



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 17, 2014

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AUHS D Selects Manuel Colon as New Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services

ANAHEIM—The Board of Trustees, on July 17, approved a key administrative appointment, selecting Mr. Manuel Colon as assistant superintendent of educational services.

“Mr. Colon is an outstanding educator with proven leadership abilities,” said Board President Mr. Brian O’Neal. “His talents and expertise will be critical as we move toward full implementation of the Common Core State Standards, and continue to position ourselves as a national leader in 21st century education.”

Mr. Colon, who said he is humbled and honored by the appointment, takes over the post from Dr. Paul Sevillano, who became superintendent of the Baldwin Park Unified School District.

“I love this District,” Mr. Colon said. “Our students and teachers are second to none. We will continue the great work that has been done in ensuring our students are college and career ready and move toward being a national model in providing a 21st century education.”

Mr. Colon began his career in education in 1992 as a high school Spanish teacher in the Campbell Union High School District in northern California. He also taught English language development, served as coordinator of the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program, and was selected as the school’s and the

district's Teacher of the Year. Mr. Colon also taught Spanish and AVID classes at Katella High School; was assistant principal at Sierra Vista High School in Baldwin Park; and served as coordinator of the AVID program for LA County.

He began his administrative career in the AUHSD in 2005, serving for five years as principal of Sycamore Junior High School. In 2010, he was selected as principal of Savanna High School. Under his leadership, Savanna, with its multiple college-prep programs and career technical education pathways, was recognized by California Superintendent Tom Torlakson as a model for the state in preparing students for 21st century education. "We want to clone this across California," Mr. Torlakson said.

"To have the state superintendent validate Savanna's outstanding efforts under Manuel's leadership is truly amazing," said AUHSD Superintendent Michael B. Matsuda. "Manuel really is at the cutting edge of the drive to make sure students are being taught the skills they need to compete in the global economy."

Mr. Matsuda also pointed out that under Mr. Colon's leadership, Savanna was named a P-21 (Partnership for a 21st Century Education) National Exemplar School for its comprehensive, innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

"P-21 challenges us to make our classes more relevant, and I am confident in Manuel's ability to successfully tackle that challenge at the District level," Mr. Matsuda said. "Manuel is fearless when it comes to advocating for what's best for students."

Mr. Matsuda also praised another innovation undertaken at Savanna under Mr. Colon's leadership—the student "capstone" project. Seniors gather their work into a portfolio presentation and then demonstrate career and college readiness during a panel interview before teachers and counselors. Students are expected to demonstrate that they are good communicators and collaborators and that they are digital-age learners who are globally aware and academically and personally accountable.

Board Assistant Clerk Mrs. Anna L. Piercy, who served as a teacher in AUHSD for 38 years, said that she appreciates the fact that Mr. Colon relied on teacher input to determine how technology would help students succeed in the era of Common Core.

"His leadership in the area of classroom technology has fostered creative solutions to challenges," Mrs. Piercy said.

Meanwhile, Board member Mrs. Katherine H. Smith praised Mr. Colon for the way he conducts himself.

"He has consistently shown himself to be a person of high moral fiber and ethics," she said. "Regardless of the situation, Manuel can be counted on to take the 'high ground.' He has explained that he always tries to see other points of view and assumes that people want the best and want to do their best. This characteristic has helped to create a positive school climate for Savanna High School."

Board clerk Annemarie Randle-Trejo said Mr. Colon “is a true believer in community and parent power. He always has time for others. I would describe him as unconditionally approachable.”

Board member Al Jabbar said Mr. Colon exemplifies “the type of educator all of us would want for our children, especially if they are English learners. Manuel was an English learner who has not forgotten where he came from or how hard he struggled.”

Raised in a low-income family in Norwalk, Mr. Colon has stated that the reason he went into teaching was because of the systematic institutional bias he experienced as a K-12 student.

Mr. Colon has his bachelor’s degree in language and culture from UC Santa Cruz, his master’s in education from Stanford, and a master’s in public policy and administration from UCLA.