

# The Insider



*The Hempstead Union Free School District*

## A Message from Superintendent of Schools ——— Dr. Patricia Garcia... ———



Dear Colleagues,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support in helping to provide the students of the Hempstead Public Schools with the quality education they deserve and our community expects. As educators and role models, we all play an integral role in motivating our students to become successful life learners.

The second half of the school year is currently underway and this is an opportune time for us to discuss the positive strides we have made since the opening of school in advancing educational initiatives and bringing district goals to fruition. It is also the time to discuss the challenges we still face, and the plans we have for continued improvement.

Thank you for your support.

Dr. Patricia Garcia  
 Superintendent of Schools



Carlos Ramirez, the district's Director of Technology, left, discussed PowerSchool with guidance counselors during an Extended Wednesday.

## Professional Development

The Hempstead School District's Professional Development Year Long Plan has been developed and implemented with the support of administrators, staff developers, and teachers. In addition to attending training sessions during the annual Superintendent's Conference Day in September and November, teachers will also complete 15 hours of professional development this school year during the district's Extended Wednesdays. The professional development sessions and workshops are tied to district goals, and many are targeted towards specific areas of instruction and grade levels. Directors, principals, assistant principals, and deans also attend professional development sessions every third Tuesday of the month in the Superintendent's Office.

## Staff Developers

To help meet the professional development needs of the teachers in the district, there are currently seven staff developers in the district who specialize in math, literacy or instructional technology. The staff developers help to coach teachers and improve classroom lesson instruction. Each staff developer is also assigned to a specific school building to not only help advance district initiatives, but to also address the specific instructional needs of each school. The district would like to thank our staff developers Elyse Amos, Russell Cohen, Carole Eason, Sandra Murphy, Jason Noon, Miriam Ortiz, and Saritha Perez for all of their time and dedication to improving education at the Hempstead Public Schools.



Carole Eason, and Jason Noon are two of the district's staff developers.



More than 20 high school teachers attended an Integrating Technology into the Classroom professional development session.

# Coffee With the Superintendent

As part of this Administration's ongoing commitment to increase student achievement and engage parents and the community, a Coffee with the Superintendent was held at several schools earlier this school year. This initiative provides parents and guardians with the opportunity to discuss instruction, programs, funding, capital improvement plans and other school-related topics with building principals and myself. Additional dates are also scheduled for 2011.

## COFFEE WITH THE SUPERINTENDENT 2010

- Alverta B. Gray Schultz Middle School
- Barack Obama Elementary School
- Hempstead High School Senior Academy
- Hempstead High School College Preparatory Academy of Business and Law
- Marshall School

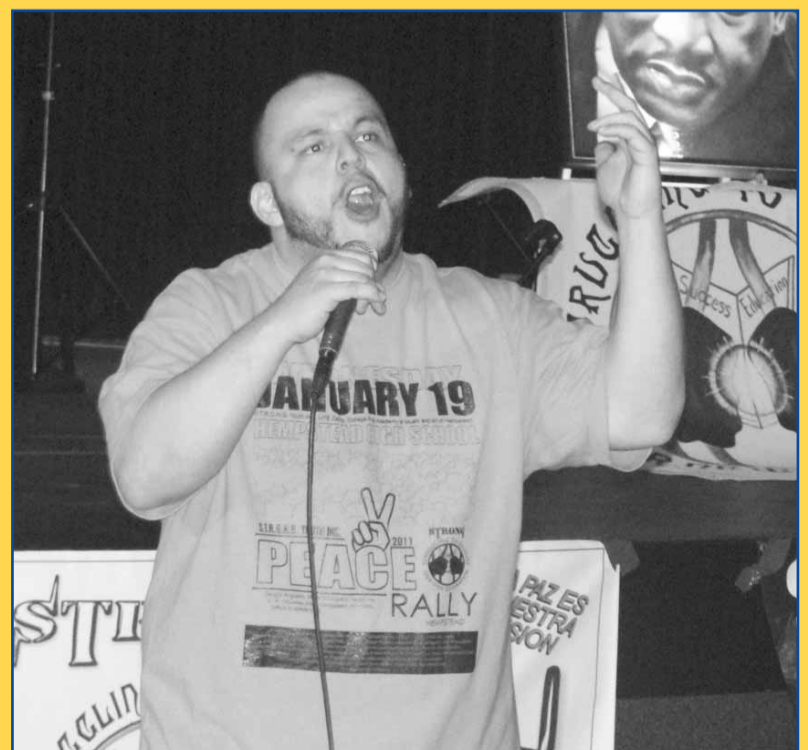


# Advisory Council

As a part of the district's commitment to continue to improve communication and engage parents and the community in educational plans for our students, I am planning to establish a Superintendent's Advisory Council this school year. The council will meet monthly to discuss and address specific interests, concerns and initiatives in the district. The group requires input from an administrator, teacher, and parent from each school in the district as well as several high school students. If you are interested in serving as a representative, please contact Ana Lovasz at (516) 292-7111.

## S.T.R.O.N.G. Youth, Inc. Partnership

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the district is also partnering with Struggling To Reunite Our New Generation (S.T.R.O.N.G.) Youth, Inc. Directors and staff from the agency will be working with students at Hempstead High School as part of a new Violence Prevention and Intervention Program. This new initiative, which will be coordinated by S.T.R.O.N.G.'s Executive Director and Founder Sergio Argueta as well as principals and staff at the high school, will feature anti-violence presentations, workshops, field trips and other educational initiatives for our students.



*S.T.R.O.N.G.'s Executive Director and Founder Sergio Argueta gave an anti-violence and motivational speech at Hempstead High School in January during the school's Peace Rally.*

## Panasonic Program



Administrators including Dr. Stephanie Clagnaz, the district's Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, left, work alongside Gail Davis, and other Panasonic Foundation representatives each month to implement improvements in the district.

This school year includes the continuation of the district's partnership with the Panasonic Educational Foundation and our participation in the Panasonic Partnership Program. The partnership is providing expert assistance to our school district about ways we can implement systematic improvements, which will help us to enhance the academic and social success of all students. We are moving forward with this initiative at a very productive pace. I'm proud to announce that the district has already created a Panasonic Task Force for ELL and Special Education.

## Welcome New Administrators

Please join me in welcoming Mr. Carlos Ramirez, Director of Technology, Dr. Nichelle Rivers, Executive Director for School Compliance and Accountability, and Dr. Cheryl Scheidet, Principal of Franklin School, as new administrators in the district.



Mr. Carlos Ramirez



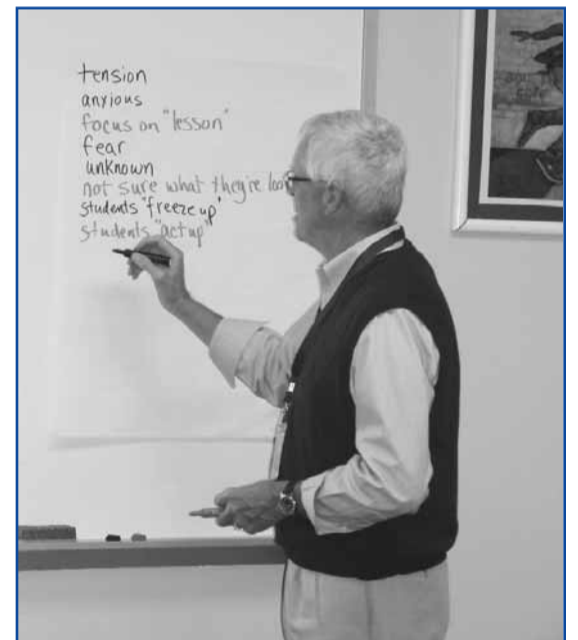
Dr. Nichelle Rivers



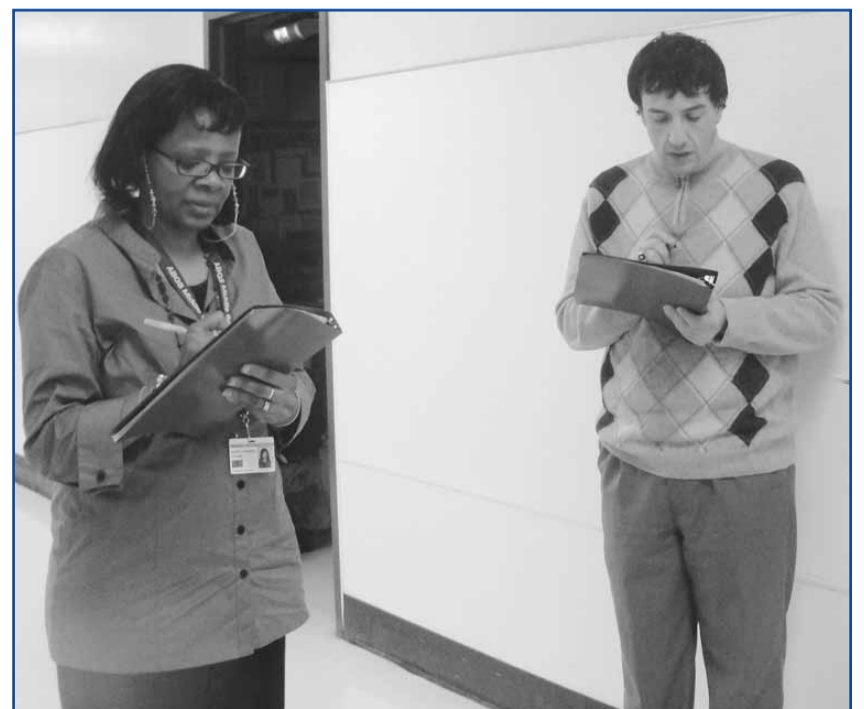
Dr. Cheryl Scheidet

## Classroom Walkthroughs

Several teachers at Alverta B. Gray Schultz Middle School recently participated in a Classroom Walkthrough with representatives from the UCLA School Management Program. Teachers held discussions about the purpose of walkthroughs, and how they can be used to improve student learning as well as district instructional practices and initiatives. The teachers also visited classes at ABGS while they were in session to observe classroom instruction. The visit was coordinated by ABGS Assistant Principal Henry Williams.



Alverta B. Gray Schultz Middle School teachers participated in small workshops before completing their walkthroughs.



Teachers Beverly Robinson, left, and Shawn Devito, took notes about their observations after their classroom walkthrough.

# Benchmark Assessments

In January 2010, the school district implemented Benchmark Assessments in all content areas. This process was developed in collaboration with the K-12 content directors, curriculum coaches and teachers. In November 2010, the district administered the first of three quarterly Benchmark Assessments. The purpose of administering quarterly assessments is to gather, analyze and use student achievement data to improve our instruction and raise student achievement. Using the data enables the district to:

- Re-teach objectives to targeted students who do not demonstrate mastery
- Move forward with new objectives for students who have demonstrated mastery
- Enrich instruction for students who demonstrate an understanding beyond the standards
- Develop plans for Academic Intervention Services
- Target instruction for students to attain proficiency on the New York State Assessments and Regents Exams

Below is an in-depth explanation of Benchmark Assessments in the district.

## What is a Benchmark Assessment?

- Benchmark Assessments are standards-based assessments administered at regular intervals to monitor students' growth, to guide instruction, and to identify individual students' needs for re-teaching and intervention.

## Benefits of Benchmark Assessments

- They are short tests administered throughout the school year that give teachers immediate feedback on whether students are meeting academic standards. They assist teachers target instructional practices to meet specific students' needs and monitor students' progress.
- They yield descriptive data — not judgements.
- They are used diagnostically to enhance instruction.
- The tests are also used to adjust instruction to better meet the needs of the students who are assessed.

# Lesson Planning

One of the most important elements of the teaching and learning process is the development of an effective lesson plan. Lesson plans serve as a road map to achieve the goals of the lesson. With this in mind, the Lesson Plan Committee, a sub-committee of the Professional Council, worked to provide a recommendation to the school district administrators in the development of the districtwide lesson plan. The following recommendations were finalized in November 2010 and are currently in effect.

## Elements of the Hempstead Union Free School District Lesson Plan

- Subject
- Applicable New York State Standard(s)
- Behavioral Objective(s)/Performance Indicators
- Unit/Concept/Topic
- Procedure/Activity (to include, setting the stage, teacher direct instruction, independent practice and/or guided practice, checking for understanding, differentiated instruction)
- Vocabulary
- Resources/Materials
- Homework
- Assessment

# New Cut Scores



Students at Barack Obama Elementary School were recently able to practice their reading comprehension and math skills with Director of Math Beverly Jones.

In July 2010, New York State Education Commissioner David Steiner announced that the State Education Department raised the bar to achieve proficiency on the state's Grade 3-8 Math and English Assessments by setting the cut scores to a New College-Ready Proficiency Standard. The district's implementation of Benchmark Assessments, professional development sessions and other educational initiatives will help our students to meet or exceed the new state scoring standards.

## Aspiring Administrator's Academy

I am elated to announce that the district has launched the first cohort of the Aspiring Administrator's Academy. This program, which is the first of its kind here at the Hempstead Public Schools, will provide aspiring administrators in the district with the opportunity to obtain professional development and other training from district administrators and extended parties.

Participants will complete monthly professional development sessions as well as have the opportunity to shadow an in-district administrator for a full-day. This academy will help to prepare courageous administrators for the next level of their careers in education. For additional information, please contact Dr. Nichelle Rivers, Executive Director for School Compliance and Accountability, at (516) 292-7111 ext. 1421.



During the Aspiring Administrator's Academy, participants will complete professional development and other training from Superintendent of Schools Dr. Patricia Garcia and administrators in the district.

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