

# Lafayette School District 2018-19 Teacher of the Year receives special visit

Submitted by Jonathan Lance



Lamorinda Teachers of the Year, from left: Katherine Walton, AHS; Karlene Steelman, JM; Carol Levin, Glorietta; and Scott Westphal, Burton Valley.

Photo Jonathan Lance, CCOE

Recently, Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools Karen Sakata visited Scott Westphal's classroom at Burton Valley Elementary School in Lafayette. Westphal, a 34-year Lafayette School District teacher, was named

by the district as their Teacher of the Year earlier in March. During his impressive career, Westphal has taught all subjects and instructional technology to grades K-5. Currently, he's teaching general subjects to fourth-graders at Burton Valley.

LAFSD's Instructional Support Teacher Alissa Levenberg reports, "My job is to support kids with special needs, and I work closely every year with teachers from 25 different classrooms. When I know my kids are going to be placed in Scott's classroom, I celebrate! I have witnessed, year after year, that even my most challenging students emerge from his class as more confident, resilient, and positive than when they began. Scott connects with every kid in his room. He sees them for their strengths, not for their weaknesses. It is this trait that gives him the ability to meet them exactly where they are as learners, allowing them the space and respect they need to order to move forward."

Levenberg continues: "Being in Scott's classroom is always an enjoyable experience. His humorous, laid-back temperament creates an atmosphere where students can

learn without stress. He doesn't measure his students by standards and test scores. Instead, he takes the time to get to know them as people. He then fosters that relationship of trust in order to help them reach their full potential."

The 22 Contra Costa County TOYs, class of 2018-19, including Westphal, will be introduced and honored Sept. 27 at the annual

Teacher of the Year Gala, held at the Concord Hilton. Additional Lamorinda TOYs include Katherine Walton, Acalanes Union High School District, Acalanes High School, Karlene Steelman, Moraga School District, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School and Carol Levin, Orinda Union School District, Glorietta Elementary School (see story on page A6).

## Traffic dangers for students near schools

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Perhaps the school with the biggest traffic congestion issues and active transportation safety concerns, however, is Springhill Elementary. The congestion issue here is complex, Hinkamp explained, as the school sits on Pleasant Hill Road – the busiest roadway in Lafayette – and is impacted by congestion also on Reliez Valley Road. The faster speed limit of the road – 35 miles per hour – makes pedestrian safety a concern.

Hinkamp said that the school has implemented the use of crossing guards and done some capital improvements to enhance walkways on Quandt Road, along with adjusting signal timing on Pleasant Hill Road, which he said has improved it modestly.

Springhill School crossing

guard Charlene Fernandes, who has been crossing students at the Pleasant Hill Road/Quandt Road intersection for 15 years, notes that the traffic is much worse now than it has ever been. "People run red lights all the time. I've definitely had some close calls," she says.

Addressing the Reliez Valley Road congestion, Hinkamp said that the city continues to work with the county to test turn restriction signs and that they hope to have the parameters in place for a trial to begin in July which would continue into the next school year.

Both school board members and the council asked questions and made comments.

School Board Member David Gerson made the point that with the wide streets in the Burton Valley

neighborhood, creating bike lanes would seem like an easy and inexpensive solution. Vice Mayor Cam Burks echoed his concern with safety of the cyclists and asked about Safe Routes to School solutions.

Several spoke of the need for further exploration on funding and implementation of Safe Routes to School solutions and Council Member Mike Anderson suggested coordination between the school district and city in obtaining funding.

For Burks, he says that the council working actively with LAFSD is very important. "I wanted to see greater collaboration between our two bodies. I think tonight represented very positive movement in this regard."



**Are you interested in learning more about the Lafayette School District? Would you like the unique opportunity to see classroom instruction in action?**

Lafayette community members are invited to join Superintendent Rachel Zinn and Principal Ann Kim for a school visit on Monday, May 21st from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m. at Lafayette Elementary School, 950 Moraga Rd., Lafayette. We do ask that you RSVP for this event by Wednesday, May 16th if you are planning to attend. Please email Sharon Carman at: scarman@lafsd.org or call (925) 927-3502.



**Are you interested in becoming a School Board Member?**

The Lafayette School District has four Governing Board seats up for election in November 2018. Three seats are a four(4) year term and one seat is a two (2) year term.

To learn more about the role of a Governing Board Member, please attend an information workshop on Monday, June 4, 2018 at 5:30 p.m. in the Lafayette School District Board Room, 3477 School Street. Contact Sharon Carman at (925) 927-3502 or scarman@lafsd.org for additional information.

# THE ADDRESS IS LAMORINDA THE EXPERIENCE IS ALAIN PINEL



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LAFAYETTE \$2,599,000

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