

Outlook

A tri-annual publication of the Diablo Managers Association. DMA is a charter of ACSA.

DMA administrators share their trials and triumphs

As part of a continuing series, *Outlook* is profiling Mt. Diablo Unified administrators and classified personnel who are members of DMA. This issue features discussions with **Terry McCormick**, **Michelle McAvoy** and **Sally Holliday**. The questions we asked were: What is your primary job responsibility? What is your biggest challenge? And what is something people might not guess is true about you?



Terry McCormick, Principal, Oak Grove Middle School

Terry joined Mt. Diablo Unified 20 years ago as a sixth grade teacher at Wren Avenue Elementary. Since then, she has had both teaching and administrative experience at the elementary, middle and high school level, and has served as a summer school principal. Terry has worked at El Dorado Middle, Pleasant Hill Middle and Crossroads, the Necessary Small High School pro-

gram for pregnant and parenting teens. After serving for two years as administrator of School Linked Services, she found she missed working directly with students and families, and happily returned to a school site in 2005.

My primary responsibility, and that of our entire administrative team, which came together three years ago, is to serve children and families. We have a real philosophy of service: we call it "doing right" by children and families. We have a strong student-support program that promotes a culture of academic achievement. This involves meeting kids where they are academically and being able to push them forward. We have a leveled program, which means that we assess students when they start school, place them accordingly, and then move them rigorously forward. Our parents tell stories about how their children arrived at our school at the below-basic level and made amazing progress, achieving at proficient and even advanced level after time at Oak Grove.

One of the biggest challenges is building the capacity of everyone involved to believe in their own potential and greatness—administrative staff, students and families—and we're all learning together. Every day we are building a knowledge base and letting everyone know how capable they are.

Our school is a microcosm of what happens in the world, and we feel it. The same challenges and potential that exist in the world we're trying to create, also exist here. We take very seriously the idea that we are

developing world citizens. My own child goes here and my other child is coming. I absolutely believe in what these students are getting at our school and what they're learning about the bigger world.

This year we held a series of community culture meetings as part of our goal to bring students, parents, staff, teachers and support staff together in big community meetings, where we just listened to one another and shared our life experiences. This is something we don't do as adults. We found that the areas that those involved in these meetings wanted to work on together were the same that staff had identified: developing positive programs, encouraging kids to continue to push the academic culture and bringing parents together around parent education.

We want to make sure this school is reflective of what families want and that we give voice to everyone. We also have an incredible coordinated care team, two parent liaisons, both of whom speak Spanish, to ensure we are receptive to all families. A large portion of our families are Spanish speaking.

At the end of the day, I want to know that I've made the world a better place. I really believe in the idea of service and that we're making a profound difference in children's lives.

What would surprise people about me? This question totally stumped me. Well, I almost flunked out of high school. I was an at-risk kid. My vice principal was concerned that I would drop out, so a plan was created and I graduated as a junior. It was only when I went to college that I finally felt in charge of my own future and realized that I needed an education to create the life I wanted for myself.

Michelle McAvoy, Personnel Systems Manager

Michelle joined Mt. Diablo as a senior secretary in 1994 and worked with former budget director Daralene Finnell. Her position was later upgraded to confidential secretary. She was named to her current job in July 2005.



I manage Mt. Diablo's systems data while maintaining a broad view of how funds are allocated and managed across the district. My largest responsibility is position control, which involves

(continued on page 2)

DMA member profiles *(continued from page 1)*

keeping track of money budgeted for positions and accounting codes. For accounting purposes, we express positions in FTE, or full-time equivalent, starting with 1.00 FTE for a full-time, 40-hour-per-week position.

I often use the metaphor of musical chairs to describe my job. Personnel oversees the staffing side of the organization, that is, who is sitting in the chairs, and position control keeps track of who in the organization is sponsoring the chairs. FTE represents the money we have to keep the district's "chairs" filled or funded.

Budget development is another big piece of what I do, which includes projecting the cost of position control for next year. I provide the fiscal director with a projection of the estimated cost for all positions, calculate any changes we expect, including advancing steps and increasing longevity, and apply the labor-related costs—like Medicare, State Unemployment Insurance, Workers' Comp, etc.—to which the district pays a contribution.

I love the whole data side of what I do. An important facet of my job is interpreting or pulling out data from the system in my role as "data wrangler." An administrator might come to me and say, "I need to know the bottom-line cost of doing something" or "can we allocate this budgeted amount to this project, which has become a priority?" To answer the question, I sometimes have to delve deeply. I have to keep asking questions to make sure I understand what is being asked. I want to share the information—it is public information—but I will want to know everything my clients need to know so that I can help the district make informed decisions.

Communication is the biggest challenge. I need to make sure I have received from my clients all of the nuances of what they want so I can give the information back to them in a way that is helpful and isn't confusing. I always encourage principals and other administrators to work hand-in-hand with Personnel, and part of my role is to make sure that everyone who should be aware of a request is included in the loop. Also, it can be hard to see from an individual vantage point how a requested change may affect other areas. We need to consider, for instance, how a change will affect Payroll, Personnel and other departments, and the legality of an action under the Education Code and the rules of each bargaining unit.

We also don't have just one program that performs all of these calculations and that is because the district has many different bargaining units with different rules and calendars. We can create a rough view of how a particular request is going to affect the budget, but it may take some additional tweaks to represent a truer picture.

It probably wouldn't surprise people to learn that at home in my leisure time, I often go on extensive internet information searches because of a need I have to absorb information about various topics. This includes everything from new medical device breakthroughs to amusing facts. I am fascinated by data mapping and the relationships between objects. I am very interested in taking all the information that's out there and making it available in a format that people can use to build their own applications to do things.



Sally Holliday, Coordinator, Classified Training

Sally has a background in business and educational job training programs in Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and northern Ohio. Her most recent position was as a career counselor/trainer for EASTBAY Works, a local business and career center. She joined the district in her current position in May 2007.

Basically, my job is to train classified employees throughout the district in programs that will help them to do their jobs with more ease and confidence. Currently, there is a special emphasis on training in the Aeries Student Information System for both classified and administrative personnel. This has been a huge undertaking, and we have needed to write and adapt materials for use in our training. With a lot of support from district personnel and Technology and Information Services (TIS), it's working!

We rolled out the Aeries training for secondary personnel last summer and are presently implementing the training to elementary personnel in stages, which will continue throughout the 2008–09 school year. Training in Encore—the Special Education System software—begins this July. In addition, with assistance from the Personnel department, Excel, First Aid, CPR and office manager meetings were offered to classified personnel throughout 2007–08. In all, about 175 training classes in these areas took place this past year.

The district utilizes a "train-the-trainer" approach to ready all employees for new computer programs. District employees volunteer to teach their fellow employees and during 2007–08, they trained about 270 secondary and about 150 elementary employees in Aeries.

The people I'm working with in the district are great, and I'm surprised with how well they embrace change. They have a depth of job knowledge and anticipate challenges we may encounter in the way we do business, which helps us to find solutions for these challenges before any problems occur.

I love to see people succeed. It's a passion for me. There's nothing more gratifying than to see that "ah ha" moment happen. It keeps my job alive and exciting for me.

I'm basically a "people" person and the change from about 100% people to 50% people and 50% computer has been a real adjustment. The TIS staff has been amazing in its responsiveness and the level of support provided to me and to those working with the new system. I am never bored in this new job!

Something surprising about me? I swam with a shark and petted skates, a type of ray, when snorkeling in Tahiti with my husband. The shark was quite a surprise and an experience I'll never forget. ■

A message from DMA President Karen Sakata

A year of challenges and dedication in representing all administrators

This year has offered many challenges, perhaps the most difficult being the state budget crisis, which has had a huge impact on our district. Even with these challenges, DMA has worked hard to represent certificated, classified and confidential administrators in the varied district programs.



The fallout from the state budget crisis has significantly impacted the work of your professional organization. This crisis has resulted in notices of administrative layoffs and reassignments, while our total compensation proposal was placed on hold. DMA has had ongoing communication with the Superintendent in his monthly union and DMA meetings. We also held two general membership meetings and have attended Board of Education meetings.

DMA and ACSA have increased their legislative activities. To this end, Board of Education members **April Treece** and **Dick Allen** and all organizations (MDEA, DMA, Local 1 CST, CSEA, Local 1 M & O and MDSPA) have met with Assemblyman **Mark DeSaulnier** and Senator **Tom Torlakson** and have plans to meet with Assemblyman **Guy Huston** to discuss how the state budget crisis has impacted programs and services in our district.

Next year will provide further challenges. But it is reassuring to know that I will be turning over my position as DMA President to **Katie Gaines**. Katie's experience and knowledge of the district will be invaluable to the position. I know you will be in "good hands."

As this year comes to a close, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and support of our DMA Board. The board has worked to represent all administrators. Thank you for the opportunity and for the honor of representing you as DMA President. ■

Congratulations to retiring members!

Vivian Boyd—Director, Curriculum & Instruction
Pat Krummen—Landscape Supervisor
Susan Laufer—Vice Principal, El Dorado Middle School
Wayne Miller—Assistant Director, Curriculum & Instruction
Barbara Weil—Principal, El Dorado Middle School ■



Join your fellow DMA members at the End-of-Year Awards Luncheon!

Wednesday, June 18, at 2 p.m.
Contra Costa Country Club

Questions? Contact Linda Hutcherson at ext. 5700 or Denise Larkins at ext. 4136.

June 18 End-of-Year Awards Luncheon to honor members and student scholars

DMA members who have made outstanding contributions to the Mt. Diablo education community, plus student scholarship recipients, will be honored at the End-of-Year Awards Luncheon on Wednesday, June 18. The annual event will be held at the Contra Costa Country Club, 801 Golf Club Road in Pleasant Hill, starting at 2 p.m. For questions, please contact **Linda Hutcherson** at ext. 5700 or **Denise Larkins** at ext. 4136.

Management awards will be named in five award categories.

Congratulations to these deserving scholars, who will receive DMA scholarships in the amount of \$800 each:

- **David Baum**, the son of **Nancy Baum**, Walnut Acres. David will attend Pomona College and wants to be a writer.
- **Chris Carman**, son of **Tom Carman**, Bel Air Elementary. Chris will attend Ithaca College in New York to pursue a degree in communications/public relations and hopes to design community improvement programs and projects.
- **David Glass**, son of **Alan Glass**, Personnel Services. David will attend the Culinary Institute of America; his goal is to be a chef and own his own restaurant.
- **Gabriel Lomas**, son of **Socorro Lomas**, Clayton Valley High School. Gabriel will attend the University of California, Los Angeles, and wants to become an aerospace engineer.
- **Molly Lorden**, daughter of **Kathy Lorden**, Pleasant Hill Middle School, will attend Seattle Pacific University to pursue a degree in psychology and follow her passion about helping people.
- **Kaitlyn Vargas**, daughter of **Jennifer Vargas**, Westwood Elementary. Kaitlyn will attend Sonoma State and major in business, and hopes to start her own business. ■

Your 2008-2009 Board named

Newly elected DMA Executive Board members who will lead the organization in the coming school year are:

President—**Katie Gaines**
President-Elect—**Linda Hutcherson**
Past President—**Bob Dodson**
Vice Presidents—**Vonda Boucher** and **Denise Larkins**
Secretary—**Mary Ann Tucker**
Treasurer—**Mike Mattos**

The following representatives have also been named:

Adult Education—**Margaret Scott**
Alternative Education—**Leyla Benson**
Central Services—**Jeanne Rau**
Co-administrators—**Amy Bush**
Confidentials—(Open)
District Office/Willow Creek—**Julie Braun-Martin**
Elementary Principals—**Cindy Matteoni**
High School—**Carolyn Plath**
Middle School—**Colleen Martin / Andrea Uhle**
Retirees—**Evie Groch / Sandy Brickell**
Special Education—**Berry Murray**
Vice Principals—**Brent Brinkerhoff** ■

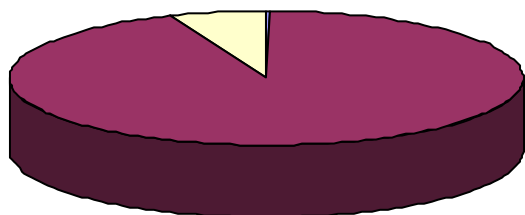
DMA 2007-2008 financial report

Beginning balance (as of July 1, 2007)	\$22,575
Current balance (as of April 30, 2008)	\$24,688

2007-2008 Income to Date*

\$21,996

Dues	Socials	Interest income
\$20,620	\$1,329	\$47

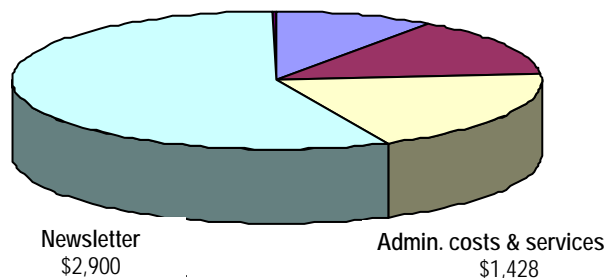


* Note 1: Additional budgeted income, including income from ACSA, is expected by June 2008.

2007-2008 Actual Expenditures to Date**

\$14,659

Socials	Professional development	Leadership Institute
\$8,281	\$50	\$2,000



** Note 2: Major expenditures, including student scholarships, the End-of-Year Luncheon and the Executive Board Dinner, are not incurred until June 2008.

ACSA Corner: Things you should know!

Be sure to save the date of November 6–8, 2008 for the ACSA State Conference in San Diego. Register by July 15 for \$260 (instead of \$360) with a \$40 rebate for purchases at the conference bookstore.

Here are Region 6 election results: **Rose Lock** (DMA Charter), President–Elect; **Kara Holthe** (Amador Valley Charter), VP, Legislative Action; **Katie Brady** (West Contra Costa Charter), VP Membership; **Karen Sakata** (DMA Charter), VP, Staff Development; and **Patt Hoellwarth** (DMA Charter), Secretary. They will join the following

Executive Committee members: **Kale Alderson** (Diablo Valley Charter), President; **Marie McClaskey** (Diablo Valley Charter), Past President; **Tess Thomas** (Amador Valley Chapter), VP Programs; **Janet Haun** (Diablo Valley Chapter), Treasurer; and **Teresa Kapellas** (Alameda County Office Charter), Comptroller.

David Baum, son of Nancy Baum, Vice Principal at Walnut Acres Elementary, has received a \$1,000

scholarship from Region 6. David is a senior at Northgate High School and will be attending Pomona College in the fall. Congratulations!

Shawn Jones, a graduating senior from Mt. Diablo High School (pictured, above) is the Region 6 winner of the Every Student Succeeding Award. This award honors those students who have succeeded against all odds. Shawn will be recognized at the State Conference in San Diego. Congratulations, Shawn!

—Rock Lock, Region 6 Delegate (Walnut Acres, ext. 4346)



Mt. Diablo High Principal Bev Hansen with graduating senior Shawn Jones, winner of ACSA's Every Student Succeeding Award.

2007-2008 DMA Executive Board and Representatives

President Karen Sakata, Ayers Elementary, 4300

President-Elect Katie Gaines, Alternative Education, 3908

Past President Bob Dodson, Mt. Diablo Elementary, 84590

Vice Presidents Linda Hutcherson, Foothill Middle, 5700; Denise Larkins, Personnel Services, 4136

Secretary Liz Kim, Rio Vista, 4398

Treasurer Joe Marsich, Research & Evaluation, 4132

REPRESENTATIVES:

ACSA Rose Lock, Walnut Acres Elementary, 4346

Adult Education Margaret Scott, Loma Vista, 4380 #2753

Alternative Education Pam Neudecker, Crossroads, 925-689-6852; Bernie Yeghoian, Nueva Vista, 925-689-1487

Central Services Jeanne Rau, Transportation, 3710

Confidentials Vonda Boucher, Elementary Education, 4016

District Office/Willow Creek Vivian Boyd, Curriculum & Instruction, 4023; Julie Braun-Martin, Personnel Services, 4142

Elementary Principals Cindy Matteoni, Sequoia Elementary, 4330

Elementary Vice Principals Anne Eggleston, Mt. Diablo Elementary, 84590

Middle School Coleen Martin, Pine Hollow, 4368; Andrea Uhle, Glenbrook, 5410

High School Martha Riley, Northgate, 3500

Special Education Melinda Hall, 4045

Retirees Sandy Brickell, 925-827-4002, Brickellsl@aol.com; Evie Groch, 510-235-9771, egroch@comcast.net

ACSA Region VI Consultant John Searles, 925-228-5700, searles3@comcast.net

The role of your DMA representative is to represent you on the DMA Board and to provide feedback to you about Board decisions and issues. If you have questions or feedback to offer, please contact your representative. To comment on items in this newsletter, contact Joe Marsich at ext. 4132, marsichj@mdusd.k12.ca.us. For more information about DMA, please visit <http://diablomanagers.org>.