



# school bulletin

ISSUED BI-WEEKLY SEPTEMBER THROUGH JUNE FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

May 30, 2008

## NEWSWEEK RANKINGS

### LBUSD Has 6 of Top High Schools in U.S.

*Newsweek's* newly released annual rankings of America's top high schools include six schools in the Long Beach Unified School District, a record high for the district.

The annual list represents only the top 5 percent of all U.S. public high schools.

Joining the list of elite schools for the first time were Long Beach's Millikan High School and Catalina Island's Avalon High School.

Returning to the list this year were Poly High School, Wilson Classical High School, Renaissance High School for the Arts, and the California Academy of Mathematics and Science.

To determine the rankings, *Newsweek* takes the total number of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or Cambridge tests given at a school in 2007 and divides by the number of graduating seniors.

Record numbers of students here have enrolled in AP courses this year, helping them to earn college credit while still in high school, giving them a competitive edge and potentially saving their parents thousands of dollars on college tuition.

AP enrollment here shows a 65 percent increase since 2003.



### Sports Illustrated List Includes Poly Again

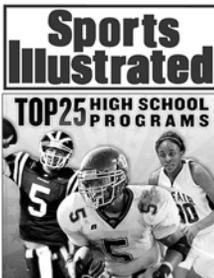
Just days after making *Newsweek's* list of top U.S. high schools for academics, Poly made *Sports Illustrated's* top 25 list for athletics.

*Sports Illustrated* ranked Poly at No. 6 in the nation.

The athletics ranking is one of the most selective in all of sports. Poly achieved the No. 1 spot in 2005, topping a list of more than 38,000 high schools in the U.S. At the time, the magazine also recognized Poly for its rigorous academics, including its PACE magnet.

Ranking criteria include the number of championship titles and college athletes produced by the school.

Visit [www.sportsillustrated.com/high-school](http://www.sportsillustrated.com/high-school) for the new rankings.



**MVP** — Poly High School secretary Phoebe McBennett exults upon winning the 2008 Classified Employee of the Year Award. McBennett accepted the honor at the sports-themed All-Star Classified Employee Barbecue. Colleagues describe her as thorough, intelligent, calm, reassuring and efficient. The Board of Education will honor McBennett on June 3.



### Poly's McBennett Wins Employee of the Year

Poly High School office supervisor Phoebe McBennett accepted the Classified Employee of the Year Award recently at the annual employee barbecue, where loyal fans of the secretary cheered at the surprise announcement.

McBennett was one of 45 employees, including five finalists, vying for this year's award.

"I'd like to thank the support staff and everyone at Poly," McBennett said after the announcement. "They're the best support staff. None of us does our work alone. It takes all of us working together. I'm happy to work in this school district. I think it's the best district. I'd also like to thank our principal, Shawn Ashley, because I know he had a lot to do with this."

Several Poly teachers and administrators nominated McBennett for the award. She has served as the school's secretary at Poly — one of California's largest high schools — for more than 13 years.

"Phoebe is an invaluable asset to Poly," wrote English teacher Jeanne Vitale in nominating McBennett. "She makes everyone's job easier because of her competence, her kindness, and her knowledge of the school and the district."

Poly principal Shawn Ashley also  
(Continued on next page)

### Schools Excel On State API Rankings

Ninety percent of schools in the Long Beach Unified School District are either at or above average compared to schools with similar demographics statewide, according to the latest state Academic Performance Index rankings.

When compared to schools with similar socioeconomic, linguistic and other challenges among their student population, an impressive 59 percent of schools here also ranked among the top 30 percent statewide.

The latest results are consistent with recent findings by The Broad Foundation, which has recognized LBUSD for performing better than expected when compared to other California school districts. The school district in April was named by Broad as one of the top five urban districts in the nation.

### Carmen Ward Earns Nurse of Year Award

Carmen Ward, a nurse at Birney, MacArthur and Naples elementary schools, has won the 2008 School Nurse of the Year Award from the Long Beach School Nurses Association.

Ward accepted the honor at the association's recent annual recognition event, where teachers, school support staff members and fellow nurses rooted her on. She had been nominated by several colleagues.

"It was a lovely evening. I was really surprised and extremely honored," Ward said.

"Everyone is so nice and supportive. Without their support, I don't think I could have done it, because it's a difficult job having three schools."

A 10-year veteran of the Long Beach Unified School District, Ward is known for her sense of humor and her ability to put students at ease.

"When the kids aren't nervous, they can tell me what's wrong with them," Ward said. "The students are so much fun to work with."

Ward also has actively served in her association as treasurer and historian.



Ward

Photo by Ingrid Perez, TALB



**CUTS HURT** – Long Beach Unified School District parents, students, teachers and classified employees gather at International Elementary School to protest proposed state budget cuts to education. A recently revised state budget proposal still means lean times.

## • Employee of Year

(Continued from first page)  
nominated McBennett.  
“Phoebe is far more than an accomplished, competent and efficient school secretary,” Ashley wrote. “She sets the tone by which families identify their child’s school, and eases the stress of staff and students by extending a caring ear followed by a helping hand. She models for the entire school how colleagues, parents and students are to be treated.”  
The four other finalists announced at the Classified Employee Barbecue were Monroe K-8 School office supervisor Laura Martinez, Millikan High School campus security officer Beatriz Nieves, Lowell Bayside Academy office supervisor Betty Wohlgezogen, and Elementary Office executive secretary Joann Kageno.

Nominees for the award are those who support the LBUSD’s educational mission by contributing significantly to the classroom support and/or the business (non-school) operations of the district. They also demonstrate a commitment to being a team player and a positive role model for others, and they strive for excellence in personal performance.

McBennett also will be recognized at the June 3 Board of Education meeting, which starts at 5 p.m. in the Community Room of the Administration Building.

## Cabrillo High Receives \$100,000 Donation

California United Terminals and Hyundai Merchant Marine announced this week that they would donate \$100,000 to Cabrillo High School for academic programs and a new scoreboard for the athletic field.

“We understand that being a part of the community means investing in the wellbeing of our neighbors,” said Elvis Ganda, President of CUT. “These programs promote the development of our city’s youth, as well as our industry’s future leaders. We have a proud history of giving, and we are honored to be a part of making Long Beach better, both on the docks and in the community.”

Along with the purchase of a scoreboard, funds will go toward the school’s Small Learning Communities, or academies such as International Studies at Cabrillo, which focuses on international business, the environment, cul-

tural diversity and international law.

“We deeply appreciate this generous contribution,” said Felton Williams, president of the Long Beach Unified School District Board of Education. “CUT and HMM have raised the standard of corporate citizenship on the Westside. It is support like this that makes our school system one of the nation’s best.”

## LBUSD Honored By Real Estate Council

The Long Beach Commercial Real Estate Council honored the Long Beach Unified School District, Long Beach City College and Cal State Long Beach recently with its Beverly O’Neill Excellence in Education Award.

The award, named after Long Beach’s former mayor, recognized the three institutions for their recent announcement of The College Promise, which guarantees all LBUSD students the chance to earn a college education. For more information, go to [www.lbschools.net](http://www.lbschools.net) and find College Promise in the A-Z index.

Realtors are among the strongest supporters of local schools because they understand the connection between good schools, good property values and desirable communities.

## Poly, Cabrillo Shine At Reno Jazz Fest

Poly and Cabrillo high schools’ jazz musicians took top honors at the recent Reno Jazz Festival held at the University of Nevada.

Poly bands placed first, third and fifth in various categories, including a first-place win in the top AAAA division. It was the first time Poly broke the top five to become number one out of dozens of schools.

Cabrillo High School also participated in the AAAA category and received an excellent rating. Cabrillo student Endra Menchaca received the Outstanding Musicianship Award.

The jazz festival included seminars and clinics held by some of the nation’s leading music educators.

## Retirement Event

Honoree	Date	Contact
Helen Bryan	June 3	Glenda Mutz ext. 3605

### SCHOOL BULLETIN

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Superintendent of Schools

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## In Memoriam

**Richard Hart**  
former teacher  
May 2008

**Howard Lowery**  
former grounds keeper  
May 14, 2008

## The Job Board

Lindsey International Studies Magnet (6-8) has an opening for a math coach for 2008-09. Applicants should possess in-depth knowledge of the math curriculum and have experience working with a diverse group of middle school students. Interested candidates should contact Teresa Osburn, principal, at ext. 2645.

## Breast Cancer Walk

More than 100 teachers, students and other staff from Millikan, Cabrillo, Poly, Buffum, Burbank, Constellation and Signal Hill schools recently raised thousands of dollars to support school district employees who are fighting breast cancer. School teams participated in the Revlon Walk for The Cure 5K/10K in Los Angeles.



**WALK FOR THE CURE** – The Poly High School team raised about \$6,000 to support school district employees who are fighting breast cancer.