



# membership matters!

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## ACSA lauds top recruiters

Nearly 400 current members walked the talk last year to help bring membership totals to nearly 17,000. Katie Brady, principal at Lupine Hills Elementary School in West Contra Costa USD and one of ACSA's top member recruiters, said it's important for everyone to pitch in.

"Recruitment really is everyone's business," Brady said. "It is our responsibility to help sustain the organization that works to improve conditions for educators and our students."

Until she joined ACSA, Brady never thought of herself as a politically active person.

"Let's face it, my salary is paid by the state budget and it was time to pay closer attention to the state affairs in California," she said. "I was surprised to learn that professional development afforded to teachers and administrators came from Senate and Assembly bills, and I could now have a voice in helping push some of those bills through."

As the economy slumps, growing ACSA membership becomes all the more important.

"My approach is to help non-members understand the benefits of being a member," Brady said. "The more I remind people of things going on in our organization, the more I have people coming to me and wanting to be a part of it."

If you are interested in helping ACSA grow, please contact Member Services for a "Membership Buzz Kit" – a flash drive pre-loaded with all the membership applications, benefit brochures and other resources you need to kick-start your conversation. Call (800) 608-2272 or e-mail [mmagliocco@acsa.org](mailto:mmagliocco@acsa.org) to get your buzz kit today.

ACSA wishes to recognize the 400-plus members who brought the value of membership to someone new last year, including our top three recruiters:

- First prize – \$500 Southwest Airline gift card: Nona Cohen-Bowman, director of personnel services, Vallejo City USD.

- Second prize – \$250 retail or restaurant gift card: Diane Young, assistant principal, Mountain Empire USD.

- Third prize – Napa Valley Wine Train dinner: Kathleen "Katie" Brady.

To view a full list of recruiters, please go to [www.acsa.org](http://www.acsa.org).

## Q&A: Civility in the workplace crucial

After assisting more than 5,000 ACSA members in the last eight years, the six ACSA Professional Standards Advocates – Pat Souza, Bill Tschida, Sharon Dezutti, Rod Todd, Brad Lantz and Lloyd Wamhof, who work under the direction of Assistant Executive Director Joseph Jones – recently had a discussion with EdCal about the importance of civility in the workplace. The following article is a result of that discussion.

**Question:** *Why is the topic of civility in the workplace so important to the ACSA PSAs?*

**Wamhof:** This past school year, the professional standards advocates worked with 777 members who called for a variety of reasons, including demotion, termination, re-assignment, negative evaluations, complaint investigations, harassment issues, and some just wanting advice or guidance on contracts, career questions, etc. A portion of the work we do, at least, could be reduced just by colleagues treating each other with civility and respect.

It doesn't mean there won't be disagreements, re-assignments or terminations, but preserving the dignity of the employee in any of these actions is essential. It's how these actions are carried out that communicates to the entire staff how employees are valued in the organization. It's a reflection of leadership.

**Q:** *Can you give us an example of a lack of workplace civility?*

**Todd:** Yes, one example is an administrator shows up to work to find his or her key no longer works for the office and is escorted out of the building without an explanation. Just ask yourself, how humiliating that would be if you were the target? The action may be necessary on rare occasions. Many times, however, if a person has to be removed temporarily from his or her office, it can be done in a more civil manner.

**Q:** *Do you have other examples?*

**Dezutti:** Unfortunately, we have multiple examples of poor treatment,

such as letters of reprimand issued out of the blue without the supervisor addressing concerns face-to-face; or suddenly excluding an administrator from the team meetings without any prior warning or explanation. Another example is a principal is re-assigned

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to a different job in the middle of the year, pending an investigation of wrongdoing, and then told to report to a remote building in the district to an office without phone service or a desk and without meaningful work.

**Q:** *How would you distinguish between what is civil and uncivil?*

**Lantz:** The answer is simple: How would you want to be treated under similar circumstances? Just following the "Golden Rule" – "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." Ask yourself, do our actions reflect proper personnel practices? Do we treat people with dignity and respect or do we sometimes demonstrate vindictiveness? We're not just discussing the issues of personnel practices, however; it's about how people in the organization are treated in a variety of settings and circumstances.

**Q:** *You're not suggesting there won't be times when an employee will require a reprimand or more severe discipline?*

**Tschida:** Not at all. What we are saying is there are proper procedures, both legal and professional, to follow when it is necessary to reprimand or discipline an employee. We have an Education Code and subsequently, board policies and procedures to guide us for disciplinary action. It just isn't necessary to be hurtful or take unprofessional action against your colleagues. It's also not necessary to raise your voice while reprimanding or disciplining an employee.

Also we find that sometimes administrators act hastily in placing fel-

low administrators on paid or unpaid leave for a variety of reasons. Placing an employee on leave is certainly appropriate at times. However, this action should only be taken after careful consultation with the district's legal support.

**Q:** *Do you think the readers of this article will be shocked by some of the comments the advocates are making?*

**Souza:** I suspect some will. The sad part is some will also recognize how they have been treated in the workplace and have additional examples. Look, how we treat our colleagues is a reflection on the type of organization we work in. No one is exempt from unfair or unnecessary treatment. I recently worked with a superintendent whose board spent a portion of its meeting berating the district leader in public. Unfortunately, they also treated other administrators in the district with the same lack of respect.

**Q:** *What do you propose as a solution to the lack of civility in the workplace?*

**Wamhof:** First, let's be clear that the majority of our administrators understand the rules of discipline and treat their colleagues with the dignity they deserve. Ask yourself: Is this how I would want to be treated if the roles were reversed? If an investigation is necessary to dig deeper into a complaint, is the process fair and do we focus on the specific issue of the original complaint? Do we use due process as a guideline or do we find the individuals guilty and then force them to prove their innocence? How long is the discipline process? If discipline is necessary, is it fair or do we go far beyond the limits of reason. Finally, we should state we are extremely proud of the professionalism of our colleagues in the field. In our work, we sometimes deal with the exceptions and we wanted to share the importance of civility in the workplace.

*The ACSA professional standards advocates will present and have a booth at the 2008 ACSA Leadership Summit in San Diego.*

## New corporate affiliate on board with ACSA

ACSA is pleased to welcome GameDay at the School as a new corporate affiliate. GameDay is a provider of full-service, standards-based physical-education programs for elementary-age students.

More than 275,000 K-6 students throughout California now receive safe, effective and fun physical education in a game-based format through GameDay at the School's unique offerings. Each program includes a comprehensive curriculum, including grade-specific lesson plans, on-site training, equipment and assessment tools, providing a permanent solution to physical education needs.

Developed by experts, GameDay at the School combines the latest research in exercise science with a fun-filled, non-competitive approach to fitness at every level. The flexible programs can be adapted to just about any environment and are appropriate for players at every skill and fitness level. GameDay classes enhance participation, build team spirit, boost confidence and reinforce important character-building lessons, all in a fun-filled atmosphere.

Through its revolutionary on-site training program, more than 15,000 teachers have received hands-on instruction on delivering GameDay

classes successfully. This training empowers classroom teachers through unique teacher tools including pre-designed lesson plans, instructional DVDs, skill cues and online assessment tools. Ongoing professional development ensures success throughout the program.

With GameDay, schools will meet or exceed crucial state and national curriculum requirements while instilling a passion for activity and fitness into every student.

For more information, contact GameDay at the School at (805) 578-2529 or visit its Web site at [www.gamedaype.org](http://www.gamedaype.org).