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## Metro's Victoria Woods Goes Back to School as 'Principal for a Day'



**Welcome Back>** Sr. Community Relations officer returns as principal to Thomas A. Edison Middle School, the same school she graduated from 21 years ago. In the background, the school's full-time Principal, Colleen Kaiwi, looks on.

By SARAH WINFREY

(April 28, 2006) It's been 21 years since Metro's Victoria woods graduated from Thomas A. Edison Middle School. And, in that time, she has graduated from college and is about to receive a master's degree.

But, when she was offered the opportunity to be "Principal for a Day" at her old middle school, she jumped at the chance.

"I thought it would be really cool to see what it would be like behind a teacher's desk," says Woods as she describes her enthusiasm for the event.

"Principal for a Day" is sponsored annually by the National Association of Elementary School Principals. It is designed to help community leaders understand the "rewards and rigors" of school principals, according to the NAESP Web site.

When Woods attended



Principal Vicky Woods, at right, above, along

Edison Middle School, she was on the Principal's Honor Roll and played volleyball and basketball. One of her most memorable days at Edison was when she was chosen to wear the Eagle mascot suit for a day and students had to guess who was in it.

A senior community relations officer who primarily works with schools along the Metro Blue Line to promote rail safety, Woods chose to shadow Principal Colleen Kaiwi.

with full-time Principal Colleen Kaiwi, ruled the Edison Middle School campus for an entire school day.



Photos by Sarah Winfrey

Located in Los Angeles adjacent to the Blue Line, Edison's population of 2,500 is primarily Hispanic. More than 50 percent of the kids are learning English as a second language.

Edison is on the track system and, when Woods visited the school, only Tracks A and C were in session. She started her day early at 7:45 a.m., although the students and teachers usually start their day at 7:26 a.m.

As one of her first duties, Woods spoke to a leadership class about the importance of education and about using experiences in school to prepare for their future workplace. "Knowledge is the key. It will get you far," she said.



Back in the classroom, Woods speaks to a leadership class.

Then "Principal" Woods attended a meeting in which she and a group of teachers and parents discussed the Edison dress code.

Woods says she never knew that a school principal's day was so busy. There was barely enough time to take a short break.

After her time as "Principal for a Day" ended, Woods attended a luncheon for participants at the Wilshire Grand Hotel.

Victoria Woods joined Metro in 1990. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in communications from California State University Dominguez Hills and will graduate in May from the University of Redlands with a Master's Degree in organizational management.

She chose communications as her career, she says, because, "I have a passion for people."

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