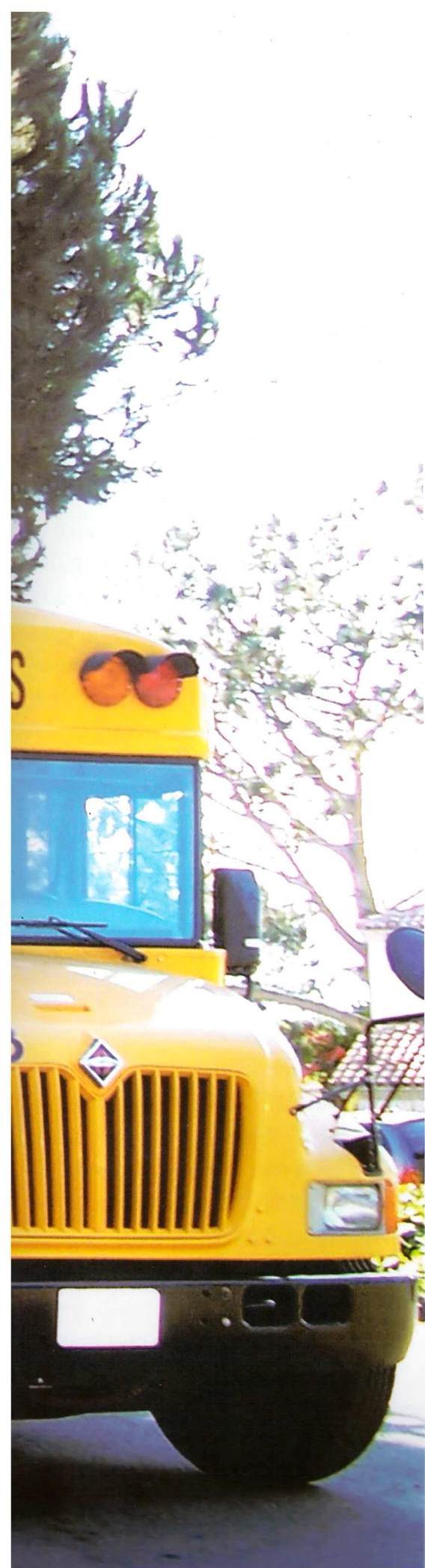




DEL MAR
SHORES
SCHOOL

WINSTON SCHOOL



Del Mar's Public School System

By Elizabeth Marie Himchak

Del Mar area pioneers probably would never have imagined that their one-room school with less than two dozen students would one hundred and thirty years later grow into a two district, nationally recognized school system, with over fifteen thousand students. If they could see the public school system today, they would be proud.

Del Mar Public Schools—The Early Years

The San Dieguito School District, founded in 1873, encompassed north coastal San Diego County. Within a decade, population growth led to division and by 1885, Soledad School (later Del Mar School) was founded. The small student population included eight grades of children with many ethnic and language backgrounds.

By 1923, the growing elementary was in its third school and high school students commuted to Oceanside. Since 1938, Del Mar students attended San Dieguito High School in Encinitas.

Post-World War II population growth led to the Del Mar and Soledad school districts merging into the Del Mar Union School District in 1949. There were over one hundred and fifty kindergarten through eighth grade students within the twenty-five-mile area. The population continued to grow and by 1965, expansion was necessary again.

Del Mar Union School District

The Elementary Years

In 1947, the Shores School (on 9th Street in Del Mar) opened, but it was soon evident that more elementary schools were needed. The Del Mar Heights School (13555 Boquita Drive) opened in 1965 outside of Del Mar because there was no open land within city limits. A few years after the Del Mar Hills School (14085 Mango Drive) opened in 1974, the Shores closed, which meant no more public schools would exist within Del Mar city limits.

Development in the Carmel Valley and Torrey Hills areas led to the need for more kindergarten through sixth grade schools. The Carmel Del Mar School (12345 Carmel Park Drive) opened in 1992. The Ashley Falls School (13030 Ashley Falls Drive) followed in 1998, with the Sage Canyon (5290 Harvest Run Drive) in 2000, Torrey Hills (10830 Calle Mar De Mariposa) in 2002 and Sycamore Ridge (5333 Old Carmel Valley Road) in 2005. Plans are underway for an eighth school located in the Torrey Hills area. The district has over 3,300 students. Several schools have earned state and national honors. In recent years, the Carmel Del Mar, Del Mar Heights and Del Mar Hills schools were named California Distinguished Schools, with the Hills also earning the U.S. Department of Education's Blue Ribbon of Excellence.

According to Janet Bernard, Del Mar Union School District Assistant Superintendent of Curricu-

lum and Instruction, several elements have led to the schools' success. She cited the district's strategic planning process and administrative, staff and parent leadership and involvement as some of the reasons. "We are probably one of the highest performing elementary school districts in ... California," Bernard said. "[There is] a long tradition of academic excellence," she added.

Since school budgets are tight and state funds limited largely due to 1978's Proposition 13, schools have to limit programs. In response, the Del Mar area schools established non-profit foundations to provide what the schools cannot.

Bernard credits the parents for enabling the schools to offer a wide array of enrichment programs including, art, music, science and technology. Parent volunteers, both in the classroom and in the non-profit Del Mar Schools Education Foundation, are key to the district meeting students' educational needs. The Foundation annually raises hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund programs. Examples of classroom parent volunteer opportunities include "Everyone's a Reader," which provides individual reading tutoring, and leading accelerated group activities for advanced learners.

Though connected by the district, the schools have each created unique identities. For example, the Del Mar Heights facility is known as "A Global Village," and Del Mar Hills school is an "Academy of Arts and Sciences." At Del Mar Heights, each grade focuses on a different continent, which is incorporated into all subjects. Kindergartners receive a passport that travels with them throughout the years, as a record of their experiences and what they have learned. "The Heights has done a really good job of trying to bring the world [to the children]," Bernard said. "It's a way to sort of link the school to the world-wide community ... [and] help students



*Janet Bernard, Del Mar Union School
District Assistant Superintendent.*

to understand how people live throughout the world," she noted.

Del Mar Hills meanwhile has infused art and technology into all subjects. Bernard said that specialist teachers work with classroom teachers to incorporate art and science into their lessons. For example, they might use music to teach mathematics.

There are also local and district-wide activities for all Del Mar elementary school students. Lunch clubs allow students opportunities to pursue interests, develop leadership skills and socialize. From 2004 to 2005, the schools' music programs joined in a district-wide band concert and choral festival.

San Dieguito Union High School District The Middle and High School Years

The San Dieguito Union High School District, formed in 1936, combined the junior high

students from six local elementary districts plus the high school students from those areas who were attending Oceanside High School. San Dieguito means "Little San Diego." In 2005, the district had four middle and four comprehensive high schools, with over 11,600 students. Del Mar area students could attend middle school at Earl Warren or Carmel Valley schools, and high school at Torrey Pines, San Dieguito or Canyon Crest schools.

The Middle Schools

Earl Warren Middle School (155 Stevens Avenue, Solana Beach), home of the "Caballitos" (little horses, reflective of San Dieguito High's "Mustangs"), and later the "Seahawks," opened in 1954. In a controversial move, the school was named after Earl Warren, a California Governor (1943-1953), and United States Supreme Court Chief Justice (1953-1969), who ruled on the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case, and who would later head the Warren Commission that investigated President Kennedy's assassination. The school has earned California Distinguished and Blue Ribbon honors.

Carmel Valley Middle School (3800 Mykonos Lane, San Diego), home of the "Bobcats," opened in 1999, when all junior highs were renamed middle schools. The population and campus are both considerably larger than Earl Warren's.

Both middle schools have active Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSA's) and volunteer opportunities for parents. Unlike at the elementary level, parents volunteer not in the classrooms, but with activities such as the Science Olympiad, Quiz Bowl and Geography Bee, as well as campus-wide events and staff support duties.

According to Phyllis Quan Steinberg, a parent volunteer at the Del Mar Heights school, Earl Warren School and a Torrey Pines Foundation Pres-