

## THE STATE OF EDUCATION

## The Bulletin

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## Education in the Hub City facing challenges

Budget shortfalls, layoffs hit Compton School District; college struggles to gain accreditation; city gets a charter school

By Cheryl Scott  
Bulletin Staff Writer

COMPTON—Compton is facing unprecedented challenges in the education of its young people in elementary, middle and high schools as well as those studying for a college degree.

Despite those challenges the city's students and their parents have reason to believe things will get better.

The first charter school, Celerity Sirius, is opening this semester with a larger enrollment than expected.

The school is expected to outscore district schools in standardized tests,

and students will have more personalized attention, according to Celerity CEO Vielka McFarlane.

The college continues to see its enrollment rise, despite the fact that state budget cuts have made it necessary to reduce the number of students it can admit. The college is slowly

working its way toward accreditation.

The state has reduced its budget for full time equivalent students at all community colleges by 6.2 percent. El Camino Compton Center has had to reduce its maximum enrollment from 7,000 to 6,000. The college is fully enrolled for the cur-

rent semester.

El Camino CEO Dr. Thomas Fallo said, "The students want to come to the college. They are energetic and enthusiastic about their education. We are really proud of that."

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## SCHOOL RETROSPECTIVE



Photo courtesy of Compton Unified School District

## Compton students shine in Spelling Bee

Primary Division winners in the Compton Unified School District Spelling Bee held in January were: first place, Stacy Alcala, second grade, McNair Elementary; second place, Chase Carter, third grade, Lincoln Elementary; and third place, Jasmin Rivas, third grade, Laurel Elementary. For more student photos, see Page 4A.

## Bradley brings energy and enthusiasm to Compton High

By Chris Frost  
Bulletin Staff Writer

COMPTON—There is a changing of the guard at Compton High School. Newly appointed principal Letitia Bradley has arrived with a new staff, high energy and a "you can do it" attitude.

Bradley, who moves up from the assistant principal position at Dominguez High School, began her career with the Compton Unified School District in 2002. She said the move to CHS is a homecoming for her and the start of an amazing experience so far.

"I have taken the time to meet with the faculty, and asked them what they love, dislike and want to change about CHS," Bradley

said. "They all really like the teamwork and camaraderie they share. The biggest opportunity for improvement was improving communication."

The continued poor state test scores have also been a concern of the teachers, she said, and she advises staff to be the example, make a difference and it will catch on.

"I don't think they realize how terrific they are," Bradley said "Envision greatness and teach in the same manner. If you teach without any learning, what difference will you make? Failure is not an option."

Groups like the Compton Initiative and the alumni association will be enlisted to bring their energies to CHS, she said, which will add to the positive influences the teach-

ers will bring.

"Consistency is a key part of success for our students," Bradley said. "I know many of them from the feeder schools I've worked at and seeing them at pre-registration has been terrific."

CHS has had its share of controversy in recent months, including an appeal to the Board of Trustees in April citing safety concerns and missing money collected by student vendors at school. Bradley said she is aware of all those problems and they are in the past. She said she stands on behalf of all students in making their high school experience a positive one.

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## Compton's first charter school set to open Sept. 7

After a protracted battle with CUSD, Celerity Charter Schools got approval from County Office of Education

By Cheryl Scott  
Bulletin Staff Writer

COMPTON—Celerity Educational Group will open the first charter school in the city of Compton on Sept. 7. Celerity Sirius Charter School will open at two locations, 310 El Segundo Blvd. and 900 E. Rosecrans at the Church of the Redeemer in Los Angeles. A total of 525 students have applied for enrollment.

"We have to apply to the L.A. County School Board to increase our authorization from 360," said Celerity CEO Vielka McFarlane. "One of the great things happening is that we have 150 students who had left the Compton schools and have decided to come back. We are very excited about that."

Celerity creates and operates schools in underserved communities in the Los Angeles area, focusing on the needs of minority students. It has developed programs for at-risk children and their families, including after-school, evening and summer programs.

The organization was selected by parents at McKinley Elementary to operate the school when they submitted a "parent trigger" petition to turn the school into a charter school. The parent trigger law allows parents of low-scoring schools to demand changes, including allowing the school to be taken over by a charter school operator.

The petition was denied by the Compton Unified School District and the denial was upheld by the Los Angeles County Superior Court. The school opening this year is the result of a petition to the district made by Celerity to open a school at another location in the district.

The district denied that petition in March, and Celerity appealed that decision to the Los Angeles County Office of Education, which granted the charter on the basis that CUSD did not cite any of the 16 acceptable reasons for denying the petition.

Education law in California specifies acceptable reasons for denial of a petition to open a charter school. In a telephone conversation with The Bulletin, McFarlane said,

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## District faces another year of operating in the red

FULL STORY » PAGE 5A



## Compton students get backpacks, supplies at back-to-school event

FULL STORY » PAGE 4A



# Brown proposes California Jobs First plan

From staff reports

SACRAMENTO—Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. has proposed a three-part California Jobs First plan that offers over \$1 billion a year in tax relief for businesses that create jobs in the state.

“Boosting job growth in California is a top priority, and this proposal is a critical step in making sure the state does everything it can to support local job creation,” said Brown. “Our state has added 116,000 jobs since January, but we must do more to build economic momentum. This legislation would expand a currently existing job credit to make it more effective while adding new tax incentives for growth in the manufacturing sector.”

The first part of the California Jobs First plan reforms and expands an underutilized tax credit for small businesses worth hundreds of millions of dollars. To date, much of this funding has been left on the table because too many small businesses were excluded from the credit. The governor’s plan expands eligibility to small businesses with up to 50 employees (up from 20), and the credit for each new hire will jump from \$3,000 to \$4,000. These changes encourage small businesses to hire immediately because the credit will expire at the end of 2013.

The second part of the California

“Our state has added 116,000 jobs since January, but we must do more to build economic momentum. This legislation would expand a currently existing job credit to make it more effective while adding new tax incentives for growth in the manufacturing sector.”

Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr.

Jobs First plan will give the state’s economy an immediate shot in the arm by providing over \$1 billion in tax relief to businesses that purchase new manufacturing equipment.

The plan exempts start-ups in their first three years from the state portion of sales tax (3.9375 percent) — and provides an exemption of 3 percent for all other firms — on manufacturing equipment purchases. The exemptions will drive innovation, investment and growth by targeting many of California’s most dynamic industries, including manufacturing, biopharmaceuticals, clean energy and software.

The backbone of the California Jobs First plan is the application of the

Mandatory Single Sales Factor (SSF) to all businesses in California. This change levels the playing field by eliminating what Brown called “an outrageous and perverse tax incentive that encourages multi-state businesses to create jobs outside of the state.”

“This places California-based businesses at a competitive disadvantage and is a disincentive for out-of-state businesses to locate jobs here,” Brown said.

The revenues produced by closing this loophole will fund the expansion of the small business tax credits for new hires and the sales tax exemption for manufacturing equipment.

“Job creation is essential to our economic recovery and future budget sta-

bility,” said Senate Pro-Tem Darrell Steinberg. “Our tax laws should reflect that reality, rather than provide incentives for companies to increase their profits within California by investing and creating jobs outside of California.”

“Democrats in the legislature fought hard all Spring and Summer to enact the governor’s budget proposals to close the Single Sales Factor loophole and to generate in-state jobs — but the efforts fell short when no Republicans would step forward to support a compromise that would help California businesses,” said Speaker John A. Pérez. “It’s time to enact this common-sense plan that puts California’s economy and our jobs ahead of

out-of-state tax loopholes.”

Brown’s proposal drew immediate praise from California business interests.

“As a company with several major manufacturing sites in this state, Boeing applauds the governor’s initiative to support manufacturing in California,” said Jeff Sweet, director of California Government Relations for the Boeing Company. “He understands the need for consistency and certainty to spur investment and job growth, and is seeking solutions that will help accomplish that goal.”

“The package proposed by the Governor will make California more competitive with other states and provide a foundation upon which we can rebuild California’s job base,” said Joe Panetta, president and CEO of BIOCOM. “Governor Brown is to be commended for putting the strength of his office into these efforts.”

Brown has delivered a balanced budget that he said would stabilize the state’s finances and provided certainty to business leaders. Rating agencies shifted California’s status from “negative” to “stable” as a result, he said.

Last week, he appointed Michael E. Rossi as the senior advisor for Jobs and Business Development in his office. This move is part of the governor’s plan to create hundreds of thousands of jobs by 2020.

# Iraqi-Americans receive threats after drug arrests

By Julie Watson  
Associated Press

EL CAJON— Members of an Iraqi immigrant community have been targeted with threatening phone calls and questions about their U.S. patriotism after a federal takedown of a drug trafficking ring operating from an Iraqi social club in a working-class city east of San Diego, officials said Wednesday.

El Cajon Police Chief Pat Sprecco said he was concerned about the anger and unfair condemnation directed at Iraqis because of the arrests of 60 people involved in the ring, whose leaders include an Iraqi Christian living in El Cajon.

Sprecco called the threats “unfair criticism on people who had no part of the investigation” and urged the public not to blame an entire community.

“We weren’t targeting a culture,” he said. “We were targeting a criminal organization.”

Former California state Sen. Wadie Deddeh said he was among those who has been insulted since last week’s announcement of the arrests.

Deddeh said a woman coming out of Mass on Sunday told him he should not brag

Officials said Thursday that they had busted the ring that was getting its drugs from the Sinaloa cartel, Mexico’s most powerful drug gang, and shipping them to Detroit. The El Cajon ring also was caught selling assault rifles, grenades and homemade explosives in the area.

about being Chaldean.

Deddeh also was elected to the California Assembly in 1966 and is believed to be the first Iraqi Chaldean to serve in public office in the United States. He was a congressman from 1983 to 1993.

He said he recognizes only four of the 30 suspects who

have been identified as being Chaldeans, and he will not have “one or two punks” ruin his community’s name.

About 40,000 Chaldeans live in El Cajon, home to the second largest such community in the U.S. after Detroit. Many escaped persecution by al-Qaeda and other extremists

in Iraq. Chaldeans are the ethnic descendants of Assyrians, who converted to Christianity in the 1st century A.D., six centuries before the coming of Islam.

“I brag of being a Chaldean,” Deddeh said. “I’m proud of being a Chaldean and I will say that until the day I die.”

Police say they have a strong relationship with the community in helping combat crime.

Sprecco and federal officials said Thursday that they had busted the ring that was getting its drugs from the Sinaloa cartel, Mexico’s most powerful drug gang, and shipping them to Detroit. The El Cajon ring also was caught selling assault rifles, grenades and homemade explosives in the area.

Police say at least some of those arrested are suspected of being affiliated with the Detroit-based Chaldean Organized Crime Syndicate.

The investigation is ongoing and there could be more arrests, Sprecco said.

Officials said neighbors and spouses of some club members complained for years about the establishment’s criminal activity, which has included attempted murder, sales of methamphetamine

and marijuana, gambling and illegal firearms sales.

Authorities seized 18 pounds of methamphetamine, narcotics, cocaine and other

drugs; more than 3,500 pounds of marijuana; \$630,000 in cash; four explosive devices; and more than 30 guns, including assault rifles.

## EDUCATION

Continued from Page 1A

Enrollment at the college has increased despite a significant raise in tuition. Last year the cost to attend full time with a total of 30 units was \$780. This year it is \$1080 for 30 units. It may go up even more next year.

The El Camino Community College District responded to preliminary budget cuts by determining which classes can be cut without decreasing the educational opportunities offered at the college.

Regardless of less classes being offered and the higher cost per semester, students are flocking to the college in greater numbers than ever.

While Compton Community College no longer exists, the Compton Community College District remains an active entity and is working with El Camino to obtain accreditation. The district changed leadership this year with the appointment of Dr. Genethia Hudley-Hayes to the post of special trustee.

Hudley-Hayes’ aggressive approach to the accreditation effort has garnered criticism from some part of the community, but she continues to hold community workshops to show what is being done and the status of the accreditation process at the present time.

Compton Unified School District is offering its students imaginative and innovative programs to support their aca-

demic education.

Yet, the district has been plagued with problems this past year, most notably when the parents of students at McKinley Elementary School submitted a petition under the newly passed “parent trigger” law to close the school and reopen it as a charter school.

The courts denied the petition on administrative grounds because it did not have a date box next to the lines for each parent’s signature. Parent Revolution, the organization that assisted the parents in circulating the petition, has said it will continue to support McKinley parents in their effort to bring about change at the school, which ranks at the bottom of the city’s schools in standardized test scores.

As the controversy became more heated, the district accused Parent Revolution of duping or intimidating the parents into signing the petition. Parents accused the district and McKinley teachers of intimidating students whose parents signed it.

According to parents, some teachers told the students they could be deported back to Mexico if their parents did not rescind their signatures.

Budget problems have caused the district to lay off many of its teachers, which will up the teacher-student ratio to 30 to one, instead of the previous 25 to one.

The district recently rescinded transfers of food work-

ers as part of its proposed plan to eliminate kitchens at each school and transport the food from a central location where it would be prepared.

The workers have accused the district of retaliating against them for speaking to the media and for opposing the new food preparation plan.

Most, importantly, the district’s schools continue to have low standardized test scores. Despite the fact that cultural, athletic and academic programs have students doing creative and impressive projects, the district has been plagued with controversy the entire year.

Students at Compton High School earlier this year attended a City Council meeting during which they accused the school of lapses in security, turning a blind eye to drug activity and even stealing funds collected by the students.

The district said it would investigate the accusations, but so far, it has released no information on the results of its investigation. Now the school has a new principal who will not discuss the topic, stating that it is “in the past.”

Karen Frison, CUSD’s interim superintendent, has not been offered a contract for the position on a permanent basis. However, there has been no indication that the district is conducting a search for a permanent superintendent.

The district has been steadfast in opposing charter

schools, which could bring in revenue as well as decrease the burden of overcrowding because of recent layoffs. But charter schools seem to be the inevitable choice of parents who are dissatisfied with the city’s schools. Celerity, which is opening the city’s first charter school on Sept. 7, may be considering a second school in Compton, if it can be accomplished without the opposition of the district.

Many students in the city are challenged by poverty, inability to speak English and the danger posed by street gangs and violence. Parents know that the key to improving their lives is education.

The community needs its educational components now more than ever.

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