



# Connections

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## Appreciating the Best of What is All Around Us

By Dr. Jorge O. Ayala

One of the things I enjoy most about our county fair is the opportunity to run into old friends and catch up with what has been happening in their lives. I appreciate seeing them. Inevitably, one of the questions I ask is "How's it going?"

Have you ever noticed how some people tell you about the good things that have happened to them, while others launch into a litany of woes? The difference is how people view the world and their place in it. Some people see promise and potential. Others see problems.

In fairness to those who see problems, most of us are trained to think that way. We all like to say we have a knack for solving problems. Indeed most of us tend to focus on the problems that beset us.

That line of thinking is attracting new scrutiny. It's occurring through the application of a new orientation to the work world called: Appreciative Inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry is an orientation to the work place that focuses on what works instead of what doesn't. Essentially, it's a way of re-orienting one's self away from problems and towards success.

Those of us who have worked on problem solving for any amount of time know that digging down to get to the bottom of a problem often only unearths more problems. How do we break out of that cycle? How do we change our world view?

Appreciative Inquiry points out that

the mere act of trying to untangle an intractable problem often leads us on a course that simply dredges up a course of failure. As people become focused on that course, it tends to infect others with negative feelings. Appreciative Inquiry chooses to examine what is working. It looks at success and not failures as providing the best course for an organization to follow.

Want to test it? Ask someone about the things that are going right for them and they sit up, their voice takes on enthusiasm, their entire demeanor changes.

When you apply Appreciative Inquiry to an organization subtle changes take place. People become more aware of how successful they are on a daily basis and over the long term.

Appreciative Inquiry asks us to remember that:

- In any number of ways our organization succeeds
- What we focus on becomes our reality
- The act of asking questions influences a group or an organization
- People have more confidence towards the future (unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known)
- It is important to value differences
- The language we use creates our reality.

Appreciative Inquiry also utilizes a '4-D' Cycle inclusive of:

Discovery: We look for what is

working in organization. This enables us to appreciate the best of what is happening around us.

Dreams: We reflect on our potential. As a result we are able to envision a better future.

Design: What part of the good things we are doing today can we build on for tomorrow?

Destiny: We consider how we can incorporate the approaches, tools, policies and processes that work into our future endeavors. This leads to an organization that is sustainable.

Appreciative Inquiry connects us to statements and perceptions that are rooted in real experience, history, and success. It directs us to look at those moments when we were at our best. It celebrates shared achievements. This

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## What is SELPA?

A mysterious entity resides in the YCOE complex. What can it be? We call it SELPA. SELPA stands for Special Education Local Plan Area. In 1977 the California Education Code mandated that school districts and county offices of education form regions of sufficient size to provide all the services needed by children with special needs. Each of these regions developed a plan describing how these services would be provided. Some districts have enough students that they make up a SELPA all by themselves. Other SELPAs, such as Yolo County, bring the districts in a particular geographic region together to combine resources. The SELPA personnel work with, and are a part of, all districts in the County.

The SELPA staff includes Assistant Superintendent, Mary Jo Johnson; Program Specialist, Barbara Horrocks; and Administrative Assistant, Vinceena Irgens. They are all relatively new to the office.

The purpose of the SELPA administration in a multi-district SELPA is that of a facilitator. SELPA is the coaching staff that brings the players together, so that there are positive outcomes for children. The team members consist of the Superintendents Council, Directors of Special Education for each of the districts and the county office of education, who make up the OAC (Operations Advisory Council), and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) made up of parents, teachers and community representatives. Each of these governing bodies provides input into policies, procedures and fiscal process for Special Education in Yolo County. The idea is that as a team, we can better serve students than each district by itself.

The SELPA office is responsible for conducting "child find" activities, writing the local plan for special education services, and coordinating staff development and parent training activities. This year, we will begin the process of totally rewriting the local plan. The process involves input from all stakeholders in the SELPA. Once written it must be approved by the California Department of Education, and then goes through all of the school boards in the SELPA for approval and adoption. Barbara is busy putting together a calendar of trainings. This schedule will be available in newsletters, the YCOE web site, and posted in various locations.

If anyone has questions about Special Education, or what is going on in the Yolo County SELPA, please stop by and see us. We're not so mysterious after all!

## Attention Shoppers!

YCOE now has more items with the YCOE logo available for purchase. These items include hats for \$9.50, Totes for \$9.50, T-shirts for \$7.00 and Sweatshirts for \$15.00. These items come in various sizes and colors.

Please see the displays in the Copy Center at Harter Avenue and the office at Greengate. Items can be purchased through the business office. For additional information, please contact Kimberly Dennis at 668-3728 or

## Thank You!

The CSBS department would like to give a salute to all secretaries for their assistance in the implementation of shorter timelines for timesheet submission.

You have each stepped up to the plate to assist us in ensuring that all employees were paid in a timely manner. THANK YOU!



## Congratulations Linda!

Linda Legnitto has been selected to fill the position of Director of Business, Management and Advisory Services. Linda has been with the County Office for five years, having most recently served as Business Services Assistant under the direction of Joel Toste who recently moved to Placer COE. Congratulations, Linda!

## Appreciating the Best

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orientation serves to remind us of how capable we have been and how capable we are. It invigorates an organization. It lays the groundwork for achievement.

Appreciative Inquiry holds a lot of potential for us as individuals, as a group, and as an organization. It reorients us to a different way of thinking about ourselves and our jobs.

Like those stories of grandchildren and graduations and new beginnings that we so enjoy hearing about at the fair, Appreciative Inquiry reminds us of the good things that surround us. Sometimes a simple change in perspective can give us a new view of the world around us. If you don't believe me, take a ride to the top of the ferris wheel sometime. Suddenly that same old city we see everyday is transformed into a landscape of light and beauty. It's all in how you look at it.

## Updates from the Yolo County Child Care Planning Council

The Yolo County Child Care Planning Council is funded through the California Department of Education, Child Development Division, and is operated through the Yolo County Office of Education. The Council is comprised of equal representation from parents who use child care, providers of child care, community representatives, public agency representatives, and Yolo County citizens. The Yolo County Superintendent of Schools and the Yolo County Board of Supervisors appoint the members to the Council and approve major Council decisions. The Council provides the following functions for Yolo County:

- ❖ Assesses the child care needs in the County and then develops a long-term plan to address those needs.
- ❖ Advises the Yolo County Board of Supervisors and the Yolo County Office of Education on the County's need for quality child care and development services.
- ❖ Recommends to the California Department of Education how and why child care related government funding available for Yolo County should be used.
- ❖ Facilitates communication and cooperation between various child care and development related agencies, businesses, and individuals in the County.
- ❖ Participates as volunteers representing the children in this County who are too young to represent themselves.

With the passage of AB212, the *Staff Retention Plan for State Subsidized Center Based Programs*, the Child Care Planning Council will be implementing the steps they developed to provide stipends for qualified child care employees who work directly with children in State subsidized center-based programs. The rationale behind the staff retention funding is that inadequate training, poor compensation, and high turnover of providers are major barriers to achieving high

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## Technology Institute

John Roina completed the second session of Technology training for K-12 teachers in Yolo County. Participants received 30 hours of instructional technology training and a year subscription to LearnCity.com, a standard-based web tool for developing lesson plans.

John will be offering sessions in the fall and spring as requested. If you are interested in this area of professional development, please contact John at roina@ycoe.org.

## Audit Update

YCOE has successfully completed the first part of our annual, independent audit. Congratulations to each of you. All Attendance, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable and Payroll activities for the 2000-01 year have been audited and there were no findings noted. This means that all activities were reviewed and there were no errors found.

This is a reflection of the hard work each of you do each and every day. Give yourself a pat on the back. HOORAY!!

## Staffing Updates

Kerry Gibson has become a full time employee in the Curriculum and Instructional Services Division.

She will be supporting the ROP Attendance Program, ROP Student Follow-up Study, ROP Career Preparation Specialist, School to Career Student Job Shadowing, and Academic Decathlon. We are fortunate to have Kerry on our team!

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We will be hiring a new manager in our division. The Career Preparation Specialist position will be posted this month.

This position will provide support to the Adult Education Schools, Community Colleges and ROP programs through servicing One-Stop clients as they are seeking career development opportunities.

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## Good Luck Dinah!

After 6 years of dedicated service to the Yolo County Office of Education, Dinah Middleton has decided to pursue other areas of interest within her life.

Dinah worked as the copy center technician throughout her tenure at YCOE.

We will all miss her cheerful disposition, her wonderful willingness to help and her bright smile.

We wish her the best of luck in the adventures of life!

## CSBS Department Information

The County Schools Business Services (CSBS) department is located at 1240 Harter Avenue and provides a vast array of business services to the students and employees of the Yolo County Office of Education. Below is a listing of the individuals within our department and a brief outline of their responsibilities. Please feel free to contact any one of us should you have a question.

### **Kimberly Dennis**

Director, County Schools Business Services  
(ext. 13728)

### **Cheryl Bates - Payroll**

(ext. 13778)  
Health & Welfare Benefits  
Section 125 Benefits  
Tax Shelter Annuities  
Retiree Benefits

### **Vacant**

(ext. 13741)  
Copy Center  
Postage  
Stores/Supplies  
Purchasing

### **Nancy Schuetts**

(ext. 13750)  
Budget Transfers, Journal Entries, Cash Transfers  
Budget Maintenance  
Categorical & Grant Reporting  
Maintenance & Operations Allocation  
Closing Entries  
Budget Development

### **Maria Souza**

(ext. 13726)  
Accounts Payable  
Purchase Orders  
Payment Vouchers  
Travel Claims  
State Attendance Accounting (ADA)



### **Michelle Tamala**

(ext. 13782)  
Cash Deposits  
Accounts Receivable  
All Invoicing  
Lunch Counts  
Budget Transfers, Journal Entries, Cash Transfers

### **Cindy Williamson**

(ext. 13721)  
General Ledger Audit  
Budget Monitoring  
Budget Development  
Closing Process  
Expenditure Reporting  
Fixed Assets  
Internal Control/Procedures

Thank you all for completing the survey about our department earlier in the summer. We look forward to implementing some of your suggestions and assisting you during this next fiscal year.

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## Child Care Planning

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quality care in Yolo County. This stipend program will serve as an initial step toward increasing the compensation of qualified child care providers in subsidized programs since current reimbursement rates for these programs are insufficient to recruit and retain qualified staff and ensure high quality services for children. This program, which provides stipends for qualified child care employees who work directly with children in State subsidized center-based programs, will also serve as a model for future stipend funding (public and

private) that may become available for all child care providers in Yolo County.

The Child Care Planning Council meets the second Tuesday of each month (except in July and December) from 2:30 – 4:30 P.M. in the Washington Room at the Yolo County Office of Education, 1240 Harter Avenue, Woodland, CA. All meetings are open to the public and public input is encouraged. Membership vacancies currently exist on the Council. Please contact Melinda Waring at 530-668-3773 if you are interested.