

SLOCOE e-News



Monthly News from the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education



Rebecca Kohle, John Taylor, Brenda Thomas, Eric Fraley, Lara Mattson, Chris Phillips, Lindsey Tompkins display their PBIS signs at a recent conference for PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports) in Sacramento.

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Creating Post-Pandemic Success

by James Brescia, County Superintendent

Over the past 20 pressure-filled months, I read multiple articles, plans and reports about the impact of COVID-19 on the workplace. I observed school employees across San Luis Obispo County skillfully managing responsibilities under extraordinary circumstances. I reviewed reports of loneliness, discouragement and anxiety. The challenges and confusion surrounding COVID-19 overwhelmed some and were celebrated by others. Here are my takeaways, which apply to all forms of employment, not just education.

When we commit to a meaningful conversation with peers, we can better serve others. As we share challenges and opportunities, we address the new normal. When we share "truth-telling" with colleagues, we allow others to assist us.

This quote from someone in education speaks to the importance of support systems: *I felt so*

relieved when I realized I wasn't the only one who felt like I did. Our families, friends, community and colleagues all represent pieces of a support network. To that end, we must continue to support each other and join together as one community.

Promoting a positive mindset will assist in providing an effective support system. It is easy to allow negative thoughts and feelings to creep into our heads. Mental health experts remind us that focusing on the positive in our lives can help filter out the barrage of discouraging news.

*Success is not final,
failure is not fatal: it
is the courage to
continue that counts."
~Winston Churchill*



When we look for opportunities during difficulty we can improve our situations and that of others. The countless monthly professional collaborations thrust upon us by COVID-19 is a practice that benefits us in a post-pandemic workplace.

I am very proud of our employees and consider it an honor to serve as your county superintendent of schools.



~Jim Brescia

Meet Nancy Gravender

Payroll Retirement Specialist, Business Services

What does Payroll Service's newest member like best about joining SLOCOE? The teamwork! Nancy Gravender, a former volleyball athlete and volleyball coach, loves the feeling of sharing common goals, and the positivity that comes from each day's accomplishments. It feels great, she says, to transition from the small office environment of the Cambria Services District where she handled Payroll and HR functions mostly alone, to SLOCOE's larger main office where one "can't not be a team!"

Both Nancy and her husband grew up in the mid-western part of the country, in a border area of Michigan and Indiana, called "Michiana." They relocated to California when her husband accepted a job in Visalia, where they raised their young sons. Both of them now enjoy living here on the Central Coast, where they hike and camp in their jeep's rooftop tent.



If you haven't yet met Nancy, be sure to stop by and say hello. Football fans may enjoy asking her about her dinner with Peyton Manning a week after his second Super Bowl victory! Nancy, we're happy you joined our team. We wish you success!

SLOCOE Staff Earn Recognition at PBIS Conference

Student Programs & Services staff gained recognition and knowledge at a conference on Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports, held September 13-15 in Sacramento.



Knowledge is important, but implementation counts! Earning the Platinum Implementation Award, above left (L-R): Eric Fraley (Behavior Intervention Services Specialist), Larra Mattson (Principal, Loma Vista Community School), and Lindsey Tompkins (Behavioral Intervention Specialist Manager). **Above Right, with a Gold Implementation Award:** John Taylor (Teacher, Grades 4-8, Chris Jespersen School), Brenda Thomas (Mental Health Specialist), Rebecca Kohle (Mental Health Therapist), Lindsey Tompkins (Behavioral Intervention Specialist Manager), and Chris Phillips (Director, Special Education).

What is PBIS? You've seen the acronym, perhaps even heard it used in a sentence. PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and is a multi-tiered framework of supports **for all students at a school** (Tier 1), **targeted small groups or additional interventions for some students who need more support** (Tier 2), and **individualized intensive supports and interventions for individual students who need even more support** (Tier 3). PBIS supports improvements for students in behavior and academic outcomes. According to Lindsey Tompkins, the conference highlighted aspects of implementation; data to support implementation in schools; interventions for educators to implement; school experiences related to implementation; culturally responsive practices for students, family and staff; and trauma-informed practices. That's a lot!

Members of the team share some of their takeaways from the PBIS conference here:

- Teach students what to do instead of telling them what not to do! ~ Chris Phillips
- Our programs are providing evidence-based interventions for our students. ~ Lindsey Tompkins
- Ongoing review, assessment and strengthening of PBIS practices is essential for program fidelity and success. ~ Eric Fraley
- Tier II interventions are needed for some students - additional instruction and time for skill development, additional structure and predictability, and increased opportunity for feedback. ~ John Taylor
- Interconnected systems frameworks are crucial for improving student outcomes. ~ Lara Mattson
- Following the program with fidelity increases success. ~ Brenda Thomas
- New ideas on how to better integrate mental health and school services and how to increase student buy-in ~ Rebecca Kohle

Raising a Reader Kicks Off a New School Year

Raising a Reader (RAR) teachers and care providers learned storytelling techniques from the authors of How To Tell Stories to Children during a September 14 kick-off event.



Above Left: Administrative Assistant Megan O'Dwyer and Early Learning Specialist Shannon Pimentel display copies of the book, *How To Tell Stories to Children*, by authors Silke Rose West and Joseph Sarosy. **Above Right:** An early learner happily displays her book bag. **Left:** Early childhood educators and authors Joseph Sarosy and Silke Rose West share their wisdom in a virtual session for SLOCOE's recent RAR Kick-Off.

A September 14 Raising a Reader (RAR) Kick-Off event featured a virtual session with authors of the book, *How To Tell Stories to Children*, after which copies of the book went to participants and caregivers.

Raising a Reader engages caregivers in a routine of book sharing with their children from birth through age eight to foster healthy brain development, healthy relationships, a love of reading, and the literacy skills critical for school success. Childcare providers and teachers for transitional kindergarten, preschool, infant-toddler, home base and early intervention programs attended the event from throughout San Luis Obispo County.

"The authors offered practical advice, helpful prompts, and a touch of science to explain how stories enrich children's lives," says Shannon Pimentel. "Storytelling can be used as an educational tool, and the training benefits students directly, cultivating healthy relationships in the classroom and a child's home. Techniques teachers learned will be shared with families throughout the RAR offerings, supporting family connections and social emotional learning. Storytelling creates a space for children to tell their stories and hear the stories of others. What a simple gift to offer when enjoying books and supporting the educational success of children!"

**PHOTO SHARES****Above Left:**

Resting ladybug,
(Jeanne Buchanan).

Above Right: This
guest was not on
the calendar!
(Dr. Brescia)

Left: Loma Vista's
hay bale garden
with strawberries
(Shirley Marshall)

STAFF TRANSITIONS & NEWS

**WELCOME!**

Samantha Case, Behavior Intervention Services Specialist, Student Programs & Services
Nancy Gravender, Payroll Retirement Specialist, Business Services

WELCOME BACK!

Cheryl Vonderahe, Behavior Intervention Services Specialist, Student Programs & Services

NEW BABY CONGRATULATIONS

Hazel June Gibson, born to Andria Gibson, September 4, 2021

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE

William Curd, Interpreter for the Deaf, Student Programs & Services
Debra Leopard, Business Systems Specialist, Business Services

