

Merit in the New Year

GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR

Happy New Year!

The start of a new year is often a time when we resolve to do something different or make an improvement in our lives. This year, my resolution is to try to embrace change rather than fear it. I have always been the type of person who is perfectly content with keeping things in my life as stable as possible. In fact, I typically dread the thought of change because my current mind set is that change is bad. I'm not sure how I came to have this thought process but it is the way I have thought as long as I can remember. This is pretty obvious when you consider that until recently, I worked for the same employer for 26 years.

When I started working at SDUHSD several months ago, I was filled with fear and anxiety. Now that I have settled in and gotten to know so many wonderful people here, I am motivated to let go of my fear of change because I now realize that change can be a good thing!

If you are interested in a work-related change, there is no better place to have that opportunity than in a merit system. In my short time here, I have seen first-hand a large number of vacancies filled through promotions. I believe a merit system is a win-win situation for both employees and the employer. In a merit system, the employment and retention of staff is governed by rules that provide existing employees, who demonstrate possession of the required minimum qualifications, an advantage over outside candidates in the recruitment process. This advantage is evident in the ability to post recruitments as "promotional only" or "open/promotional" where eligibility lists of existing permanent employees are utilized before considering outside applicants. Even when recruitments are posted as "dual certification", employees receive preference through the use of seniority points for years of service with the district. These options benefit employees' placement on eligibility lists but the district also benefits from having the best opportunity to fill positions with those who are already fluent in district processes.

Employment opportunities are emailed to classified staff as the need to generate an eligibility list arises. If you have questions regarding any postings, or general questions regarding transfers, promotional opportunities, professional growth, or other personnel issues, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to serving you!

- Susan Dixon
Director of Classified Personnel

TO SEE THE NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS MADE
BY YOUR COLLEAGUES, TAKE A LOOK INSIDE
THIS NEWSLETTER.

PERSONNEL COMMISSIONERS:

- John Baird, Chairperson
- Terry King, Vice Chairperson
- David Holmerud, Member

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Resolutions for the New Year

Donna Crosby (Special Education): Is not to make any this year, just live each day to the fullest!

Jackie Busch (Carmel Valley MS): Be more aware of the feelings of others and to be more understanding and patient.

Toni Stadler (Carmel Valley MS): Try to live life with a positive attitude and be grateful everyday for everything.

Shirley Janssen & Kathy Potter (Personnel): We are going to try one new food item each month!

STAFF FEATURE PAYROLL DEPARTMENT



Barbara Crisostomo, Dawn Pearson, Courtney Rock

If the staff of the Payroll Department doesn't look familiar to you, there are some good reasons. Most notably, these three individuals are tucked away, hidden on the second floor of the district office, behind not one, but two closed doors in a remote corner of the Finance Department. Despite their location, Barbara, Courtney, and Dawn are incredibly approachable.

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\$ (Payroll staff continued from previous page) \$

Another reason they may not look familiar to you is due to their proficiency in their work. Month after month, the payroll staff works diligently to process an accurate payroll. This means that for the great majority of San Dieguito employees, interaction with payroll staff is very infrequent.

Not everyone is suited for work in a payroll office. Constant deadlines, considerable consequences for errors, and sometimes screaming clients are things that can make working in payroll seem difficult. However, this payroll team loves what they do and enjoys working in this type of environment. A big reason for this is their support and appreciation of each other. All three staff members agree that the best part of their job is getting to work with people they genuinely like who work well together. In fact, according to Dawn, “when you are having a hard day it makes all the difference to have a team of people you really like.”

People who work in payroll must follow precise rules to ensure accuracy and compliance. This sometimes leads others to believe that payroll staff are cold or unfriendly. This is definitely not the case with the San Dieguito team. When an error does occur on a paycheck, all three expressed their desire to do whatever is within their means to correct the error as quickly as possible. They understand that if a paycheck isn’t processed correctly it could seriously impact someone’s circumstances. According to Courtney, “we really do feel bad when something goes wrong.” As an added source of frustration for the staff, as much as they may work to correct errors as quickly as possible, with the implementation of the PeopleSoft payroll system, the ability of district staff to correct errors is not as direct as it used to be.

Although our payroll team has a lot in common, they have unique backgrounds that led them to a career in payroll. Dawn worked in bookkeeping for a private company and then payroll for a neighboring school district before taking a five year hiatus from an office job to work as a home-birth midwife. This experience was the most incredible type of work she has ever done but having a work schedule that was dictated by a woman’s labor was not conducive to raising her own child so she returned to the stability of a school district.

Courtney, a newlywed who is still considering whether she will keep her maiden name, is a “home-grown” employee having graduated from the district and then working as an Instructional Assistant while attending college. She later worked as a secretary at Torrey Pines and supplemented this work by helping in payroll over the summer. Her experience in this limited-term role gave her an advantage when it was time to make a selection for a permanent vacancy as she had proven herself to be hard-working and competent.

Barbara is the payroll die-hard of the group. She took some time off along the way but has been working in the payroll field since 1994. She is the newest addition to the staff having worked here about one and a half years. She is a fitness enthusiast with indoor cycling being her latest interest.

If you are in the neighborhood, stop by to say hello to these devoted employees. In the event you don’t see them at their desks, you may want to check the beach as this is the spot all three of them choose to go walking to “de-stress” whenever they have time to take a break from work.

And if you have ever wondered what a payroll person’s biggest request is now you know—Check your paycheck every month! Errors are easiest to correct when they are caught early on.

THE PERSONNEL COMMISSION

The Personnel Commission is responsible for the recruitment, selection, training, and retention of employees in the classified service. Staff are responsible for implementing practices that adhere to the adopted Rules and Regulations. In addition, we conduct classification and compensation studies.

BECAUSE OF YOU

The Personnel Commission and staff believe that each classified employee plays a key role in supporting the work of the District to educate students. Some classifications directly support student education, such as our Instructional Assistants and Learning Commons Technician. In other cases the work we perform indirectly supports student education by providing services such as transportation, beautiful school grounds and classrooms, needed supplies, healthy meals, data to improve instruction and other vital services. Our goal is to support you in the work that you do, whether that’s through training opportunities to enhance your skills in your current position, preparation for your career advancement, or to recruit strong candidates to work on the team alongside you. Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have about recruitment, selection, training and retention. We’re here to help!



WELCOME NEW HIRES!

Maricelia Gonzalez
Accounting Technician
9/15/15

Leslie Luna
Reception-Bilingual
9/15/15

Nancy Benbow
Secretary
9/21/15

Mireya Villa
Nutrition Services Assistant I
9/24/15

Nicole Price
Secretary
9/28/15

Vanessa Varela-Fusco
Instructional Assistant SpEd
10/12/15

Marielle Bravo-Saltzman
Secretary
10/29/15

Ramon Reyes
Custodian
11/2/15

BriAnn Hailey
Receptionist
11/5/15

Karli Meier
Instructional Assistant SpEd
11/10/15

Melanie Lawson
Secretary
11/30/15

Corey Larsen
Nutrition Services Assistant I
1/4/16

Kelsea Maule
Instructional Assistant SpEd
1/4/16

Kelsey Rahon
Instructional Assistant SpEd
1/4/16

Lai Lai Chow
Nutrition Services Assistant I
1/4/16

Position Title, Current Edjoin Postings	Posting Deadline
Administrative Secretary-Middle School	January 20, 2016
Custodian	January 20, 2016
Custodian-Floater	January 27, 2016
Instructional Assistant Special Education Non-Severe	Continuous Filing
Nutrition Services Assistant I	Continuous Filing
Nutrition Services Supervisor	January 13, 2016
School Bus Driver	Continuous Filing

DID YOU KNOW...

All job postings and applications are now On-line through **www.edjoin.org**. There are computers available for your use at each work site and in Human Resources. If you need assistance viewing a job posting or submitting an application, we can help over the phone, via email or in person.



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EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR NOMINATIONS

COMING SOON!

Next month it will be time to once again start the selection process for Classified Employee of the Year (EOY). Each site and department will select their classified employee of the year in February. Nomination forms will be submitted to a review committee comprised of representatives from a variety of employee groups. The committee will score the nominees based on the nomination criteria, and the employee with the highest overall score will be selected as the district-wide EOY. That nominee will then move forward to represent the District in the San Diego County Office of Education sponsored county-wide Employee-of-the-Year competition.

All SDUHSD Employee-of-the-Year nominees will be honored at a celebratory event with the Board of Trustees.



David Holmerud and his wife Cheryl at David's farewell reception

After nearly 20 years serving as a Personnel Commissioner, David Holmerud is stepping down as the joint appointee. Although his term expired December 1, 2015, Mr. Holmerud has agreed to continue in this role, as the rules permit, for up to 90 additional days or until a new commissioner is appointed. (The new commissioner will be featured in the next issue.)

Mr. Holmerud is a lifelong public servant having worked for the City of Solana Beach for 32 years including serving as the Deputy Fire Chief. He was also a school board member for Cardiff Elementary School for 10 years.

Although officially "retired", Mr. Holmerud spends considerable time working as both a consultant in areas related to fire service management and as an instructor with the National Fire Academy. Safety has always been a key issue for him. In fact, as we were celebrating his service on the commission, it was brought to our attention that at the very first meeting in which he served, Mr. Holmerud directed a member of the staff to get a different extension cord for the tape recorder because the three-pronged tape recorder was being plugged into a 2-pronged extension cord.

Another fun fact about David Holmerud is that while in high school, he was a frequent visitor to the "special chair" outside the Assistant Principal's office. That AP was former Superintendent William Berrier who later served as a colleague with David on the Commission.

Mr. Holmerud has contributed greatly to the principle of merit while on the commission by giving careful consideration to each agenda item and by serving in a leadership capacity for the state merit organization.

Thank you for all your years of dedicated service. You will be missed!



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between a transfer opportunity and an employment opportunity?

When a position becomes vacant, and there is not a reemployment list of laid off employees from which to hire, the vacancy is posted. The posting will always include a transfer notice. A request for transfer may be submitted by any staff member who has established permanency in the job classification (passed probation). This can include employees who are requesting a voluntary demotion to a lower class. Employees who qualify as transfer candidates proceed directly to a selection interview for the vacant position. For these individuals, there is no need to apply through Edjoin to go through the testing process to be placed on an eligibility list for hire because the testing process is to determine whether a candidate has the minimum qualifications necessary to perform the job. By virtue of having successfully passed probation, transfer candidates have demonstrated the required abilities and, therefore, move straight to consideration for selection. In addition to transfer candidates, positions may be filled with anyone in the top three ranks on an eligibility list. Often times, when a position becomes vacant, an eligibility list already exists from a prior posting as these lists are valid for six months. However, if a recruitment has not been conducted within the last six months, the vacancy will be posted on Edjoin and all employees will have an opportunity to submit an application to participate in the examination process. If you have any questions about qualifying for a position as either a transfer candidate or promotional candidate, please feel free to contact the Personnel Department.

2. How is it decided whether a recruitment will be posted as open, open/promotional, or open/promotional with dual certification?

The determination is based on several factors, all of which relate back to determining whether or not there is a sufficient pool of qualified internal applicants. Factors to consider include: how has it been posted previously and how many internal applications were received the last time it was posted, are there lower-level positions within the same job family, have district employees recently expressed interest in the job classification, how many positions will most likely be filled during the life of the eligibility list.

3. I saw a job posting but I am not interested in working at the site where the current vacancy exists, but I do want to work in that job classification. Should I apply?

Yes, when jobs are posted for recruitment it is to fill the immediate opening as well as any opening in the job classification for the next six months. There is a spot on the application form to indicate the locations/hours in which you are interested in being considered.

4. I've worked here for years and have a strong reputation as a good employee. Why didn't I receive a higher score on the qualifications appraisal interview?

When you compete for placement on an eligibility list, your score is based entirely on the performance you give on the examination. Your score on the multiple-choice and performance components are based on the raw number of correct points you receive. For the Qualifications Appraisal Interview (QAI) portion of the exam, your score is based strictly on the information you provide to the panel members in response to the questions asked. They do not have a copy of your application, letters of recommendation, certificates, etc.. All they know about you is what you tell them. If you are asked to describe your experience performing a specific task it is not enough to say, "I've been doing that task for 10 years." You must give sufficient detail such that the panel can assess whether or not you have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to do the task and whether or not you have demonstrated this proficiency.

5. I would like to advance in my career but there are some skills for higher-level positions that I do not yet possess. How do I obtain these higher-level skills?

The San Dieguito Union High School district has a Professional Growth Incentive Program. In order to encourage professional growth of classified employees, the District will provide up to \$4,000 each year for the Professional Growth Program. Any permanent employee in the classified unit who would like to complete courses/workshops during non-working hours related to his/her job or who desires to improve his/her skills for possible promotion to other classified positions is eligible to apply for the program.

6. What is the best way to prepare for a promotional examination?

Examinations are designed to assess the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience required to perform the tasks of a job. The best way to prepare for an exam is to review the job description as it lists all these factors. For example, if the description states that the ability to perform standard mathematical computations is required, you may expect a math section on the multiple-choice exam. If the description states that knowledge of English spelling, punctuation, and grammar is required, you may expect to compose correspondence on a performance exam. If the job requires experience explaining information to others, you may be asked to relay your experience in this area on the Qualifications Appraisal Interview. Review the job description and then study the knowledge requirements, practice the skills and abilities, and think about how your work experience relates to the experience required for the position.