAA Offices. A partial description of items discussed at the meeting are included in this article.

Barry MacPherson was nominated and voted in as chairman. He will work with Jim Rogers and Denise Knutsen on developing the agendas for upcoming meetings.

The majority of the meeting was spent discussing the implementation of Genesea, the new web-based IEP program. Denise Knutsen shared that the purpose of the new program is to develop fully compliant IEPs that are based on education code requirements. The staff shared their thoughts regarding the program and discussed ways in which additional support could be provided during the implementation phase. Geoff Hurst shared information regarding the difference between Genesea "needs" and IT "needs".

Results of the recent needs assessment have been shared with the Assistant Superintendents who have begun to work with site administrators to resolve these issues.

The Special Education Department is continuing to offer training sessions at different sites. The department has asked site administrators to work with their zone coordinator to organize additional training sessions. To further provide support to the special education staff, the November 1<sup>st</sup> staff development day is being dedicated to Genesea training and work. Geoff Hurst is currently working with Zone Coordinators to set up Genesea labs throughout the District where staff can train and spend the day entering their students into the system and completing IEPs. More to come in this area.

# Welcome to our New and Returning Zone Coordinators

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In response to the need for more support at the site level, NMUSD has added new Coordinators. During the 03-04 school year three Coordinators provided support throughout the District. Candy Barela supported our secondary programs as well as our Occupational Therapists and Instructional Aides. Sally Sweatfield was responsible for the elementary sites, speech and language therapists as well as the pre-school program. Laura Rydell provided leadership for our psychologists and adapted physical education staff. She also provided support for our severely and moderately handicapped students. As we all know...it was an impossible job!

Help arrived in mid-August when three new Coordinators joined our ranks! We are excited that they have accepted the challenge of working with us to build a "quality program". Coordinators have been assigned to a Zone and will work with the sites in their zone, grades K-12. Please take a moment to read the brief bio provided for each Coordinator. The paragraph also details what other responsibilities they will have within the Special Education Department.

## **Estancia Zone: Candi Barela**

Candy Barela has worked in the NMUSD for the past 7 years after working in the Santa Ana School District for many years. Candy also teaches classes in the special education intern program at Cal State Fullerton. Candy will lead the Estancia Zone which is housed at Estancia High School. Her office assistant is Melissa Espinoza. Candy will also be responsible for the hiring, assigning and training of our instructional aides.

## **Costa-Mesa Zone: Laura Rydell**

Laura Rydell has been with the

District almost two years. She joined our team after working in other Districts as a Special Education Coordinator as well as a Director of Support Services. Her background as a school psychologist has helped her leadership role. Growing up in the Panama Canal Zone, her knowledge of Hispanic Culture and Spanish will be an asset in the Costa Mesa Community. Laura will head the Costa Mesa Zone which will be located at the Davis Education Center. Her office assistant is Bea Delatorre. Laura's other responsibilities will include overseeing the District psychologist and adapted physical education staff.

## **Harbor Zone: Sally Sweatfield**

Sally Sweatfield has almost completed her first year in Newport-Mesa. She relocated last year from Berkley, CA where she served as a Program Specialist. She now resides on beautiful Balboa Island, when she's not escaping to her cabin in Tahoe. Sally has assumed the leadership role of the Harbor Zone which is located on the Kaiser Elementary campus. Her office assistant is Linda Fisher-Hughes. Sally will also oversee the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Regional Program as well as the STEP program at the Harper Site.

## **Corona Del Mar Zone: Mary Shields**

Mary comes to our District from La-Mesa-Spring Valley School District where she was a special education program specialist. She has been working in the field of special education for over 20 years. She has experience teaching at all grade levels (preschool-high school). She participated in the Fulbright Exchange Teacher's Program, taught overseas for the Department of Defense and has been a state compliance monitor for the State of Arizona. Mary will be working with the elementary schools in the CDM

Zone (except for Newport Coast) and will be housed at Lincoln Elementary. Her office assistant is Debbie Kerwin.

## **Corona Del Mar Zone: Diana Hernandez**

Diana joins our team after working as the Director of Support Services in Little Lake Unified School District. She has a vast background in Special Education and has presented at the ACSA Conference on many different topics. She has also worked as a middle school principal in the LA area. She and her family relocated to the Laguna Niguel area last year. She will be overseeing Corona Del Mar Middle and High School as well as Newport Coast Elementary. Her office is located at Lincoln Elementary and her office assistant is Debbie Kerwin. She will also be taking over the leadership role for our speech and language therapist.

## **Harper Assessment Center: Gina Cataldo**

Gina joins our team from Oceanview School District in Huntington Beach. She successfully oversaw their assessment center and served as the District Lead Psychologist. She is highly knowledgeable in the area of pre-school and has been instrumental in providing leadership in the area of Autism. Gina will provide leadership at the Harper Assessment Center and serve as the Coordinator for the Harper Site. Her office assistant is Janet Hernandez. Their offices are housed near the H.O.P.E. Resource at the back of the Harper Pre-School Site. Gina will also oversee the home-base program as well as our occupational therapy program.