



## Meeting the New Assistant Principals



BY LINDSEY YOLLIS

During the previous school year, Tom Ambrecht and Roberta Mailman were two of the assistant principals at John F. Kennedy High School. At the beginning of the current semester, two more assistant principals joined them. Each of the four assistant principals has taken on separate tasks and have different responsibilities but ultimately work towards a common goal. They wish to improve the school to the best of their abilities and provide an efficient educational environment that contributes to both the present and future success of every student. New to the school are assistant principals Robert Clarke and Brunel Merilus. Both Clarke and Merilus have previous experience at being an assistant principal from the previous schools they have worked at. Their prior experience provides them with plenty of expertise which can be beneficial. They openly expressed optimism regarding their new positions here at Kennedy and are confident in their ability to complete the tasks set before them and significantly improve the school.

### Brunel Merilus



Assistant Principal Brunel Merilus

Brunel Merilus has been an assistant principal for nine years. He manages field trips, leadership, activities (performances in the quad), the school's calendar, PA announcements, and getting guest speakers to come on campus during and after school, physical education, math department, bilingual program, and periodic assessments. Merilus also is concerned with preparing for the school's visit from the WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges). Merilus' most immediate goal is to help

students pass the CAHSEE (California High School Exit Exam). As of now, about 30 students who are currently seniors have not passed the CAHSEE. ARC is an afterschool program on Kennedy's campus has set up a program called CAHSEE Boot Camp. The program started on September 22. It prepares students to pass both portions of the CAHSEE. The last chance to take it will be October 7 and 8, so preparing students is an urgent task for him.

Merilus has a long-term goal of establishing a 100% graduation rate. "It takes the school, students, and families working together and creating a culture with an academic focus with

support," he explained, "Also providing kids a well-rounded high school experience including athletics, clubs, and community partnerships...I really love working with kids. I'm always involved with the schools I'm at...My door is always open, so people come in all the time." He hopes to have a positive effect on the school that will help students find success. A piece of advice that Merilus would like to pass on to students comes from Audrey Hepburn: "Nothing in the world is impossible because the word itself says 'I'm possible.'"

### Robert Clarke

Like Merilus, Robert Clarke has been an Assistant Principal for nine years. Clarke manages athletics, supervision, discipline, the teaching academy, and the social studies and art departments. Collaboration is a very important aspect of his job. He collaborates with other staff members through his email account, meetings that occur twice each month at school, as well as individually during teachers' conference periods. He can be seen across the campus throughout the day, speaking with students about varied topics. Communication with people on campus is required for him considering how many responsibilities he has.

He has developed some short-term goals for Kennedy. One of his goals has already been set in place. "We focused a lot on dress code and safety as well as promptness to class," Clarke stated. The implementation of a stricter dress code was not positively accepted by the majority of Kennedy students. As expected, many students were also upset by the changes regarding their attendance to class. Clarke continues to stand by his support of the new policies. "Our mission is not to be punitive to students...It's to help them be well-dressed and on time for success," says Clarke,



Assistant Principal Robert Clarke

"Dress code is a safety issue too." His long-term goal for students is to make students understand the link between success and the importance of their obligations to themselves, their communities, and their families. He finds importance in teaching people how to succeed not only at school, but also when they leave the school. To Clarke, a school can and should be a place that sets students on the path to a successful life.

### Detailing the New Dress Code

"Dressing for success"

by Kaleb Solomon

Editor-in-Chief

With the arrival of a new principal at Kennedy High School came new policies, including a revised dress code. In the early weeks of school, there was a premature dress code that was released to students which caused quite a bit of controversy. However, with the finalized dress code officially in place, some students still find themselves unhappy with the results.

"When it comes to any new policy that concerns students, there is a process," said Principal Richard Chavez. The dress code that the administrators wish to have is reviewed by school based management and

students, as they did in the ASB homeroom recently. The creation of the dress code is not made by just one person; it is made by representatives of the student body.

Dr. Chavez claimed "ninety percent of the students already dressed appropriately" and he just wants students to know that safety is a factor in the creation of the school dress code. One of the biggest issues that students tend to have toward the dress code is the prohibition of open-toed shoes; his and the district's strong belief in safety for the students requires him to ban those types of foot wear. He believes that during passing periods, or in extreme situation such as earthquakes, that open-toed shoes pose a great risk to students.

Furthermore, the dress code prohibits several logos and sports team apparel due to their

possible affiliation with gangs in the community. This was always part of the previous dress codes, but it was rarely enforced since students were often seen wearing professional sports team apparel and derogatory logos. Although there haven't been any gang related issues within Kennedy for nearly a decade, Chavez does not want to take any chances and will definitely get his administration to enforce this rule. However it is important to know that Chavez claimed that his background from various troubled schools does not influence his creation of the dress code at Kennedy.

Not all students have been satisfied by the dress code. Senior Delanie Solorio believes that the dress code is sexist and is targeted more towards the girls; however, students' opinions have been heard and have been taken into consideration. With all this in mind, Dr. Chavez is doing all he can to satisfy everyone as much as possible.

### John F. Kennedy Dress Code 2014-2015



Dress for Success



- **NO bare shoulders or back exposed – MUST have cover-up.**
- **NO visible midriffs, cleavage, underwear or see-through clothing.**
- **NO shorts, skirts or dresses shorter than the length of the fingertip when arms are at rest.**
- **Pants/jeans must be fitted and not have excessive holes. Leggings, yoga pants, tights, etc. cannot be worn in place of pants.**
- **NO tube tops, halter tops or spaghetti straps – straps must be at least 3 inches wide.**
- **All shoes must be closed-toe with a strap attached to the heel of the foot**

