

**FREE**

# School News

*Education + Communication = A Better Nation*

**Covering the Capistrano Unified School District**



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September / October 2017

## Learning is Exceptional in CUSD!



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**Kay Coop**  
Founder/Publisher



*Netragrednik*

Welcome to another school year. This is always an exciting time for students meeting old friends, making new friends, meeting their teachers, finding their way around the school and settling into a routine. We are looking forward to publishing the excellence from CUSD September, November, February, April and June.

For this first issue we asked the principals to write about themselves. It is always fun to learn where they went to school, about their families, pets and hobbies. The common thread for all of them is their dedication to education and the success of our children — our future leaders.



**Happy Halloween and Thanksgiving!**

Our next issue is November 29. In the meantime, Happy Halloween and Happy Thanksgiving!

## SUPERINTENDENT



**Kirsten M. Vital**

Kirsten M. Vital joined Capistrano Unified School District on June 25, 2014, becoming the leader of Orange County's second-largest school district with nearly 4,000 employees and 50,000 students. Prior to arriving at CUSD Vital had served as Superintendent in the Alameda Unified School District beginning in 2009.

Superintendent Vital brings a wealth of professional experience to her leadership position in CUSD after serving as an administrator in some of California's largest districts, including Los Angeles Unified School District and Oakland Unified School District. A seasoned educator, Ms. Vital has served as a teacher, an assistant principal, principal, director, associate superintendent, a college professor and a consultant on school reform.

The Superintendent earned her B.A. degree from Northeastern University and her M.A. in Education at Whittier College. She is currently pursuing her doctorate at Saint Mary's College of California.

Her free time is devoted to her 3-year-old daughter Ivy.

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Tesoro High School



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Reardon**  
*Member*

**San Juan Capistrano Resident  
Represents Trustee Area 2**, which covers portions of San Juan Capistrano and Mission Viejo, and the Ladera Ranch and Las Flores areas. First elected to the board in 2012. Re-elected in 2016 for a term ending in 2020. Schools represented are:

Harold Ambuehl Elementary School  
Chaparral Elementary School  
Ladera Ranch Elementary School  
Las Flores Elementary School  
Oso Grande Elementary School  
Wagon Wheel Elementary School  
Ladera Ranch Middle School  
Las Flores Middle School  
San Juan Hills High School



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Represents Trustee Area 1**, which covers portions of San Juan Capistrano, San Clemente and Dana Point including Capistrano Beach. First elected to the board in 2012. Re-elected in 2016 for a term ending in 2020. Schools represented are:

R.H. Dana Elementary School  
R.H. Dana Exceptional Needs Facility (ENF)  
Palisades Elementary School  
Las Palmas Elementary School  
Shorecliffs Middle School

## Aliso Niguel *High School*

28000 Wolverine Way, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 • 949/831-5590 • anhs-capousd-ca.schoolloop.com



**Deni Christensen**  
*Principal*

### Meet Mrs. Christensen!

Deni Christensen begins her third year as principal of Aliso Niguel High after serving as a CUSD administrator for over 13 years. She's the former principal of Capistrano Valley High School and the district's former executive director of secondary education.

"I was very excited to finally return in 2015 to the job I love most—high school principal," Mrs. Christensen said. "I have the incredible opportunity to work with an outstanding staff, a supportive community and of course, wonderful students."

Mrs. Christensen began her education career as an English teacher, a basketball coach and a journalism advisor at Aliso Niguel when it opened in 1993. In 2000, she was honored as the CUSD's High School Teacher of the

Year. She earned a master's degree at Chapman University and then entered administration as an assistant principal at Dana Hills High. Since then, she has worked at four of the district's six high schools.

Mrs. Christensen has lifelong ties to Orange County—high school in Anaheim and at Cal State Fullerton on a basketball scholarship while earning a BA in business administration and economics and minoring in English. She spent over 10 years working in in both the consumer-products and aerospace industries and running a family business. She was inspired by citizen-astronaut Christa McAuliffe, the high school teacher aboard the doomed Challenger space shuttle, to earn a teaching credential.

Mrs. Christensen lives in Laguna Niguel with her husband, Mark. Her daughter Kayt is a 2015 Aliso Niguel graduate and is now a junior at San Francisco State University.

## Aliso Viejo *Middle School*

111 Park Avenue, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 • 949/831-2622 • avms-capousd-ca.schoolloop.com



**Cynthia Steinert**  
*Principal*

Cynthia Steinert is proud to have served as an educator for 20 years. After teaching high school English in Corona, California for a year, she transitioned to Capistrano Unified where she continued teaching English and coaching soccer. She served as an athletic director and assistant principal at the high school level. During her time as assistant principal, Mrs. Steinert had the opportunity to work with students and staff in activities

and athletics, discipline and school safety, guidance, assessment and data, and curriculum and instruction. Her educational background includes receiving a B.S. from Brigham Young University, a Master's Degree from National University and an additional Masters and Administrative

Credential from Chapman University. She has a love for learning and enjoys seeing her students grow from year to year.

Mrs. Steinert is thrilled to again lead the Falcon students and staff as their principal. Aliso Viejo Middle School has been recognized for excellent programs, an exceptional staff, and great academic achievement for over 20 years. Mrs. Steinert recognizes the proud history of the school and is excited for AVMS's future achievements. Mrs. Steinert believes all students can achieve in an environment that is safe, supportive, and student-centered, and she is looking forward to continuing her work with the Falcon community to help Aliso Viejo Middle School continue to be a place where students and staff thrive and love to be.

## Harold Ambuehl *Elementary*

28001 San Juan Creek Rd., San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/661-0400 • abes.capousd-ca.schoolloop.com



**Anthony Bogle**  
*Principal*

Tony Bogle is proud to be entering his fourth year as the principal of Ambuehl Elementary School in San Juan Capistrano. Tony has spent 28 years working with the children of Capistrano Unified. He began his career as an elementary teacher in San Clemente in 1989 and moved into the ranks of administration 7 years later. His vast experience working with both elementary and middle school children gives him a

unique insight to the educational needs of all students.

One of the many exciting aspects of becoming a principal in Capistrano Unified is that Tony has seen the district grow. As a student, he attended R.H. Dana

Elementary School before moving on to Marco Foster Middle School; junior high at that time. Tony also attended Dana Hills High School and opened Capistrano Valley, where he graduated too many years ago!

Tony's ties to the community and school district do not stop with just him, though. He lives in north San Clemente with his family. Tony's wife is also an educator and elementary principal for CUSD and his children attended San Clemente High School before heading off to college.

"Ambuehl is very special to me. The staff is dedicated and caring and the community support is wonderful," claims Bogle. "However, it is the students that really sets Ambuehl Elementary apart. It is exciting to watch them learn and grow each day."

## Arroyo Vista *K-8*

23371 Arroyo Vista, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/234-5951 • avk8.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Joe McGann**  
*Principal*

Joe McGann enters his fourth year as the principal of Arroyo Vista K-8. A graduate of CSU, Fullerton, Mr. McGann brings a wealth of knowledge, high expectations and a commitment to ensure that all students learn at the highest level. He enters his 28th year as an educator in the Capistrano USD, the last eight as principal. Mr. McGann's teaching experience includes

both elementary and middle school and he was honored as an "Apple Distinguished Educator" in 1998 because of his program's innovative use of technology. Mr. McGann looks forward to leading the Arroyo Vista K-8 staff as they focus on engaging students in meaningful, challenging, and innovative educational experiences to increase post-secondary options. He truly wants to help students Make Today Count!

## Don Juan Avila *Elementary*

26278 Wood Canyon, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 • 949/349-9452 • djaes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Krystal Allan**  
*Principal*

Dr. Krystal Allan is the principal of Don Juan Avila Elementary School (DJAES) and has served as an administrator in the Capistrano Unified School District for the past five years. She has worked in various school districts in Southern California for the past twelve years and is a lifelong learner. Prior to becoming a principal, Dr. Allan served as an assistant principal, built an Autism Focus Program, was curriculum

specialist for Special Youth Services, and taught both special and general education classes varying from first grade through high school, college, and even mommy and me classes! Dr. Allan's vision as a leader is to serve in a learning community that promotes academic excellence for all students to succeed as members of a global society.

As principal, Dr. Allan loves to collaborate with students, families, teachers, community members, PTA, and colleagues at DJAES. She has had the opportunity to promote capacity building and facilitate staff development courses at both district and site levels, and takes pride in developing technological tools for students and staff. Dr. Allan is proud to share that for the past two years, DJAES has been developing Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to better meet the needs of all learners, and recently won a Silver Medal from the California PBIS Coalition's System of Recognition! Dr. Allan is proud to be part of the DJAES Eagles staff and continues to focus on enhancing an educational environment where ALL students succeed!

## Don Juan Avila *Middle School*

26278 Wood Canyon, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 • 949/362-0348 • djams.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Manoj Mahindrakar**  
*Principal*

Manoj Mahindrakar is honored and excited to be the Principal of Don Juan Avila Middle School. He is committed to working with all members of the school community to carry on the tradition of academic achievement and excellence at DJAMS. Mr. Mahindrakar works hard to build strong relationships with parents, students, staff, and community partners. He understands the importance of offering every student an education that is both nurturing and challenging, and works

diligently with the outstanding DJAMS staff to continue this effort. Furthermore, as the parent of two children and husband of a middle school teacher, Mr. Mahindrakar recognizes the great responsibility educators are entrusted with in educating children and strives daily to ensure that

each student experiences success.

Mr. Mahindrakar comes to Don Juan Avila Middle School as an experienced educator, previously serving as a teacher, coach, activities director, and assistant principal in the Capistrano Unified School District. Additionally, Mr. Mahindrakar serves as an adjunct professor at Concordia University in the Masters of Education Program where he has the privilege of teaching dynamic educational leaders. Mr. Mahindrakar's academic background includes a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from University of California Irvine, Summa Cum Laude, and a Master of Education and Teaching from the University of California Irvine as well. He is currently furthering his education as a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern California. Mr. Mahindrakar is a strong believer in continual growth and lifelong learning.

## Bernice Ayer *Middle School*

1271 Calle Sarmentoso, San Clemente, CA 92673 • 949/366-9607 • bams.schoolloop.com



**Nicholas Stever**  
*Principal*

Mr. Stever is embarking on his 16th year serving children as a professional educator. Mr. Stever started his career working as a 6th grade teacher and later had the opportunity to teach, coach, and work with student leadership at the high school level. After several years of teaching at the high school level, Mr. Stever transitioned into administration at the middle school level. In the Central Valley of California, Mr. Stever had the distinct pleasure of opening a new middle school as well as lead two different Title I middle schools. It is in those Title I middle schools that Mr. Stever began the important work of collaboratively facilitating the creation of systematic intervention systems as well as effective English Language Development models.

Mr. Stever's educational background includes receiving a B.A. and Master's Degree from Azusa Pacific University.

Mr. Stever has an incredibly active family and can be found coaching youth sports in the community of San Clemente as well as spending quality family time at the beach.

Mr. Stever is thrilled to lead the students and staff at Bernice Ayer Middle School. BAMS is a school that has been recognized for excellent programs, an exceptional staff, and great academic achievement for many years. Mr. Stever recognizes the proud history of the school and is excited for what awaits our students as we work together to prepare them for success after high school. Mr. Stever strongly believes that all students can learn at high levels and that it is our responsibility as educators to ensure this happens. BAMS is blessed with educators that agree with this philosophy so much that it has become our school's Mission Statement. Mr. Stever is looking forward to the consistent partnership with families and staff to ensure that BAMS continues to be a place where students feel safe, supported, and successful.

## Bathgate *Elementary*

27642 Napoli Way, Mission Viejo, CA 92692 • 949/348-0451 • bges.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Shelly Kurtz**  
*Principal*

Shelly Kurtz has enjoyed over 20 years as an educator in the Capistrano Unified School District. For the past eight years she has served as Principal of Bathgate Elementary School. Prior to becoming a principal, Mrs. Kurtz taught 3rd, 4th and 5th grades at Hidden Hills and Laguna Niguel Elementary Schools. As a teacher-leader, she served in various coordinator roles, initiated programs for students, and led professional

development trainings. During her tenure as a classroom teacher, Mrs. Kurtz was honored to be named CUSD's 1999-2000 Elementary School Teacher of the Year, and a finalist, for Orange County Elementary Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Kurtz worked as an Assistant Principal at Bergeson, Barcelona, Ladera Ranch, Viejo, and Palisades Elementary Schools.

Mrs. Kurtz graduated from San Diego State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Sociology. She earned her teaching credential from the California State University at San Marcos, and a Master's degree in Educational Administration from the California State University at Fullerton. Mrs. Kurtz has always had a passion for working with children. Prior to becoming an educator, she worked for the YMCA and volunteered extensively in Girl Scouts.

Mrs. Kurtz views a positive, collaborative school environment as the key to successful teachers and students. She feels fortunate to work with Bathgate's exceptional staff, who are all committed to making a positive difference in the lives of our students. Mrs. Kurtz is excited for the new school year where Bathgate students will continue to explore, create, and learn.

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## Truman Benedict *Elementary*

1251 Calle Sarmentoso, San Clemente, CA 92673 • 949/498-6617 • tbes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Heidi Harvey**  
*Principal*

A native Californian, I grew up in Santa Barbara, went to college in San Diego and ended up in San Clemente in 1991, as it reminded me of home. I am thrilled to be a principal at Truman Benedict Elementary School! I have come full circle here in Capistrano. In 1993, I student taught at Truman Benedict in second and sixth grade! It was a very positive environment to learn to be a teacher, with a talented staff, fabulous students and a great community. Five years ago, I interviewed with Capistrano Unified School District, intending to become more of a member of the South Orange County community. It never occurred to me that I would end up as principal of the very school where my teaching

career started.

Subsequently, I taught in Garden Grove Unified as a special education teacher, a teacher curriculum coach and a special education program specialist. While these were valuable experiences, I knew my next step was to return to the school site as a principal. I was hired in Huntington Beach City School District as a principal at Hawes Elementary School. I was there as principal for five years and truly enjoyed the challenge of making a good school great. The experience was invaluable and confirmed that my passion is to facilitate and lead teachers and students at the site. That continues as I enter my sixth year here as principal of Truman Benedict. I look forward to another fantastic year of learning and growth.

## Marian Bergeson *Elementary*

25302 Rancho Niguel Rd., Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/643-1540 • bgnes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Greg Hauser**  
*Principal*

Greg Hauser is the proud principal of Marian Bergeson Elementary School. He has been in education for 20 years and has experience with Kindergarten through 12th grade. His time at CUSD started as a math teacher at Las Flores Middle School but he quickly began taking on administrative assignments while acquiring his Masters in Educational Administration. Carl Hankey was his first full time administrative role as an Assistant Principal. He played an integral part in its expansion into a K-8 school and then its certification as an International Baccalaureate School. Now as the principal of Bergeson, he enjoys integrating the Traditional English

Program, Mandarin Immersion Program and Structured Autism Program to enrich all students through cultural events put on by our immersion program and the Buddies program for our Structured Autism Classes.

When Greg is not dedicating his time to his school and his district he is an AYSO coach for his 8 year old son's soccer team and loves all things outdoors. Although skiing is his families favorite winter activity, you can also catch them rafting, biking, hiking, camping or any other activity to enjoy the outdoors. It is this same passion for life he brings to his site while collaborating with students, staff, parents and the community to ensure the success of all students.

## Bridges *Community Day High School*

31576 El Camino Real, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/234-5302 • bridges-capousd-ca.schoolloop.com



**Clint Collins**  
*Principal*

Clint Collins is the Principal for Bridges Community Day High School, Adult Transition Programs, and Career Preparation. He has previously worked in education as a teacher for Orange County Department of Education and Tustin Unified School District. He was also an Assistant Principal in Anaheim Union High School District before coming to Capistrano Unified School District as a Principal.

As an educator, Clint is continually looking for ways to enrich his opportunities for new experiences. He uses these experiences to help shape his personal philosophy, which is that every student can be reached. Working predominantly in the field of special education, it has been his pursuit to

help each student overcome individual barriers so that they can meet their fullest potential. This consists of holding himself, all students, and teachers accountable to the highest expectations possible, and providing the necessary tools to meet such expectations.

Working in the education field for over 15 year, one of the areas he is most proud of is the positive relationships he has built with students and their families. He has earned the trust of staff, parents, community, and most importantly, the students he works with. He does so by showing passion and commitment, not only for schools, but for the individuals that work at and attend those schools.

Education must not simply teach work – it must teach Life.

— W.E.B Du Bois



**Jolene Dougherty**  
*Administrator*

Ms. Dougherty has spent over 30 rewarding years in education as a classroom teacher, assistant principal, principal, director, executive director and educational consultant. She currently serves as principal of alternative education, overseeing several schools and programs including California Preparatory Academy (an online college-preparatory high school), Fresh Start Independent Study and K-8 Capistrano Home and Virtual School. She received a B.A. from the University of

Colorado, a Master's degree from California State University, Fullerton and an administrative services credential from the University of California, Irvine.

Ms. Dougherty has presented at numerous conferences including the California School Boards Association (CSBA),

the Juvenile Court, Community and Alternative School Administrators of California (JCCASAC), and the California Consortium for Independent Study (CCIS). In addition, Ms. Dougherty holds the position of Vice President of CCIS, a statewide organization that supports and promotes the interests of teachers, counselors, paraprofessionals, and administrators working in kindergarten through adult independent study.

Alternative education is Ms. Dougherty's passion because it provides flexibility for students and their families in a nurturing and supportive environment. She is extremely proud of the caring educators she has the opportunity to work with each and every day. They have a laser focus on student learning and work together in a collaborative culture to ensure that all students succeed.

## Canyon Vista *Elementary*

27800 Oak View Drive, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 • 949/234-5941 • cves.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Jeana Dagley**  
*Principal*

It is with great pride and excitement that Mrs. Jeana Dagley serves as the Principal of Canyon Vista Elementary School. She has served in a variety of teaching and educational leadership positions over the past sixteen years including service as: a classroom teacher in both general and special education, district wide support as a Teacher on Special Assignment, Extended School Year Coordinator, and Assistant Principal at

Arroyo Vista Elementary School and Administrator of the Therapeutic Behavior Intervention Program. Her academic background includes a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies with a minor in Anthropology from Cal State Long Beach and a Master of Science in Special Education from National University. She possess a Multiple Subject Teaching

Credential (CSULB), a Mild/Mod Education Specialist Credential (National University), and an Administrative Services Credential (UCI).

Canyon Vista is a great school because of its teachers, staff, families, and students. Mrs. Dagley believes that providing our students with 21st Century skills, a safe and nurturing school environment, data driven instructional goals, and rigorous, engaging, differentiated lessons will be critical in preparing every student for post-secondary options. Canyon Vista has an exceptional PTA membership which supports the school's organic gardening, performing arts, STEAM labs, and numerous field trip opportunities. Mrs. Dagley looks forward to continuing to support teachers and parents to ensure that every student receives quality first instruction.



# Capistrano Valley *High School*

26301 Via Escolar, Mission Viejo, CA 92692 • 949/364-6100 • www.cvhs.com



**John Misustin**  
*Principal*

John Misustin has had the opportunity to serve in a variety of teaching and instructional leadership positions over the past twelve years including: teacher, head baseball coach, CAHSEE Support Coordinator, testing coordinator, Teacher on Special Assignment working on student behavior management and school discipline, AVID Coordinator, District Grant Coordinator, Activities Director, and Assistant Principal. John also currently serves as an adjunct instructor for the educational technology program at Concordia University. His educational background includes a Bachelor's of Science and teaching credential from California State University, Northridge and a Masters of Arts Degree in Educational Administration from

California State University, Bakersfield.

John is an advocate of a student centered learning environment where students are given frequent opportunities to collaborate. He believes that when given the opportunity all students can learn at high levels. John understands the challenges that face professional educators today and works relentlessly to serve, support and build capacity with them.

John is honored to be serving the exceptional students, families and community of Capistrano Valley High School. Currently celebrating its 40th anniversary, CVHS has a long history of outstanding academic, athletics, and visual and performing arts programs. CVHS is an award winning school and was most recently recognized as a World News and Reports "Best High School."

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## Castille *Elementary*

24042 Via La Coruna, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/234-5976 • ctes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Laura Lyon**  
*Principal*

Laura Lyon begins her 10th year as the Principal of Castille Elementary. In the 23 years she has been in Capistrano Unified School District she has worked at 7 schools in a variety of roles such as elementary teacher, assistant principal, district science coordinator and now principal. Laura graduated from Cal State Fullerton with a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies and received her Master's degree in Educational Administration from Alliant International University.

Laura brings a wealth of experience in developing quality science programs for schools and has worked to guide Castille into becoming a STEM focus school. "I have always been interested in science, especially in fostering the natural curiosity young people have about

their world and how things work." Our school's theme this year is Create, Innovate, and Discover. Students will find themselves entrenched in STEAM learning opportunities throughout the school year where creativity flourishes, innovation thrives and students discover new interests. This year we are beginning a 3 year partnership with Discovery Education and will be unveiling an Innovation Lab (Maker Space) on September 13th! Our teachers work hard to provide students with a variety of experiences to promote the 4 C's: Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, and Critical Thinking.

Castille has a rich 42 year history of working as a team to assist all Castille students to become contributing members of society empowered with the skills, knowledge, and values necessary to excel in a changing world. We are a 21st Century Learning Collaborative.

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## Chaparral *Elementary*

29001 Sienna Parkway, Ladera Ranch, CA 92694 • 949/234-5349 • chpes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Melissa Schaefer**  
*Principal*

Mrs. Melissa Schaefer has served as an educator for 15 years in Capistrano Unified School District. Her teaching career started the year Laguna Niguel Elementary School opened its doors. After 10 years of teaching elementary school, she served as an assistant principal at several sites across the district.

Mrs. Schaefer is excited to be starting her 4th year as principal of Chaparral Elementary School. Chaparral has a strong reputation for high student achievement, which is all made possible by the exceptional staff and continuous parent involvement. Her goal is to provide a safe and supportive learning environment in which every student is given the opportunity to learn and succeed.

## Concordia *Elementary*

3120 Avenida Del Presidente, San Clemente, CA 92672 • 949/492-3060 cces.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Rob McKane**  
*Principal*

Rob McKane is a husband, father and grandfather and, of course, enjoys spending lots of time with his family. He also enjoys traveling as well as spending time at local beaches. He believes that among the most important things to share with his family are the environment and the preservation and conservatorship of our natural resources.

Mr. McKane has been an educator in Orange County for 18 years. He has been an elementary school principal for 8 of those years and the 2017-2018 school-year will be his second at Concordia Elementary School in the Capistrano Unified

School District. Prior to being a principal, he was a middle school assistant principal, an academic coach and taught seventh and eighth grade social science. He earned his undergraduate degree at California State University, Long Beach and his Masters of Educational Leadership at Pepperdine University. He is honored to be a Sea Lion and being a part of a school with a rich history spanning over 60 years. He is exceptionally proud of the strong and experienced staff at Concordia, many living locally in San Clemente. Mr. McKane has an unwavering commitment to student success and will work with the staff, parents and community to prepare Concordia's students to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

## R.H. Dana *Elementary*

24242 La Cresta Dr., Dana Point, CA 92629 • 949/496-5784 • rhdana.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Dr. Christina Portillo**  
*Principal*

Dr. Christina M. Portillo, who you might recognize from Brandman University's TV commercials, has educational experiences in various California school districts for more than 18 years including serving as an instructional assistant, substitute teacher, bilingual education teacher, classroom teacher, assistant principal, and elementary principal. Dr. Portillo received a master's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with an emphasis in Language, Learning, and Literacy from CSULB, earned an

administrative credential at Chapman University, and her Ed.D. from Brandman University. In her free time, Dr. Portillo enjoys traveling, reading novels, and taking ballet classes.

Dr. Portillo is thrilled to lead RH Dana, a beachside school, which officially launches this year as a Science and Technology Academy. Dr. Portillo strongly believes in RH Dana's mission to prepare kids for the future with inquiry based curriculum that fosters curiosity and technology-enabled problem solving. Dr. Portillo looks forward to the exciting changes in store including a new Design Lab, School Uniforms, and Discovery Education partnership. #travelfar

## R.H. Dana *Exceptional Needs Facility*

24242 La Cresta Dr., Dana Point, CA 92629 • 949/234-5505 • rhdenf.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Judy Dore**  
*Principal*

Ms. Judy Dore has been an educator for over 40 years. She began her career in New South Wales, Australia initially as a general education Elementary school teacher. She completed Special Education training and transitioned to teaching students within the Special Education realm, both in separate and general education environments, at the elementary and middle school levels. After completing her Masters in Educational Administration Ms. Dore had Assistant Principal positions in two Elementary school in Australia before moving to the US in 1995.

After a year as a Resource teacher in a high school setting in Tustin Unified School District, she was the Special Education Program Coordinator and Interim SELPA Director during a four year period.

This is her 17th year working as a Principal in

Capistrano Unified School District. After spending the first 2 years working with the Deaf & Hard of Hearing Program she transferred to her current assignment working with students at R.H. Dana Exceptional Needs Facility.

The highlight of her day is to greet students, staff and parents. Seeing students alight from busses or transition from their parents for their school day, with big smiles and enthusiastic attitudes, is what makes her feel renewed and constantly reinforces her belief in the school mission that students will learn more today than yesterday, and more tomorrow than today. The staff constantly strives to produce students who demonstrate the basic skills and attitudes that make each person a positive, productive, and contributing member of society.

Students' obvious joy of learning, teachers' enthusiasm for teaching, and parents' commitments to their children and school, is what she most looks forward to being a part of at ENF each day.

## Dana Hills *High School*

33333 Golden Lantern, Dana Point, CA 92629 • 949/496-6666 • www.dhhs.net



**Dr. Josh Porter**  
*Principal*

Dr. Josh Porter is proud to have served as an educator for more than 12 years. After beginning his career as a teacher in Tustin Unified, he transitioned to working as an assistant principal at both the middle school and high school levels. For the past three years, Dr. Porter served as the Principal of Carlsbad High School. During his tenure in education, Dr. Porter had the opportunity to work with a diverse group of students and staff in a variety of activities and athletics, implement new educational technologies, develop curriculum and data driven instructional practices. His educational background includes receiving a B.A. and Master's Degrees from California State University, Fullerton, and his Ed.D. from the University of Southern California. During his doctoral

studies, Dr. Porter was given the opportunity to research the impact of globalization and multinational corporations on schools in Costa Rica.

Dr. Porter is excited to lead the Dolphin students and staff as their principal. Dana Hills is filled with rich tradition that has served as a foundation for the development of amazing education programs, exceptional staff, and great academic achievements. Dr. Porter believes it is important to build on this tradition and commit to developing a culture of learning. When combined with supportive staff and providing excellent instruction, students will be able to succeed beyond High School. He is looking forward to working with the Dolphin community to ensure DHHS is a place where students feel valued, are excited to learn, and excel academically.

## Del Obispo *Elementary*

25591 Camino del Avion, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/234-5905 • does.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Suzanne Heck**  
*Principal*

Mrs. Heck was approved by the Capistrano Unified School District board of trustees to the lead position to fulfill a vacancy created upon the retirement of the school's current principal, Kathy Parker. Heck served in the Monrovia Unified School District for over 20 years, beginning her career as a teacher before climbing the ranks to Elementary School Principal at Plymouth Elementary, a position she has held for the past six years.

Over the course of her career, Suzanne developed program initiatives, optimized the learning atmosphere

and created opportunities for each student to reach their full potential. Her accomplishments include: implementing a Mandarin Dual Immersion program, guest speaking in China at a teaching conference, implementing Code to the Future Computer Science Immersion, and bringing transitional kindergarten and spring kindergarten to her school. This past year, Plymouth increased their SBAC scores by 20 points.

Described as a leader among her peers with a firm commitment to student-centered learning, Heck's proven record of educational success prepared her for her new role at Del Obispo Elementary School

## Marco Forster *Middle School*

25601 Camino del Avion, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/234-5907 • mfms.schoolloop.com



**Carrie Bertini**  
*Principal*

I was born and raised in the North Woods of Michigan's Upper Peninsula in the town of Ironwood. It is there that I learned to love the outdoors, cold winter days, and an appreciation for nature (and also a high tolerance for mosquitoes.) I graduated from Luther L. Wright High School and attended Gogebic Community College - go Samsons!- in my home town. I transferred to Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo,

Michigan - go Broncos! - graduating Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, Math, and Science. I completed my Masters in Education Administration at National University and my Tier II Administrative credential at Chapman University - go Panthers!

I was hired at Marco Forster - go Roadrunners! - to teach 7th and 8th grade math in 1993. In 1998 I became an Assistant Principal here and I have been the principal since 2003. I feel extremely fortunate to be at Marco Forster. Having come from a small town, I felt somewhat lost in South Orange County's vast suburban neighborhoods when we first moved here. Shortly after arriving at Marco, I realized that the communities of San Juan Capistrano and Dana Point shared the characteristics of a small town that I have always valued: a sense of community, value for diversity, and compassion for your neighbors. Marco has always served as the heart of our communities. Those of us fortunate enough to work here get to be a part of an amazing family!

## Carl Hankey (K-8)

27252 Nubles, Mission Viejo, CA 92692 • 949/234-5315 • chawks.schoolloop.com



**Dana Aguilera**  
Principal

Serving as the leader of Carl Hankey K-8, the only public International Baccalaureate (IB) K-8 school in South Orange County, is a natural fit for Principal Dana Aguilera, who has been the site administrator for the past six years. Mrs. Aguilera spent her childhood in Malawi, a tiny county in Africa, where her father served as Counsel General and Director of Tourism. Her family traveled extensively throughout Southern and Eastern Africa, and Southern Europe, and her journeys planted the seeds of international mindedness and an appreciation for cultural diversity, two foundational principles of an IB school.

Mrs. Aguilera attended UCLA and received a B.A. in Psychology. After working for several non-profit organizations, she enrolled at UCI and obtained a multiple

subject teaching credential. She taught in Carlsbad Unified for a year, and then moved to Newport-Mesa Unified, where she taught upper grade classes. She transferred to Capistrano Unified in 1998, working first at Foxborough Elementary and then Tijeras Creek, where she was recognized as the 2004 CUSD Elementary Teacher of the Year. She was selected to open Hankey's Middle School, and taught 6th and 7th grade science. Mrs. Aguilera's first administrative assignment as Las Palmas's Assistant Principal was followed by her return to Hankey as principal.

Hankey is a small neighborhood school with a huge heart and tremendous spirit. Under Mrs. Aguilera's leadership the school has accomplished recognition as an IB World School, 2012 California Distinguished School, 2015 and 2016 California Gold Ribbon School and designation as a CBEE (Campaign for Business and Education Excellence) Honor Roll School.

## Hidden Hills *Elementary*

25142 Hidden Hills Rd., Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/495-0050 • hhes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Pamela Allen-Sawyer**  
Principal

Pamela Sawyer has been an educator for 35 years. A native of California, Pamela graduated from U.C. Santa Barbara, received her teaching credential from UCLA, and obtained a masters degree/administrative credential from Pepperdine University.

She began her career in the Los Angeles Unified School District where she spent 10 years. In LAUSD, she was a classroom teacher, mentor teacher, Bilingual Program Coordinator, and Title I Program Coordinator.

Ms. Sawyer transferred to the Long Beach Unified School District, in 1992. In LBUSD, Pamela served as an Assistant Principal and Principal at the Elementary, K-8,

and Middle School levels.

This is Ms. Sawyer's fifth year at Hidden Hills Elementary School. As one of CUSD's CapoForward schools; Pamela is proud of the effective instructional strategies and innovation, evident in all classrooms, which include the integration of technology, a partnership with Discovery Education, and a soon to open innovation lab, "The Creation Station".

This summer, Hidden Hills became the first Certified Energy Bus School in California. The primary goal of The Energy Bus for Schools Leadership Journey is to develop shared leadership and promote a positive school culture. At Hidden Hills Elementary School: Academy of Technology, we fuel our ride with positive energy!

## Kinoshita *Elementary*

2 Via Positiva, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/489-2131 • kses.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**José Luis Pedraza**  
Principal

Mr. José Luis Pedraza is a product of the Capistrano Unified School District. He began his schooling in San Juan Elementary as a newcomer, attended Marco Forster Middle School, and completed his K-12 education at Capistrano Valley High School. Mr. Pedraza continued his education at California State University Fullerton where he obtained his Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Studies and elementary teaching credentials. He taught several years at the Dual Immersion Program at Las Palmas Elementary while serving as an Elementary Teacher Assistant Principal. He later obtained his Masters Degree in Administration and became the Assistant Principal at Kinoshita Elementary.

For the past four years, Mr. Pedraza has served as the Principal at Kinoshita Elementary where he enjoys working with a dedicated staff. Mr. Pedraza visits family and friends in Mexico every summer and is passionate about serving his community. He enjoys collaborating with various community partners because he believes that working together enhances community relationships and builds academic and social opportunities for students.

Mr. Pedraza is moving Kinoshita Elementary forward by implementing new and exciting programs that focus on preparing his students for college and careers. He is looking forward to working with his Bonsai families, teachers, and staff by cultivating a community of lifelong learners.

## Ladera Ranch *Elementary*

29551 Sienna Parkway, Ladera Ranch, CA 92694 • 949/234-5915 • lres.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Sandra Miller**  
*Principal*

Sandra Miller is starting her 23rd year as an educator. She has been an elementary school teacher in grades kindergarten thru fourth for thirteen years, an Assistant Principal for two years and an elementary school Principal for eight years. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Literature, a Master's Degree in early childhood development, a

multiple subject teaching credential and an administrative credential.

Ms. Miller is honored to be entering her third year as the proud principal of Ladera Ranch Elementary School. Ladera Ranch Elementary is celebrating 15 years of excellence. Ms. Miller feels fortunate to be part of such a wonderful school community with an excellent staff, amazing students and a very supportive parent community.

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## Ladera Ranch *Middle School*

29551 Sienna Parkway, Ladera Ranch, CA 92694 • 949/234-5922 • lrms.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Dr. George Duarte**  
*Principal*

George Duarte has been the principal of Ladera Ranch Middle School (LRMS) since 2013. Prior to being at LRMS he was at San Clemente High School, and has been working in the Capistrano Unified School District since 1999.

Dr. Duarte has a doctorate in educational administration from California State University, Fullerton; a master's in education leadership from California State University, Bakersfield; and a Bachelor of Arts in history and a secondary teaching credential from the University of California at Los Angeles (go, Bruins!) Mr. Duarte is also a self-described family man with a supportive wife and two children.

Dr. Duarte loves boasting about the tremendous staff, students, and parents at LRMS. He notes that, "The data

clearly supports the tremendous success that we are seeing as a Professional Learning Community at LRMS." He also notes that, "We have an involved student body, an active Parent Teacher Student Association, and the absolute best teachers and staff at LRMS."

A retired army reservist, Dr. Duarte has served his country as lead investigative case agent for investigations involving detainees in Guantanamo Bay and Afghanistan. He was also a special agent in charge for hundreds of protective missions, including assignments for the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Dr. Duarte always wanted to be an educator, and was a classroom teacher before going into administration. The absolute favorite part of his day is when he visits the classrooms and observes students learning and teachers teaching.

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## Laguna Niguel *Elementary*

27922 Niguel Heights Blvd., Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/234-5308 • lnes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Michelle Moore**  
*Principal*

Mrs. Michelle A. Moore, M.Ed is in her sixth year as principal of Laguna Niguel Elementary School. She comes from a diverse background that has equipped her for her chosen profession. In her early years, Mrs. Moore owned/created a swim school, and published, before teaching in both private and public education: Kindergarten-8th grade. For the past 16 years, Mrs. Moore has been a school administrator, as an

Assistant Principal and Principal, serving students, staff, and families K-8.

Today, she continues to embrace an educational philosophy which focuses on; personalizing education for students, student achievement, school spirit, encouraging others, and building a professional learning community. She works diligently in her efforts to encourage educational

partnerships and continues in her quest advocating for all students, with varied educational needs.

Committed to being a lifelong learner Mrs. Moore not only encourages her staff to attend professional development, she holds herself to the same expectation. This year LNES has begun a three year partnership with Discovery Education. This partnership allows LNES to deepen work in providing students with a variety of experiences while promoting growth mindset within the 4 C's: Communication, Collaboration, Creativity, and Critical Thinking.

If you ask her what makes LNES so special, Mrs. Moore's response is always the same: "It is undoubtedly my entire Aviator community. I could not imagine a better family of staff, students, families, and community. We all care so deeply for our school and are grateful to be serving in this capacity." Go Aviators!

## Las Flores *Elementary*

25862 Antonio Pkwy., Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/589-6935 • lfes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Holly Wiseman**  
*Principal*

Holly Wiseman begins her 18th year in Capistrano Unified and her third year as Principal of Las Flores Elementary School. A native of Orange County, Mrs. Wiseman received her Bachelor's degree from Cal State Fullerton in Liberal Studies and a Master's degree in Educational Administration from Concordia University, Irvine. Mrs. Wiseman began her teaching career in 2000 at Don Juan Avila Elementary School in Aliso Viejo

and continued it at Marian Bergeson Elementary School in Laguna Niguel. After working in the classroom for 11

years, Mrs. Wiseman moved to the District Office where she worked as a Teacher on Special Assignment for four years. Working in this capacity, Mrs. Wiseman trained teachers district-wide at all grade levels on providing quality instruction to students as well as on implementing the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts. Mrs. Wiseman firmly believes that it was her work with teachers across the district that prepared her to support staff and students in her current role as Principal. Las Flores Elementary School is proud to be celebrating their 20th year of preparing students for success in an ever changing world.

## Las Flores *Middle School*

25862 Antonio Pkwy., Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/589-6543 • lfms.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Sean McNamara**  
*Principal*

Mr. Sean McNamara has served as the Las Flores Middle School Principal since the fall of 2015. Beginning his career in 1999 at San Luis Obispo High School, Mr. McNamara came to CUSD as a Special Education teacher at Aliso Niguel High School in 2001. Since this time, he has served in numerous leadership positions including High School Assistant Principal at Tesoro & Capistrano Valley High Schools, High School Activities Director

at Tesoro High School, Summer School Coordinator, and Coordinator of Special Education Programs.

Sean attended Cal Poly San Luis Obispo earning a BA in Social Sciences with an emphasis in teaching and a minor in Geographic Anthropology. Earning his Special Education

teaching credential at Cal Poly SLO and Master's degree in Special Education at CSU San Marcos, Mr. McNamara cemented his dedication to supporting students and staff that support Special Education students. UC Irvine provided the experiences and education for Sean to earn his Administrative credential.

Mr. McNamara is a strong advocate for student exploration of personal interests and aptitudes to develop career and postsecondary education goals. His passion for the outdoors, strong background in technology, systems planning experience and Scouting have provided Capistrano Unified School District with a visionary leader that is making a difference in our student's lives.

The McNamara family lives in the community with three children attending CUSD schools.

## Las Palmas *Elementary*

1101 Calle Puente, San Clemente, CA 92672 • 949/234-5333 • lpes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Kristen Nelson**  
*Principal*

Kristen Nelson is the Principal of Las Palmas Elementary School starting her 10th year at the school site. She has served as an elementary and middle school classroom teacher in CUSD, a district office administrator, and a school principal. She is also an adjunct professor at Concordia University in Irvine instructing in the teaching credential program. She is a graduate of UC Santa Barbara where

she was able to play Division 1 basketball and study child psychology. She went on to get a masters and administrative credential at Cal State Fullerton. She is the author of three education books and numerous education articles. Kristen greatly enjoys being a part of the Las Palmas community.

Las Palmas Elementary School turns the ripe old age of 90 this year. As the city's first school, San Clemente Grammar School, was built in 1927, and in its second year the school was home to approximately 80 students. The original school remained until 1972 when it was torn down due to earthquake concerns and rebuilt as Las Palmas Elementary School. Las Palmas is now home to 875 students and offers a unique Spanish immersion program where students leave fully bilingual and bilerate. "The world is a big place and we are preparing them to compete in it," Nelson said recently, "Knowing more than one language and understanding different cultures will help these students excel in their future."

## Clarence Lobo *Elementary*

200 Avenida Vista Montana, San Clemente, CA 92672 • 949/366-6740 • cles.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Cheryl Sampson**  
*Principal*

Mrs. Cheryl Sampson is proud to have served as an educator for over 30 years. She has taught in both private and public school settings up and down the state of California. She also has been a district administrator coordinating special projects. Mrs. Sampson has worked for Capistrano Unified School District for the past 8 years and is blessed to be a principal at Clarence Lobo Elementary School in San Clemente. Her educational background includes receiving a B.A. from

Concordia University, Irvine and a Master's Degree from Chapman University in Organizational Leadership.

Mrs. Sampson is thrilled to lead the Lobo students and staff as their principal. Clarence Lobo has recreated itself as an Innovation Academy. The STEAM principles have given Lobo new life and it is amazing to watch the high performance of the students when they collaborate, use critical thinking, be creative, and communicate. The Lobo teachers are adding creativity to every subject they teach and Lobo is a joyous place to be.

## John S. Malcom *Elementary*

32261 Charles Avenue, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/248-0542 • jmes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Peggy Baerst**  
*Principal*

Peggy Baerst begins her fifth year as Principal of John S. Malcom Elementary School this year. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and her Multiple Subject Teaching Credential from Cal State Fullerton and her Master's Degree in Educational Administration and Administrative Credential from Chapman University. Mrs. Baerst has been an educator for 27 years as a Classroom Teacher, Reading

Specialist, Assistant Principal at seven different CUSD Elementary Schools, and was previously the Principal at Kinoshita.

Malcom Mariners have a rich 23 year history of "Making a Difference in Ourselves and in our World." This has been

the school's motto since opening its doors in 1994.

Mrs. Baerst's personal philosophy and reason for pursuing a career in education is to make a difference in the lives of young people - to encourage and empower them to utilize their talents, persevere to solve problems, and be their personal best each day. "When I became Principal of Malcom, it was like coming home."

Malcom is beginning a three year partnership with Discovery Education to move its scholars "Full STEAM Ahead" in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. The mission at Malcom is for scholars and staff to strive for excellence while building relationships, respect, and responsibility to ensure that scholars will meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

## Marblehead *Elementary*

2410 Via Turqueza, San Clemente, CA 92673 • 949/234-5339 • jmes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Dr. Faith Morris**  
*Principal*

Dr. Faith Morris begins her fifth year as Principal of Marblehead Elementary School this year. A native of New York City, Dr. Morris received her bachelor's degree from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, a master's degree in Educational Administration from the California State University at Northridge and her doctorate in Curriculum from UCLA. Dr. Morris began her teaching career in

1978 at St. Michael and All Angels School in Studio City, California and continued it at Corinne A. Seeds Elementary School, the laboratory school associated with the Graduate School of Education at UCLA. Dr. Morris taught every

grade from Pre-K through 6th grade. She believes that this has contributed greatly to her effectiveness as a Principal. "I know what the challenges are at each grade level, which goes a long way with teachers and parents," she says. Dr. Morris came to the Capistrano Unified School District in 1996, working as an Elementary Teaching Assistant Principal at Bathgate Elementary, then as an Assistant Principal at Bathgate, Del Obispo and Wood Canyon Elementary Schools before serving as Principal at Del Obispo Elementary and John S. Malcom Elementary before coming to Marblehead. Dr. Morris is excited about Marblehead's new direction as an Environmental Studies Academy.

## Moulton *Elementary*

29851 Highlands, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/234-5980 • mnes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Jacqueline Campbell**  
Principal

Jacqueline Campbell has dedicated 27 years to public education, 25 years in service to Capistrano Unified School District. Ms. Campbell has served CUSD as a teacher, an Elementary Teaching Assistant Principal, Assistant Principal, K-12 Educational Program Director and Principal. Her vast experience working with students, parents and educators from diverse educational backgrounds across the K-12 continuum gives her unique insight to the educational needs of all students.

### **Ties to the Past, Present and Future**

Jacqueline Campbell is a first generation Australian-American, bilingual and bi-literate in Spanish and English, and is passionate about providing a top-quality educational opportunity for all children. She strives to ensure that all students get access to the educational and social opportunities that will assist students to reach their individual, optimal potential.

“It is a privilege and honor to be the principal of Moulton Elementary School.” Campbell said. “The students, staff, parents and entire community are committed to help build a bright future for our children.”

## Newhart *Middle School*

25001 Veterans Way, Mission Viejo, CA 92692 • 949/855-0162 • newhart.schoolloop.com



**Jeff Jones**  
Principal

Jeff Jones is proud to have served as an educator for 20 years. After teaching middle school Social Science in Orange Unified, he transitioned to working with middle school students as an assistant principal in the La Habra City School District. Working two years in La Habra, he moved south to Capistrano Unified as an Assistant Principal at Marco Forster Middle School. During his time as assistant principal, Mr. Jones had the

opportunity to work with students and staff in activities and athletics, discipline and school safety, guidance, assessment and data, and curriculum and instruction. His educational background includes receiving a B.A. from San Diego State University, a Master's Degree and an Administrative Credential from National University.

Mr Jones is thrilled to lead the Panther students and staff as their principal. Newhart is a school that has been recognized for excellent programs, an exceptional staff, and great academic achievement for over 30 years. Mr. Jones recognizes the proud history of the school, and is excited for Newhart's future achievements. At the forefront of those achievements is a school focused on success for ALL students while simultaneously incorporating a variety of programs including engineering, Language Immersion and an overall STEAM focus. Mr. Jones believes all students can achieve in an environment that is safe, supportive, and student-centered. He is looking forward to working with the Panther community to help Newhart continue to be a place where students and staff thrive and achieve high levels of success.

## Niguel Hills *Middle School*

29070 Paseo Escuela, Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/234-5360 • niguelhills.schoolloop.com



**Tim Reece**  
Principal

Tim Reece is proud to have worked for the Capistrano Unified School District for 33 years. He has been the Principal of Niguel Hills Middle School in Laguna Niguel for the last ten years. His middle school principal experience spans over sixteen years while serving at two different sites. Prior to that, he served as high school assistant principal and an Activities Director at two different high schools for seven years. He began

his career in Education teaching English, Drama and Journalism at Shorecliffs Middle School in San Clemente for nine years. During his tenure in public education, he has expanded his expertise by serving on various committees related to the operations of a K-12 school district. Prior to that, Mr. Reece grew up in Dana Point and attended Capistrano Unified Schools for his entire K-12

education. He holds the following credentials: a B.A. in English from the University of California, Santa Barbara; a Single Subject Teaching Credential in English from the University of California, Irvine; an M.A. in Educational Administration from United States International University; and a California Clear Administrative Services Credential from National University. He is also the instructor for the fieldwork courses in the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential program at the University of California, Irvine, Division of Continuing Education.

Mr. Reece thoroughly enjoys serving the students and parents of Laguna Niguel and Dana Point. Niguel Hills is well known throughout the community for its excellent academics, fabulous elective programs, and a stellar Physical Education program. He and the staff at Niguel Hills are looking forward to another great year with the Niguel Hills “Sharks”!

## Oak Grove *Elementary*

22705 Sanborn, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 • 949/360-9001 • oges.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Jill  
O'Connell-Bogle**  
*Principal*

During Jill O'Connell-Bogle's 30 years in the Capistrano Unified School District, she has excelled in a variety of assignments. As an award-winning classroom teacher at Moulton and Laguna Niguel Elementary Schools, her passion was technology integration. Her favorite project was working with elementary students to create bi-monthly student-run news broadcasts. As an Assistant Principal, she served as CUSD's Student Success Team Coordinator and as a Principal, besides being the Instructional Leader of Oak Grove, she also supports and mentors the Elementary Assistant Principals. Her educational background includes a B.A. in Economics from UC Irvine and a M.A. in

Education from Pepperdine University. When not working, "Mrs. OCB" as she is known around CUSD, enjoys reading, going to the beach, watersports, and running. Her adult children are CUSD K-12 graduates as is her spouse.

Mrs. OCB knows without a doubt that Oak Grove is a special place. Oak Grove's outstanding instructional programs and activities are in part why the school has been awarded the California Distinguished School award three times. Mrs. OCB believes that Oak Grove's success is a reflection of students who are excited about learning, dedicated and knowledgeable teachers and staff, a PTA and Foundation that work tirelessly to support enriching activities, and a community that supports education. Oak Grove is truly an All-Star school!

## Oso Grande *Elementary*

30251 Sienna Parkway, Ladera Ranch, CA 92694 • 949/234-5966 • oges.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Jayne Martin**  
*Principal*

Jayne Martin is extremely proud to have been an educator in Capistrano Unified for the past 33 years. She began her career at a teacher at Crown Valley Elementary before pursuing her administrative credential. She served as an assistant principal at several schools before ultimately becoming a principal. Her educational background includes receiving a B.A. from CSU Long Beach and a Master's degree from UCI. Serving as the principal of Palisades Elementary and Viejo Elementary, combined with all of her prior

experiences, ultimately prepared her for opening Oso Grande Elementary in 2005, where she continues to serve as Principal. Mrs. Martin loves to read, spend time at the beach and travel with her husband, Wade, and two children, Katie, a freshman at CSUMB and Jackson, a junior at Mission Viejo High School.

Opening Oso Grande and being a Grizzly has been one of the major highlights of Mrs. Martin's career. She feels incredibly fortunate to have been able to work with amazing staff, students and their families over the years to create a positive school culture and a learning environment that fosters success for all students.

## Palisades *Elementary*

26462 Via Sacramento, Capistrano Beach, CA 92624 • 949/496-5942 • pses.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Curt Visca**  
*Principal*

It has been an honor to be the principal at Palisades Elementary School for the past four years! My focus is to encourage all students to do their very best, academically and behaviorally, each school day. I enjoy being an elementary principal and setting a fun tone at school for students, staff members, and parent volunteers. Unless I have a meeting, I will be in the parking lot to help with traffic, and to greet students before and after school. I also like to visit classrooms on a regular basis and interact with students during recess.

I have been with CUSD since 1987 and this is my twenty-fourth year as an elementary school principal. Starting

out as an elementary school teacher, I eventually became an assistant principal and summer school principal. When I was hired as a full-time principal, I had the honor to be the first principal at Bathgate Elementary School in Mission Viejo (Go Blazers!). After spending four years as the principal at Bathgate, I was thrilled to be named the principal at Wood Canyon Elementary School in Aliso Viejo and remained there for four years (Go Comets!). I was then selected to be the principal at Moulton Elementary School in Laguna Niguel and had the privilege to be their principal (Go Hawks!). After being at Moulton for five years, I was excited to be named the principal at Ambuehl Elementary School in San Juan Capistrano and remained there for seven years (Go Eagles!).

## Philip Reilly *Elementary*

24171 Pavion, Mission Viejo, CA 92692 • 949/454-1590 • pres.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Sharla Pitzen**  
*Principal*

Mrs. Sharla Pitzen is proud to have served as an educator for the past 23 years. She began her career as a teacher for students with disabilities in San Diego. Mrs. Pitzen moved up to Orange County in 2000 and began an administrative career in Capistrano Unified, including Program Specialist, Director of Special Education and Executive Director, Special Education, Infant through Elementary programs. Beginning this year, Mrs. Pitzen is honored to be the Principal of Reilly Elementary. Her educational background includes a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies and a Master's Degree in Special Education from National University. She also holds Multiple Subject and Specialist Instruction Teaching Credentials and an Administrative Services Credential. She has two daughters whom attended CUSD schools; one is an

Education Specialist for preschool and her other works with adults with disabilities. Mrs. Pitzen enjoys spending time with her granddaughter and her husband at the beach and in Palm Springs.

Mrs. Pitzen is thrilled to be the leader of the Reilly Patriots! Reilly is a phenomenal school with an outstanding character education program and high academic standards. The school is thriving because its teachers, support staff, families, and students are respected and valued. Mrs. Pitzen believes that giving her students a safe and positive school culture with innovative solutions will keep them engaged in high levels of instructional learning. Reilly Patriots will flourish in an environment of "student centered" 21st Century skills, data driven instructional goals, and rigorous, engaging, differentiated lessons. We will continue to build strong outstanding Patriots at Reilly!

## San Clemente *High School*

700 Avenida Pico, San Clemente, CA 92673 • 949/492-4165 • www.sctrions.com



**Chris Carter**  
*Principal*

Chris Carter is honored to be the principal of San Clemente High School. As a twenty-two year resident of San Clemente, leading the high school is an honor, but what makes him most proud is he is also a parent of two Tritons. Mr. Carter has spent the past twenty-three years in the Capistrano Unified School District as a teacher, assistant principal and principal. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History from California State University, San Diego and his teaching credential from California State University, Long Beach. As a lifelong learner Mr. Carter holds a Master of Science in Education Administration from National University and his administrative credential from Chapman University.

Education is a family affair in the Carter household, as Mr. Carter's wife is a teacher at Shorecliffs Middle School which is also in San Clemente.

As a community member and principal, Mr. Carter is proud of San Clemente High School's rich history of academic, athletic and artistic success which dates back over fifty years. SCHS is truly one of the last small town high schools left in Southern California. Many of the families, faculty, and staff are alumni, which instills a deep sense of belonging to this incredible school. The students and community embrace San Clemente's motto, "One Town – One Team." With a focus on tradition, commitment and excellence, the faculty and staff look forward to preparing all Tritons to successfully contribute and compete in the global community. Go Tritons!

## San Juan *Elementary*

31642 El Camino Real, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/493-4533 • sjcs.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Silvia Mazzeo Pule**  
*Principal*

Silvia Mazzeo Pule is starting her 19th year as principal of San Juan Elementary School in San Juan Capistrano. Her passion for teaching and learning spans more than 27 years and she considers it a privilege to be part of the Capistrano Unified District community.

Ms. Pule started her career in education as a bilingual instructional assistant in 1988 and was hired as a bilingual teacher at San Juan Elementary School in 1991. She taught all grades (K-6) and then started her administrative assignments as a teaching assistant principal at R.H. Dana Elementary School and as an assistant principal at Las

Palmas Elementary School. She helped develop and grow the popular Two Way Immersion program and became principal at Las Palmas School in 1997. As the popularity of the program grew, Ms. Pule was asked to start the TWI program at San Juan School. Last year, she was thrilled to have attended the graduation ceremony for San Juan's first class of TWI students at San Juan Hills High School.

San Juan Elementary School is a Two Way Immersion Academy (Spanish and English) where students also enjoy learning through STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math), as well as, music. At San Juan Elementary School the scholars are preparing to be the leaders of the future!

## San Juan Hills *High School*

29211 Stallion Ridge, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/234-5900 • www.sjhhs.org



**Jennifer Smalley**  
*Principal*

Jennifer Smalley is proud to serve as the principal of San Juan Hills High School. She has worked for the Capistrano Unified School District for 25 years in a variety of roles including secondary English teacher, a district TOSA for secondary teachers, an assistant principal, a middle school principal, and a high school principal.

Mrs. Smalley is well-known for her expertise in curriculum and instruction and her passion and dedication to student success. Her educational background includes receiving a B.A., a teaching credential, a reading/language arts specialist credential, and a M.S., from California State University, Fullerton, and an administrative services credential from

Chapman University. Mrs. Smalley grew up in Orange County and lives locally within the Capistrano Unified School District. When not at San Juan Hills High School, she enjoys traveling with her family and friends.

Mrs. Smalley is honored to lead the Stallion student body and staff. San Juan Hills High School is in its eleventh year and in that short time the school has been recognized for outstanding academic, athletic, arts programs. San Juan Hills prides itself on the nurturing relationships that the staff develops with students to support them in all aspects of high school. The mission at San Juan Hills is to Ride for the Brand, ensuring that all students have enriching high school experiences and graduate with a multitude of post-secondary options. Go Stallions!

## Serra *High School*

31422 Camino Capistrano, San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675 • 949/489-7216 • serra.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Dr. Meg Ervais**  
*Principal*

Dr. Meg Ervais has been an educator with Capistrano Unified School District for twenty-seven years. She began as an elementary teacher at San Juan School and has since worked at the elementary, middle and high school level, becoming principal at Serra High School in 2015. Dr. Ervais grew up attending CUSD schools and graduated from San Clemente High School. She earned her B.A. from UC Santa Barbara, her

teaching and administrative credentials from UC Irvine, and her Ed.D. from the University of Southern California.

Dr. Ervais feels very fortunate to be principal at Serra High School, known as the small school with the big heart. She believes that the alternative education environment provided at Serra offers students another path towards graduation and prepares them for life beyond high school. She loves working with the students and their families and looks forward to a great school year.

## Shorecliffs *Middle School*

240 Via Socorro, San Clemente, CA 92672 • 949/498-1660 • shorecliffs.schoolloop.com



**Dr. Brad Baker**  
*Principal*

Dr. Brad Baker has served in a variety of teaching and educational leadership roles over the past sixteen years; all of them with Capistrano Unified School District. Some of the roles he has held include Campus Supervisor, Resident Substitute teacher, Science teacher, High School Activities Director, Middle School Assistant Principal, High School Assistant Principal, and Principal. His academic background is grounded in CUSD as well. Dr. Baker received High School Diploma from San Clemente High School and then went on to earn a B.A. from Azusa Pacific University, a Master's

Degree from Chapman University, and finally a Doctoral degree in Educational Leadership from the University of Southern California. Dr. Baker is married to his High Sweetheart Anysue and they have lived in San Clemente for over 30 years. They have two children, Ben (11) and Grace (8) who both attend CUSD schools.

Dr. Baker believes education is a partnership which all stakeholders must inspire ALL children with words of encouragement and take action with kindness. "It is a true honor to be a part of the Shorecliffs/CUSD family, and I believe that through our focused team work the sky is the limit for every student."

# Tesoro High School

1 Tesoro Creek Rd, Las Flores, CA 92688 • 949/234-5310 • www.tesorohighschool.com



**Rich Bellante**  
*Interim Principal*

The Tesoro High School program is one to appreciate! After 40 years in education, all in CUSD, and serving the communities as a teacher, coach, Assistant Principal, and as the Principal of Serra High School for 10 years before retiring in 2013. Since that time I have been enjoying retirement and working in several high schools in the school district as well as at the district office. The opportunity to be part of Tesoro's fine school program, opening up this school year as the Interim Principal, was not be missed. Yes, there are a number of challenges in getting ready for opening day in any school, but the rewards and satisfaction of getting the year underway on the right foot is exciting.

Can you picture the joy and excitement on the faces of those Freshman as they came to school that first day? Met by the Cheer and Song squads, the school Band, and teachers and staff as you step out of the car is a memory that all will treasure. I know that this memory will be treasured by virtue of the number of pictures taken of sons and daughters by beaming parents as they watched their child begin high school. And, the smiles that were on faces as friends were spotted, and then the quick "schedule comparing" to see how many classes they were in together. That first week culminated with a football game and a Welcome Back Dance – ahh, High School, what a great time in our students and their parents lives. We are glad to be part of the journey. Our commitment is to provide a safe and welcoming school that provides a rich education and supports positive personal growth for our students.

## Tijeras Creek Elementary

23072 Avenida Empresa, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • 949/234-5300 • tces.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Diann Buckingham**  
*Principal*

Mrs. Diann Buckingham is proud to be part of Capistrano Unified School District. She joined the Capistrano team at Tijeras Creek Elementary in 2003. Mrs. Buckingham grew up in a small Pennsylvania town where she graduated Cum Laude and received the President's Award in Education from Mercyhurst College. After graduation, she moved to teach in Kingwood, Texas, where she received a master's degree in Educational Administration from Stephen F. Austin State University.

Mrs. Buckingham found joy teaching K-8 general and special education. She worked diligently to guide children to achieve their fullest potential. Through her teaching experience, she was drawn to administration. After 10 years in the classroom, she became an Assistant Principal

in Marietta, Georgia and then worked as Program Director in New Jersey. After three years, she relocated to Arizona, where she was a principal for seven years and had the amazing opportunity to open a new elementary school.

Mrs. Buckingham is passionate about education and deeply believes in all the Tijeras Creek scholars. She works alongside parents and teachers to facilitate innovative programs, staff development and technology in the classroom. For example, TC is beginning a three-year partnership with Discovery Science Center during which teachers and scholars will participate in hands-on STEM education. This partnership will help students master new science standards and engage in higher level thinking.

To Mrs. Buckingham, there's no greater reward than to see the scholars happy and thriving. As she would say, "It is a great day to be a Tijeras Creek scholar."

## Viejo Elementary

26782 Via Grande, Mission Viejo, CA 92691 • 949/582-2424 • vjes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Jesus Becerra**  
*Principal*

Mr. Jesus Becerra has worked for Capistrano Unified School District for over 20 years. He started working as a school custodian during the day while attending college in the evening. He became a teacher in 2005 at Del Obispo Elementary and transitioned to Viejo Elementary in 2009 as a language immersion kindergarten teacher and elementary teaching assistant principal. In 2012 he became assistant principal of

Kinoshita Elementary. As assistant principal he was a part of the safety committee, was ELD coordinator, was the Student Success Team Coordinator, and a part of the data committee. He met consistently with community members

and organizations to help support the schools. He enjoyed his role as a teaching assistant principal which ultimately helped him be a better administrator.

Jesus Becerra has been principal of Viejo Elementary since 2013. He is excited to lead Viejo's students and staff as their principal. Viejo elementary has wonderful and caring staff that go above and beyond to reach the needs of every student. Mr. Becerra believes that all students can achieve academic success while also learning and reinforcing a second language. Mr. Becerra enjoys the challenge of working at a language immersion school. He also enjoys having conversations with students, parents, staff and community members.

## Vista Del Mar *Elementary*

1130 Avenida Talega, San Clemente, CA 92673 • 949/234-5950 • vdmes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Dr. Troy Hunt**  
*Principal*

Dr. Troy Hunt has proudly served the San Clemente community for four years as the principal at Vista del Mar Elementary School. As an educator for over 30 years he taught elementary school and was vice principal of a middle school in Downey. He was also an elementary school principal and executive director of educational services in Cypress. In addition to his administrative roles, Dr. Hunt was a professor at both Biola

University and Concordia University teaching educational graduate courses to future leaders. Regardless of his roles and responsibilities, his focus has always been to serve the needs of others. While obtaining his doctorate at the University of LaVerne, he focused to learn and apply Servant Leadership traits (i.e. listening, awareness,

conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of others, and building a community).

Currently, as the principal of Vista del Mar Elementary School, he is proud of the Mako Family (staff, students and parents) because of their unwavering commitment to student success. The school focuses on a rigorous educational program that teaches students to persevere through difficult educational problems that will prepare them for college and career. The Mako Family is also proud of their accomplishments being recognized as a California Distinguished School, Honor Roll School, and Gold Ribbon School over the last few years. Dr. Hunt looks forward to maintaining the school's tradition of excellence and doing what is in the best interest of children to prepare them for their future.

## Vista Del Mar *Middle School*

1130 Avenida Talega, San Clemente, CA 92673 • 949/234-5955 • vdm.schoolloop.com



**Michelle Wrenn Benham**  
*Principal*

Beginning her 31st year in the Capistrano Unified School District (CUSD), Mrs. Michelle Wrenn Benham has taught at Carl Hankey and San Juan Elementary Schools and served as the assistant principal at RH Dana Elementary School and the principal at Reilly School. During her tenure at Reilly, she successfully secured grant funding to install the first schoolwide network in CUSD and put computers into every classroom. Mrs.

Benham also served as the district's first director of educational technology, the executive director for community relations, and later as the executive director of assessment and research. For the past three years, she has been the principal at Vista del Mar Middle School.

Mrs. Benham completed both her undergraduate and graduate studies at the University of California, Los Angeles and has taught extension courses for California State University, Long Beach and University of San Diego. She is very involved in the community of San Clemente, where her family enjoys swimming, karate, and church.

Mrs. Benham is excited to be at Vista del Mar with some of the finest staff members in CUSD. She enjoys working with the students and families of one of the highest performing schools in the district. She is committed to fostering a safe and nurturing environment where students feel free to take academic risks and grow into responsible students, prepared for high school and beyond. It is her vision that every student will enter high school focused on college and/or career.

## Wagon Wheel *Elementary*

30912 Bridle Path, Coto de Caza, CA 92679 • 949/589-1953 • wwes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Jean Grabowski**  
*Principal*

Mrs. Jean Grabowski is honored to begin her second year as principal of Wagon Wheel Elementary School. As an educator for 20 years, Mrs. Grabowski brings a wealth of experience to our CUSD community.

Mrs. Grabowski is a graduate of UCLA where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in World Arts and Cultures. Additionally, she attended Concordia University and Whittier College where she earned two masters degrees. As

a lead learner, Mrs. Grabowski has served as a classroom teacher, literacy coach, assistant principal, and principal. These multifaceted roles have defined Mrs. Grabowski's administrative career with a passion for student success

through the application of research-based instructional practices while partnering with school communities to build and support robust programs.

She brings an excitement and connection with students and families in order to provide the highest level of educational experience for all students. Since Mrs. Grabowski's arrival to CUSD, Wagon Wheel Elementary has been recognized for its exceptional Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) program. This year, Wagon Wheel celebrates 20 years of academic excellence and is looking forward to commemorating this milestone with a grand invitation to all WWES educators and families who have made impact on Wagon Wheel's continued academic acclaim.

## George White *Elementary*

25422 Chapparosa Park Dr., Laguna Niguel, CA 92677 • 949/249-3875 • gwes.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Andrew Klinkenberg**  
*Principal*

This is my third year at George White as the principal. I first started my teaching career in Anaheim where I taught 1, 3, 5, and 6 grades. I later moved into administration and served at 4 different schools. I have been in education for 15 years. Prior to being in teaching, I was both a probation officer and parole agent for California. I worked specifically with gangs in the cities of Santa Ana and Westminster. I found that in the education field there were many more smiles than in law enforcement. I decided that I could make more

of an impact in the educational setting than in probation/parole. My chief belief is that "Children come first" and we are responsible for preparing our students to be academically, socially, and behaviorally successful in the world.

On the personal side, I have been married to my wife Julie for 25 years and we have 3 wonderful boys. Nathan is 22 and a graduate of UCSD, Noah is 20 and a junior at San Diego State, and Joel is 15 and a sophomore at Yorba Linda High School. Some of our favorite activities include camping, walking, and just spending quality time together as the "Fab Five"

## Wood Canyon *Elementary*

23431 Knollwood, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656 • 949/448-0012 • wces.capousd.ca.schoolloop.com



**Paul Foucart**  
*Principal*

Paul Foucart has spent over 23 years in public education. After graduating from University of Massachusetts in Amherst, MA with a major in Communications and a Minor in Broadcast Journalism and Bridgewater State College with a Master's in Elementary Education and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) in Educational Leadership, he started his career teaching second, fourth, and fifth grade at the Cushman School in Dartmouth Massachusetts. After spending nine years in the classroom, his first administrative position was an Assistant Principal in a middle school located in Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

After the birth of his son, Paul moved to Chandler, Arizona where he was an Assistant Principal at Santan Junior High School. Florence Unified School District located in Florence, AZ asked him to open a new K-8 school. He opened his first school named Copper Basin K-8.

This was an exciting opportunity for Paul.

After enjoying sunny Arizona, Paul moved to San Ramon located in the East Bay in Northern California where he was the Principal of Neil Armstrong Elementary School. After a few years serving as Principal, the District asked him to open another new school. Paul opened Creekside Elementary School in Danville, CA. The focus of the school was the integration of technology and 21st century teaching skills. He was promoted to Director of Curriculum to the District Office after only a couple of years.

Paul moved his family down to Orange County in 2013 where he was the Principal of Concordia Elementary School in San Clemente. After three years, he moved to Wood Canyon Elementary School to begin the reimagine process of our CapoForward Schools. Wood Canyon is the School of Arts and Communication. He believes all students can succeed and thrive in a nurturing environment. He is very excited about starting his fifth year in the Capistrano Unified School District.

# School News

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## Keira's Book Nook



**Keira**

### A Page Turner

*Joplin, Wishing* by Diane Stanley is an extraordinary page turner! It really makes you feel like you are there with the characters. This fantasy novel is about a 12 year old girl named Joplin who finds an antique



platter with a picture of a girl at a pond and wishes she could be her friend. The next day Joplin sees a girl in the garden. When she goes to say hello, she learns that the girl, Sofie, is new to the neighborhood. Curiously, when Joplin goes back to her room the girl in the platter is gone! When Joplin discovers everything Sofie has been through, she comes to the conclusion that she must help her. Later when Sofie meets Joplin's mom, they think they recognize each other which made me think, "Is there a story behind this?" You'll just have to read the book to find out! I give this book 5 out of 5 apples.

Keira F. is a sixth grader. In addition to her love of books, she enjoys art, crafts, traveling and playing with her cats. She rates books from 1 to 5 apples with 5 being the highest.

## Book Review by Abbas



**Abbas D.**

### A Creepy and Fun Read

*Lockwood & Co.* by Jonathan Stroud is a novel about teen psychic agents, Lucy Carlyle, George Cubbins and their leader Anthony Lockwood. Together they run the smallest ghost-



fighting agency in London, Lockwood and Co. There is an increased outbreak of ghosts in England known as The Problem which is where Lockwood & Co. comes in to help, with each member using their talents such as listening to ghost activity and seeing ghosts in plain sight. After they are offered a ghost hunting job in one of the most haunted places in London, Lockwood and Co. must work together to fight a fearsome ghost. Will they survive the night and work together?

This book was filled with many twists and unexpected sharp endings. I give this creepy tale 5 smiley faces.

Abbas D. is a fifth grade student who enjoys cooking in his free time, swimming and loves roasted marshmallows. Abbas will rate the books 1 to 5 smiley faces with 5 being the best.

## Leadership Word Search Contest

**Rules!** One word in the list is NOT in the word search.

When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that word you email to: [Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com](mailto:Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com) (Please put Capistrano in the subject line)

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Word Search by Gunnar Coop

Entries must be received by November 15, 2017  
From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.

Accomplished	Organized
Caring	Powerful
Confident	Responsibility
Determination	Role Model
Drive	Strong Willed
Enthusiastic	Suitable
Focused	Teamwork
Independent	Trustworthy
Initiative	Understanding
Intelligent	



## Note-ables



**Kate Karp**

### Camp Songs

Camp songs are very dear to Ella Jenkins, the national children's-singalong treasure who at 93 is still performing. She cherished songs that her brother brought home from Boy Scouts and had always wanted to record a camp-song CD.

For this project, Jenkins assembled a literal band of brothers and sisters who have veritable campground DNA: Kate and Tony Seeger, nephew and niece of the legendary Pete Seeger, and Judy Seeger, the late folk singer's wife. A team of musicians, children, parents and teachers rounds out the rounds, spirituals, campfire singalongs, protest songs and just plain silliness.

*Camp Songs* opens with Jenkins's harmonica and the round of all rounds, "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Following are 24 more familiar and yet-unheard numbers: "This Little Light of Mine," "Down in the Valley"; "Sipping Cider Through a Straw," and the hilarious but complicated round "One Bottle of Pop." On "The Hill Was Steep and Tall," Jenkins relates how she reluctantly signed up for a hike with some campers and then got hopelessly lost.

School districts camping and field trips, and scout gatherings and youth groups are going to love these songs.

Kate Karp is an editor for *School News Roll Call* and a freelance writer and editor.



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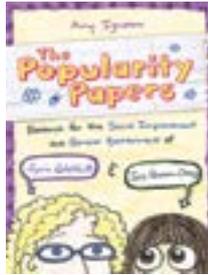
## Richard's BookReview



Richard J.

### Funny Book with a Message

*The Popularity Papers* is a book by Amy Ignatow. It's written like a diary by two middle school girl authors Lydia and Julie writing about their "observations"



and very funny results on their attempts to be popular. They go through many things to be popular, trying and failing in a funny way at hair bleaching, joining the popular sports teams, and even pretending to like boys, which really backfires, and many other things, too. The results are funny, unpredictable, but don't make them popular. They learned in the end that it's important to be yourself and be liked by your friends, not the people who everyone says are cool and popular. This is a really funny book written and drawn in a way I would have done with markers, pens and pencils, and the story is relatable in the way that they work so hard to be liked and noticed.

I give this book a 5 out of 5 stars, with 5 being the best.

Richard J. is a third grader. Richard likes math, playing sports, physical activities like bike-riding and running, reading and spending time with his family.

## Alana's Book Review



Alana F.

### The Wide-Awake Princess

By: E.D. Baker  
Long ago, in the kingdom of Treecrest, a baby princess was born, and was given many magical gifts. This little girl is known as Sleeping Beauty. So- as the



stories say- when the evil fairy cast the famed curse on the newborn, her fairy godmother lessened it. However, the royal family was so traumatized that they decided that their second daughter, Princess Annie, should be immune to all magic. Hence, when the sleeping curse fell upon her older sister, Annie was unaffected, and set off to find the one who could save the kingdom. Traveling far and wide, she battles things scarier than magic, like evil, fear, and stereotypes. But without any magical gifts, will she triumph?

I'd give this book eight out of eight triforme shards for it's cleverly hidden messages. It's also downright hilarious, and has had me laughing for hours.

Alana is a student columnist and a self-proclaimed "huge nerd". When she doesn't have a book in her hands, she loves to play video games and write fiction. She rates books on a scale of 1-8 triforme shards with 8 being the highest

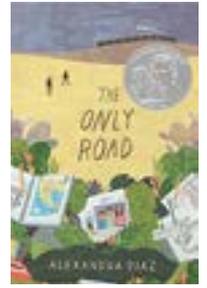
## Lucy's Book Review



Lucy Davis

### The Only Road

Author: Alexandra Diaz  
Life in Jaime's small Guatemalan village is pretty peaceful, excluding one group: the Alphas. Drug dealers that ask for 'favors' and new recruits. If



you refuse, you die. So when Jaime's beloved cousin, Miguel, is murdered for that very reason, the whole family is devastated. And the death comes with something else: a request for Jamie and Miguel's sister Angela to join them.

The only way Angela and Jamie can escape is to leave Guatemala, and that might be harder than it seems. Train hopping, refugee churches, immigration officials, and lost dogs are all part of their journey, and hopefully they can make it to the other side. The U.S. is promising safety, but the road to get there isn't.

I really enjoyed this book. It talks about serious topics while still keeping the mood as light as possible. Five of five stars are well earned in this wonderful story.

Lucy is a 6th grade student. When she isn't immersed in a book, she loves musical theater, ballet, and singing. She enjoys stretching her imagination by writing short stories of her own. Lucy will rate the books 1 to 5 bookworms with 5 being the best.

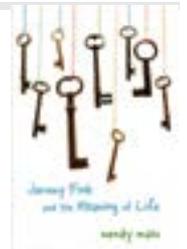
## Isabella's Book Review



Isabella A.

### Adventure and Fun

The book *Jeremy Fink and the Meaning of Life* by Wendy Mass is about a 13 year old living in Manhattan with his mom and his friend Lizzy. Together, they convinced the mailman to give them a package. Inside,



they find a letter and a box. The letter indicated that the box once had keys that were now lost. They decide to set out to find the keys. In the process, they sneak into a business and vandalize it. A policeman makes them do community service, as punishment they have to deliver packages. They ride around the city delivering antiques to the people who had once pawned those items. Almost all was planned by his dead dad

The friends must now do this the entire summer. Will they find the keys before Jeremy's birthday? Or ever?

I give this book 4 stars because it is full of fun and adventure.

Isabella is a 6th grader who loves to read, write, volleyball and plans on becoming an author of children's books. She rates books 1-5 stars with 5 being the best.

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