

# SLOCOE e-News



*Monthly News from the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education*



May students and staff shine bright and happy with renewed energy and promise at the start of a brand new school year.

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Classified  
Coordinator for  
Homeless & Foster  
Youth Services**

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## In Gratitude for Your Service

*by James Brescia, County Superintendent*

A year ago, when I wrote the August 2020 newsletter introduction, I did not imagine that we would begin the 2021 academic year with many COVID-19 safety protocols still in place. The past year presented us with time to reflect and to adapt to changes in guidance based upon public health conditions. This year, we benefit from working through many of our challenges in returning to in-person and flexible services.

Please continue to complete the daily health assessment and maintain physical distance from others when possible. Employees must wear face coverings in the presence of unvaccinated individuals and/or students. Consider holding meetings outdoors and increase ventilation indoors as much as possible.

I look forward to seeing you at our outdoor "Welcome Back to School Breakfast" on Wednesday, August 18. A portion of the day will be spent together, and the balance of the day will be spent in department meetings, planning for the upcoming school year.



**Mark your calendars for our outdoor  
"Welcome Back to School Breakfast"  
on Wednesday, August 18, 2021.**

I thank each of you for making a difference to those we serve. Your time and talents are much appreciated. I have tremendous confidence in our workforce and appreciate your actions to take safety seriously!



It is an honor to serve as your county superintendent.

~Jim Brescia

## Meet Daniela Garcia

*Classified Coordinator, Homeless & Foster Youth Services, Educational Support Services*

Warmth and enthusiasm emanate from Daniela even through a Google or Zoom meeting screen. Smiling, she says, "I've worked with youth all my life," and indeed she has! Experience with the Boys and Girls Club, and then the YMCA motivated her to earn an associates degree in child development, which in turn led to a BA in child development.

Daniela says she saw the impact she could make in the lives of students with behavior issues that needed time and attention. It is gratifying to her when individuals encounter her later and share their successes. Five years with Lucia Mar Unified School District in their Homeless & Foster Youth Services program - as well as more than a year with CAPSLO as a family resource center supervisor - deepened Daniela's connections to families in our county and the network of collaborative agencies that provide provide services to them.



SLOCOE offers Daniela what she calls "a perfect opportunity for growth." She adds, "I feel like everyone here reached out to help and make me feel right at home, which is huge." She loves that each day is different from the day before. "I don't come to work knowing what my day will be like," she says.

Born and raised in Nipomo to parents who are first generation transplants from Mexico, Daniela enjoys the proximity of family that includes siblings, a nephew, and

newborn niece. In her life away from work, she enjoys creating succulent planters, and lots of outdoor time, with walks or hikes. Her pug dog, "Pugsie," keeps her company at home.

Welcome to the SLOCOE family, Daniela!

## Meet Chris Balogh

*Director, Alternative Education, Student Programs & Services*

High school students - even those who seemingly perform at upper levels of achievement in athletics and subject knowledge - do not fit into easy molds. No one knows this better than Chris Balogh, who joins SLOCOE at a new stage in his teaching and administrative career, a career that has spanned 25 years in three counties, 22 of them in San Luis Obispo County.

"I learned the value of teaching the whole student, not just the subject," says Chris of his early teaching experiences in Humboldt and Butte counties, where the timber industry once reigned. While his specialty is English, he stretched himself to teach other subjects as well, including Social Studies and Algebra, and coached many athletic teams. These experiences helped him to realize the importance of knowing students in more than one aspect of their high school lives. Some of his students had no aspirations for the future beyond following previous generations into the lumber mills. Chris found ways to widen their scopes. A film and literature class developed their creative writing abilities. A service learning project for student docents or guides in a nearby 30,000-acre preserve provided opportunities for connection to the natural world.

Chris later relocated to San Luis Obispo County with his wife Carolyn, where they settled in to raise a daughter and son. Carolyn now teaches at the Fine Arts Academy and ACE (Atascadero Choices in Education) Academy in Atascadero. Carolyn's watercolors illustrate a children's storybook co-published with author Lori Thomas-Hicks. Chris has served as dean at San Luis High School, and principal at San Gabriel Elementary, Paloma Creek High School, and ACE Academy. He has taught grades 7-12 in English, Math and Social Studies. He loves the classroom, but also loves the wider perspective of an administrator. It feels right to work with students who are disenfranchised, he says, finding out what works for each individual in order to best meet their educational needs.

Chris and his wife enjoy cooking classes together, and the family recently traveled together to Costa Rica. Welcome, Chris! We wish you a great new school year.





## Cal Poly Is Seeking Participants for **STANDUPTV** Study



A research study that uses cutting edge technology to identify the best strategy for changing sedentary screen time habits and improving health is recruiting participants who are:

- 23-64 years old
- own a smart phone or tablet
- have wifi or unlimited data plan
- want to decrease their sedentary screen time.

What does participation look like? Wearing activity sensors and interacting with the study's app for 16 weeks. Participants receive compensation up to \$100 and a Fitbit fitness tracker.

If you are interested, follow this link to see if you are eligible to participate:

[BIT.LY/STANDUPTV](https://bit.ly/standuptv)

Contact: 805-756-5506 or [standuptv@calpoly.edu](mailto:standuptv@calpoly.edu)



## STAFF TRANSITIONS & NEWS



### WELCOME!

**Megan O'Dwyer**, Administrative Assistant II, Educational Support Services

**Andrew "Sylvan" Levin**, Teacher, Grizzly Youth Academy

**Stefanie Monahan**, Teacher, Orthopedically Impaired/Muti-Handicapped, Student Programs and Services

**Karen Moreno Sandoval**, Administrative Assistant, Grizzly Youth Academy

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

**Carey Alvord-Schof**, Mental Health Therapist, Grizzly Youth Academy

**Lenette Costa**, Registrar, Student Programs & Services, Retiring after 20 years service

**Dan Peverini**, Executive Director, Educational Programs & Services



### CONGRATULATIONS!

**Jennie Curto**, CSEA Chapter 444 Member of the Year for 2021

### NEW BABY CONGRATULATIONS

**Levi Rojas**, born to **Noel Rojas**, Teacher, Deaf/Hard of Hearing Program, Student Programs & Services