

NEWS

GEVIRTZ GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE DEAN, PHELPS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SANTA BARBARA CA 93106
www.education.ucsb.edu

CONTACT: TERESA ROUNDS

(805) 893-5227

trounds@education.ucsb.edu

April 15, 2002

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington Mutual supports Oxnard Schools reform program

UC Santa Barbara's **Gevirtz Graduate School of Education** has received a \$125,000 grant from **Washington Mutual** to continue the California Center for Effective Schools Project in the Oxnard Elementary School District.

In April 2000, the Gevirtz School and the Oxnard School District formed the Effective Schools Partnership to establish a comprehensive school reform program designed to improve student performance. The partnership is working to strengthen teaching and learning at all levels: district, school and classroom.

"This initiative is helping to fill a void by providing the type of support and resources that are needed in our schools to enhance learning and increase performance," said Antonio Manning, vice president and Corporate Giving manager at Washington Mutual. "Washington Mutual is pleased to offer support to such an effective program and to work with the Gevirtz School to improve the quality of education in our communities."

After only one year, the program has already shown significant increases on the 2001 SAT-9 Academic Performance Index. The average percentage gain in the seven participating schools was 10.4%, compared to 5.1% for the other eight Oxnard Elementary District schools. These are encouraging results in a school district with more than 8,200 English-learners and more than 70% of its students receiving subsidized lunches.

"The professional development provided by the Effective Schools/Oxnard District Partnership has been critical in improving our students' learning," according to Oxnard District Superintendent Richard Duarte.

--- MORE ---

OXNARD SCHOOLS REFORM 2-2-2

Effective Schools emphasizes developing leadership at the district level and at individual schools, as well as redesigning curriculum, instruction, and assessment to align with state content standards. Starting with seven, the number of Oxnard schools participating is now up to 10. Impressed with Oxnard's results, two schools in Washington state have also formed a partnership with the California Center for Effective Schools.

Gevirtz School researchers from the California Center for Effective Schools work with district leaders to implement and evaluate Effective Schools reforms. A key component of the Effective Schools process is helping teachers and administrators use "best practices" based on research. The focus is on improving the depth and quality of student learning by teaching to the standards.

"The professional development teachers are engaged in is really proving to be a worthwhile process. Teachers are sharing with each other and gaining ideas. It breaks down the isolations that are sometimes a part of a teacher's life," said Assistant Superintendent Dr. Connie Sharp.

"We are excited about Washington Mutual's support for the complex, systemic reform initiative with the Oxnard School District," said Dr. Janet Chrispeels, Executive Director of the California Center for Effective Schools at the Gevirtz School. "We hope this is just the beginning of a long partnership with Washington Mutual to support school change to ensure success for all children."

--- # # # ---