

FREE

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation



Covering the Vista Unified School District

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NOVEMBER 2015–JANUARY 2016

SUPERINTENDENT



Devin Vodicka, Ed.D.

Vista Unified School District is committed to using data to inform our decisions. One of our eight strategies in the Blueprint for Educational Excellence and Innovation is focused on achievement monitoring and feedback, including the addition of staff positions and funding for professional development and assessment software. Goals approved by our School Board center our efforts on multiple measures, including achievement in the arts, service learning, graduation rates, and STEM areas. We strive to improve in each of these important facets of the educational process.

Recently we received the baseline results from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) which provided us with scores in English Language Arts and Mathematics. This is the first time that we have comparative data that gives us insights into achievement on Common Core State Standards. While the overall results show room for improvement, there are some highlights that we should also celebrate in the Vista community. Those include:

- Mission Vista was the highest performing high school in San Diego County in English Language Arts with 88% of students meeting or exceeding standards.
- Rancho Buena Vista ranked in the top one-third of high school high schools in San Diego County on English Language Arts, placing ahead of both Poway High School and Carlsbad High School.
- Vista High School ranked ahead of El Camino High School and Oceanside High School in English Language Arts.

This strong showing from our high school students reflects well on the diligent efforts of our students, families, and staff. We will continue to focus on finding opportunities to accelerate learning for every student as we strive to achieve our vision to become the model of educational excellence and innovation.

Blueprint Shows Success

By Matt Doyle, Ed.D., Executive Director of Innovation-VUSD

The Blueprint for Educational Excellence and Innovation is making a tremendous impact on rebuilding our House of Learning for all students. Taking a look back at the success of each strategy during the first year of implementation, the progress is impressive.

Vista Unified School District has more than doubled the number of family-engagement workshops and events across the district, which illustrates implementation of the first strategy. Digital infusion into every school is almost complete, meaning that all students will have access to personal digital devices during the school day, which is the second strategy. Student academic and social-emotional wellbeing are central priorities, and the addition of counselors, nurses, social workers and assistant principals across the district supports our third strategy. Language development and early literacy received a

surge of energy and expertise with the new partnership forged with Stanford University, which facilitates the strong commitment to curriculum in our fourth strategy.

Teachers are using a new system for their own professional growth, which focuses on the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and reflects our commitment to our fifth strategy. Vista Unified was invited to represent the United States in an international project on creativity and critical thinking, which allowed us to exhibit the results of our sixth strategy. Professional learning for teachers and staff is shifting to a more personal approach, giving each person the flexibility to determine his or her own growth path, which is our seventh strategy. Finally, the Vista Unified Personal Learning Pathway was developed by a group of students,

teachers, parents, and staff members, which is the eighth strategy.

Visit our Web page at www.vistausd.org/blueprint to discover more about our successful movement toward realizing our vision to become a model of excellence and innovation.



Funding Our Future

By Brad Peterson, President Vista Education Foundation

The Vista Education Foundation has already begun the year full speed ahead! In fact, you may have seen our booth at the Vista Festival of the Arts. We love seeing all the wonderful student artwork as well as the student performances.

We are very proud of our Vista students and want to continue to be part of supporting VUSD as they strive to be the model of educational excellence and innovation. As part of our commitment to students, we gave away a Chromebook to two lucky VUSD students during the Festival of the Arts. Thank you to everyone who stopped by our booth and filled out a form. In addition, VEF was honored during the noontime ceremonies this year for their commitment to the arts. Our board was humbled by the recognition. We feel very strongly about helping students.

The Vista Education Foundation has four areas we fund. They are arts, internships/apprenticeships, scholarships and technology. Last year, we gave \$15,000 toward college scholarships. We are all ready to give that much again. In addition, we gave over \$9,000 in classroom technology grants. Finally, we gave over \$19,000 to support various arts programs covering all four disciplines, including visual arts, music, drama and dance. Our grants ended up supporting programs at every secondary school from middle school to high school as well as reaching students on every elementary campus.

VEF is looking forward to helping more students this next year. If you are interested in requesting funding for your school, you can access the grant application through our website or by calling our office.



236 E. Broadway, Vista, CA 92084 • 760/630-8268
www.vistaedfoundation.org

Del Norte Council PTA

1234 Arcadia Ave., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/815-4872



Way Above Average

By Joe Green, President

Every month at the district office, we hold our monthly PTA meeting. We have historically had average representation from our units, average being 12 to 15 of our 24 units showing up. At last month's meeting, we had representation from 23 of our 24 units along with representation from Vista Visions Academy, which will be the newest PTA in our district. This is the first new PTA in our district in years!



A community united!

Our mission as a PTA of "Every Child, One Voice" is being fulfilled in this district thanks to hardworking, dedicated parents. With the evolution in education happening nationwide, it is more important than ever that we as parents and a community are at the table for our children. Thank you so much, VUSD families! You have answered the call and are making a difference! #wave



Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



Dr. Vodicka's message on the front page is very informative. The District's Blueprint seems to be working. The Del Norte Council PTA message underscores the importance of parent involvement.

This issue is full of information from balanced literacy, canines in the classroom, higher-level thinking and WATCH DOGS. Enjoy!

Students are focused and will soon be enjoying a winter break. Happy Thanksgiving, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year...our next issue is February 17, 2016. We are always mindful of our men and women in the armed services.

Career Technical Education

1234 Arcadia Ave., Vista, CA 92084 • www.ctevista.org

Supporting Existing Pathways



Susie Johnson
Coordinator CTE/ROP

CTE is thriving in Vista! Our district is an active partner in the California Career Pathways Trust Grant College and Career Readiness Consortium that was funded with over \$11 million in outside help.

This grant will help support our career pathway programming by developing a regional online learning portal that can broker work-based learning opportunities, professional development opportunities for teachers and counselors, and curriculum alignment and development. It will also facilitate our marketing to students and parents, overall data collection and evaluation, and meaningful industry engagement with the help of the United Way of San Diego County.

The district's CTE will use their portion of the funding to enhance existing programs in the advanced manufacturing and STEM areas. Along with encouraging professional development opportunities, we will also be able to purchase specialized equipment to support the existing pathways that are identified in the grant.

Capital expense purchases will include new 3D printers for each of our engineering programs, new software for the computer gaming program, a Toyota Prius cutaway engine, Electude e-learning curriculum to support NATEF student certification training, and an EVAP System Trainer Model for a new clean energy module in the automotive technology pathway.

This planned approach to career pathways builds upon the San Diego County region's long history of collaboration. It aligns with industry sectors already identified by the Workforce Investment Board as high-demand, high-growth, and high-wage sectors.

Major partnerships include community based organizations, Local Education Agencies (LEA's), regional economic development councils, industry advisory groups, and key business partners. The Consortium is also working to develop innovative practices, including but not limited to project-based learning, cohort scheduling, common teacher prep-time, professional learning communities, fully integrated core academics, and CTE curricula based around common themes; along with alternative school scheduling, student internships, and externships for teachers.

Check out our website at www.ctevista.org, and follow us on Twitter @SusieCTE.

School News

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Covering the
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Heartfelt Gratitude



Judy Ritter
Mayor

The holidays are fast approaching and as we break for the Thanksgiving holiday, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all who help make the Vista Unified School District a great place to teach, learn, and work.

Vista is a community with many gifts and talents, which we share daily with one another and most importantly, with our youth. From the classroom, board room, living room and all points in-between, the community's collective efforts to support VUSD students are filled with passion, commitment and a willingness to make decisions that have a positive and lasting influence in the future for all.

With the holidays upon us, and 2016 around the corner, we have an opportunity to be grateful for VUSD's leadership, teachers, staff, and parents in working towards the goal that all Vista students succeed. VUSD is making positive and lasting differences in the lives of its students.

Finally, I am grateful to our wonderful, talented, creative, inquisitive, and resourceful students at every age level. You make our community a better place.

Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season. I look forward to watching our VUSD students learn, achieve and grow in the New Year.

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Alamosa Park *Elementary*

5130 Alamosa Park Dr., Oceanside, CA 92057 • 760/940-0700 • www.vistausd.org



Dr. Kyle Ruggles
Principal

Character Education Teacher

Alamosa Park (AP) is fortunate to have the addition of a community liaison as funded from the VUSD Local Control Accountability Funding. It gives me pleasure to welcome Ms. Holguin as our new parent-community liaison.

Ms. Holguin has experience in working with student and parent outreach in the Escondido Education Compact, attended VUSD schools, is a recent CSUSM graduate, and possesses interpersonal skills that will support outreach efforts to our community. Ms. Holguin is bilingual and will provide outreach and support to all of our families, including connecting them to AP by providing family workshops in a variety of areas, communicating support and involvement of families, and being visible on campus.

Every week, all our students receive art instruction, and fourth- and fifth-grade students also receive character education in addition to art from a certificated teacher. Mrs. Moore, who has held this assignment over the past year, has recently been hired to teach fifth grade at Olive Elementary School. We have been most fortunate to have Mrs. Moore working with our students in this capacity, as she did an excellent job of connecting students to art and character education.

Mrs. McCloud is our new art and character education teacher. She has a multiple-subjects credential and experience in teaching art in previous job assignments, and she possesses interpersonal skills that will connect students to interesting art and character-education lessons.

Please join me in welcoming Ms. Holguin and Mrs. McCloud to the AP community!

Beaumont *Elementary*

550 Beaumont Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-4040 • www.vistausd.org



David Moore
Principal

Ready to Learn!

Team Beaumont hit the ground running. We are ready to impact the lives of our Beaumont Families!

Increasing our attendance is a top priority at Beaumont Elementary. Our staff and family members are working together to see that each student gets to school every day on time. Those classes and students with perfect attendance are offered monthly incentives, such as opportunities to earn a weekly class party or a scooter. Beaumont has actually seen an improvement in the numbers this year by working hard to educate our students and families on the importance of rewarding those who make school attendance a top priority.

We are also off to a great start this year with our focus on literacy. In early October we hosted our first Family Friday, with 127 parents in attendance. Our library circulation is at an all-time high too, with students coming in on their own to trade in books. Beaumont already has an AR millionaire, with a few more almost-to-the-million-words read mark!

Parent involvement at Beaumont is increasing as well. We have had a number of parents volunteer their time to help with all the decorating and games for our upcoming Family Harvest event. The parents obviously enjoy giving back to their school!

Our parent workshops and meetings have also had full houses. Our first Coffee with the Principal was well-attended too, with some engaging discussions and celebrating.

Coming soon to Beaumont are ESL Classes for parents. We currently have over 60 parents signed up and ready to learn the English language!



Alta Vista *High School*

1575 Bonair Dr., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/724-3775 • www.vistausd.org



Mike Sterner
Principal

Spirit Week

The Alta Vista High School Leadership class sponsored a Spirit Week October 26th-30th. The events included dress up days, A Red Ribbon Day, lunch activities, and we ended the week with the traditional school wide event, The Great Pumpkin Relay. The school was decorated in festive fall and Halloween art and posters made by the Leadership students. At the end of the week, the Alta Vista football team took on our cross town rivals, General Murray High School at the Vista Sports Park. Go Tigers!



Alta Vista Spirit Week.

Bobier *Elementary*

220 W. Bobier Dr., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/724-8501 • www.vistausd.org



Jenifer Golden
Principal

One Student at a Time

Bobier is excited to continue its journey to create exciting learning experiences that will expose students to engaging lessons in science, technology, engineering, art, and technology.

Every child at Bobier is valued, and so each staff member carefully crafts lessons that embed character education and 21st-century Common Core rigor to help prepare them for an ever-changing world. This year we have worked closely with the community to create new opportunities to empower our parents and the community, and model lifelong learning through parent workshops, activities, and other events led by staff, PTA, the School Site Council, and the ELAC.

We have recently created a more parent-friendly waiting area in the front of the school called the Parent Pavilion. We are also working hard to invite parents into our parenting classes and parent center. We will soon be conducting home visits to get to know our families a little better and involve them in the school community.

Our staff and teachers have also been working collectively to support local families in need. We are sending food home in backpacks for students to bring to these families, and the parents seem very appreciative of the support.

Our teachers are also working closely with district coaches to help close the achievement gap in reading and English proficiency. We are even refining our practices with guided reading and digital literacy enhancements to help meet children at their own levels, as well as allow them to set specific individualized learning goals to compete and succeed.

We are also working with behavior specialists (and our counselor and psychologist) to provide character education through the Bronco Buzz, our new YouTube channel, where our students are empowered to communicate with their peers. I am so excited to be venturing into the year with a wonderful and passionate staff that is changing the world one student at a time.

Breeze Hill *Elementary*

1111 Melrose Way, Vista, CA 92081 • 760/945-2373 • www.vistausd.org



Rachel Jauss
Principal

Academic and Behavioral Learning

How do we reach all students' academic and behavioral goals all of the time? Breeze Hill Elementary School is committed to a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model for all students. MTSS addresses our students' academic, behavioral, and social success.

As part of this commitment, we have started a Coyote Preparing Academically Wise Students (PAWS) block at each grade level. This block consists of differentiated teaching, which provides individualized instruction for all students. This program includes a 30–45 minute block of time for each grade level during our English language arts instructional time. Teachers utilize a matrix of research-based programs for student support. All students in all grade levels have the opportunity to participate in either a block of intensive intervention, grade-level support, or enrichment instruction.

We are also ensuring our students have the tools they need for behavioral success, as we continue our journey of implementing the Five Pillars: Welcome; Do No Harm; Choice Words; Never Too Late to Learn; and Best School in the Universe. We are using this approach in combination with Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to provide our students with a positive school climate and a safe environment. With this continued commitment to providing students with a positive, safe school climate, our students are able to focus on learning.

California Avenue

215 W. California Ave., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/630-4870 • www.vistausd.org



Rachel Schmidt
Principal

Canine Companions Serving Students

Visitors to California Avenue School are often surprised to see Hugh, Doone, and Callie, the Canine Companions International (CCI) therapy dogs who work at the school. California Avenue's canine companions have received intensive and specialized training, and the staff members who own them have completed a long approval process and training period as well. Canine companions who work at the school are retired after approximately 10 years of service, at which time they live out their golden years as pets.

California Avenue has a long history of utilizing canine companions with students. These therapy dogs spend time in the classrooms to encourage student communication, social skills, and pre-vocational skills. Hugh may calm and soothe a child who has experienced a seizure. Callie follows verbal directions to help students practice their language skills during speech therapy. Kindergarten students enthusiastically interact with Doone as they learn the steps of brushing, feeding, walking, and caring for an animal.



Our CCI dogs are wonderful contributors to California Avenue and are loved by the young students who work with them each day.

Casita Center *Elementary*

260 Cedar Rd., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/724-8442 • www.vistausd.org



Laura Smith
Principal

Representing VUSD at Columbia University

This past June, three teachers from Casita Center were selected to participate in the prestigious Teachers College Writing Institute at Columbia University in New York City.

Joining more than 1,200 applicants from across the globe, kindergarten teacher Lisa Boyle, third-grade teacher Natasha Seabrook, and fourth-grade teacher Luke Jackson Perez spent one week studying educational methodology and planning curricula in order to encourage our students to lead rich and literate lives.

Ms. Seabrook explained later that, "The main focus of the Lucy Calkins Writing Workshop is to teach the writer (not the writing) with an emphasis on the writing process."

During the Institute the teachers became students. Mrs. Boyle said she learned from both the Institute's peers and the workshop trainers. "Every day, we were privileged to listen to keynote speakers that were published authors themselves," she later remarked. "I was inspired throughout each section of the Institute! It was absolutely an incredible experience."

"This training has inspired me to continue writing some stories that I have not thought about or touched since high school," remarked Mr. Perez. "It has ignited a passion for storytelling, and made me pass that passion on to my students."

The Lucy Calkins Writers Workshop is all about giving children choice, and helping them to find their voice as a writer. Mr. Perez added, "I am no longer giving students topics to write about, but trying to open doors for them to express themselves. At Casita, this means that I have set a writing time where students are given the freedom to write about what interests them, for an audience of their choice. Students have writer's journals that they feel ownership over. It has put the fun back into teaching writing, and I'm excited to find out how it inspires my students."

Casita is proud of these teacher-leaders.

Empresa *Elementary*

4850 Avenida Empresa, Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/940-8454 • www.vistausd.org



Dr. Cheree McKean
Principal

The Child As a Whole

Tammy Lee has joined Empresa Elementary School as its new assistant principal. Tammy began her career as an elementary school teacher 20 years ago. During her time at this school, Tammy has worked in combo classes and moved our students forward based upon their mastery of skills, and regardless of grade level.

Her public school experience is also combined with middle school charter experience in the heart of Los Angeles, where Tammy was a founding teacher at a takeover school which happened to be the fourth lowest-performing middle school in California. As a founding teacher at this Green Dot Public School, Tammy helped transform the student culture into a "can do" mindset.

VMMS is where Tammy first landed in the VUSD, a place that solidified her skill at increasing the rigor and critical thinking of her students. This is where Tammy learned the importance of having students revise their performance tasks to proficiency, and take time for written reflection. She believes that all students can and will learn, and that once we help them understand this there are no limits to how much they can grow.

In combination with academics, Tammy brings a focus to the child as a whole, always concentrating on their social and emotional wellbeing. She has implemented a new "Pupil of Positive Praise" certificate program, where those students who have shown perseverance, growth, or overall stellar effort are recognized with a parent phone call and website picture.

Tammy looks forward to maintaining the positive culture that embodies Empresa, a school that continues to dig deeper into the instructional shifts of the Common Core State Standards, and effectively embraces the use of technology. The value placed on student learning is back in full swing now, as our shift is once again moving towards competency based progress.

Foothill Oak *Elementary*

1370 Oak Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/631-3458 • www.vistausd.org



Sandra Ceja
Principal

ROCK Solid!

Foothill Oak Roadrunners ROCK! We have launched our new character-education and recognition program, Roadrunners R.O.C.K.: R = Respectful and Respectable, O = Own Your Choices, C = Care for Others and K = Keep Our Focus!

At our first flag ceremony, students, parents and staff joined together to recognize the first round of ROCK recipients from each grade. Award winners receive recognition from the entire school community and certificates, and they also get to have a very special lunch with the principal!

The VUSD Blueprint has helped us to increase positive programs for social, emotional and behavioral learning and support as well as the human capital to do this important work via our new school counselor! With increased parent participation and focus on building a positive school culture, we will continue to open hearts and minds for academic achievement!



Roadrunners ROCK Recipients from our first grade classes!

Hannalei *Elementary*

120 Hannalei Dr., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/631-6248 • www.vistausd.org



Tracy Zachry
Principal

Citizens Helping Citizens

Hannalei Elementary School is the “Home of the Stingrays,” a place where character counts! Our school mission states that, “Hannalei Elementary fosters positive relationships, encourages acceptance of all, teaches responsibility, and promotes the love of learning.”

This year we have begun our campaign of developing a well-rounded child by focusing on both the VUSD’s “Blueprint for Educational Excellence” and their Innovation Strategy Number Three: Social and Emotional Systems of Support. We also follow the Character Counts program by using restorative practices to help our children solve problems socially as well learn to deal with their emotions.

We have a wonderfully welcoming campus with good citizens, an experienced staff, and a very supportive parent community. Most recently, we collaborated with Rancho Minerva Middle School to help promote what our students, staff, and parents love about Hannalei. The RMMS students taught the Hannalei students how to make a short video called *What I Love about Hannalei!*



Grapevine *Elementary*

630 Grapevine Rd., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/724-8329 • www.vistausd.org



Rafael Olavide
Principal

Ready to Run

Grapevine Grizzlies are now lacing up their running shoes with the advent of our new track and field. This project was completed over the summer to transform a previously barren sandlot into a luscious grass field bordered by a paved dirt track. At a Mighty Monday flag ceremony, teachers and staff ran an inaugural lap, followed by several classes. It has been a perfect addition to our expansive playground, and is seen bustling with runners and soccer players every day at recesses and during PE.



Lake *Elementary*

4950 Lake Blvd., Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/945-5300 • www.vistausd.org



Krista Berntsen
Principal

Balanced Literacy

Lake Elementary students and teachers are working hard this year to improve literacy! Kindergarten, first- and second-grade teachers were trained last year in Common Core expectations and the components of great literacy instruction. This year, they are putting that to work daily, reinforcing and cementing learning through balanced-literacy workstations. Students work alone or in groups on activities to explore and expand their literacy. Materials are changed to reflect children’s reading levels, strategies being taught and topics being studied. While students



are working independently, the teacher meets with small flexible groups for guided-reading or skills instruction during literacy work stations.

Students love having choice, and every student has more opportunities to get exactly the instruction they need.

Madison *Middle School*

4930 Lake Blvd., Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/940-0176 • www.vistausd.org



Susan Ford
Principal

Higher-Level Thinking

At Madison, we have been implementing the Common Core State Standards for the last several years. With the rigorous Common Core, our students are now being challenged to think and write analytically, as well as to justify and explain their reasoning.

English and math classes are aligned to the Common Core Standards. Other curricular areas are working towards supporting the CCSS literacy standards.



In addition to this move, our science classes are also being aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). Several of our teachers are being trained in NGSS through an early implementation grant. Part of the training is to first plan a collaborative lesson, and then teach it in ways that the students can engage in higher-level thinking together.

As we have increased our focus on science education, we have also developed two new science electives: STEM and marine biology. We now have 150 students enrolled in science electives that will gain them valuable experience in fields which have great potential for future careers.

Mission Meadows *Elementary*

5657 Spur Ave., Oceanside, CA 92057 • 760/630-7884 • www.vistausd.org



Dr. Bill Porter
Principal

Ability Awareness: A Parent's Perspective

By Carol Jimenez, Parent

My child is popular. Schoolmates wrangle for his attention. Why? Is he particularly handsome? I think so, but that's not it. An exceptional athlete maybe? Well, he tries. My son has autism.

I used to worry that he wouldn't make any friends. Today, I worry that he may become conceited. (Seriously, I actually had that thought.) So what's the story? How did this social situation, unusual for someone with autism, come to be?

In my opinion, it is the Mission Meadows Ability Awareness program. With a focused theme each year, such as this year's "Assume Competence," the entire student body continuously learns about disabilities and practices appropriate social interactions. Ability acceptance has become the norm—and, frankly, also cool.

I am grateful to the Vista Unified School District for its dedication to this successful program. The results are indisputably clear. Next year my son is off to middle school and a whole new batch of worries—girls!



Maryland *Elementary*

700 North Ave., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/631-6675 • www.vistausd.org



Carol LaBrecht
Principal

A Summer Adventure

For seven weeks this summer our parents and students were invited to participate in the Healthy Kids Summer Academy at Maryland School.

Our community partners the Vista Community Clinic and Cal State San Marcos taught parenting classes. Vista City librarians read and came with applications for library cards. North Coast Assistance League member Kim Stephens-Doll led an orchestra program.

Students even came daily to learn violin, cello, and keyboarding. They also enjoyed weekly games on the field taught by a group of high school students. We had arts, crafts, drama, Zumba classes, and school beautification. The Route 78 Rotary Club also donated school supplies and backpacks to the students.

The program's success is due in large part to the following volunteers: Sue Bentley, Diana Mendoza and Irma Amezcua, Liliana Munoz and Vince Vargas, and high school student Noelia Luna. We also had school personnel support from Susana Torrico, Virginia (Pepper) Vargas, Jeneva Popoca, and Librarian Jennifer Stone.



Mission Vista *High School*

1306 Melrose Dr., Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/758-6800 • www.vistausd.org



Nicole Miller
Principal

Future Testing in View

Mission Vista High School is actively preparing for its mid-year WASC Accreditation visit in March of 2016. We have been spending the last few months looking at data, setting goals, reviewing our WASC Action Plan, reviewing critical areas, and revising our Vision, Mission, and Values statements.

We are encouraged by our students' performance on the recent standardized tests. Mission Vista students passed the California High School Exit Exam at a rate of 97 percent in both English language arts and math, with proficiency rates of 77 percent for both.

In the Smarter Balanced Assessment, 88 percent of our juniors met or exceeded standards in English language arts, and 54 percent met or exceeded the standards in math. This places us at the top tier of the county for both exams.

We considered this and other data points as we set our goals for the 2015–2016 school year in the areas of student achievement, college and career readiness, and parent engagement. These directly relate to our WASC critical areas of Professional Learning Communities, the achievement gap, math achievement, and mentorship.

Lastly, we are excited to introduce the new Vision, Mission, and Values statements for Mission Vista High School. First, our Vision is to be a model of educational excellence through discovery, innovation, and growth. Our Mission purpose is to empower students to be self-directed, creative, and critical thinkers who can persevere and positively impact our interconnected world. We will also Value mutual respect, collaboration, integrity, originality, and intellectual curiosity to prepare our students to become integral members of society.

Monte Vista *Elementary*

1720 Monte Vista Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-0410 • www.vistausd.org



Charlene Smith
Principal

College and Career Fair

Monte Vista Elementary hosted a first-of-a-kind Elementary College and Career Fair in October. Students from all Vista Unified elementary schools were invited to participate in this event planned to promote the school's culture of preparing students for college.

Students and their families visited the booths of several local colleges and universities as well as VUSD middle and high schools. CSU San Marcos, Palomar College, Mira Costa College and Ashford University were just a few of the higher-education organizations on hand to share information about their programs. Also on hand were representatives from local businesses, civic organizations and service industries. Students were able to view local law-enforcement and military vehicles, learn about the educational requirements for veterinarians and doctors, and learn about how a chef and a public-relations firm serve the public. They also asked questions of local technology experts, government officials and businesses.

In addition to speaking with representatives from the college and career fields, students had their pictures taken in caps and gowns and received certificates of participation. Local organizations including the Vista Library, Vista Community Clinic and the Boys and Girls Club were also on hand to speak to parents about the services they offer.

It proved to be an exciting evening for all those who attended. We look forward to hosting additional College and Career Fairs in the future.

Olive *Elementary*

836 Olive Ave., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/724-7129 • www.vistausd.org



Stephanie Vasquez
Principal

Student Engagement

"Genius is the ability to put into effect what is on your mind."
F. Scott Fitzgerald

Genius Hour at Olive Elementary is a special time that is designated for students to put into effect what is on their minds within a personalized learning pathway. It is a time where our students can ignite their own interests in learning.

During Genius Hour, our fourth- and fifth-grade Falcons of all learning levels are empowered to explore their own passions. They discover how to transform their classrooms into a place where they are excited about their own learning and can take ownership over what and how they will learn. The teachers provide a set amount of time for the students to work on a passion project of choice. Through inquiry and research, the students can then enjoy the challenge of exploring a topic of interest.

Essential questions help generate ideas for their projects. Students spend several weeks researching a topic prior to creating a product that can be shared with the class, the school, and eventually the world. Deadlines are limited, and creativity is highly encouraged.

Genius Hour also provides an opportunity for intrinsic motivation. It helps Olive students learn important skills such as active participation in research, refining organizational skills, increasing reading of nonfiction articles and text, and developing higher-level questioning strategies. It also provides opportunities for writing, and allows for creating and showcasing authentic work.

Here at Olive Elementary, student engagement is key. Our students are actively encouraged to engage in the 4 C's of Collaboration, Communication, Critical Thinking, and Creativity. We share in the district's mission to inspire each child to persevere as a critical thinker who can also collaborate to solve real-world problems.

Murray *High School*

215 N. Melrose, Vista, CA 92084 • 760/631-2502 • www.vistausd.org



Chuck Hoover
Principal

Project AWARE

Project Attitude When Angry and Resolving Emotional issues (AWARE) is in its third year serving Murray High School students. The purpose is to help at-risk youth take charge of their lives and their reactions to challenges, which results in a more effective way of thinking and behaving. On a weekly basis, the founder, Reggie Washington, and his staff strive to create a healthy environment where students can safely express their feelings and learn effective ways of dealing with their life struggles.



Two Project AWARE graduates say it best. One student shared, "Project AWARE has been incredible. It has helped me not get in trouble as much, because I can deal with my anger in different ways. I now think twice about what I'm going to say and do before I do it."

Another student stated, "When I started this program, I was broken. Project AWARE has brought me up one step at a time...very blessed where I'm at today."

Rancho Buena Vista *High School*

1601 Longhorn Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/727-7284 • www.vistausd.org



Chuck Schindler
Principal

Updating Our Campus

RBV opened in 1987, and today, the facilities are showing the wear and tear of many thousands of Longhorns. Starting this last summer, the district has provided much-needed upgrades to the campus to support students and staff. These improvements include resurfacing of the track this last summer—it is now being used by all athletic teams and PE classes; resurfacing three of the tennis courts, which now provide a safe, clean playing surface for our PE classes and tennis teams; present reconstruction and rebuilding our student restrooms from the ground up—they should be completed by December of this year; and the new shade structure that the quad at RBV will be getting and which will protect our students from the sun and rain during nutrition and lunch.

RBV is also happy to welcome 31 new teachers, four new counselors and a new assistant principal over the last year. The new teachers cover all the departments on campus and allow for smaller classes to support student learning. To support the teachers and students, many class sets of Chromebooks have been purchased and are being used by many of the teachers and students to support learning in the 21st century.

These additions and repairs support RBV to be well on the way to producing students who are ready for college and career.

Happy Thanksgiving, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!
Our next issue is February 17, 2016

Rancho Minerva *Middle School*

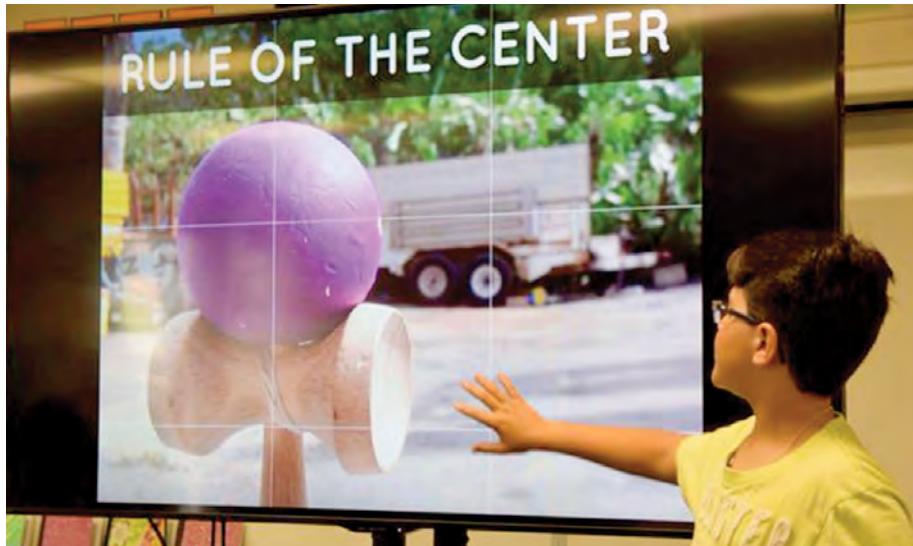
2245 Foothill Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/631-4500 • www.vistausd.org



Ben Gaines
Principal

Plowing the Pathway

At RMMS, we are plowing the path to provide students a personal learning experience for all learners. We know that our students have different interests, strengths, abilities and levels of understanding. We have created a one-of-a-kind experience for students to explore their interests, learn at their own pace through our Digital Discovery class. Students work through a playlist of suggested activities to learn on different topics. The first topic was Digital Photography. Students ended the unit displaying their comprehension in a variety of presentation formats and entering a photo into the RMMS Photo Gallery. This new class is a small step down the pathway to personal learning for RMMS. We continue to develop into a 21st century learning place for students.



Rancho Minerva Plowing the Pathway to Personalized Learning.

Temple Heights *Elementary*

1550 Temple Heights Dr., Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/631-6242 • www.vistausd.org



Kim Morton
Principal

Welcome, WATCH DOGS!

WATCH Dads Of Great Students (DOGS) began in 1998 in a single school in Arkansas and has grown into a nationally recognized program. It has brought thousands of fathers onto school campuses across the country, creating millions of hours of in-school volunteer time.

At Temple Heights Elementary School, we welcome fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and other father figures to join our team and volunteer at least one day during the school year.



Our "Top Dogs and proud fathers, Michael Zamora and Mario Aguirre are excited to lead our Watch D.O.G.S. Team.

There are many activities where they can be actively engaged with students. They may help in the classroom or on the playground. This is a great way for students to gain positive male role models, while fathers gain a greater awareness of the positive impact they can have on their students' lives in three critical areas: academic performance; self-esteem; and social behavior.

We are excited to include more volunteers at Temple Heights!

Roosevelt *Middle School*

850 Sagewood Dr., Oceanside, CA 92057 • 760/726-8003 • www.vistausd.org



Elise Ochenduszko
Principal

Expanding Technology

We are off to a great start at RMS! Thanks to the ASB, all of the students and staff members participated in our first ever "Roosevelt Revolution" to kick off the school year. We learned about citizenship, goal setting, and team building. The students also selected their PAWS Positive Attributes: creativity, courage, collaboration, determination, integrity, positivity, respect, responsibility, and spirit.

We are expanding our campus-wide technology, and now have a set of Chromebooks for every two classrooms. If you walk into the classrooms you will see students using cell phones and Chromebooks to conduct research as they also work in Google Classrooms to edit Google Documents and G-Chat with their peers!

Finally, we are happy to welcome some new members to our team this year: two new assistant principals, two counselors, a community liaison, and 11 new teachers. Follow us on Twitter @RooseveltMiddl2 to see the exciting things happening on our campus!



Vista Academy *of Visual & Performing Arts*

600 N. Santa Fe Ave., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/941-0880 • www.vistausd.org



Catina Hancock
Principal

Possibilities Abound

The 2015–2016 school year is off to a great start at Vista Academy, an International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme Candidate School, with a focus on the innovative integration of the visual and performing arts of art, music, drama and dance. Creativity and collaboration are in full swing as students dig deeper into our IB transdisciplinary inquiry units of study under the facilitation of our skilled staff.

Our fall musical, “A Year with Frog and Toad Kids,” is in production. The kindergarten through fifth-grade cast has been selected, sets are being created, and acting, singing and dancing are being rehearsed. Please join us for one of our performances in December.

Parent participation is on the rise from our monthly Coffee with Catina meetings to increased commitment in our parent organizations. Possibilities abound for students at Vista Academy!



Vista Academy of Visual and Performing Arts
A “wonder”ful place to learn and grow somewhere under the rainbow!

Vista *Adult Transition Center*

325 E. Bobier Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/758-3400 • www.vistausd.org



Chris Altona
Principal

To Ease the Transition

The transition to adulthood is difficult for most students and can take on an even more difficult dimension when educational disabilities are thrown into the mix. Students who have individual education plans (IEPs) require specialized instruction or other assistance because of diagnosed disabilities, and in some cases, this assistance includes extra time in school to help ready them for adult living, including college or career readiness. The expressed purpose of Vista Adult Transition Center (VATC) is to provide those extra services that young adults with disabilities need after high school completion.

Students are enrolled into VATC if they meet a number of criteria—each student is unique and considered individually. The three primary criteria are that the student is turning 18 by the end of the fall semester after high school; is receiving special-education services, that is, has an IEP; and has not received a high school diploma. In the majority, though not in all cases, students are able to continue in school into the semester of their 22nd birthday.

So, why would students want to continue? VATC is a college-like campus where they can receive support in growing into independent, successful adults. Through their IEPs, they can get help in getting around the community, getting employed, continuing their postsecondary education, and learning basics such as money management, domestic-living skills and appropriate social skills. They may also continue to receive services such as speech and language therapy, counseling and adaptive physical education if deemed appropriate by their IEP teams. Also, VATC is currently offering elective courses in diverse subjects such as self-advocacy, cooking and guitar.

We pride ourselves in being a unique campus, truly designed with the individual student’s needs in mind.

Vista *High School*

1 Panther Way, Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-5611 • www.vistausd.org



Anthony Barela
Principal

Wave of Excellence

It has been a great start to the school year, and there have been a number of great opportunities for our students. We had the second group of WAVE scholars honored during a special lunch and had over 100 students attend. Each of these scholars demonstrated academic excellence. You will be able to read their biographies and see their pictures, as they will be posted in our office for the month of November.

Continuing to showcase excellence, the 34th Annual Vista Invitational Field Tournament will be taking place on November 14. This prestigious field tournament will showcase the premier bands from around southern California.

Lastly, a quick update on Dick Haine’s Stadium - the new home bleachers have been erected, and the construction project is in full swing, with a completion set for December. Just like we did with the new bleachers, we are going to celebrate the rich traditions which defined who we were and look forward to building some new traditions based on who we want to become. We Are Vista every day, and we will be the model of educational excellence!

Vista Magnet *Middle School*

151 Escondido Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-5766 • www.vistausd.org



Anne Green
Principal

View of Peru

Living up to their mission as STEM and International Baccalaureate students, Vipers met children from the rural community of Luis Pata, Peru, during a recent webcast. VMMS students participated in the Students Rebuild Literacy Challenge, raising \$4,000 worth of books for their new friends, and chatted about their common interests and one another’s school and wider community. Vista students learned about Luis Pata’s Literacy Corners, while Peruvian students learned about life in Southern California. Vista Magnet students reflected upon their renewed

appreciation for their lives of privilege when they learned that their Peruvian friends work on farms every day after school.

VUSD leadership invited VMMS students to speak at the recent Digital Retreat to showcase how to utilize webcasting technology to deepen student learning and reach out to the international community. Stay tuned for the next international project for VMMS: Students Rebuild Challenge: Healing Classrooms.



Students Make New Friends in Peru – Digitally!

VIDA *Vista Innovation & Design Academy*

740 Olive Ave., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/724-7115 • www.vistausd.org



Thanks, Thinkabit!

VIDA was recently highlighted on the local news by FOX 5. The televised newscast aired in multiple spots on TV over a two-day period. VIDA has developed a very close relationship with Qualcomm and their Thinkabit Lab in San Diego. They have opened the doors of Thinkabit Lab to our school for an amazing series of field trips.

Dr. Eric Chagala
Principal

UT San Diego has referred to the Thinkabit Lab as “part art studio and engineering lab.” During the field trips, students work alongside Qualcomm engineers to build “RoboCrafts” that are mechanized by servomotors and programmed with Arduino microcontroller technology. Students also have the opportunity to learn about the world of work and what it takes to be employed by a highly innovative firm.

You may see the video footage of this exciting opportunity by visiting our website.



Vista Visions *Academy*

305 E. Bobier Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/724-4785 • www.vistausd.org



A Sense of Renewal

Vista Visions is excited about our new sense of direction. Our vision, “To provide an exemplary blended learning environment that inspires students socially, emotionally, and academically,” is inspiring us to a new level of excitement that clearly permeates our campus.

Dr. Erin English
Principal

The first difference that visitors might see at VVA is our new student hangout center. In an effort to create an environment that is both inviting and conducive to learning, we are reconfiguring



our learning spaces. We are also excited to have our first PTA at VVA. Our wonderful parents have partnered with staff members to help reach our vision together!

We also want to congratulate our new student board member, Katrina. Katrina is a twelfth-grader whose goal is to become a pharmacist, and she is already a great artist! Katrina was chosen to be the student board member because she is a definite leader on campus and a good role model to her peers.

Vista Adult School

510 Sunset Dr., Vista, CA 92081 • 760/758-7122 • www.vistaadultschool.org



Never Stop Learning

Did you know that the Vista Adult School has a Student Transition Center (STC)? The center is located in Room 507 at the Sunset campus and is open for students to meet with coordinators and access computers and resource materials. It is also a place where students can receive information and help with transition services, such as college admissions, jobs, and resumes.

Liz O'Shea-West
Principal

In addition to these wonderful services, our STC hosts speakers throughout the year, who give presentations on relevant topics to our students and the community. Most recently, Sylvia Alcantar from the Vista Community Clinic spoke about the US Department of Agriculture's My Plate five food group recommendations. Erin Mulrooney from a staffing agency gave an informative discussion on professions in the finance and accounting fields. Aaron Lietz with the North County Educational Opportunity Center through Palomar College shared information about classes, financial aid, and admissions. The San Diego Blood Bank held our second successful blood drive on campus in October, and Goodwill offered information about their services and job opportunities. The district's own human resources specialist, Bill Meni, presented valuable information about employment opportunities and the application, screening, and testing processes.

All of our presentations are open to the public, and new events are scheduled monthly, so please call (760) 758-7122 if you are interested in making a presentation or would like to see what we have coming up. Also, look for our new brochure, available online November 14, at www.vistaadultschool.org. We will have some great classes in our winter session, which begins November 30, including our revamped culinary program, medical and business courses, delicious Saturday cooking classes, Saturday Soul Line Dancing, and multiple yoga classes. We hope to see you here, where we “Never Stop Learning!”

Board of Education



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R. Elizabeth Jaka
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Contest!

Our office tortoise, Cheeseball, is somewhere in this issue. When you find him, email the page number to:

Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com
Please put VUSD in the subject line.

Congratulations
September Winner Steven Miller

Your entry must be received by December 15, 2015. From the correct entries, we will draw a winner to receive a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes and Noble.



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