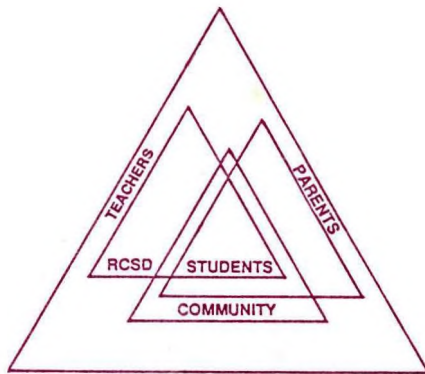


The Board Room

RAVENSWOOD CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD NEWSLETTER



"OUR CHILDREN-OUR FUTURE"

BOARD NEWSLETTER PREMIERE ISSUE

This is the premiere issue of the *Ravenswood City School District Board Newsletter*. The Board Newsletter is produced four times a year by the Clerk and Vice-President of the Board and is distributed to the entire school district community.

The Newsletter features Board decisions on school district business and policies, forthcoming agenda items including those from the master calendar, highlights from the official minutes from the preceding quarter, information regarding District related parent-child-school information and announcements, and general educational issues. Additionally, the Board Newsletter, in its editorial, expresses its opinion on District and general educational issues.

Members of the Board

Mavis Knox, *President*
Herbert Perkins, *Vice-President*
Connie Hammett, *Clerk*
Brad Davis, *Member*
R.B. Jones, *Member*

DISTRICT WELCOMES NEW SUPERINTENDENT

On October 7, 1985, Charlie Mae Knight began working as superintendent for the Ravenswood City School District. Her prior experience demonstrates her abilities, capabilities, and qualifications to meet the demanding needs of her new position.

Dr. Knight began her career on the Monterey Peninsula, where she worked for twenty years as a teacher, counselor, and administrator in the Monterey Unified School District. She left in January of 1978 to work for the Department of Education as associate state superintendent of schools under the direction of Wilson Riles. In 1981, Dr. Knight accepted a four-year contract to work as superintendent of the Lynwood School District, located near Los Angeles.

Dr. Knight said, "I do not see my job as a challenge, but rather as an opportunity to provide necessary leadership." In the future, Dr. Knight plans to continue to raise academic standards. She would also like to convert the two former Jr. High Schools (Garden Oaks and Green Oaks) into preparatory schools. Included in these schools would be a curriculum on all grade levels. Approval from parents for students to attend these schools would be a requirement, since program and grade level competency standards would be high, and students would be expected to meet those standards. She also plans to include excellerated classes at all schools.

Dr. Knight plans to implement an early entrance program for pre-schoolers. She feels that all schools should admit kindergartners whose birthdates are after December 6.

Another major concern is attendance. Dr Knight plans extensive changes in the current curriculum. Classes which are not currently offered, such as typing and performing arts will be added. A certified multi-media specialist will be hired to ensure that all libraries will be open. Homework will be systematically structured and writing assignments will be increased. She would also like to give attention to the recently established "Opportunity Class" for those who have been retained two to four times. The establishment of basic educational skills teachers would be necessary to meet the special needs of these students.

An important, but often overlooked point that Dr. Knight recognizes is the mis-use of the talents of grade level and above grade level students. Often in the urban school system, these grade level and above grade level students are placed in tutorial positions, with the assumption that this will help the teaching student, as well as the student being taught. Although test scores prove this assumption to be true, Dr. Knight explores the question, "If the grade level and above grade level students were being taught instead of tutoring others, would their test scores become even higher?"

In the area of district staff, Dr. Knight would like to raise teacher salaries to above the median in San Mateo County. She says she would like to see employees stop using this district as a training ground. Because of lower salaries, employees tend to stay with the district only long enough to gain necessary experience, then they apply to other districts which pay higher salaries. Dr. Knight would also like to develop a Career Advancement

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ON THE CALENDAR

Board Agenda

December 2, 1985:

- Formal Installation of new Board.
- Swearing-in ceremony.
- Reorganization of Board.
- Election of Board officers:
President, Vice-President, and Clerk of the Board.
- RECEPTION for new Board.

December 12, 1985:

Study: Consideration of a plan to use Garden Oaks School as a site for a district-wide school for grades 4 and 5.

December Special Meeting To Be Announced:

Report on Bilingual Program--Training for aides and teachers on waiver.

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AT RAVENSWOOD

Effective schools can be a reality in the Ravenswood School District. There is no mystery to what needs to be done to create an effective school system. Much of what needs to be done can be done without an impouring of great sums of money. Of course, certain basic money needs must be met in order to produce effective schools: adequate salaries for teachers and staff, good teaching resources (e.g., quality, up-to-date textbooks, curriculum guides), pleasant environment (adequately maintained facilities). But the major contributors to effective schools come from the applied intellectual, affective and moral resources of the teachers, principals, and administrators working in union with the parents. In this issue of *The Board Room* we share with you the factors that actually produce effective schools. Please study over these factors and consider the implications for what we all must do to apply the factors to Ravenswood School District.

The following represents the finding from a Task Force on Standards for Effective Schools set forth in the July 1983 issue of the *New California Schools*. The task force identified eleven major indicators of school effectiveness and five factors that promote and support the major factors.

Major Factors:

1. **Academic Focus.** The primary goals of schools should be academic ones that focus on student learning and achievement. The academic focus should be reflected in a variety of school policies and practices.
2. **Rigorous Content.** In effective schools, students are exposed to a broad-based academic curriculum, including reading, language, mathematics, science physical education/health, social studies, and fine arts. The content of these courses is based on consistent and professional standards, and the content is clearly defined and readily available in written form.
3. **Safe and Orderly Environment.** Effective learning environment in schools tends to be characterized by established rules and specified standards, by consequences for rule violations that are clearly communicated to parents, students and teachers, by rewards for good behavior, by adults at the school assuming responsibility for the behavior of all students, by the school principal ensuring that the discipline policies are implemented, and by the superintendent and school board supporting the principals and teachers through its practices and policies.
4. **Coordinated Curriculum.** Effective schools not only have a core curriculum — clearly delineated sets of skills and objectives for all students in all subject areas — but they also ensure that curriculum materials, instructional practices, and assessment instruments are coordinated with those objectives. Learning is related directly to objectives.
5. **Maximum Use of Time.** Time needs to be viewed as a scarce resource. Efforts need to be devoted to determine both how more time can be obtained for instructional purposes and how to better use that which is already available.
6. **Regular Homework.** Regular homework can be an important factor in helping students achieve and in helping them develop effective work habits. Homework should be structured and based on the core objectives of the curriculum.
7. **Teacher-directed Instruction.** Teacher-directed instruction means that new concepts and skills are analyzed for their key elements or

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BOARD ACHIEVEMENTS: 1981-1985

Over the past four years, the Ravenswood City School District Board of Trustees, with the cooperation of district teachers and staff, administrators, Parents of Positive Action, Bilingual Advisory members, and parents of the community have implemented various programs which have improved the quality of education received by the youth of our community.

Board initialized policies on Exit skills, homework, and promotion standards have improved student academic attainment by producing higher CAT scores. Also, the Board sponsored a program which increased parental involvement in homework supervision, this was a key factor in raising the CAT scores. Due to the implementation of a retention policy based on achievement of grade level performance, students interest level in classroom instruction was greatly increased.

During the past three years, teachers salaries were raised \$3,000 per year. Also, in an effort to upgrade the quality of teachers, new, more strict evaluation procedures were implemented. The Board is currently involved in labor negotiations with RTA and CSEA to secure a pay raise for the upcoming year. Board members hope that they will conclude these negotiations with positive results before the end of their term.

Through the efforts of the 1981-1985 Board members, the Breakfast Program was re-established. Four Summer Schools were re-established as a result of their efforts:

1. **The Brentwood Oaks Summer School** for Kindergarten through Fourth grade, provided students with intensive instruction in the areas that needed improvement as indicated by the CAT and the district's proficiency tests. It also provided enrichment activities for students who passed as well as basic subject areas. This summer school ended with an enrollment of 462 students.
2. **The Ravenswood Middle Summer School** for grades Five through Eight focused on four major areas: a) Improving test taking skills, b) Improving math skills, c) Improving reading skills, and d) Improving language skills. More than 240 minutes of each summer school day was devoted to these major focus areas. The student population for this summer school totaled 179. It provided a learning opportunity for students during the summer and an opportunity to rectify deficient skills while providing effective, consistent discipline for students, as well as summer employment for district employees.
3. **The Belle Haven Migrant Summer School's** major purpose was to provide bilingual instruction for all identified migrant students. Curriculum dealt in base program subjects with emphasis in enriching the academic instruction on a daily basis. Activities also included art, dance, motor coordination skills, and two field trips. These field trips were in conjunction with science units. To provide migrant students with medical and dental health care, Dr. Daniel Mendoza, DDS, screened migrant students. Medical referrals were given to those students needing medical attention. This summer school program was an overall success.
4. **The Special Education Summer School** for Kindergarten through Eighth grade varied according to grade levels. However, reading, writing, and math were included in all levels of instruction. Each teacher was required to complete a progress report on each student attending this summer school and a total of 68 students applied.

Staff Development Program

This program, funded by Special Projects, will be on the agenda for discussion and action by the Board of Trustees at the upcoming board meeting.

The purpose of the program is to enhance teacher, instructional aide, and administrator's ability to fulfill his/her role as an educator. Present plans call for a school site being selected as the

development center for all staff, and a university, college, consulting firm, or a person hired by the district to provide consultant services and instruction.

Teachers will be recommended to participate in the Staff Development Program to improve identified skills based on classroom observations and evaluations as indicated by the Principal.

NOTE TO PARENTS

Ways Parents Can Help Their Schoolchildren

Show interest in your child's school life:

1. *Ask the child daily what he or she is studying at school and how he or she is doing.*
2. *Review your child's homework assignments.*
3. *Quiz him or her on work that's been done in the recent past.*

Let your child's teacher know that you value a quality education for him or her:

1. *Attend Parent-Teacher Night Meetings.*
2. *Visit the classroom during the instructional day at least once in the fall and once in the spring of the year.*
3. *Review with the teacher your expectations and her expectations for your child.*
4. *Review the exit-skills, text books and ways you can help your child to learn.*
5. *Let the teacher know that you support good classroom discipline and will back up all reasonable requests from the teacher.*
6. *Call the teacher or principal on any significant concern you may have regarding your child's progress.*

Get to know at least one board member.

1. *Let him/her know about your ideas for improving the education of your child.*

Create a good learning environment in your home.

1. *Turn off the TV during homework time.*
2. *Reduce TV watching to a maximum of 3 hours a week.*
3. *Provide a place for quiet study—a bedroom or kitchen or dining room table.*
4. *Insist on the cooperation of all family members.*
5. *Praise and reward your child for good study habits and progress.*
6. *Provide learning resources for your child: a good dictionary, atlas, or world map, a set of encyclopedias if possible.*

School achievement does not happen by accident. You the parent must participate in creating the conditions that allow for academic achievement.

WELCOME TO THE CHIEF

The welcome to Superintendent Dr. Charlie May Knight was one of the warmest and enthusiastic outpourings that the Ravenswood school community has ever seen. About 300 people were in attendance. All segments of the Ravenswood school community, City of East Palo Alto, County and adjacent city officials, and school board members from nearby districts were represented. The message of the October 25th reception was clear: The school community approves and is supportive of Dr. Knight's leadership.

MOMENTOUS EVENTS

This inaugural issue coincides with several momentous events in the school district: the installation of the new superintendent, Dr. Charlie Mae Knight, the election of new Board members- Mr. Clarence Burley, Mr. James Davis and Mrs. Mrytle Walker, Board contract negotiations with the Ravenswood Teachers Association (RTA) and with Classified Schools Employees Association (CSEA), and Board efforts combined with those of the other school district Boards defendants to reach a conclusion of the Tinsley suit through a negotiated settlement with the Tinsley plaintiffs.



NEW SUPERINTENDENT

Continued from page 1

Program for teachers who are interested in expanding their careers within the school system. Because of the shortage of teachers in this district, Dr. Knight would also like to develop a Career Opportunity Program for instructional aides to assist them in obtaining teaching credentials.

Dr. Knight says she will focus on upgrading the schools at each site. This will encourage students who have left the district to return. "We are looking at balancing the curriculum, improving the environmental conditions of the schools, and raising the morale of our teachers. We want people who are proud that they are part of East Palo Alto and a part of this District.

Board Workshop

Outgoing Board President Mavis Knox, under the auspices of the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE), lead the present Board (Trustees Hammett, Jones, and Perkins), Board elect (Burley, Davis, Walker), and Ravenswood City School District administrators in a three day workshop. The theme of the County sponsored workshop, "Excellence and Innovation Through Teamwork," characterized the formal presentations of Peter Burchyns, Coordinator of Planning and Evaluation for SMCOE, on effective schools, those of Trustees Knox and Hammett and Superintendent, Dr. Knight on the budget status, surplus land proposals, maintenance, staff and student enrollment, and accountability of administrators, as well as the department reports by the central office administrators and school principals.

In these presentations the Board-elect were able to get an indepth review of

EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AT RAVENSWOOD

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attributes, and these are presented in turn by the teachers to the students.

8. **Variety of Teaching Strategies.** Teachers in effective schools are able to adapt teaching strategies, as necessary, to achieve maximum student learning and success.

9. **High Standards and Expectations.** High academic standards are predicated on the belief that all students can learn. They are reflected in everything from course requirements to how staff are held accountable for student learning. High expectations are evident both in the policies and practices of the school and in the behaviors of students and teachers and in the responsibility held by all in the school setting for their school.

10. **Regular Assessment.** Ongoing assessment has two critical ingredients. First, there need to be broad-based and regular used procedures that focus on the outcomes of student learning - textbook related and teacher-made test, and criterion- and norm-referenced tests. Second, assessment results must be used to guide instruction, assess curricular programs, develop school goals, and plan for professional growth activities.

11. **Instructional Leadership.** Strong instructional leadership is a critical factor in school effectiveness. And, the most important aspects of strong instructional leadership are, first, the vision to know where to take a school or district and, second, the ability to get the resources working toward moving the organization toward that destination. Tasks of instructional leadership include setting and communicating goals, setting high standards, supervising instruction, evaluating personnel, monitoring curriculum, and supporting staff.

Supportive Factors of School Effectiveness:

1. Opportunities for Student Responsibility and Involvement.

In effective schools, students have many opportunities to participate in school activities, including school governance and community service.

2. **Structured Staff Development.** The most effective staff development programs are those that are based on school goals, involve the entire staff, enjoy the support of the administration, and involve the instructional staff in planning the programs and assuming some of the teaching roles.

3. **Widespread Recognition.** Well-planned and conscientiously implemented programs of student recognition are associated with effective schools. Such programs should be broad based, centering on academic excellence, systematic and integrated throughout the school-level system, presented in public ceremonies, given to a high percentage of the students in the school.

4. **Home-School Cooperation and Support.** Parental support of school goals and disciplinary policies and the provision of home learning experiences for students are the two types of cooperation between home and school which translate into the highest degree of student learning.

5. **Sense of Community.** Sense of community in effective schools is a combination of cohesion among staff and students and between these two groups. Mutual respect and a set of prevailing community norms which reinforce important school goals are present in effective schools. The internal sense of community needs includes parents whenever possible.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN RAVENSWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Ravenswood has a large LEP (Limited English Proficient) population, one of the highest in San Mateo County. The group is composed mainly of Spanish-speaking, along with Tongans, Samoans, Vietnamese and Indian.

The four elementary schools offer a Bilingual Program to Spanish-speaking students. LEP children of other languages are served by an ESL (English as a Second Language) Lab. Ten or more students, at a grade level, that speak a common language, are needed to trigger a Bilingual class.

Ravenswood Middle School offers services at a Language Development Lab to students in grades 6-8. Instructional aides assist students in subject area classes.

In order to provide quality instruction to all students, many Bilingual staff members are taking courses from De Anza College, offered through the Ravenswood Bilingual Bicultural Teacher/Aide Training Institute.

Waivered teachers continue to work towards passing Bilingual Certification exams.

Soon, Bilingual staff will become

involved in program assessment and will develop a plan of action that will enable them to implement an even more effective program.

BILINGUAL TEACHER AIDE INSTITUTE

Proposed by the De Anza College Bilingual Center and the Ravenswood City School District, this program identifies the needs, goals, and objectives in regard to bilingual/bicultural training for district staff. This Institute offers bilingual aide career ladder classes and bilingual competency classes to elementary classroom teachers.

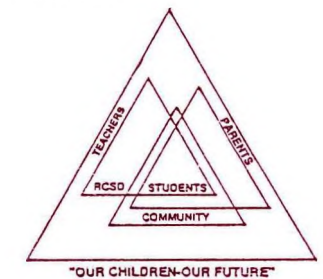
The program, administered by the Ravenswood Bilingual Program Special Projects staff, is taught by De Anza staff. Program participants receive college credit for all course work.

Under the Teacher Certification Component, lecture and tutorial courses are offered to prepare teachers for

certification. Several of these courses offered to the teacher aides may be applicable to teachers who are seeking the Bilingual Certification.

Parents, community members and Ravenswood City School District staff are welcome to join the spring class.

CALL the Special Services at 323-9411 for additional information.



Bulletin of School Site Events

January 17, 1986

Willow School

• *Reading Champions Program-Now through the end of the school year for grades 1-5.*

Sponsored by the March of Dimes to encourage students to read at home.

• *Thanksgiving Meal on November 27, 1985 at 12:00 for the 2nd and 3rd grade children who will prepare the meal for their peers.*

• *Peninsula Childrens Theatre has given 30 tickets to the 3rd grade class to attend the play "Christmas Fantasy" to be held in San Bruno on Saturday, December 7, 1985.*

Brentwood School

• *Winter Festival on December 18, 1985:*

(3 assemblies)

• K-3rd at 10:30 a.m.

• 4th-5th at 1:30 p.m.

• Parents at 7:00 p.m.

• *Martin Luther King Jr. Day on*

Belle Haven School

• *Awards Assembly on November 15, 1985 at 9:00 a.m.*

• Academic Awards

• Citizenship awards

• Attendance awards

• *Outstanding achievement awards*

• *Thanksgiving Program on November 27, 1985 at 9:00 a.m.*

Parents are invited to attend

• *Christmas Program on December 20, 1985 at 9:00 a.m.*

Parents are invited to attend

Costano School

• *Thanksgiving Program by each Unit on Wednesday, November 27, 1985*

• *Canned Food Drive-November 1st-27th, 1985*

• *Art Project reflecting stories of Thanksgiving-ongoing throughout November*

• *SSC/SAC Meeting-6:00 p.m. on*

Tuesday, December 3, 1985

• *Child Abuse Workshop for Parents/Teachers on Wednesday, December 11, 1985*

• *Christmas Tree Decorating on Monday, December 16, 1985*

Each Class will make decorations

• *Friday, December 20, 1985-*

Units K-1-Christmas Songs

--Sing Along

Units 2-3-Christmas Poems

Units 4-5-Christmas Plays

• *Friday, December 20, 1985-*

Booster Club will sponsor Santa

Claus and pass out a fruit and nut bag

to each student.

Ravenswood Middle School

• *Christmas Special Activities on December 19, 1985*

Auditorium

• *Martin Luther King Jr. Day on*

January 17, 1986

Auditorium

Board Workshop

Continued from page 3

the workings of the major departments and of the major educational issues the present Board is grappling with. Facilitating the study of district workings and issues was a thoroughly

prepared manual digesting information on effective schools and critical documents on District services, department programs and policies on governance and curriculum.

The theme and activities of the workshop had a significant impact on

the informal relations of the participants. The Board, Board-elect and administrators got to know and feel good about each other. From teamship developed at the workshop may follow the conditions conducive to educational excellence and innovation.

FROM THE HOT LINE

Board and Teacher Settle on Contract

SALARY SCHEDULE AGREEMENT

An agreement has been reached between the RCSD Board and RTA the teachers bargaining unit. Provisions of the agreement call for an salary increase of 13.4% over the current salary scale. This agreement means that the minimum salary in the District is now above \$18,000. Within a four year period the Board has increased the minimum salary by 25%. Top salaries for teachers can now range beyond \$30,000 with recognition increases for M.A. and Ph.D. degrees.

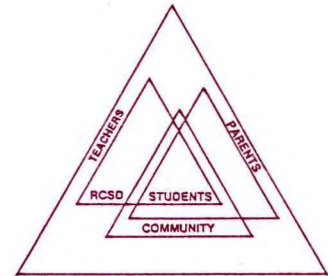
"We are now in a better position to hold on to our good teachers on both ends of the salary scale," stated Board President Mavis Knox at the November 21 special meeting.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

Other provisions of the contract call for the possibility of retroactive pay should the District be able to receive State "SB 813 minute money" for the 1984-85 school year. For the 1985-86 school year, the District may increase student instructional minutes to qualify for SB 813 extended day money. This provision will allow for the development and operation of an extended day program staffed by non-bargaining unit personnel.

CONTRACT DURATION

The Board and RTA agreed to extend the contract through the 1986-87 and 1987-88 school years. Reopeners will be allowed on compensation and instructional minutes necessary to qualify for SB 813 extended day funds. Both RTA and the Board have agreed to not draw pending unfair practice charges (No. SF-CE-a041 and SF-CD-282).



"OUR CHILDREN-OUR FUTURE"

RAVENSWOOD CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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