

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **McKibben Elementary Propels Students to Success with Achievement Programs**

**SOUTH WHITTIER** – In an effort to meet the academic needs of all students – from the scholastically gifted to those at risk of falling behind – South Whittier’s McKibben Elementary School has spent the last few years developing and refining a pair of achievement programs that engage students with hands-on projects and individually targeted lesson plans to prepare them for tackling educational challenges on their road to high school, college and beyond.

McKibben has been a leader in exploring innovative ways to serve students of all academic levels, including through its High Achievers enrichment program for fourth- through sixth-grade students, and Target for Success, a staple intervention and support program for K-6 students.

“At McKibben, we are committed to providing students with programs that focus on achieving academic greatness, regardless of where they are on the educational scale,” Principal Sandra Gallegos said. “Our educators and staff work tirelessly to ensure that every student leaves McKibben with the skills and knowledge to succeed.”

High Achievers – modeled after the now-disbanded Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program – includes 40 upper grade students who demonstrate exceptional scholastic success and have a drive to acquire more knowledge. Target for Success assists 110 students who may be struggling in literacy and math with small group instruction and tutoring sessions tailored to their individual needs.

Students in High Achievers meet after school and engage in such activities as engineering projects, studying art at the Huntington Library, exploring marine biology on a floating lab at Long Beach Harbor and creating origami pieces to learn math concepts. The program recently held its inaugural science fair with a group of judges that included board members, the superintendent, an engineer and science teacher.

There is no grading scale for the program, which further nurtures organic learning and gives students gratification on achieving the task at hand, said Carolyn Howard, a fifth-grade teacher and program adviser.

“We want to challenge students who want to take their education further and are eager to learn,” she said.

Target for Success is a 15-week program that provides before- and after-school support for students and English learners who are at risk of not meeting grade-level benchmarks.

It includes an ABC boot camp for transitional kindergarten through first-grade students who need help with phonemic awareness, letter recognition and sound identification; a fluency boot camp to help second- and third-graders with reading skills and comprehension; and Imagine Learning to augment fourth- through sixth-grade language and literacy skills.

School administrators use data, including test scores from the California Assessment of Student Progress and Performance and the California English Language Development Test, to assess the program's effectiveness and determine what subject areas students require more instruction in.

"Both of these achievement programs address the needs of our students by ensuring each one has access to top quality education and are prepared for the next step in their education," Gallegos said. "Each of our instructors who are teaching these classes are dedicated to helping our students excel and grow, and we expect to see our students make improvements over time."

### **PHOTO CAPTIONS:**

**062117\_SWSD\_MCKIBBEN1:** McKibben Elementary School developed its High Achievers enrichment program for fourth- through sixth-graders who demonstrate exceptional scholastic success and have a drive to acquire more knowledge. The program, in its second year, is modeled after the now-disbanded Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program.

**062117\_SWSD\_MCKIBBEN2:** McKibben Elementary School began its Target for Success program to assist 110 K-6 students who may be struggling in literacy and math with small group instruction and tutoring sessions tailored to their individual needs.

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