



April 29, 2008

from the office of Superintendent Robert Collins



Left to Right: Valhalla Teachers Kate Dibos, Edna Shaba, and G.I.S. Martie Rixon check in testing materials.



2007-08 & 2008-09 Student Representatives to the Governing Board (L. to R.) Carly Cody, Rep; Hannah Escalante, Alternate; Naomi Ocen-odoge, Rep; Kelsey Hjalmarson, Alternate



West Hills officers listen as Larry Pear, Director of Extended Curricular Programs, explains the Character Education and Pursuing Victory with Honor programs.

Valhalla Teachers Positive About Performance of Students on CST

Earlier this month, I discussed issues regarding the California Standards Test (CST). Many different views exist about standardized tests and both the State and Federal accountability programs. Nonetheless, we are judged on these programs by both the State and U.S. Department of Education. More importantly we are judged by the public. Just last month, I met with members of the Chamber of Commerce who expressed concerns about test scores and their effect on property values.

While we can debate standardized testing, we have an obligation to ensure that our students do their very best on these measurements. In visiting Valhalla High School, that's exactly what happened. Teachers and staff stressed the importance of the CST's on all students!



Teachers set the tone on campus and in talking with Keith McKee, **Science teacher at Valhalla**, he spoke of students doing their best, concentrating and completing the CST. The same was true for other Valhalla teachers who spoke of how they set **expectations for testing**

throughout the school and their classrooms. **"Do your very best and try hard,"** was consistently heard throughout the first day of testing. Valhalla students met their expectations. Regardless of how well their students perform, teachers can rest-assured that they did their very best. I am sure their students will do well.

New ASB Officers Installed!

On Monday, April 21, the outgoing and incoming student body officers from each high school gathered and prepared for the transition to a new school year.

Larry Pear, Director of Extended Curricular Programs, discussed the Character Education and Pursuing Victory with Honor programs that will be implemented in 2008-09. He explained that the student body leaders, athletic team captains and athletes, band, and cheerleader groups will lead those efforts in this important area in the coming year.

What are our expectations for Character Education and Pursuing Victory with Honor? Both programs will seek to build a strong core of student leaders who will advocate for the practice of strong universal values in athletics, after-school activities and in daily interaction on campus. What are those values? **The following are examples of what it means to practice good character:**

Respect for the opposing team, sports officials, teachers and each other. **Responsibility** to one's teammates, for a clean campus and being to class on time. Playing a game fairly and practicing **Fairness** throughout the school day. **Caring** for others, being **Trustworthy**, and practicing good **Citizenship**.

At the same time, we have to expect that adults will model the above values on a daily basis. Students learn from our example. We explained to the students leaders that their student body also looks up to them. Because they're the football captain, drum major or student body officer, they are admired and respected by students they do not even know. It is critical, therefore, that our student leaders are also models of good character and strong values. We want to ensure that **all programs** and activities reflect **respect, responsibility, caring, trustworthiness, fairness and good citizenship**.

This summer, we will begin training football coaches and teams, band directors and members, and ASB advisors and officers. Then we will train our cheerleaders and all remaining coaches and team members. By fall, the first round of leadership students will be well-trained in making a difference in the quality of life on each of our school campuses. After visiting with the student leadership on Monday night, we can be very proud of the student leaders who will be at the forefront of this effort.