Message from the Superintendent

It is an absolute pleasure to serve as your Superintendent of Schools for Alpine County. Our School Board and I feel privileged to be a part of all the tremendous progress our students and staff have made over these last three years and will continue into the future. Now, our students are achieving at levels well above state averages in both English Language Arts and Math. Our student achievement levels are the highest above state averages they have ever been in Alpine County! We are equally proud of the programs we have added to Alpine County Schools a great place for learning. For example, we have reinstituted or implemented for the first time programs in music, art, competitive sports, advanced learning, anti-bullying, and Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM). We have also extended our early learning offerings to include infants in our revitalized Early Learning Center, have added a Summer Academy, provided Chromebook computers for all students, and expanded our high school options. Due to our students’ great academic progress and overall school programs, Diamond Valley Elementary School was selected as a 2016 Gold Ribbon School AND a Title I Academic Achievement Award Winning School (see last article in this Bulletin)!!

These achievements resulted from changes developed through many collaborative efforts with the Alpine County Board of Education, Alpine County Unified School District, and various community groups. I am proud of the remarkable progress we have made together and am looking forward to expanding educational solutions for our Bear Valley students as well – more on Bear Valley in the Early Learning article below. I am confident of our continued successes and growth in the next year and years to come.

New Teaching Staff

We are excited to have three new teachers join the Alpine County Unified School District’s teaching staff!!

Sarah Harvey - Ms. Sarah Harvey graduated from the University of Oregon with a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Educational Studies with a double minor in Spanish and Special Education. Ms. Harvey earned her Multiple Subjects Teaching Credential from Cal State University, Fresno. She has also been one of our most sought after substitute teachers for all grades and even for our California State Preschool Program. She also contributed to the great success of our 2016 Summer Academy this summer and did an exemplary job during her student teaching at Diamond Valley Elementary School last year. As most Alpine County residents know, the Harvey family has a long history in Alpine County and remains active in the community. Dr. Richard Harvey was the County’s Public Health Officer and Clinic Physician from 2004-2014. Ms. Kate Harvey is active in Health and Human Services coordinating 50+ Club events and a bi-annual blood drive. The Harvey family remains a strong supporter of the fantastic education Alpine County Schools provide. Ms. Sarah Harvey has also worked at Grover’s Hot Springs as a Nature Interpreter and Park Aide. She loves Alpine County and enjoys introducing her three year old son to the County’s outdoor beauty. Ms. Harvey will be Diamond Valley Elementary School’s Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten (TK) teacher during the next school year.

Lucia Pinotti - Ms. Lucia Pinotti is relocating from Amador County to join the Alpine team! She graduated from Cal State Chico with a Bachelor’s of Arts degree with a Special Major in Environmental Art through Interdisciplinary Studies. She also earned her Multiple Subjects Teaching Credential through Cal State Fresno and her Single Subject Authorization for Math Methodology through UC Riverside. Ms. Pinotti has completed two successful years of teaching in Amador County Schools. During the 2015-16 school year, she taught seventh grade math at Ione Junior High School and was named a Title I Academic Achievement Award Winning School Teacher. Ms. Pinotti received this title for the second year in a row for her outstanding work with her students! Ms. Pinotti will be teaching seventh grade math at Diamond Valley Elementary School this fall.

Sarah Harvey will be teaching kindergarten at Diamond Valley Elementary School and Sarah Harvey plans to teach TK next year.

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Message from the Superintendent Continued

of instructional technology. During the 2014-15 school year, she was an Art, Drama, and Intervention Teacher at the elementary school level in Amador Schools. She completed her student teaching at Ponderosa Elementary School in Paradise, California and has also taught third through fifth grade science in Butte County as a staff member of a local Outdoor Education program. Ms. Pinotti will be Diamond Valley's third grade teacher for the next school year.

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Academy Students Being Exposed to next year's Sunworks.

Facilities
The newly formed Facilities Advisory Committee held its first meeting on June 6, 2016. It was great to see members of the community willing to volunteer their time to address the facility needs of the school district. The community committee members present were Danielle Knapp, Buck McLelland, and Evan Mecak. Board members Clint Cello and Jill Wegenstein also attended as Board facilities representatives, as well as Superintendent Traynor, Diamond Valley Elementary School Principal Scott Smith, and Business Manager Jessica Young, who is leading the effort. District staff and Board members look forward to working with the committee to create a Master Facilities Plan that will provide long term benefits to the District. We thank the committee members for their strong support in this endeavor.

Early Learning in Alpine County
We were pleased to have met with our Bear Valley early learning community in June. We are examining reopening our beautiful Bear Valley School facility for early learning! The Bear Valley parents group hosts a recreational program for early learners in Bear Valley, which is partially funded by Alpine County’s First Five. Currently, the Perry Walther Building houses the program, but our Bear Valley School could be better suited to meet our Bear Valley community’s needs. Presently, our Bear Valley school age students enjoy a great education through our partnership with Calaveras County Schools. However, our annual parent surveys have been revealing a desire to open Bear Valley School again for younger students from kindergarten through second grade. In fact, we have been pleased to have held two meetings so far with the Bear Valley Charter group who has initiated efforts to open up Bear Valley School as a Charter School or working with our District to reopen it as a District magnet school. We are looking forward to addressing the challenges ahead and will keep you updated on the progress of a possible reopening in the near future.

On the Diamond Valley Side, our Early Learning Program is expanding to include infants. We will now have a combination of infant care, California State Preschool, and child care. A Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program will be available for students whose fifth birthday falls between September 2 and December 2. Enrollment packets will become available after July 29th. Children can be added to our waiting list by calling our County Office of Education at (530) 694-2330. The facility will be moved to 100 Foothill Road in the Fredericksburg area, where our Early Learning Center was previously. Quality childcare, including infants, and a progressive early education curriculum are scheduled to begin August 22, 2016. Subsidies and scholarships are offered to eligible Alpine County families to assist with tuition costs. Hours and days have been increased to accommodate a range of family schedules. Please join us for our Open House on August 19th at 3:00 p.m. at the new location! If you have any questions, please give us a call.

2016 Gold Ribbon School
As reported in the last Spring Bulletin, Diamond Valley Elementary School received the 2016 Gold Ribbon School Award. The Gold Ribbon Awards, like the Title I Academic Achievement Award, recognize California schools that have made gains in implementing the academic content and performance standards adopted by the State Board of Education. These schools also have one identified program or initiative that serves as an exemplary model for other California schools. Diamond Valley’s initiative included its Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework which is a positive and non-punitive approach to managing student behaviors at school so they are consistent with a highly productive learning environment. Regarding Gold Ribbon Schools, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson states, “Shining as bright beacons for others through an exemplary effort to ensure that every student is ready for 21st century college and careers.” We are so proud of our Gold Ribbon staff and students!
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Eleanor Moore - Ms. Eleanor Moore comes to us with a wealth of experience in the field of education. She has a Bachelor’s degree in Sociology from the University of Texas, Austin and a Master’s degree in Educational Leadership from Cal State Fullerton. In addition to her Multiple Subjects Teaching Credential, she has credentials in Mathematics, Special Education, and Administrative Services. Having been a substitute teacher in the Lake Tahoe Unified School District and a part time Tahoe resident, she is moving back into her home in the Tahoe area. Ms. Moore has been a middle and high school Math teacher, Activities Director, and Special Education teacher for the Newport Mesa Unified School District. Ms. Moore will be our sixth grade teacher for English Language Arts and Mathematics in the mornings and will be instrumental in implementing our new Adult Education Block Grant focusing on the parent education component in the afternoons.

Summer Academy
We finished our third annual Summer Academy with great success. We had approximately 30 students attend in total over the four week session. Consistent with the last two years, the Academy’s non-traditional curriculum included computer programming, this time with Lego Mindstorms Robotics, video production, structured recreation, and computer assisted instruction in English Language Arts and Math. All students got to work at their own pace on a few of the English Language Arts and Math topics for their next year’s grade level. We are confident our Academy students will have a head start when they begin their regular school year in the fall! See more photos of our Academy on the insert!

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One to One Computer Chromebooks
We are pleased to open the next school year with every student having their own computer Chromebook. As stated in the last Bulletin, Chromebooks are essentially computers designed specifically for the Internet. With Internet technology now an essential 21st century skill, our students will all have ready access to the latest learning applications that supplement our Board adopted curricula.

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Diamond Valley Elementary School – A 2016 Award Winning School!
It is not surprising that Diamond Valley won awards in 2016 for its most recent outstanding progress, achievement, and programs. Not only did it earn the 2016 Gold Ribbon School Award for student academic achievement and solid educational programs, it earned the equally, if not more prestigious, 2016 Title I Academic Achievement Award for outstanding student academic achievement for student achievement in the 2014-15 school year. These awards are presented by the California Department of Education (CDE) only to select schools which must be in the upper half of student performance. Board President Lane Starratt (see photo far left), Diamond Valley Elementary School (DVES) Teacher Philip Marks (see photo far right), DVES Principal Scott Smith (see photo center right), and Superintendent Patrick Traynor (see photo center left) received the awards on behalf of Diamond Valley Elementary School at a California Department of Education ceremony in Sacramento earlier in June from State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson (see photo center). Here are brief descriptions of these awards.

2016 Title I Academic Achievement Awards Program
The California Department of Education (CDE) recognizes schools with a significant number of students who come from low income families that demonstrate success in ensuring all students are making significant progress toward reaching proficiency on California’s academic content standards. These standards define the knowledge, concepts, and skills students are expected to acquire at each grade level. In addition, the awardees provide support to and serve as models for other schools, especially other Title I schools that have been identified for Program Improvement.

The CDE states, “The criteria to qualify for the award are rigorous.” Diamond Valley Elementary School is a Title I school due to receiving additional funding for students from low income families. According to the CDE, to be eligible for this award, a minimum of 40 percent of the enrolled students in each school must meet the poverty index and students in all subgroups must have exceeded state and federal expectations for student achievement. Diamond Valley’s outstanding growth and achievement for all groups of students during the 2014-15 school year earned them this highly prestigious recognition.

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May 2016 – Superintendent Patrick Traynor thanked the Board for their continued support of the Summer Academy now in preparation. He reported the half day sessions consist of computer assisted instruction in English Language Arts and math, video production, computer coding, and physical fitness. He also reported that the music program is continuing to expand citing that 5th grade students were now invited to join the other wind instruments and new bell keys, called Orffs, were purchased and being implemented to all fourth graders to learn piano keyboard fundamental. He thanked the Board for their strong support of bringing the arts back to our schools and said that the addition of Ms. Stephanie Reynolds, Visual and Performing Arts Specialist, has added tremendous value to our music program. Diamond Valley Elementary School Principal Scott Smith reported that samples of the Board adopted English Language Arts materials had been given to teachers for review. Business Manager Jessica Young reported that the new Developer Fee Study was ready and the District and County Budgets were being prepared for future approval. She also reported the District is acquiring a contractor to complete the perimeter access system. The perimeter access system includes replacing manually keyed doors with electronically locking doors that can be centrally locked and unlocked. The purpose is to increase student safety. The Board approved public hearing dates for the 2016-2017 Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs) and Budgets, and approved Diamond Valley Elementary School’s Single Plan for Student Achievement for the 2016-17 school year.

June 2016 – There were two June Board meetings. Ms. Elizabeth Wengrin-Rohrbaugh, Early Learning Center (ELC) Site Supervisor, presented the annual California Department of Education and Support Division Program Self-Evaluation Report on the quality of the preschool and services provided. Superintendent Traynor reported that the Summer Academy was in full swing and off to a great start. He reported the teaching staff consisted of Ms. Sarah Harvey, who will be joining the regular teaching staff in the fall, Principal Smith, and himself as needed. He added that several of the District and County instructional support staff are supporting the Academy as well including Preschool Supervisor/Teacher Elizabeth Wengrin-Rohrbaugh who will be completing her library internship during the program, Instructional Aide and Business Technician Katie Quinlan, Library Media Technician Carol Lawlor, Instructional Aide Patty DeMaio and Special Education Instructional Aide Denise Frueh. The Board held public hearings for the District and County Local Control Accountability Plans, Budgets, and the Developer Fee Study. The new Developer Fee study was approved at the same meeting which included substantially lower fees. The Board adopted the District and County LCAPs and Budgets at the second June Board meeting and approved the hiring of three teachers for 2016-17 school year. The Board also adopted the District Wellness Plan.

July 2016 – Superintendent Traynor presented on Assessment in Education which included mandated and voluntary state testing, how the District implemented these tests during the 2015-16 school year, the time investment, the utility of the results, and plans for reviewing and modifying the District’s assessment program with the Curriculum Council in mid-August. He took questions from the public. He reported that the County Office of Education’s third annual Summer Academy was again a great success. Students remained engaged in the non-traditional instruction which included computer coding with robots this time, strength, endurance, and flexibility training in a fun environment, Friday fun days that included hikes in the Fallen Leaf and Grover’s Hot Springs areas, and disc golf at Alpine’s own Turtle Rock Park. It also included English Language Arts and Math computer programs in which students could work on a few of their next year’s topics and review previous year’s topics that were not fully mastered. He also reported that an invitation was sent to parents of Diamond Valley Elementary School and Bear Valley parents to join the LCAP Parent Advisory Committee, or LCAP PAC. He said the LCAP PAC meeting with a new representative group of parents is scheduled for August 3, 2016 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and will be held in the Board Room (Administrative Annex Building) at the Diamond Valley school site. Superintendent Traynor reported that he and staff have held meetings with the Bear Valley Charter School parents’ group regarding their efforts to re-open the Bear Valley School as either a Charter School or a District Magnet School. Ms. Lauren Schimke of Bear Valley and president of this group provided more details of their efforts. Superintendent Traynor also explained the Educator Effectiveness Plan which will be more fully developed by the Curriculum Council composed of District teachers and administrators. He added that the full plan will be adopted at a subsequent meeting. Business Manager Young reported that the next Facilities Advisory Committee meeting will include guidance from a California Department of Education Consultant, Robert Corley, who has extensive experience in school facilities and developing facilities’ master plans. She thanked Facility Advisory Committee community member Danielle Knapp for making this connection for the District. Grant Administrator and Learner Center Director Cheri Warrell reported that the move to the new Early Learning Center on Foothill Road is almost complete and Ms. Wengrin-Rohrbaugh already has a waiting list.

Future Board Meeting Dates

August 9, 2016 • September 13, 2016 • October 11, 2016 • November 8, 2016

District Board meetings begin with a Closed Session at 5:30 p.m. and the General Open Session follows. The County Office of Education meetings begin shortly after the completion of the District meetings. Often times both meetings include teleconferencing from the Administrative Annex Building in Woodfords and the Bear Valley Library in Bear Valley.
Summer Academy 2016

Academy students at Grover's Hot Springs State Park learning with rangers.

Academy students stop to pose for a mid point photo for the Grover’s Hike.

Two Academy students show off their robot they built and programed with their computer (Logan Aros left; Alan Baker right)

Academy students finishing up Grover’s hike on a Fun Friday excursion.

Summer Academy students enjoy last day celebration

Academy students taking a well deserved rest after an eventful program.
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