

# HTA Newsletter

October 2012

Hesperia Teachers' Association

*Have a question?  
Need some help?  
Contact an HTA E-  
board member!*

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**"Good teaching is more a giving of  
right questions than a giving of right  
answers." --Josef Albers**

***Dates to Remember:***

***3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month is an opportunity for  
teachers in the high desert to gather and discuss  
topics at the Hesperia Marriot at 4:30pm.***



**Teacher Spotlight:**

**Castillo honored by Teachers R Heroes**



TOP HONOR: Mission Crest Elementary fifth-grade teacher Derek Castillo, center, was recently honored by the Teachers R Heroes program. He was presented with a trophy and a plaque by, from left: Victor Valley College Academic Dean Lorie Kildal; El Dorado Broadcasting radio personality Coleen Quinn; Principal Mission Crest Elementary Eric Land and Assistant Principal Mission Crest Elementary School Frances Lewis  
PHOTO COURTESY OF BILL GREULICH

*Daily Press*

*October 08, 2012 4:14 PM*

From Staff Reports

In the auditorium, filled with excited, talkative students, teachers could be seen on the perimeter doing their usual professional job of quietly maintaining control. The moment Derek Castillo, fifth grade teacher at Mission Crest Elementary School was announced as the “Teachers R Heroes” honoree, the place erupted into cheers and applause.

After all the festivities including the presentation of gifts and plaques, Castillo was asked to provide a message to the assembled. Once he began to speak, the room quieted and the atmosphere turned a bit somber as he related the story of one of his students who was recently diagnosed with cancer. Rather than dwelling on the negative, he reminded students that where there is faith there is hope.

This was the subject matter of the many nominations sent in on

Castillo's behalf.

The parents of Jayson Brown, a student of Castillo's, wrote, "Mr. Castillio has been one of son's biggest supporters over the past few months. Our son, one of Mr. Castillio's third-grade students, was recently diagnosed with stage 4 Nueroblastoma cancer. Mr. Castillio didn't waste any time on jumping in and helping. He and his wife honored our son by making a large billboard to carry in the Relay for Life Cancer Walk where he was featured in the Hesperia Star Newspaper.

Mr. Castillo worked with the class and helped them understand our son's illness so it wasn't such a scary thing. He had all the children work really hard on some amazing getwell-soon cards and he has continued to stop by the hospital while our son under goes chemotherapy treatment. He brings our son work to keep busy and has dropped off care packages to make sure he has what he needs. Our son lights up when he talks about Mr. Castillio and the way he teaches. Mr.Castillio loves being a teacher, and he and his wife take a personal interest in his students."

The "Teachers are Heroes" program is sponsored by Victor Valley College and Eldorado Broadcasting. School participation is coordinated through San Bernardino County Schools. Participating businesses and agencies include; Local Papa John's Pizza as a title sponsor, and Horace Mannre presentative Robert Stephanian, Victorville Mazda, High Desert Primary Care, Law Offices of Ripley and Associates and Jiffy Lube as participating sponsors. Contributing sponsors include Vitelli's Deli, Reed Foods, Red Robin Restaurant in Apple Valley, Ultra Star Theaters, Aspen Fitness, 1st Supervisor Brad Mizelfelt and the Daily Press.

Teacher nominations may be submitted in the form of 500 words-or-less essays to [www.KATCOUNTRY1007.com](http://www.KATCOUNTRY1007.com), [www.Y102FM.com](http://www.Y102FM.com), [www.TheFox106.com](http://www.TheFox106.com), [www.Talk960.com](http://www.Talk960.com), or [www.vvc.edu](http://www.vvc.edu). Nominations may also be sent by mail to Victor Valley College, Teachers are Heroes, 18422 Bear Valley Road, Victorville, CA 92395, attention Dr. Lori Kildal.

### **Article Highlight:**

## Common Core Standards Are a 'Heavy Lift' for Districts, Educators

## The new standards will change high school requirements, but turn out stronger graduates, advocates say.

By [KELSEY SHEEHY](#)

September 28, 2012 [RSS](#) [Feed](#) [Print](#)

New Common Core standards aim to help high school students develop a deeper understanding of math and English.

Implementing the Common Core State Standards will be challenging—but not impossible—according to experts speaking in New York this week at the Education Nation summit, part of an NBC News initiative.

The new standards, adopted by 45 states and the District of Columbia, require English and math lessons to go more in-depth to teach students critical thinking and analytical skills, in order to develop students who are more prepared to succeed in college and the workplace. During an informal survey at a discussion panel on Monday, 92 percent of those attending said they thought rolling out the new standards would be either difficult or very difficult.

"It's going to change what we teach, ... how we teach and what materials we use to teach, ... how we decide who's ready to graduate from high school and ... who gets into college, and how we prepare teachers," said Chester Finn, president of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a nonprofit, education policy think tank. "It's a very heavy lift, and it's well worth lifting."

School officials in the Los Angeles Unified School District are trying to smooth the transition by having their teachers take the lead in developing training and professional development courses, John Deasy, the district's superintendent, said at the panel.

Despite severe funding shortages, teachers and administrators at LAUSD have ramped up training over the past year and a half in preparation for a statewide rollout of the standards next year.

"Is it cost neutral? Of course not. But on the other hand, it must be done," Deasy said. "So we're finding ways to use the current resources we have and tap into the knowledge of the amazing teaching and leadership staff."

To tap into those resources, Deasy and other LAUSD leaders taught lessons for teachers over the summer, and teachers in the district worked together to prepare lesson plans and critique teaching strategies, he said.

Having a common set of standards and expectations means educators can collaborate across state lines as well, noted Monica Sims, a teaching fellow at America Achieves, a nonprofit group working to improve education quality.

"I could talk to a [teacher] across the nation and say ... 'This is what I'm grappling with; what are you doing?'" Sims said. "I believe that this is definitely something that everyone has to take a different approach to, but it's totally doable."

While the standards are achievable, they are not a quick fix and states will experience some hurdles in implementing them, cautioned Finn, with the Fordham Institute.

"It's going to go at different rates in different places ... and we need to be ready for that," he said. "But honestly, if a dozen states do a bang-up job over the next five, six years, it's going to begin to change the country."

***If you have a special event, teaching story,  
announcement, or anything exciting  
happening at your site that you would like to  
share, please send it to  
[hta.comschair@gmail.com](mailto:hta.comschair@gmail.com).***