



association of california
school administrators | region 8

OCHO Newsletter

Issue #4 June 2020

Executive Board Updates

President's Message- Dawnel Sonntag

In the last few months, our world has changed, and the impact of those changes are far-reaching and still being discovered.

We've faced a pandemic and had to shift the way we serve our students and our communities. I've been consistently impressed with the flexibility and creativity that our districts, schools, and staffs have shown across the country as they seek to meet student needs during this time. The challenge isn't over, and I know that we'll continue to keep what's best for students at the heart of our decisions. I hear a lot of people hoping that we will soon go back to "normal," but I actually hope that the increase in innovation I've seen from so many of our educators continues, regardless of whether we're back in the classroom or continuing with distance learning.

I also don't want to go back to "normal" in another vital area. The recent deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, and the worldwide protests in response to these tragedies and others, have shined a spotlight on what has long been a system of racial inequality, prejudice, and institutionalized racism. Education's role in reinforcing these inequities cannot be ignored, and as educators, it is our responsibility to change it. We must be leaders in this work, fearless in our commitment to confront racism. We must examine our own biases, engage in tough conversations about race, and actively dismantle systems that reinforce racial inequities.

Although my term as Region 8 President is ending, I will continue to do my best to serve the students and educators of Region 8. I have been blessed to work alongside so many of you, I have seen your commitment to equity, and I look forward to working with you to confront racism in our schools, our systems, and our communities so we can create a new "normal."

I look forward to seeing you in the fall, whether it's in person or virtually, and I hope that you stay healthy and safe through the summer.

Awards- Alyssa Lynch and Mala Ahuja

To all of our 2019-2020 ACSA Region 8 Award winners, once again, we would like to congratulate you on your ACSA Award. Due to the uncertainty of COVID-19 times, we will recognize each 2019-2020 awardee at the May 2020-2021 Region 8 celebration at Villa Ragusa in Campbell. Our apologies for not being able to celebrate your accomplishments with you during the 2019-2021, but due to your patience, we promise to double the recognition. You will not be forgotten.

Committee/Council Reports

Equity Committee- Elizabeth Gordon-Stoll

Given all that has occurred since March 13th, even those of us with some perspective of years and experience in leading through past crises may find ourselves at a loss, feeling defeated, wondering: "What next?" More than anything, as a mom, "auntie" and educator, I go to sleep and wake up worrying about our kids, our students, and their families. What can we do? How can we help? How do we keep going if like me, your inclination is to want to run and hide, or just keep paddling down that old river we know as 'Da Nile.

This article is the book-end to the first article I submitted as our Region 8 Representative to the ACSA State Equity Committee. If you have been an educator for more than 10 years, it is very likely that you have experienced some level of burnout, and now more than ever is a time to be aware of that danger. Renewing my commitment to social justice and equity for the students who most need our support, has kept me in the fight these last couple of years, as it was always my aim to leave my full-time career a much more diverse field than what I entered.

Luckily, I have just finished my first year of a three-year commitment as your state committee representative, so if you will have me, I'll do my best to actually complete some solid work (read: help increase diversity of representation) for our region in the next couple of years! At our region meeting in February, I shared a presentation I had prepared based on the work of our state committee in November, and the input of our executive board's annual plan: [Region 8 Equity Plan Update](#). At our state meeting in February we focused on the "new" LCAP and SPSA templates as the state tools for leading for equity. Micah Studer from Yolo COE shared his presentation: [Leading for Equity in the New LCAP & SPSA Templates](#). Given the extension of dates for the LCAP, I encourage you to view/review this presentation in the coming year.

I am looking forward to the final state committee meeting of the year. Our state committee looks very much like what I imagine we all want our regional leadership to look like: Truly representative. The equity work in our region must be ours. The challenge for myself and all who read this is for us to come together as leaders for equity. No one does this work, or accomplishes much else, alone. Now more than ever, equity must be at the center of every decision we make and we are all made stronger in those decisions when we stand together.

Special Education and Student Services- Trudy Gross

The Student Services and Special Education Council had our final meeting of the year via Zoom on Friday, April 24. Council members shared their respective experiences during shelter-in-place and distance learning in support of the students and staff in their district. The ACSA Resource Hub was highlighted and there is a goal to increase the resources available for special education and student services. The surveys from the 2020 Every Child Counts Symposium were highly positive, in particular the venue and networking lunches. At this time the 2021 Every Child Counts Symposium will be held in Anaheim from February 3-5; transition to virtual, in whole or part, is being considered. The theme will be Navigating the New Normal and focus on new practices and interventions that have been successful during the pandemic related school closures. The next meeting of the Council is September 18.

Charter Updates

Alum Rock- Tara Bickford

The Alum Rock Administrators Association has been working diligently to ensure our students started distance learning immediately into the school closures. Managers from around the district partnered up to ensure the first week out, that our students had devices and were being fed. Our feat was only doable thanks to our amazing leaders in the ROCK and our amazing staff. In a matter of a week, we had served upward of 6,000 meals daily and distributed an exponential amount of devices and hotspots to our community. While we have gone through an unprecedented time, it has been amazing to see the teamwork and dedication to our students in our community. We hope you all have stayed healthy and we wish everyone health and wellness as we wrap up this roller coaster of a year and go forward into a new unknown for the 2021 school year.

Morgan Hill- Patrick Buchser

As our world has been through quite turmoil the last few months, Morgan Hill is working hard to ensure an equitable approach in responding to Student needs during COVID-19 and more importantly humanity. What our world needs more than ever is kindness. We have been serving close to 40,000 meals weekly to needy families.

As a unified school district we are making the appropriate adjustments according to budgetary uncertainties as well as maintaining human capital to support systems that have been built over time to support students. Finally, no one would've ever imagined high school graduations and end-of-the-year ceremonies being so remote. We anticipate the time and we anticipate the time in which we can all celebrate in the same room together. Congratulations to all of the graduates for the 2020 school year. We are all very hopeful for a fresh new start to the 2020-2021 school year.

Retirees- Will Ector

This has been a very challenging year for our Retiree Charter as we have adjusted to the new normal induced by the COVID-19 Pandemic. We have continued our scheduled Board meetings albeit in a virtual mode. We have continued our efforts to recognize our local retired talent and refer them to State ACSA as part of the yearly awards program. We are proud that our Retiree Charter has produced the State Robert E. Kelly recipient for past two years running. We are also proud of our own Maxine Amundson for being selected as the Region 8 Retiree of the year for 2020. Her involvement and dedication to our charter as membership chair and her extended community activism has just been outstanding.

Every year the Retiree Charter gives out scholarships to teachers who are in the process of completing their university coursework to receive their administrative credential. Our scholarships are awarded annually in the name of Marty Mathiesen, a former retired administrator here in Region 8. Our five winners this year are: Stephanie Dong – Assistant Principal in Cupertino Union School District, Ashlee Dradee – Teacher/ELD Coach, Oak Grove School District; Jonathan Ho – Teacher, Milpitas Unified School District; John Cuong Phung – Student Activities Director, East Side Union High School District; and Katherine Powell – Literacy Coach with the New Teacher Center working in Franklin McKinley School District. Our recipients are usually recognized at our May luncheon meeting but due to the current COVID-19 restraints, they will receive their checks and certificates in the mail and hopefully meet them at our fall meeting.

The Retiree Charter will see some new faces as our Executive Board will sport some new members for the 2020-21 school year. Our Officers will be:

Past President – Will Ector, President – Eric Andrew, President-Elect – Hedwig Rucker, Secretary – Laurel Olsen, Treasurer – Dan Moser, Membership – Maxine Amundson, Programs – Louise Levy, Newsletter – Maureen West, Hospitality – Suzanne Boxer-Gassman, Historian – Iris Berke/Sheila McGann-Tiedt, STRS Representative – Cliff Tyler, Scholarships – Barbara Anderson and ACSA Liaison – Pat Einfalt.

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