

## English Department News

The **English Department** opened the 2009-2010 school year with a new focus; in addition to teaching our content-related curriculum, we also strive to help every child's test scores to improve. A dedicated group of veteran teachers return, including: *Mrs. Ellen Blair, Mrs. Mary Bolton, Ms. Roscelia Lavenant, Mrs. Jennifer Blount, serving as our ELD coordinator, Mrs. Roberta Austin, serving as our AVID coordinator and Department Chair, Mrs. Cindy Cowlin.*



We also welcome *Ms. Lynn Alexander and Ms. Tammy Jackson.* All are working together to integrate the state standards and district requirements into our curriculum. Implementing the textbooks, Holt's Literature and Language Arts and Handbook, and enhancing new strategies and programs help this energetic and amiable group meet the needs of multi-level students effectively in language arts.

Several of the department's teachers have fine tuned curriculum with the district curricular maps now in place in all the language arts classrooms at Los Alisos. Knowing what is expected of them in a constant and consistent way helps all students to focus and meet the challenges of the English class. Many teachers are



sharing an uplifting "**Quote of the Day**" to help students focus at the start of the class period on important ideas and to use critical thinking to analyze, interpret, and relate the quote to themselves. The department continues to strengthen the honors program with excellent instruction from *Ms. Alexander* (seventh grade) and *Mrs. Blair* (eighth grade) to insure an effective consistency in their accelerated instruction. In the regular level English classes this year, a more heterogeneous grouping has been implemented allowing students of different ability levels to be grouped in each class. Curriculum is modified according to student need, but all students will be given an opportunity to function at a pre college prep level.

Los Alisos Intermediate School has a strong writing curriculum and our scores continue to improve. Writing has been identified as a major learning need across the district, with evidence that students need to increase their frequency of writing and demonstrate growth in writing skills through portfolios and test scores. Recognizing these challenges, Los Alisos English teachers are working together to give the students the best of curriculum and instruction appropriate to their level with as many of the meaningful and enjoyable activities as our combined years of experience can offer.

