

## Special District Administrator Certification

My District was in transition, changing leadership and recognizing the need to develop new leaders during the next five years. My own leadership skills needed some attention, particularly if I was going to draft recommended changes and processes for developing existing staff. I chose to pursue the SDA because it seems to offer the most comprehensive approach.

It's been many years since I graduated from college. In the years since I have attended a great number of workshops, seminars, training meetings, network gatherings and conferences. Unfortunately, I had not catalogued the events and kept only memories and the knowledge gained. I was apprehensive that I just might not be eligible to even try to sit for the examination. Preparing the application was an eye opening experience while I identified the variety of my life experiences. I began to recognize the value of each in shaping my skills as a leader and mentor when I volunteer, participate in community activities and work to develop in others leadership and other related skill sets. I admit, I was relieved and excited to be accepted as eligible to pursue the test.

SDLF was terrific to help me assemble the necessary materials. I closely followed the study guide and researched every bullet point. Each resource was informative and I learned a great deal about how government works in its different forms. My special district is also a regulatory agency, so the research helped to expand my knowledge base about special district operations across the spectrum. That knowledge also helped me help our staff to understand why our agency must operate a bit differently than other governmental agencies. The comprehensiveness of the materials caused me to be serious about this undertaking, I went from a casual see-what-happens attitude to oh-my-gosh-can-I-really-do-this? I found the study was so relevant to my day to day experiences. In addition, the information supported my career experiences with foundational knowledge. I was very excited in April 2008, when Diana Zavala called to tell me I had successfully passed the examination and would receive my certification.

Preparing and completing the examination process motivated me to enroll in graduate school. I expect to earn my Masters in Public Administration from California State University, San Bernardino in early 2010. The continuing education has been energizing and fulfilling. While researching for a paper I came across this quote, "Education liberates the decision making process." This statement is my theme in planning the transition strategy at my agency.

The experience was exceptionally worthwhile personally and professionally. It reaffirmed my ability to learn and coherently express what I learned. I am better informed about special districts and their role in government. I am more aware of the various elements that comprise our unique government. Passing the exam was very rewarding.

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