PRESIDENT'S CORNER
Welcome Back!

I would like to welcome everybody back from their winter recess on behalf of the Ventura County School Board Association! And a special welcome to the recently-elected school board members.

I’d like to extend a very big thank you to our two newest VCSBA Executive Board Members who have stepped up to the plate and have filled vacant positions for the remainder of our 2016-17 school year. Please join me in greeting Denise Helfstein, Oak Park Unified School District, who is our new VCSBA Secretary. Also joining us is Dr. Charles Weis, Hueneme School District, who is our new Vice President, Legislation. Hooray to both of you for serving our organization.

The state of California serves 6.2 million children in its public education system. With that many students, it’s a safe bet it is one of the most diverse student populations in the nation. All of our students deserve safe places for learning and teaching regardless of their immigration status, gender, race, ethnicity, faith or sexuality.

Please join us at our February 9, 2017 VCSBA Dinner Meeting where we will be holding a discussion on “Implicit Bias” led by a representative from the Social Justice Foundation. Implicit bias is defined as the unconscious attitudes and/or stereotypes which affect our understanding of those different from us. Our intent is to have a dialogue on this phenomenon and discuss what we can do to reduce the negative impacts of bias in our schools.

Our parents and students are looking to us for hope and leadership. Let’s make sure our children have the best possible start in life. Hopefully, after our meeting, we can learn to view one another with a fresh pair of eyes and help our students look to the new year with renewed hope and a sense of freedom. After all, our students are our future and they deserve our best.

Several of our board members who have reached milestones in their school board service will receive Meritorious Service Awards at the February dinner meeting. Be sure to attend to receive your award or to watch your fellow board members be recognized for their continued achievements in serving their schools and their communities.

Christina Urias, President, VCSBA
Santa Paula Unified School District
A Learning Opportunity

In the aftermath of the recent presidential election, many of our students and their families are feeling uncertain about what the future may bring. Months of divisive campaigning in which civility and compassion were in short supply have taken an emotional toll on many and allowed a few to feel empowered to spurn the diversity we enjoy here in Ventura County. However, rather than approaching the current climate with either fear or antipathy, we can make this a teachable moment for our young folks. We know that our public schools are a cornerstone of our democracy, and that politics is an inevitable component of that system; so let us seize the opportunity to make this a real life lesson in the value of our democratic ideals and institutions.

How can our administrators and Board members help? First of all, we can diffuse some of the tension by allowing our students a voice for their questions, frustrations and ideas. This will assist them in learning how our democracy works, how it can be made better, and their role in achieving the change they desire. We can instruct them on legally supported positions relative to our constitutional freedoms of speech, assembly, and the responsibilities that accompany these privileges. We can also assure them about the strength of our diversity, commitments to mutual respect and zero tolerance for racism and bullying. All of these strategies will allow our students to find common words and talking points supporting a culture of informed and positive thought.

Lastly, let us not forget the third leg of the stool – parents. Whatever messages kids pick up from politicians and the media, the fact remains that parents are their most important teachers. As educators, we can also help parents know what to say to their children and help them find constructive ways to get involved in causes that are important to them. One potential theme for meeting this need would be the stakeholder meetings which are required as part of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) process. These meetings can provide valuable forums for sharing of information and uniting around a common goal of building the best life possible for all of our children. After all, they will be the voters and leaders of tomorrow, and we have the means to help shape the way they see the world.

Stan Mantooth
Ventura County Superintendent of Schools

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Legislative Action Day

Save the Date!
Tuesday, March 21, 2017

The California School Boards Association is our statewide voice for public education. One of our primary responsibilities as school board members is to set policy and advocate on behalf of our students. Please sign up to spend the day in Sacramento with the California legislature. More information is available on the CSBA website.

Important Update CalPERS board approves half-percent drop in discount rate. This move will cost school employers even more than expected. More information will become available as the state budget session unfolds.
LEGISLATIVE REPORT (continued)

Take a Look
CSBA has a newsroom section on their website. The Policy News newsletter is published five times a year. The next issue will be available in March.

Training Opportunities
Throughout the year, CSBA’s Governance U provides leadership offerings, often online, for individual board members or an entire governance team.

The most recent offering was the 2017 Forecast Webcast. These webcasts are frequently archived for later viewing.

If you have a specific question for me regarding CSBA please feel free to contact me at skitchens@hotmail.com.

My continuing thanks and appreciation to the school board members serving on the statewide CSBA delegate assembly:

CSBA delegates Region 11B

Christina Urias, Santa Paula Unified
John Andersen, Conejo Valley Unified
John Walker, Ventura Unified
Mark Lisagor, VCOE
Vianey Lopez, Hueneme Elementary

Suzanne Kitchens, CSBA Region 11 Director
Pleasant Valley School District

MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD HONOREES

Please join us on February 9th as we honor the following School Board Members for their years of dedicated service to public education.

- Colleen Garmon-Smith, Briggs 8 years
- Betsy Connolly, Conejo Valley 8 years
- Mark Lisagor, VCOE 8 years
- Ramon Flores, VCOE 8 years
- Ute Van Dam, Moorpark 8 years
- Mike Dunn, Conejo Valley 12 years
- Steve Sullivan, Mesa 12 years
- Tim Shield, Mupu 16 years
- James Merrill, Ocean View 16 years
- Suzanne Kitchens, Pleasant Valley 16 years
- Arturo Hernandez, VCCCD 16 years
- Virginia de la Piedra, Fillmore 20 years

APRIL 27, 2017 DINNER MEETING
Accountability & Testing System/State of LCFF

For our final dinner meeting of 2016-17 on April 27. We will be focusing on the latest developments with the state’s accountability and testing system and the current state of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).

Please join us so we can continue educating ourselves and do the best job possible of informing our communities about these important issues affecting education.
Career Education Center Expands to Moorpark

Starting this school year, students in Moorpark and surrounding areas are able to take career education courses in their own backyard. In addition to serving students at its original campus near the Camarillo Airport, the Ventura County Office of Education’s Career Education Center is now offering classes at the former site of Community High School on Condor Drive in Moorpark.

The continuation high school facility had been vacant since Moorpark Unified School District moved its students to classrooms at Moorpark High School. VCOE and the district agreed to a deal that transformed the site into the Career Education Center Moorpark. The campus has been upgraded to include a digital media lab, a music and sound production lab, and a certified nurse assistant training facility. Moorpark USD is partnering with VCOE in this effort through a multiyear lease agreement. CEC Executive Director Dr. Tiffany Morse says, “It’s a good deal for the district because they get additional programs and services for their students and for us because we get to use this facility to serve students at a second location.”

Course offerings include cyber security, engineering, nursing, criminal justice and more. In addition to providing career and technical education to middle and high school students, the Moorpark site is home to adult education programs and services. Many of the courses at CEC Moorpark are open to adults and an employment specialist is available to provide career coaching.

Dr. Morse says the expansion is helping to relieve space constraints at the Camarillo Airport location. “We are expanding everywhere at the airport. We have taken over a portable classroom at ACE Charter High School and have two classrooms across the street at the County Department of Airports office and we still are constantly running out of space, so this is a great opportunity.”

More information about the Career Education Center Moorpark is available at www.vcoe.org/cec.

Dave Schermer, Communications Manager, Ventura County Office of Education
CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!!!

VCSBA Nominating Committee

Attention all school board members! VCSBA is looking for volunteers to serve on its Nominating Committee for the 2017-18 school year. The Nominating Committee will solicit candidates for the VCSBA President, Secretary, Treasurer, VP Programs and VP Legislation.

The Nominating Committee will meet immediately following the February 9th dinner meeting (at 8:30 p.m.). The remaining work of the Committee can be done via phone and email as members look for candidates. The Nominating Committee will announce the candidates for VCSBA Executive Board at the April 27, 2017 dinner meeting.

Please consider becoming a member of the Nominating Committee; we need your participation. If you have questions, please contact any of the Executive Board members listed below. Thank you!

Christina Urias, President
Santa Paula Unified School District
curias@santapaulaunified.org

Steve Sullivan, Vice-President, Programs
Mesa Union School District
steve@e-ponyexpress.net

Dr. Charles Weis, Vice-President, Legislation
Hueneme School District
cweis@huensd.k12.ca.us

Denise Helfstein, Secretary
Oak Park Unified School District
dhelfstein@oakparkusd.org

Steve Blum, Treasurer
Ventura County Community College District
blumper@gmail.com