

LEADERSHIP SPOTLIGHT:

Dr. Jim Brescia — San Luis Obispo County Superintendent of Schools



What led you to become County Superintendent?

Since receiving my doctorate, my writing and research interests have included school leadership, instructional leadership and problem-solving-based training of educational leaders. My predecessor, Julian Crocker and I have worked together for almost 25 years both at the district, county, and university levels, so I was fairly familiar with the position's importance and broad reach. Consequently, he asked me to consider serving as the county superintendent after his retirement. I discussed the situation with my family, the district superintendents, community college president, and local university president. After receiving their support, I decided to run for the office.

What inspired you to enter the field of education?

While completing my undergraduate degree at the University of California San Diego and preparing to enroll in a Clinical Psychology Pd.D., I was required to participate in a year-long internship program. After completing about three-quarters of the internship, I discovered that I did not want to become a therapist and began to ask myself, "What now?" My family offered suggestions such as to become an engineer (like my father), or a priest (grandma's wish), or enter the human resources arena like my mother. I turned to a former teacher from my high school for advice. Brother Jerome had dedicated his life to teaching mathematics and had been the one who encouraged me to work in the math lab at my high school and tutor other students. He had a way of responding to my questions with another question designed to make me think. Brother Jerry asked me why I continued to work in the math lab long after my required elective was completed. I responded that I enjoyed helping others and that as a tutor my passion for learning was nurtured. He simply responded that he thought I had my answer. The next week I

applied to the teacher education program and completed my credential a year later.

Do you have a particular goal that drives you?

I believe that the children who sit in our classrooms today are our future. They will determine what type of world we inherit as the stewardship for humanity passes from our hands to theirs. Schools and educators have a daunting mission to ensure that our future is one of promise and hope. Education is a more than simply a profession, but a calling that must be approached with respect, dignity, dedication and accountability.

What objectives do you hope to achieve?

I see County Offices as strategically positioned to lead throughout the county in strengthening our profession. In collaboration with universities, districts and the community, I hope to assist in rebuilding our humanities-based programs, mentoring the next generation of educational leaders, providing resources for our underserved and vulnerable populations, as well as maintaining good stewardship of taxpayer monies.

What are your interests?

I enjoy teaching organizational theory, educational leadership, educational finance, school site leadership, and instructional evaluation. My writing and research interests include school leadership, instructional leadership, and problem-solving-based training of educational leaders. I have peer-reviewed articles published in both national and international journals. My wife and I enjoy traveling, spending time with family and cooking. I am an avid chess player and can often be found in local coffee shops waiting for a willing chess partner.

Who are the special people in your life?

My family, friends, fellow parishioners and colleagues make living on the central coast very enjoyable.

FROM THE DESK OF:

Peter Birdsall, CCSESA Executive Director

"Consistency" and "capacity" are the two words that keep recurring as we discuss with others the experience working with county offices during this second year of the LCAP process. What is CCSESA doing to support consistency and capacity of county offices in their critical role of supporting LCAP development and providing LCAP review and approval?

This question was an important focus of the State Board of Education discussion earlier this month and we have heard the same questions from some school district superintendents through ACSA.

The formation of the LCAP Coordinating Committee, consisting of county superintendents and representatives from BASC, CISC and SPSSC, is an important part of our answer. The purpose of the

committee is to allow critical issues to be reviewed across the steering committees of CCSESA, and with county superintendents directly engaged in these questions. Documents and policy positions of CCSESA will continue to be approved by the CCSESA Board of Directors.

LCAP topics will be an important part of our agenda at the October General Membership meeting. This year we need to provide guidance and support to strengthen the consistency and capacity of county offices, while at the same time doing the development and policy work to revise the LCAP template and adopt evaluation rubrics, so that the LCAP process truly becomes a vehicle for continuous improvement rather than a new name for another compliance document.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Digital Instructional Materials: CCSESA and the ACLU have collaborated to develop a guidance letter entitled “[Digital Instructional Materials and the Williams Sufficiency Standard.](#)” It is intended to help outline different approaches by which LEAs can meet the sufficiency requirement of Williams AND adopt digital materials.

Many LEAs will be looking to adopt new instructional materials for ELA/ELD after the State Board of Education takes action in November on the recommendations from the Instructional Quality Commission.

October General Membership Meeting: CCSESA General Membership will meet in Napa from October 4-6. Registration is now open. Contact JaConya Merchant if you have any questions: jmerchant@ccsesa.org.

JCCASAC Mini Conference: The Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School Administrators will hold its annual Mini Conference on October 8-9 in Yosemite. To register, click [here](#). Contact Patricia Gutierrez in the Fresno County Office of Education with any questions: pgutierrez@fcoe.org.

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AESA’S EDUCATORS’ CALL TO ACTION CONFERENCE



Pictured: Amanda Dickey (CCSESA), Congressman Jared Huffman (CD-2), and Gayle Garbolina-Mojica (Placer)

Last week, representatives from CCSESA traveled to Washington, D.C. for AESA’s Educators’ Call to Action Conference. CCSESA joined with state education associations from across the nation in a three-day lobbying effort for increased Title I funding and ESEA reauthorization. Although not much progress has been made on ESEA since Congress adjourned in July, rumors are abuzz on the Hill that members will be appointed to the conference committee in October and will soon

begin the process of aligning the Senate and House bills. Conversations with Senators Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray affirmed that they remain optimistic that ESEA will be reauthorized this year; however, members of the House expressed less confidence, citing significant political issues between and within the parties. One thing is certain - in order to achieve reauthorization in 2015, there will need to be a strong bipartisan effort in the House.

While in D.C., CCSESA had the privilege of presenting AESA’s 2015 Legislator of the Year award to Congressman Jared Huffman. Congressman Huffman played an active role earlier this year in obtaining Secure Rural Schools funding and is currently leading the effort in the House for full IDEA funding. CCSESA and AESA are grateful for the Congressman’s leadership on behalf of California’s students and will continue to work closely with his office on K-12 issues.

ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK TAKES SHAPE

The September State Board of Education (SBE) meeting provided a comprehensive look at the state’s accountability framework.

The “Mega-Accountability” item was presented on the second day of the meeting and included presentations by SBE staff, WestEd, CDE staff, the CORE Districts and CCSESA representatives. Peter Birdsall and Dave Gordon (Sacramento) presented on LCAP Year Two learning and their presentation was very well received by the SBE members, staff, and audience.

At this point it is evident that the LCFF Evaluation Rubrics will be the foundation for the state’s new Accountability system. SBE staff and WestEd presented a significant amount of work on the framework for the both the Evaluation Rubrics and the new State Accountability System.

CCSESA is looking forward to the October SBE memos and November SBE meeting to review the implementation plan.

Click [here](#) to watch Day Two of the SBE meeting.

SBE HOLDS OFF ON ADDRESSING ESEA SCIENCE ASSESSMENT

One of the key items originally scheduled for the September State Board of Education (SBE) meeting wasn’t even discussed at the meeting. CDE’s ESEA Science Assessment recommendation to the board was pulled from the agenda at the eleventh hour. There were concerns expressed by many in the Science community regarding the initial content focus being on biological sciences for the high school assessment. The CISC Science subcommittee was engaged and they also expressed this

concern and highlighted that this path would have wide-ranging ramifications on Science instruction in our state. There was broad-based concern that having the high school assessment focused on only biological sciences would be the antithesis of the Next Generation Science Standards and that there would be a narrowing of the curriculum.

CCSESA will continue to engage our CISC Science Subcommittee and others that are interested to help identify the best path forward for our state.

USING CAASPP TO IMPROVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

In 2013, when CCSESA supported the legislation implementing the new student assessment program, a key reason for our support was the commitment to making interim and formative assessment resources more readily available for the purposes of improving teaching and learning.

It is encouraging that CDE has asked the Sacramento and Ventura County Offices of Education to design and implement a series of institutes on this important topic.

The first “Train the Trainer” session for County Offices of Education will occur in October. Click [here](#) to view the 2015-16 Train the Trainer Calendar.

This is the critical next step in making the assessment system meaningful—helping local educators learn practical strategies to use the CAASPP system to improve instruction, with a focus on interim assessments and the Digital Library of formative assessment resources. If you have any comments or questions, please contact emercado@ccsesa.org

REGIONAL ARTS LEADERS CONVENE IN SACRAMENTO

On September 16, CCSESA and the California Department of Education convened arts leaders from county offices. Presenters included Dr. Kathryn Catania, VAPA Subcommittee Chair and Deputy Superintendent from Fresno COE,

Steve Venz from Orange COE, and Kristine Alexander, Executive Director of The California Arts Project. County Office leaders shared exciting plans for 2015-16 in support of arts education.

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