

Outlook

A tri-annual publication of the Diablo Managers Association. DMA is a charter of ACSA.

DMA administrators share their trials and triumphs

As part of a continuing series, Outlook is profiling Mt. Diablo Unified administrators and classified personnel who are members of DMA.

This issue features discussions with Absyлом Sims, Patti Bannister, Barnaby Gloger and Leyla Benson. Questions we asked were: What is your primary job responsibility? What is your biggest challenge? And what is something people might not guess is true about you?

Absyлом Sims, Vice Principal, Mt. Diablo High School

Absyлом joined Mt. Diablo three years ago from Oakland Unified, where he was a vice principal at a continuation high school. He previously taught for 15 years at West Contra Costa Unified.

I oversee the math, science and special education departments, and I am in charge of several academies on our campus. That includes the Digital Safari Multimedia Academy, which integrates the core subjects of English, social studies and multimedia. Students take some core classes outside the academy. While mathematics is outside the academy, academy teachers work closely with math and science teachers to ensure that students have appropriate class schedules and rich academic experiences. It's a wonderful saving station for children who are at risk. These students who don't feel a connection to large comprehensive high schools can find a home in a smaller learning environment inside that larger school.

I also work with JROTC, an Army program on campus that is basically an ethics class; our teacher, Sgt. Major Larry Smith, is a unique individual whose presence enriches the program. Like all VPs on campus, I evaluate 14 teachers, including many new and temporary ones.

With regard to our math department, because Mt. Diablo High is part of the School Assistance and Intervention Team (SAIT) improvement program, I make sure we meet all the SAIT requirements, and help coordinate SAIT team efforts to improve student performance. My dream is to close the achievement gap—that's why I took the job. I want to see more success with all students, regardless of the social and economic experiences they have had that are challenging them.

The greatest challenge in the job is to provide an equitable education to students that have been underserved, and who are still being underserved. Some of these students have been adjudicated; some come from juvenile detention ranches, where they were under guard. Some have been to multiple schools. They have skills gaps that we need to

find, and fill, so we can make sure they are receiving the proper education that will move them forward as quickly as possible. We also need to hear the voices of special education children and help them.

I believe the answer is here, that we are the solution. We're doing a job without all the resources. When I'm able to connect to teachers about why we're really here, and we as a team are connected to our work, then I'll feel successful, and there will be some movement toward supporting the students.

What might surprise people about me? I love to sing spirituals. I have done it all my life.

Patti Bannister, Principal, Diablo View Middle School

Patti joined the district in 1991 as a middle school math and science teacher and still loves the middle school age group. She taught at Riverview and Oak Grove Middle and was a vice principal at Oak Grove. She was vice principal at Diablo View for three years and was appointed principal this school year.

I am honored to have been selected principal of Diablo View, and I am truly committed to continuing the mission and goals that enabled our school to be named a California Distinguished School last year. While we proudly fly the Distinguished School flag, it serves as a reminder that we must continue to strive to make Diablo View a place where every student has a rewarding and enriching school experience.

While other schools may have more challenges in helping students be successful, our challenge is to maintain a growth mindset. We need to keep asking, What things can we do to challenge our students to be the best they can be? This is part of the effort to develop positive relationships and a positive school culture.

I find my biggest challenge is time, and being able to complete all I want to accomplish, and I think I'm fairly realistic. You need to learn to prioritize and be available for parents, teachers and students when they most need it. One of the roles is to be a good listener—you can learn so much from listening!

(continued on page 2)



Absyлом Sims



Patti Bannister

DMA member profiles: Trials and triumphs *(cont. from page 1)*

People may be surprised to learn that my husband and I have six children. They're all grown and all graduated from Notre Dame. My children are exemplary young people and they're all individuals. Needless to say, I'm extremely proud of them.

Barnaby Gloger, Student Services Coordinator, Concord High

Barnaby joined Mt. Diablo in 2006 under the California block grant created by AB 1802 that enabled districts to increase student access to counseling services in grades 7 through 12. His initial assignment was at Oak Grove Middle School, and he moved to Concord High last summer. He previously worked as a case manager and therapist in a residential facility in Santa Barbara.

My principal responsibility is to provide supplemental counseling to at-risk students. These are students who are not graduating, may be behind in their credits, are exhibiting at-risk behavior or are in a troubled situation. Once we identify those students, we provide them with academic and other counseling to try and meet their needs. Our goal is to ensure they are successful in their classes and are passing their exams to graduate. My administrative responsibilities include facilitating our school's coordinated care team, where we try to connect students who are having emotional difficulties or trouble at home with services in the community, the district and the school, for example, anger management classes or one-on-one counseling and therapy. I also facilitate the positive school climate committee,



Barnaby Gloger

which connects teachers, administrators, students and parents. I love being part of that conversation—especially at Concord High, where a lot of great things are happening.

I have two major challenges. One is making time for everything. I love doing the supervision because it gives me an excuse to hang out with students and talk to them and encourage them. I find the kids are very open and generous about letting adults come into their lives. The other challenge is to work on preventing problems rather than always reacting to them. It's easy to keep putting out fires, running from problem to problem after it happens. We need to work to prevent problems *before* they happen and create a better learning environment for all students. An hour spent on preventive solutions might save many hours of follow-up. We want our students to know there is someone who cares about them so that when difficulties come, they will make the right decisions and do the right things, and will know where to go for support. That knowledge is all part of our work in building a positive school climate.

People may not know that I am married. We have a young child and one on the way. I met my wife in Costa Rica, where we were both traveling and studying. She learned Spanish and I surfed. I miss the ocean and would like to move it a little closer to Concord.

Leyla Benson, Administrator, Summit Necessary Small High School and Transitional Learning Center

Leyla joined Mt. Diablo this year from Pittsburg Unified, where she taught English and administered Pittsburg High School's Stevenson Academy program for truant and at-risk students.

As the administrator at both Summit and the Transitional Learning Center, my role is to support the two programs and to ensure they are successful. It's a great experience. Since I have a maximum of 100 students, I get to know each of the students well, and strive to build a relationship with them. I also like being involved in every aspect of our school.



Leyla Benson

The emphasis at Summit is to get students back on track for graduation. My role involves facilitating programs, supporting teachers, ensuring that the curriculum is standards-based and rigorous, and creating an environment in which students feel successful and are supported. Many students have had negative experiences associated with school. We want them to feel that Summit is their school and they can contribute to making it more of a community. We want them to have positive experiences, find what might work for them in the future and help prepare them for success with those transitions.

The Transitional Learning Center (TLC) is an opportunity for retained eighth graders to start and complete the ninth grade. TLC offers students extra support in English and math classes, and because the maximum number served is just 50 students, teachers are able to work more closely with them. If students complete the year with good grades and 90 percent attendance, they can take a summer-school class in English and are officially in tenth grade. Those who do not reach that level of success will start at a comprehensive site in the ninth grade with additional credits. It's a positive program either way because students get the support they need in areas where they may be struggling to prepare for high school.

My major challenge is to help students who may have negative associations with school, or who have struggled or feel far behind in school. I want to help them see education in a positive light and feel they can be successful in school. Another challenge is to give 100 percent to all the areas where I need to be involved. I believe that students will give 100 percent if they feel they belong and are valued at the school site, and if they have a say in what goes on and feel represented. If you have community, you have everything; you can build on the academics and everything else that follows.

I am an open book, so I'm not sure what would be surprising. I love to shop and indulge in retail therapy often. I also really love to eat. People may not believe that about me, but it's true. ■

A message from DMA President Karen Sakata

DMA works to represent every one of our members

Welcome to the 2007-08 school year. I am looking forward to a challenging yet productive year as your new DMA President. I am fortunate to be working collaboratively with a bright, hardworking board that is focused on representing all DMA members.



DMA is your local professional organization. Our goals for the coming year include supporting management; increasing our participation in the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA); continuing the strong, positive working relationship and communication with our superintendent; recognizing members; promoting professional development and increasing participation on DMA committees.

DMA supports management employees in several ways. Our Mentor Project pairs veteran and new managers on a one-to-one basis. (For more information about the Mentor Project, please see the article on this page.)

DMA is an official charter of ACSA. Rose Lock, our ACSA representative, and I attend ACSA Region 6 meetings to keep abreast of state and local issues pertinent to managers. We encourage all members to attend ACSA conferences and workshops, and to get involved in committee and legislative work.

DMA representatives meet with the superintendent each month to discuss management needs and concerns, and to learn about the district perspective. Additionally, we are part of the monthly conversation with the superintendent and district union leadership, where we focus on the issues and interests of all employees.

DMA participates in the ACSA awards, which are presented at the ACSA Leadership Summit in the spring. Our goal is to nominate DMA members in all ACSA recognition categories. DMA also provides scholarship opportunities to children of DMA members who are applying to college. In addition, we offer financial support to members through a one-time reimbursement of registration fees for professional development activities. DMA is also a co-sponsor of the August Leadership Institute.

Finally, we hope to increase member participation on DMA committees this year. If you are interested in getting more involved, please contact any of these committee chairpersons:

- Awards—*Bob Dodson* ■ By-Laws—*Rose Lock*
- Communication—*Joe Marsich* ■ Membership—*Denise Larkins*
- Mentor Project—*Jeanne Rau* ■ Salary/Benefits—*Karen Sakata*
 - Staff Development—*Cindy Matteoni*
 - Student Scholarships—*Linda Hutcherson*
 - Sunshine/Hospitality—*Margaret Scott*
 - Professional Development—*Anne Eggleston*

Your DMA Board meets on the first Wednesday of each month. We encourage your input and active participation. Thank you! ■

ACSA Corner: Things you should know!

This issue introduces the ACSA Corner, where you can read all about the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA). DMA is an ACSA charter.

- **State Conference**—November 8–10 in Santa Clara (alternates between northern and southern California). Registration information at www.acsa.org.
- **Region Conference**—April 18–19 in Napa includes the Region Awards Dinner. This year's theme is *Leading with Courage, Confidence and Commitment*.
- **Awards**—ACSA awards recognize individuals in various job categories and bring distinction to the individual's school and district. Charter nominees are considered for region awards and region winners are considered for state awards. The DMA Charter hopes to select nominees in these categories: Central Office Administrator, Elementary Principal, Middle School Principal, High School Principal, Co-administrator, Classified Manager, and Educational Option Administrator (Special Ed, Alternative Ed, Adult Ed). Please start thinking about individuals for consideration of these awards. Details to follow!
- **Every Student Succeeding Award**—ACSA recognizes one student from each region who has overcome challenges to achieve success.
- **Grants and Scholarships**—Region 6 offers three \$1,000 mini-grants each year to its members and three \$1,000 scholarships to members' children.
- **Membership**—This year's A Dollar A Day membership campaign makes becoming an ACSA member highly affordable. Check out all the benefits that ACSA offers you as an administrator at www.acsa.org or www.acsaregion6.org.

Rose Lock serves as a representative from Region VI to the ACSA State Delegate Assembly. Agenda topics at the upcoming meeting will include an update on No Child Left Behind and strategies for reaching out to Generation Xers. Please contact Rose Lock at Walnut Ares, ext. 4346, lockr@mdusd.k12.ca.us, if you have any issues of concern. ■

Mentors needed for DMA's Mentor Project!

DMA's Mentor Project, which offers support to district administrators and classified personnel throughout the school year, expects to pair at least 10 mentor-mentee teams in 2007-2008.

Coordinator *Jeanne Rau* says she has received 10 requests for mentors this year. "Many are new student service coordinators, so we are looking for additional volunteers to serve as SSC mentors. We would also like to set up a list of ongoing mentors so that any new administrator could be assigned to a more experienced manager right away," she said.

Jeanne and the Mentor Project team are also working on the creation of a new format for the "One Minute Mentor," a resource listing of managers with specific areas of expertise whom other administrators can call on for assistance. For questions about the Mentor Project, to request a mentor or volunteer to offer to become a mentor, please contact Jeanne at 925-825-7440, ext. 3710, rauj@mdusd.k12.ca.us. ■

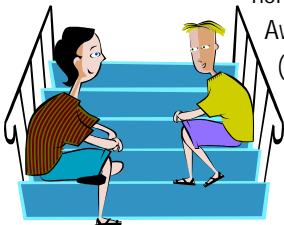
Comments, news & notes ...

Winter Social will be December 5 ... Don't forget to save the date for DMA's Winter Social on Wednesday, December 5, from 4 to 6 p.m. Watch for details!

ACSA appointments ... Congratulations to *Julie Braun-Martin*, Director, Certificated Personnel, and *Martha Riley*, Principal, Northgate High. Julie has been appointed to the ACSA Human Resources State Council and Martha to the Secondary Education State Council as representatives from Region VI.

Congratulations to June luncheon honorees ... DMA members honored at the June 2007 End-of-Year

Awards luncheon were *Melinda Hall* (Outstanding Contribution to Education), *Bob Johnson* (Lifetime), Nadine Rosenzweig (Have a Heart), *Liz Kim* (Rising Star) and *Bob Dodson* (Most Involved). Well done!



Professional development awards ... *Evie Groch*, *Jana Harrison*, *Christine Huajardo* and *Jeanne Rau* received DMA Professional Development Awards at the close of the 2006-2007 school year. All members are eligible to receive a one-time reimbursement up to \$500 once every three years for participating in a professional development course or program. Please contact your DMA representative with any questions.

Take the survey! ... Please take a few minutes to respond to the readership survey included in this issue. Thank you!

Congratulations to retiring members!

Patrick Cleaver—Curriculum Specialist

Bob Johnson—Principal, Foothill Middle School

Melinda Love—Curriculum Specialist

Welcome, new DMA members!

Catherine Acosta—Administrator, After School Program

Lisa Allphin—Curriculum Specialist

Peter Aloo—Vice Principal, College Park High

Joe Alvarez—Vice Principal, Ygnacio Valley High

Michelle Batesole—Vice Principal, Highlands

Leyla Benson—Administrator, Summit NSHS

Felicia Bridges—SSC, Olympic High

Sharon Brockman—Vice Principal, Concord High

Charmion Brown—Vice Principal, Bel Air

Sandra Bruketta—Curriculum Specialist

Amy Bush—SSC, College Park High

Ana Castro—SSC, Riverview Middle

Orielle Couttten—SSC, Diablo Day

Barbara Cowles—Program Specialist, Special Education

Nigel Dabby—Vice Principal, Delta View

Terry Dunn—Vice Principal, Continuation High, Alliance

Jonathan Eagan—Vice Principal, Ygnacio Valley High

Rosario Elmy—SSC, Ygnacio Valley High

Silvia Esteban—Integrated Systems Project Manager

Tina Frediani—Curriculum Specialist

Alan Glass—Personnel Coordinator

Spoogmai Habibi—Curriculum Specialist

Sallie Holliday—Classified Training Coordinator

Marcie James—Chief Accountant

Irene Keenan—Vice Principal, College Park High

Socorro Lomas—SSC, District-wide

Kathy Lorden—Vice Principal, Pleasant Hill Middle

Julene MacKinnon—SSC, Concord High

Rhys Miller—Program Specialist, BTSA/PAR

Monica Moreno—Vice Principal, Rio Vista

Nina Mucher—Vice Principal, Sun Terrace

Micah Palechek—SSC, Valley View Middle

Susan Shih—SSC, El Dorado Middle

Phyllis Stuart—Bus Driver Instructor

Megan Thomas—Vice Principal, Concord High

Christina Topf—Vice Principal, Hidden Valley

Christine Wilburn—Administrative Assistant, Special Education

DMA Executive Board and Representatives

President Karen Sakata, Ayers Elementary, 4300

President-Elect Katie Gaines, Alternative Education, 3908

Past President Bob Dodson, Mt. Diablo Elementary, 84590

Vice Presidents Linda Hutcherson, Foothill Middle, 5700; Denise Larkins, Personnel Services, 4136

Secretary Liz Kim, Rio Vista, 4398

Treasurer Joe Marsich, Research & Evaluation, 4132

REPRESENTATIVES:

ACSA Rose Lock, Walnut Acres Elementary, 4346

Adult Education Margaret Scott, Loma Vista, 4380 #2753

Alternative Education Pam Neudecker, Crossroads, 925-689-6852; Bernie Yeghoian, Nueva Vista, 925-689-1487

Central Services Jeanne Rau, Transportation, 3710

Confidentials Vonda Boucher, Elementary Education, 4016

District Office/Willow Creek Vivian Boyd, Curriculum & Instruction, 4023; Julie Braun-Martin, Personnel Services, 4142

Elementary Principals Cindy Matteoni, Sequoia Elementary, 4330

Elementary Vice Principals Anne Eggleston, Mt. Diablo Elementary, 84590

Middle School Coleen Martin, Pine Hollow, 4368; Andrea Uhle, Glenbrook, 5410

High School Martha Riley, Northgate, 3500

Special Education Melinda Hall, 4045

Retirees Sandy Brickell, 925-827-4002, Brickellsl@aol.com; Evie Groch, 510-235-9771, egroch@comcast.net

ACSA Region VI Consultant John Searles, 925-228-5700, searles3@comcast.net

The role of your DMA representative is to represent you on the DMA Board and to provide feedback to you about Board decisions and issues. If you have questions or feedback to offer, please contact your representative. To comment on items in this newsletter, contact Joe Marsich at ext. 4132, marsichj@mdukd.k12.ca.us. For more information about DMA, please visit <http://diablomanagers.org>.