

Pt. Loma Cluster Schools Foundation
Learning Environment Area of Strategic Focus
Status Update
May 2011

The goals established in the strategic plan for the learning environment area of strategic focus are to create a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment for every student, prepare our students for global competency, differentiate instruction based upon student's needs, create a seamless articulating curriculum (from grade to grade, elementary school to elementary school, and primary level to secondary level), honor diversity, and ensure that facilities are conducive to learning. Six priority areas have been broadly identified.

Specific Interest Groups (SIGs) have been established in a number of areas to accomplish the tasks on an inclusive basis. Many parents have specific interests and passions, and the SIG approach provides an opportunity for meaningful hands-on involvement. Marvin Estrin, as Chair of the Learning Environment, sits on each of these SIGs. Information about the activities relating to the priorities of this strategic area has been posted to the PLCS Foundation web site under the Learning Environment section.

PRIORITY 1: Establish and enforce behavioral expectations

Cluster-wide vision: All students will have an opportunity to realize their full academic, social, and physical potentials in an inspiring, supportive and secure environment. There is consensus that students who feel safe and secure in their learning environment are in a better position to achieve.

Students are expected to apply the golden rule and show consideration for others, as well as adhere to all school and classroom rules. Bullying - physical, mental, or cyber - is totally unacceptable, as is the taking of someone else's property (even a pencil) or defacing school property.

Behavioral Expectations that begin in Elementary School continue during the middle school and high school years. Consistency of message and enforcement in each school and classroom from K - 12 is vital; as are similar core values throughout the cluster.

Elementary Schools: "Coach" Geoff McCloud at Silver Gate developed a list of "caring values" to be shared with our elementary schools. The goal is for all of our elementary schools to develop and focus on the same caring values. The sequencing and programs can vary from school to school. The first six are the "Pillars of Character" taken from "Character Counts". The remaining are qualities/ traits being addressed at Silver Gate. These are: *Trustworthiness Respect Responsibility Fairness Caring Citizenship Honesty Courage Kindness Encouragement Giving Self-control Sportsmanship Attitude*

Dana Middle School: Dana provides a challenging curriculum that inspires academic, artistic, and physical excellence while fostering positive self-esteem, respect, enthusiasm, and cooperation. Coach John Wooden's "Pyramid of Success", a character development program, is included in the daily planner to teach children how to be truly successful in life: "Success is peace of mind, which is a direct result of self-satisfaction in knowing you made the effort to do your best to become the best that you are capable of becoming." A "character trait of the month" is featured during monthly assemblies and a "way to go" ticket system encourages, promotes, and rewards positive behavior. Counselors lead 5th grade students on character development through the WhyTry Program to help students approach life with an optimistic attitude and learn how to persevere when facing challenges in life; and 6th grader on bully prevention: what bullying is, who is affected by bullying, and why its' important for adults to get involved in prevention and intervention. Also, as part of "Incredible Kids Week", a certificate is presented to each student containing the positive traits their peers recognize in them.

Correia Middle School: Initiated in Fall 2008, a "culture of learning" guides every student and staff member in learning and practicing the tenets represented by the word "R.E.A.C.H." which calls out the following traits: Respect, Enthusiasm, Achievement, Citizenship, and Hard Work. The goal is for students to become organized, responsible, respectful, college-wise citizens. Emphasis began in 2009 on consistency in behavioral expectations / enforcement not only in the classrooms, but also between classes and during lunchtime. Campus behavior is much improved over prior years.

The *Tariq Khamisa Foundation* (TKF) has been presenting at Dana and Correia school assemblies. Even though students have seen the presentation before, the powerful messages are stronger each time. TKF's programs focus on educating students about the effects of violence and empowering them to make positive, non-violent choices.

Pt. Loma High School: The focus at PLHS is on Respect, Responsibility, and Safety. The objective is to have a respectful atmosphere – how students talk with each other, staff, and community; as well as taking care of the school campus. The key is clear words, clear expectations, and consequences. The Positive Intervention Committee, consisting of staff, parents, and students, have created a program to educate fellow teachers and students about the issue of bullying. The goal is to improve the overall climate at Point Loma and institute school wide incentives about attendance and bullying prevention.

EMPOWERED SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK: ACCOUNTABILITY: There should be consequences for students who make 'bad choices'. The behavioral expectations, along with the discipline policies, should be communicated to students and parents. A "Parent Expectation" document should be developed so they are 'involved' in encouraging appropriate behavior (such as parents ghosting their children at school for a day -- versus an at-home suspension where kids play video games and watch television).

- Between busy work schedules and your children's extracurricular activities, it can be tough to work in quality family time. Parents and children can do simple activities that strengthen family bonds without breaking the bank. "Most of the child's basic learning takes place in the many informal situations that occur daily in the life of the family," says Dr. James E. Van Horn, Professor of Rural Sociology, Pennsylvania State Cooperative Extension. Quality family time helps children become responsible, self-sufficient adults. For a good reminder of how fast time flies, be sure to listen to "Cat's in the Cradle" by Sandy & Harry Chapin.
- Can you imagine a world without Mozart, Bach, Beethoven, Rembrandt, Michelangelo, da Vinci, Monet, or David? Wouldn't you like for your children to appreciate the music of Chuck Mangione, John Williams, Andrew Lloyd Webber, John Philip Sousa, and Rogers and Hammerstein? Please do not condemn your children to the limitations of mainstream corporate radio or "American Idol". Please expose your children to the artistic wonders of our world.

PRIORITY 2: Increase the safety of students arriving and departing school

We established a Traffic Safety Specific Interest Group to proactively collaborate with the City of San Diego, San Diego Unified School District, Police Department, and Councilmember Faulconer's office to determine what safety improvements are viable and develop an ACTION plan.

Meetings were held with principals and detailed plans have been developed for all 10 of our cluster schools. This includes traffic flow, walking patterns, crosswalks, and bicycle lanes for safety around school zones; signage and flashing lights in school zones; painting of curbs; obstructions, etc. Common Issues Identified:

- Schools are being impacted by changing demographics - more parents are driving students to school
- Limited space at school sites for drop-off / pickup - limit parking hours, etc.
- Desirable to control traffic flow better - structural and behavioral (parents, students, and community)
- Drivers 'forget' to slow down in school zones - Chatsworth, Catalina, Canon, and Talbot are high volume through-traffic corridors

To date, site visits and plans have been conducted with City Traffic Engineers at 7 of the school sites. Improvements have been completed at Correia, and Dana and Pt. Loma High will be next. The rest of the school sites will hopefully be completed over summer break. Some delay was caused by the heavy winter rains and major road damages, which became the city priority.

Backpack safety: Backpacks that are too heavy or are worn incorrectly can cause problems for children and teenagers. Improperly used backpacks may injure muscles and joints. This can lead to severe back, neck and shoulder pain, as well as posture problems. Always use both padded shoulder straps. Tighten the straps so that the pack is close to the body. The backpack should never weigh more than 10% to 20% of the student's total body weight. Pack heavier items closest to the center of the back. Bend using both knees, when you bend down. Encourage your child or teenager to tell you about pain or discomfort that may be caused by a heavy backpack. Do not ignore any back pain in a child or teenager. Ask your pediatrician for advice. (American Academy of Pediatrics)

Car Seats: Each year, thousands of young children are killed or injured in car crashes. Proper use of car safety seats helps keep children safe. Seat belts are made for adults. Your child should stay in a booster seat until adult seat belts fit correctly (usually when the child reaches about 4' 9" in height and is between 8 and 12 years of age). (American Academy of Pediatrics) Any child under the age of six, weighing less than 60 pounds, must be secured in a federally approved child passenger restraint system and ride in the back seat of a vehicle. (DMV)

Teen Smoking: *Why accept a chance of losing 8,000 sunrises?* Every year tobacco use causes more than 430,000 deaths in this country from lung cancer and other smoking-related diseases, including emphysema, heart disease, COPD, and stroke. Preventing young people from starting to use tobacco is the key to reducing the death and disease caused by tobacco use. *“Tobacco is often the first drug used by young people who use alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs. Adolescents with lower levels of school achievement, with fewer skills to resist pervasive influences to use tobacco, with friends who use tobacco, and with lower self-images are more likely than their peers to use tobacco.”* (M. Joycelyn Elders, M.D., Surgeon General)

Floods and Tsunamis: Contrary to popular belief, a tsunami isn't one giant wave. It is a series of waves most commonly generated by great earthquakes below the ocean floor. Underwater landslides also can cause tsunamis. The first tsunami wave is seldom the highest or the last. Waves will continue to arrive for several hours, spaced minutes to hours apart. Usually tsunamis that reach California average 10 feet in height and peak in the 20-40 foot range. The State of California has updated the area tsunami inundation maps, and none of our Pt. Loma Cluster schools lie within the projected maximum tsunami run-up for the area. Ocean Beach, Barnard, and Cabrillo Elementary Schools are located closest to inundation areas.

PRIORITY 3: Enrich the curriculum and access to information in ways that engage and inspire students

21st century literacy is the set of abilities and skills where aural, visual and digital literacy overlap. These include the ability to understand the power of images and sounds, to recognize and use that power, to manipulate and transform digital media, to distribute them pervasively, and to easily adapt them to new forms. (*Report of the 21st Century Literacy Summit 2005*)

Much of the technology we use today did not exist 10 years ago. Much of the technology we will be using in 10 years does not exist today. “What emerging technology trends are going to be hitting the headlines over the next ten years? Geoengineering, Smart Grids, Radical Materials, Synthetic Biology, Personal Genomics, Smart Drugs, Bio-Interfaces, Data Interfaces, Solar Power, Nootropics, Cosmeceuticals” (Andrew Maynard, Director, Risk Science Center, University of Michigan School of Public Health.)

President Obama: “We have to realize that in today’s global, competitive economy, the best jobs and newest industries will take root in the countries with the most skilled workers, the strongest commitment to research and technology, and the fastest ways to move people, goods, and information. To win the future, America needs to out-educate, out-innovate, and out-build the rest of the world.”

To coordinate matriculation plans and interdisciplinary skills, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) will collaborate vertically (between grades and schools) and horizontally (same discipline and inter-discipline).

Technology: We need to integrate the use of information communication technology and digital media in the learning process. Digital technologies are changing the way people learn, play, socialize, and participate in civic life; access to this culture will shape which youth will succeed and who will be left behind as they graduate and enter the workplace. PLCSF ICT seeks to combine the wisdom of research, best practices, and insights from educators, employers, and policy makers; and points to a vision of education that honors core subjects yet integrates learning skills and 21st Century tools, context, content and assessments.

Librarians / Ibrarians Barbara Forster (Dana), Marcia Abbott (Correia), and Sara Sine (Pt. Loma High) perform a vital role in opening up the world of information for our students by promoting literacy; blending digital learning with other learning styles; teaching students how to find, use, and analyze information; validating online sources and data bases; and conducting professional development for teachers to bridge technology into the learning process. They are working to implement the *Model School Library Standards for California Public Schools, Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* that was adopted by the State Board of Education on September 16, 2010 for our cluster.

Science: We need to better integrate the science and math curriculums; 15 of the fastest-growing occupations projected for this decade require substantial science or math preparation. *“Science is a way of thinking much more than it is a body of knowledge.”* (Carl Sagan) Science teachers from Pt. Loma High, Correia, Dana, and representatives from our cluster elementary schools have been meeting to conceptualize and implement a dynamic and engaging K - 12 Science Articulation Cluster Plan. The Science SIG discussed some of the desirable skill sets teachers want their students to obtain before matriculation to the next grade level and the importance of positioning Science as a Core Subject, as well as Nuts and bolts - skill sets – with a focus on elementary schools. The goal is to ensure that all students are learning basic skill sets as they relate to Science. The Science SIG sees advantages of having elementary school Science integrated into the English Language Arts and Mathematics blocks - an interdisciplinary approach – or more accurately, the English Language Arts and Mathematics blocks integrated into the Science curriculum.

- Emphasis on the Process of Science: Developing critical thinking skills; moving from Science is “Fun” to the desired: ‘That was hard, but cool, and I had fun and I learned a lot!’
- Skill Sets: skills teachers want their students to obtain before matriculation to the next grade level
- Lab Skills: What skills do we want our students to learn? Goal: faster lab set up; more time for analysis; Measurements: metric; grams; Reading: instructions
- Elementary School: Science Academic language, Science notebook, Reading – instructions, Writing – conclusions, Math: word problems – extracting the relevant information, Attention to details, cartography, and “Write It, Do It” - learn to write simple procedures - take your coat off; make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich

To support Science instruction, the California Department of Education has prepared “*A Look at Kindergarten through Grade Three in California Public Schools*”, a compilation of subject -matter curriculum, including information about the Common Core State Standards, organized by individual grade levels. It describes what elementary school students should know, what students learn, and science across the content areas – broken out by grade level. To get a better understanding of the science being taught at the cluster elementary schools, the Science SIG feels we should develop a survey for teachers.

- What resources are you using in teaching science?
- Do students keep a science notebook?
- Are the FOSS kits an effective way to teach science to your students?
- Do you supplement the FOSS kit with science read alouds or shared readings from your personal books?
- How many hours per week are students engaged in hands-on science projects?
- Do you find that incorporating field trips enhances your science block?
- What would help you most in teaching science?

Visual and Performing Arts: We need to expand and *integrate* the visual arts, performing arts, and music programs into the K-12 curricular areas as a means to encourage creative thinking. “*An arts education contributes significantly to improved critical thinking, problem posing, problem solving, and decision making. As with language and mathematics, the crux of an arts education involves the communication, manipulation, interpretation, and understanding of complex symbols.*” (Ramon Cortines, Stanford University) A goal for 2011/12 will be to develop a VAPA SIG to capitalize on the passion of the music associations to strengthen the financial support for the overall VAPA program.

- “*Three Ways The Arts Improve Schools*”: (Brent Wilson, Ph.D, professor and head of art education in the School of Visual Arts at the Pennsylvania State University)
 1. *The Arts Improve the School Climate.* Schools organized around the arts look, sound, and feel attractive, warm, welcoming, and visually exciting.
 2. *The Arts' Comprehensive Tasks Challenge Students.* Students master an enormous number of artistic skills, direct a myriad of aesthetic and expressive qualities toward given ends, and symbolize human behaviors and emotions in a great variety of ways. They learn physical boundaries and, in the process, learn to see the boundaries in a world that to many teenagers, appears to be without them. Students carry the discipline required in arts to the discipline of study.
 3. *The Arts Turn Schools Into Communities.* The occupants of arts-centered schools see themselves as members of communities – communities that they have a role in creating and sustaining. Arts encourage students and faculty members to work together, create things together, perform together, and display the results of their efforts together. The arts transform learning and schools.
- There is tremendous support in our cluster for Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) programs, and we have taken a strong position in advocating to the SDUSD Board for continued funding for VAPA. Research shows students with an education in the arts outperform others by virtually every measure.
- “Research shows students with an education in the arts outperform others by virtually every measure. Moreover, learning through the arts can help level the playing field for youngsters from disadvantaged circumstances.” (*Michigan Department of Education*) “As students achieve in the arts, they participate in society by looking at things carefully, hearing things thoughtfully, and feeling things sensitively. When students have access to the arts throughout their school years, they have opportunities to grow as creative, intellectual, and spiritual human beings.” (*California Visual and Performing Arts Framework*)

- The SDUSD VAPA Department in the past collaborated with each school to develop a long-range strategic plan for effectively using VAPA grant funds. The plans entailed a comprehensive process with stakeholders, and includes Standards-Based Curriculum; Instructions and Methodology; Student Assessment; Professional Development; Program Administration and Personnel; Partnerships and Collaborations; Funding; Resources and Facilities; and Program Evaluation. A comprehensive cluster-wide plan can hopefully be developed from these plans.
- Pt. Loma High is converting a vacant building into a state-of-the-art facility for the Motion Picture Career Technical Education facility (downstairs) and a new music center (upstairs). The contract completion date is February 14, 2012. We are *very enthused* about the visions for the *exciting* music and film production programs, and looks forward with great anticipation to the opening of these facilities.

The vision of the PLHS Music Program is *to become a nationally-recognized center of excellence!* The mission is to *connect students, school, and community through music.* Participation in the music program helps to develop student's potential and intelligence, provides a positive venue for creativity and self-expression, and develops leadership skills.

Plans for PLHS's decorated film production program include student feature films, commercials and PSAs, green screen projects 3D films, animation and video game design and web design, iPhone app development, sound design and editing projects, in collaboration with the band and music production classes, and college partnerships including internships.

EMPOWERED SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK: SCHEDULING: scheduled time on a regular basis to enable teacher collaboration within disciplines, within grades, between grades, and between schools.

EMPOWERED SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK: CURRICULUM: In a Culture of Accountability, *Teachers* will be held accountable, but should be provided flexibility in determining how to teach. Define what autonomy a teacher could have within his or her classroom and how to evaluate student achievement / growth (*comments submitted by teachers during community survey January 2010*)

- More time to work with students on a one-on-one basis.
Example: Science: cap class sizes at 32 for laboratory science classes - rooms are set up for 8 lab groups and typical labs have 3 - 4 active roles - larger groups lead to inactive participants and hinder the learning environment
- More control over time lines for units of study
Teach content standards in greater depth and complexity, input on the amount of content standards taught; and incorporating project based learning
Enriching curriculum beyond District curriculum to state-approved, standards-based texts; use funds usually set aside for textbooks for other materials (online books, subscriptions, practice books, etc.)
- More control over sequence of instruction and how material is taught
Example: control to teach math chapters in the order best for children. It is not best for 3rd graders to start math on Chapter 14 instead of Chapter 1; starting on Chapter 14 makes mixed review unusable
Cross-curricular teaching of STEAM
GATE humanities classes team-teaching in a 2-hour block by an English and history teacher
- More time spent planning instead of grading and testing
Updated technology and on-site tech support to aid teachers in their efforts to access and use technology without interruption to the learning process
Learning and developing strategies to ensure students learn desirable skill sets needed for matriculation
- Focused and Relevant Professional Development
Professional development programs tailored to the needs and skill levels of staff attending the program; non-requisite attendance by staff where the program itinerary would be of limited benefit
Cluster "in-services": We have a wealth of experience and knowledge right here among our own teachers. Let's tap that and design our own professional development that has meaning and can be implemented immediately in our classrooms. It would probably save money. It would definitely save teacher time.

Professional development to support cluster priorities and common focus. For example, if the cluster decided that a common focus for several years would be how to create truly high quality differentiated instruction, then all 10 schools would put time and energy into ongoing professional development. The district, depending on the current superintendent and staff, basically surprise most teachers/administrators every year with a "new" focus. It's very difficult to gain traction and ground with such a moving target.

- **Input on Assessing Student Progress and Accountability**

Construct assessments that are timely, useful, relevant, and reflective of what students are / should be learning; Timely feedback on student achievement and alignment with school goals; Ensure any assessment is of value - opportunity cost of lost classroom instruction time

Benchmark testing flexibility - timing and content - so that curriculum is not interrupted mid-stream

Input as to what is tested on the benchmark exam, as well as control over the order that units are tested

PRIORITY 4: Emphasize the environmental connection

Creating Awareness of Our Interrelationship with the Environment: The world has a fixed amount of natural resources - some of which are already depleted. So as population growth greatly strains our finite resources, there are fewer resources available. If we intend to leave our children and grandchildren with the same standard of living we have enjoyed, we must preserve the foundation of that standard of living. Schools that model and teach principles of environmentally responsible behaviors to students will have a long-term impact. Teachers and parents are working everyday to educate the next generation of business owners and government officials. We can equip them with the knowledge and skills they will need in the future to manage the complexities of the environmental impact inherent in all activities.

- The PLCS "Go Green Team" is helping to implement Go Green teams and programs at each school. Programs will be student-based and supported with education. Emphasis will be placed on our inter-relationship with the environment and our responsibility in protecting our planet as part of citizenship.

EMPOWERED SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK: CURRICULUM: A goal is to structure an Environmental SIG to collaborate on developing a program to teach principles of environmentally responsible behaviors to students. The goal is to create awareness of our interrelationship with the environment and get more parents and community organizations involved.

PRIORITY 5: Promote balance and a healthy campus lifestyle

- To educate students about money management, 12th Graders at Pt. Loma High School have been taking a mini-course called "Personal Financial Literacy, the Game of Life" as part of the Economics class for the past several years. This curriculum was compiled by a team of teachers, bankers and even a bankruptcy judge. Beginning last year, the San Diego Unified School District will be the first large, urban district in California to require such a course.
- Students at Pt. Loma High School and Correia Middle School have a variety of menu choices in their Campus Cafés and Power Up Cafés. In Campus Cafés, students have a choice of three entrees, an entrée salad or a sandwich along with a variety of side dishes. In Power Up Cafés, students have four entrée choices, and then can go to the salad bar for a variety of vegetables, fruits and toppings.
- Students at Dana Middle School and the elementary schools participate in the Kid's Choice Café, a healthy-choice breakfast and lunch program that encourages students to choose foods wisely and establish lifelong positive eating habits. Students are given choices at breakfast and lunch. At lunch, students make a choice from three entrées and then go to a salad bar to make selections of salad, vegetables, fruits and various toppings. After making a selection from three entrées at breakfast, the salad bars are also used to offer additional choices.

PRIORITY 6: Develop a passion in students to pursue life-long learning opportunities

If we want our students to be productive in the San Diego economy - which is being propelled by high-technology companies competing in the international marketplace - we need to foster creativity, talent development, and self-generating, problem-solving abilities to expand each student's awareness of choices for satisfying contributions to society.

- Open-mindedness and creativity are two key attributes needed to succeed in the world. Without these, we tend to force our opinions on others and fail to understand or negotiate with different views. Some of the most creative inventions and best ideas come from making mistakes, discussing and combining ideas, and straying from a designated goal. (Becca Luger-Guillaume, MIT) *"Flowers Are Red"*, written by Harry Chapin, is an inspiration for what a good teacher can be – and a warning reminder of the lasting results of closed-mindedness. (Russell Nadel)
- Structured opportunities for students to study outside of school: Tying together the resources – facilities, Internet access, data base subscriptions - of the San Diego Public Libraries to extend the reach of our school libraries. Extra copies of text books are available for doing homework at the Prime Time programs at Dana and Correia Middle Schools; as well as at the Pt. Loma branch of the San Diego Public Library.
- *"The Point"* Pt. Loma High is initiating a safe and structured program on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 until 5:30 p.m., beginning May 2nd. The "fun yet educational programming allows for students to grow both individually and collectively under the tutelage of highly qualified mentors; and will focus on student growth and connecting positive mentors with students in after-school programs". This is part of the 21st Century Assets Grant, which also funds the Upper Level Club and Saturday Math Madness.
- Correia students are making significant progress. API Scores have risen to 841 in 2010 from 727 (2007), 729 (2006), 726 (2005), and 721 (2004). A key factor for achieving the desired results of the Program Improvement Plan is the collaboration of STEAM teachers on these strategies, which have been incorporated in the School Single Plan for Student Achievement. A substantial investment of time and money has been invested in professional development in 2010/11 with a special emphasis toward embedding Gould & Kaplan's Depth & Complexity and Content Imperative Icons. The latest benchmark assessments in English Language Arts and Math show definite increases in the numbers of students achieving at, or above, grade level.

Correia is seeking to obtain a waiver from California education code section 44955 (b) for the 2011-2012 school year for the certificated teachers at Correia, regardless of seniority, or of permanent or probationary status. By obtaining a waiver from California Ed Code Section 44955 (b), Correia is able to benefit from the collaborative campus culture and specialized professional development invested in our teachers over the past year. We intend to continue with the differentiated planning and instruction - Gould & Kaplan's Depth & Complexity and Content Imperative Icons – and a significant turnover of staff will set this project back at least a year to get back to where the staff is at today.

- *Title I Academic Achievement Awards:* Barnard and Ocean Beach Elementary Schools have been selected for a 2010/11 Title I Academic Achievement Award. To receive this prestigious award, Title I schools must show that their students are making significant progress toward proficiency in California's academic standards, doubling achievement targets for two years. Winners in previous years:

2009/10 Ocean Beach Elementary School
 2008/9 Dewey Elementary School and Ocean Beach Elementary School
 2007/8 Dewey Elementary School
 2006/7 Loma Portal Elementary School
 2005/6 Dewey Elementary School and Ocean Beach Elementary School

- *California Business for Education Excellence Foundation Awards:* Barnard and Ocean Beach Elementary Schools were named 2010 Star Schools, and Silver Gate and Sunset View Elementary Schools were named 2010 Scholar Schools. The Honor Roll includes public elementary, middle, and high schools that have been recognized by California's business community for demonstrating consistent high student academic achievement and making significant progress toward closing achievement gaps among all students. "Star Schools" are those with significant populations of socio-economically disadvantaged students that have shown a significant increase in grade-level proficiency and achievement gap reduction over four years. "Scholar Schools" are schools that are showing significant academic achievement levels, but do not have a significant socio-economically disadvantaged student population.

Star School Award Winners in previous years:

2009 Ocean Beach Elementary School

Scholar School Award Winners in previous years:

2009 Silver Gate Elementary School and Sunset View Elementary School

- *California Distinguished Schools:* Barnard Elementary School (2010), Loma Portal Elementary School (2010), Ocean Beach Elementary School (2008), Silver Gate Elementary School (2006), Correia Middle School (1999), Pt. Loma High School (1988), and Sunset View Elementary School (1987) have been selected California Distinguished Schools. The criteria for school selection are designed to reflect the consensus of the education community regarding what constitutes a quality education program by incorporating the major themes of state and national policies and research related to effective schools. This means each school has met the eligibility criteria, including designated federal and state accountability measures based on No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and the Academic Performance Index (API) requirements.
- The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) granted Pt. Loma High a six-year term accreditation expiring in June 2015, with a midterm review. Schools that want UC approval of courses to meet a-g requirements, and teachers to receive credit for years taught, must be accredited by WASC.

“WASC Focus on Learning: On Target for 21st Century Schools – Learning Must Be the Passion”
(Marilyn S. George, Ed.D., Associate Executive Director, Accrediting Commission for Schools, WASC)

The critical questions that are part of the PLC process are powerful ones that are also essential to the ongoing WASC school improvement process:

- What do we want students to learn (grade, course, and/ or unit)?
- Are we doing everything possible to support that learning?
- How will we know that students have achieved the determined knowledge, skills, and broader outcomes?
- What do we do if students have not achieved their goals?
- How do we enhance the learning for those demonstrating they have achieved?

The intent of the WASC Focus on Learning process:

- The school is centered on results-based learning for all students, rather than teaching as the core.
- The WASC criteria expect that a school works as a “collaborative culture.”
- The school uses multiple sources of assessment to determine the degree of student learning based on defined learning, and regularly uses those formative and summative results to modify learning and teaching.

The criteria that guide a school in evaluation of the effectiveness of all organizational and programmatic aspects always go back to the impact on student learning, e.g., leadership empowerment, continual growth and learning by staff, learning and teaching, resource allocation, and student support systems.

“When learning becomes the preoccupation of the school, when all the school’s educators examine the efforts and initiatives of the school through the lens of their impact on learning, the structure and culture of the school begin to change in substantive ways.” (Dr. Richard DuFour)

- Because of the tremendous achievement gains made during 2009, SDUSD selected Correia and 7 other schools to study to determine, if possible, what contributed to these schools' overall successes. The findings "Project Schools Making a Difference," were presented to the Board in January 2010. "While factors outside of school are certainly very important sources of unequal outcomes, superior education policies and practices at every level-federal, state, districts, school and classroom-matter profoundly for student achievement...American education is filled with instances in which students with similar backgrounds and traits achieve very different results." (McKinsey and Company, 2009)

Common Threads:

1. Strong principal leadership and support
2. Focused and frequent collaboration
3. Consistency of rules, expectations, and instruction
4. High expectations: everyone expects the best of themselves and students
5. Strong and effective organizational structures (ILTs, PLCs, master schedules, shared-decision making, reciprocal accountability)
6. Tight, consistent, and fair student management
7. High visibility of staff that is positive, supportive, and encouraging
8. Use of assessment data via DataDirector to inform instruction
9. Strong sense of ownership from all stakeholders

EMPOWERED SCHOOLS FRAMEWORK: ACCOUNTABILITY: In a “Culture of Accountability”, every stakeholder takes personal accountability to think and act in a way that will achieve the agreed-upon results. The four Steps to Accountability are See It, Own It, Solve It, and Do It. Consistent performance of these steps characterizes those who think and act in an accountable manner. Consistently taking these steps will create individual and organizational ownership for achieving results and attaining objectives. *“Journey to the Emerald City: Achieve a Competitive Edge by Creating a Culture of Accountability”* by Roger Connors and Tom Smith

- In a Culture of Accountability, Principals will be held accountable; therefore, schools should not be required to accept teachers or classified staff without the consent of the principal, regardless of seniority. Teachers will be held accountable, but should be provided flexibility in determining how to teach.

- Define what "instructional leadership" we desire from our principals (some ideas)
 - (a) creating high-achieving learning environments
 - (b) providing coaching and professional development for teachers
 - (c) removing ineffective teachers
 - (d) collaborating with cluster principal peers (horizontal and vertical)
 - (e) striving for student academic, artistic, and creative thinking achievements
 - (f) positive family and community engagement