



# GROSSMONT UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT'S NEWSLETTER

From the office of Superintendent Robert Collins



## "Ready to Learn" at El Capitan

I was more than impressed by the enthusiasm of the **Ready to Learn** counselors, teachers and student peer leaders at El Capitan High School as they explained their **student intervention program**. Led by **Christine Carroll**, counselor and program coordinator, their passion and commitment for addressing the needs of students who were failing courses, not succeeding and in danger of not graduating, was clear.

The Program is also a partnership with the San Diego County Office of Education, which provides the curriculum for training 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students to serve as peer leaders, who provide one-on-one counseling and mentorship to at-risk students. The training is under the leadership of Academic Advisor **Joe Herman**.

The curriculum, called Insight, emphasizes **building assets** in students as well as **resiliency**. At the same time, the program provides strong role models for our at-risk students.

While the Program operates throughout the regular school year, there is also a **summer component** that addresses incoming 9<sup>th</sup> graders who have been identified as being at-risk.

There is also an adult component to the program. *Ready to Learn* is a multi-faceted umbrella of student support systems at El Capitan.

I was especially impressed with the leadership of Principal **Bill Sullivan**, **Carolee Villegas**, head counselor and **Christine Carroll** in bringing this program to El Capitan and more importantly building, supporting and making it work for over 150 students.

A District strategic plan has to include and ensure that there are intervention programs for at-risk students. That will require a District commitment to support and seek funding to maintain programs such as *Ready to Learn* in high schools across our District.

## What Will It Mean to Be Career Ready in East County?



**Rotary Club of El Cajon**

Yesterday I met with the **El Cajon Rotary** and had a chance to explain the importance of graduating students who are both **college prepared and career ready**. It is definitely a focus for Rotary and the larger business community in East County. **What does it mean for our students to be career ready?**

We have an obligation to address the needs of all students. This includes having a strong career academy and Career Tech Education (CTE) programs that will prepare students for a post-secondary experience and a career.

These are not the vocational programs of the past. They are **the new, high-tech, high-interest programs, with multi-year sequences of courses which will prepare students for the jobs of the next 20 and 30 years**. These programs represent 15 industry sectors. Examples include: Arts and Media, Engineering, Construction, Health Sciences, Public Service, Transportation and Business and Finance and **are integrated into a rigorous high school curriculum and part of a strong post-secondary preparation program**.

During the next two years we will develop these programs in each of our schools. This effort will require:

1. The development of a **comprehensive CTE program for our District**—to describe the programs available to students in each of our high schools and the matriculation options for college, further training and/or certificate programs.
2. **Integration of the current Regional Occupational Programs (ROP) into the regular school curriculum**. ROP programs are in all of our high schools, but they exist as independent classes and not as part of a total, focused program.
3. **Expansion of our certificate programs**, providing students with opportunities to leave high school prepared for a specific career interest.
4. **Grant funding** to support new CTE academies.
5. Development of **strong connections with our community colleges** and our Adult School's CTE curriculum and programs.
6. Development of **strong business partnerships** to support CTE programs. These connections would provide business expertise and opportunities for job shadowing and internships.
7. Counselor and staff professional development regarding CTE.

Developing career tech programs involves more than curriculum and modern equipment. It involves developing in our students those skills necessary to succeed in the career of their choice. Our programs have to teach critical values such as responsibility, trustworthiness (honesty and integrity), respect, good citizenship and caring. These are the same values that are part of a strong Character Education program.

I explained to the Rotarians that we want to graduate students who are academically prepared, career focused and who we can be proud of because of the content of their character. **Who's concerned about our students being career ready?** Certainly our business community is. Certainly the Rotarians I spoke with yesterday. And certainly our parents. A strong CTE program will make a difference in the lives of East County youth.