

## **Banning Unified 411! - A pipeline to teaching**

By Human Resources Coordinator Sandi Khodadadi, Banning Unified School District

Yard duty monitors, secretaries, security officers, and classroom aides are becoming qualified teachers in the Banning Unified School District, easing a teacher shortage in the areas of special education, math, and science.

So far, four of the District's classified employees, or support staff, are now teaching under a program called *California Classified to Classroom— Pipeline to Teaching*. A state grant funds the program, which offers school district employees help with college tuition.

### **Success stories**

The district strives to help every employee fulfill their potential and achieve their highest dream through professional development. One of district's great success stories is para-educator Abilene Perez, a classroom intern who works with special education students at Hemmerling Elementary School. She joined Banning Unified as a yard duty monitor, became a para-educator, earned her bachelor's degree from California State University, San Bernardino, became a substitute

teacher, received a teaching grant, and now works as a classroom intern. Perez is working toward her master's degree and teaching credential in special education at Azusa Pacific University via the "pipeline" program.

"The program has opened doors and opportunities for me that I could never have imagined," Perez says. "I'm so grateful for all the support that I've received from the Banning Unified School District."

Three former classified employees have joined Perez and are now working as classroom interns for the district. They are Kayla Cruz, Banning High School, Anthony Ochoa, Coombs Alternative Education Campus, and Deborah Bukowski, Florida Street Discovery Center.

### **Pipeline to the classroom**

Statewide, nearly 1,000 classified school employees are now on their way to becoming teachers after taking courses through the California State University system.

Locally, the Riverside County Office of Education administers the program,

which allows classified employees to receive up to \$3,200-a-year for books, tuition, and fees while earning a bachelor's degree and/or a teaching credential. In return, they must teach one year in Banning Unified for each year of financial assistance (or repay the money). If no position is available in Banning Unified, the employees may teach in another district. To participate, eligible classified employees must have earned an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, or completed at least two years of study toward a bachelor's degree.

### **A helping hand**

Besides tuition assistance, program participants are assigned mentors by Banning Unified: Barbara Wolford, Ed. D., Director of Student Services and Estella Patel, Coordinator of Assessments & Information. In addition, participants receive staff development training from the Riverside County Office of Education on topics ranging from ethics in education to sharpening job interview skills.

A total of 14 school districts in Riverside County and nine universities in the region are participating in the *California Classified to Classroom — Pipeline to*

*Teaching*" program. Banning Unified has participated in the program for two years.

It's a county-wide effort among school districts with funding to train 100 classified employees to become teachers. Banning Unified is eligible for funding to train seven of its classified employees to become teachers in special education, math, and science. Participants have up to five years to earn their preliminary teaching credential. At the moment, there are no openings in Banning Unified for the *California Classified to Classroom — Pipeline to Teaching* program. But the district's classified employees can put their name on a waiting list.

### **Details on applying**

Applicants are required to complete an electronic application, <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Pipeline2Teaching-B>, provide official college and university transcripts, and submit two letters of recommendation about their potential to become a classroom teacher. Hard copies of the completed information must also be delivered to the District's Human Resources Department.

So, if you are a classified employee with our district and feel called to



classroom teaching, now's the time  
to launch a new career with the  
Banning Unified School District!