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The Inyo Insight

An Education Newsletter from the Inyo County Superintendent of Schools
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Electoral Race for Superintendent of Public Instruction

There used to be a day when the state Superintendent of Public Instruction was a career educator who had worked in the ranks to attain this prestigious statewide office. Names like Bill Honig, Wilson Riles and Dave Dawson recall a time when the State Superintendent was keenly attuned to curricular leadership and educational fiscal issues. The rank and file in education knew them and respected them for their innovation and progressive leadership. California was riding high in educational funding and national prestige while being a leader in progressive education.

For the past 20 years (5 terms), since the advent of

term limits, the position of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) has been "reserved" for a termed-out legislator. Former State Senators Delaine Easton, Jack O'Connell and Tom Torlakson have found the SPI position as a safe landing place. While all have had a short stint in the classroom, they have all found the halls of the state capitol to be their launching pad to the California Department of Education (CDE). They have landed at the CDE to head that agency due to their fundraising ability not due to their educational careers. These last 20 years, coincidentally or not, have seen the demise of public opinion for California public education and

thus limited funding being directed towards K - 12 schools.

For the first time in the past two decades a strong and vigorous election debate is being held on this November ballot as to the future of the CDE. This hotly contested seat appears to be about the only interesting race on the ballot and deserves your attention. The incumbent, Tom Torlakson, is being challenged by 41 year old Marshall Tuck. Tuck, a graduate of UCLA and Harvard Business School, started the Green Dot Charter Schools in Los Angeles and was then recruited by former Los Angeles Mayor Villaraigosa to

manage 17 struggling LAUSD schools. Tuck is well funded by private money seeking to change the CDE while Torlakson is primarily funded by labor unions and the CTA who are seeking to maintain the status quo in Sacramento.

As County Superintendent, I urge you to become knowledgeable on this important race. Since you are in the field of education, you will be sought out by friends and neighbors to lend your voting advice. Check out: www.torlakson.com and www.marshalltuck.com to better understand the candidates in the important race.

Keeping Up with Changes in the Education World

What is Your Hot Topic? Please Take the Survey

by Pamela Jones

I would greatly appreciate it if you would please take ten minutes (or less) to respond to a survey which you can access at the link provided below. My colleagues and I at the ICSOS Curriculum Department have knowledge and information to share with you on a variety of topics. There are so many new ini-

tiatives rolling out of Sacramento these days--it is difficult for any of us to keep up. My team here at ICSOS and I have some tools and strategies that can help you make sense out of it all and help you to weave it all into your classroom practice. With so much to choose from: new standards in ELD and Science, the Common Core, a new ELA-ELD

framework, and so much more, I am asking your help in guiding the future workshop offerings that we will provide for you. Thanks in advance for sharing your thoughts and priorities.

Inyo County Teacher Interest Survey:

<http://tinyurl.com/k7vtyp9>



BTSA: A New Name, A New Program

This year Inyo County's beginning teachers will experience a renovated induction program through a partnership with Riverside County Office of Education's Center for Teacher Innovation (formerly the Teacher Support Center for RIMS-BTSA). Why the new approach you may ask? Several factors came into play in making the switch towards a re-modeled, technology-rich formative assessment system for beginning teachers. First, the voices of the new teachers and their support providers came through loud and clear. Data collected by RIMS-BTSA helped design the new program, which will reduce "paperwork", focus on quality coaching and be less redundant in comparison to teachers' pre-service work.

Secondly, funds previously

set aside for BTSA are included in the LCFF fiscal provisions. With LCFF, county offices with Commission-approved induction programs no longer receive funding tagged specifically for new teacher induction. The new teacher induction program was redesigned to be competitive in a newly emerging marketplace.

Third, the Common Core standards are reshaping our educational landscape. While BTSA was well aligned to the 1997 standards, the approach in the new improved program promises to offer a wide variety of choice in demonstrating knowledge and competency and is technology-rich, mirroring the student-centered approach we want our teachers to use in their classrooms.

The goal is to provide a flexible, supportive individualized induction experience to all new

teachers to assist in their development and growth in improved instructional practice through meaningful, manageable cycles that are natural and fluid occurrences in their 21st century classrooms. Beginning teachers, or candidates, will be utilizing Haiku LMS to engage in a blended learning environment encouraging self-reflection and peer collaboration. No longer will be teachers be asked to draw a map of where the copy machine is located or describe where they might find supplies. Instead, they will journey through seven short, manageable learning inquiries:

- Building Community to Support Learning
- Effective Management: Student Perception and Engagement
- Planning and Analyzing Student Learning

- Approaches to Instructional Design
- Self-Selected Topic of Inquiry
- Differentiating for Success
- Strategies for a Successful End of the School Year

Within each inquiry cycle, candidates will build their knowledge of the given content (building community, effective management, etc.), apply a strategy or resource in their classrooms, reflect on its efficacy, and collaborate with peers. Throughout this journey, candidates receive regular, individualized coaching from a district-selected coach (formerly called Support Providers). By completing his two-year program not only will candidates earn a clear California General Education or Ed. Specialist credential, but also will improve instructional practice and student learning.

Haiku Learning for Digital Classrooms

When all students have laptops and access to the internet in classrooms, teachers confront a new set of challenges: how do I give students quick and easy access to digital resources like files and links to websites? How will students turn in electronic files? How do I manage a paperless classroom?

For many teachers in one-to-one technology classrooms, the answer lies in using a Learning Management System, or LMS. But *which* LMS? There are so many LMSes available that it can make a teacher's head spin: Edmodo, Schoology, and Google Classrooms to name a few. In order to provide a high-quality, consistent experience for teachers and students alike, ICSOS has

purchased subscriptions to an LMS called Haiku Learning for the middle school students and teachers participating in this year's Laptops for Learning project.

Haiku Learning calls itself a "K - 12 digital learning platform". It allows teachers to quickly and easily create online classrooms where they can post online information, assignments, images, videos, maps, and links to web resources. In addition to being a portal students can access for class materials, Haiku is also a robust collaboration tool, incorporating the ability to set up wikis for projects, discussion pages, and polls. Teachers and students can communicate with a secure, spam-free internal messaging system (like email, only better!) and have the ability to create an-

nouncements and reminders.

In Haiku, teachers have a Dropbox to which students can upload completed assignments and drafts. Teachers can annotate and comment on student work in Haiku to give timely feedback to students. When teachers create assignments, they show up inside the lesson, in students' calendars, and in the Haiku gradebook. Haiku can also be configured such that parents can see their child's classes, grades, assignments, and attendance.

All our districts are currently using a variety of online tools for activities such as grading and attendance, these features are also available in Haiku. However, the use of Haiku in the classroom is not intended to replace those tools nor to create redundancies. As our middle school teachers

pilot the use of Haiku this year, we will consider how districts can best integrate Haiku into their systems.

Teachers who are not part of the Laptops for Learning project but who would like to try out Haiku Learning may create a free teacher account at www.haikulearning.com. After logging in, add a class, create a roster of students, and Laptops for Learning project go digital!



College Day for 8th Grade Students at Cerro Coso Scheduled for November 7th

In November all 8th grade students in Inyo County will once again have the opportunity to attend College Day at the Bishop Cerro Coso campus. The sixth annual College Day is November 7th at Cerro Coso College. Students will attend a



series of "classes" at the college to spark an interest in planning and preparing for college or vocational training. "Through attendance at this event, we hope that students will enter high school with college or vocational training in mind and work towards reaching their goals," Dr. McAteer said of the event. The classes will cover such topics as financial aid, college eligibility and require-

ments, and the differences between the various types of colleges—community or two-year schools, California State Universities, the University of California system and private schools. Dr. McAteer will again lead an engaging session on "Why College?" and answer student questions about the long-term benefits of college and career. Students will also learn about what Cerro Coso has to offer in terms of vocational

training, which can be attained at little or no cost for Inyo County's high school graduates through the Eastern Sierra Foundation Scholarship program. College Day is made possible through a joint effort of Inyo County Superintendent of Schools and Cerro Coso Community College. For further information, please contact Ilissa Twomey at 760-873-3262 ext 429.