

# School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation



Covering the Wiseburn Unified School District

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## Wiseburn Employees of the Year for 2017

### Wendy Tsubaki, Classified Employee of the Year

Wiseburn's Classified Employees are in so many ways, the face of Wiseburn. They work up front with parents and the community and behind the scenes in so many countless ways to support our schools and improve the quality of education that we are able to provide for our students. Our 2017 Classified Employee of the Year, like the 8 honorees that came before her, is the personification of commitment and dedication, and a willingness to do whatever it takes to provide outstanding service to our students, families and community. Like almost all of our Classified Employees of the Year, this year's honoree, Wendy Tsubaki, is homegrown in the Los Angeles area. In fact, Wendy Tsubaki has deep roots in Wiseburn. Her uncle, Noboru Uyekawa, was a student in Wiseburn from 1936 to 1941. His principal was Mr. Don Smith. Wendy was born and raised in Los Angeles near the Crenshaw District and spent much of her time in the Venice and Culver City area. She is a proud descendent of a Japanese American family interned

See **WENDY TSUBAKI** • Page 14



Wendy Tsubaki, Dr. Tom Johnstone and Liza Downer.

By *Dr. Tom Johnstone, Superintendent*

On August 31, at the Wiseburn Opening BBQ of the Year, Dr. Tom Johnstone shared some opening thoughts with the Wiseburn employees. "After working in the teaching profession for 38 years and having been blessed to work in Wiseburn for the past 9+ of these years, I am convinced more than ever that no other profession positively impacts the life of our nation and our world, than the teaching profession. I am in awe watching all of you do your magic with our students on a daily basis. In thinking about our two 2017 Employees of the Year, I always like to look for common threads and common characteristics. Our two 2017 Employees of the Year share much in common. They both love people and they both deeply care about kids. They are both leaders and their greatest strength as leaders is their ability to problem solve. They both make Wiseburn a little bit better every single day!"

### Liza Downer, Wiseburn Teacher of the Year!

On August 31, Anza fifth grade teacher Liza Downer was honored as the Teacher of the Year for the Wiseburn Unified School District. Ms. Downer is our 9th Wiseburn Teacher of the Year and is the 4th Wiseburn Teacher of the year who grew up in the South Bay and more specifically Manhattan Beach. She has a rich background of experiences that she has brought to our District! Coming from Manhattan Beach, it is no surprise that Liza spent lots of time near the water and had a huge interest in water sports. She was in a local club swim team from age 10-14 and spent 4 years on the Mira Costa High School Swim Team. During the summers, Ms. Downer served as a lifeguard and swim instructor for 4 years and at the university level spent 3 years on Varsity Crew.

Like all of our Wiseburn teachers and Teachers of the Year, Ms. Downer has a deep love of learning and working with children. She received a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from University of California, Santa Barbara and also completed credential work and graduate study

See **LISA DOWNER** • Page 14

## SUPERINTENDENT



Dr. Tom Johnstone

### A Thought from the Superintendent

The Wiseburn Unified School District considers our students as our most precious and valuable asset. The diversity of our student population is the envy of other school districts and is something that we in Wiseburn hold near and dear. The Wiseburn student population represents the very best qualities of diversity not only in our local community but in greater Los Angeles, the State of California and indeed the entire United States of America. The community of Wiseburn is America at its very best.

As a District, we are compelled to help our students cope with acts of hate, racism, and discrimination worldwide, such as the horrific events that occurred in Charlottesville, VA in August. Violence of this nature cannot be tolerated in our schools, neighborhoods, and community.

See **SUPERINTENDENT** • Page 13

## Wiseburn: A Culture of Continuous Improvement

By *Dr. Tom Johnstone, Superintendent*

Welcome to the 2017-18 school year! Over the past three years in Wiseburn, we have been working diligently to create and refine a world-class 21st Century education for our students that is built on a solid foundation of continuous improvement. As the proud Wiseburn Superintendent, I would share that Wiseburn schools are competing favorably with some of the finest school districts in Los Angeles County and the State of California and Wiseburn is achieving this with one of the most diverse student populations in the country.

Wiseburn and Da Vinci are working together to create K-12 academic pathways that are resulting in our high school graduates being civic minded, college ready and on a solid pathway to career readiness. As part of this effort we have joined forces with Future Ready Schools, Schools That Can, the Cotsen Foundation/Math Leadership Corp, the National Forum for Schools to Watch, the iSchool Initiative, XQ Super Schools, and the University of Southern New Hampshire (College for America).

See **WISEBURN** • Page 11

# Wiseburn Education Foundation

13530 Aviation Blvd., Hawthorne, CA 90250 • 310/643-3025 Ext 55 • [www.wiseburnedfoundation.org](http://www.wiseburnedfoundation.org)

## A Successful Year of Improvements

By Debbie Felt, President

**Wiseburn: A Culture of Continuous Improvement** is the theme to kick off this year and the statement is a true reflection of the environment in the Wiseburn Unified School District! Our elementary, middle, and high schools employ some of the state's best teachers. This is evident in our students' high academic performance and you can see it in their passion in and out of the classroom

WEF is no different! We strive to improve so we can enhance student learning, provide supplemental funding, and unify the schools and community of the Wiseburn Unified School District. In the 2016-2017 school year, the Wiseburn Education Foundation awarded over \$65,000 and successfully funded: Wiseburn Arts and Music Program from K-8, Growing Great nutrition at Anza and Burnett, Traditional folk dance program by Dawn Dyson, Secrets of the Heart Dance, Teacher grants awards, General PTA support and new this year in honor of Doug Sweeney Memorial Fund we will offer a new Ukulele Program for all 5th grade students, Stride Track Running Program at All K-8 schools and a new PA system for the Music Program. Our schools do not simply educate our children but help to prepare them for higher education so they can become productive members in society. After all, learning opportunities do not simply end after we leave our schools.

We ask you **make a contribution** to the Wiseburn Education Foundation through our website [www.wiseburnedfoundation.org](http://www.wiseburnedfoundation.org) today. Your donation helps us to continue the programs mentioned above and allows us to fund even more. We suggest a donation of \$100 per child but any amount given is appreciated. We encourage 100% participation from every family. Your contribution will enhance student learning throughout the district and support the very backbone of our community.

### Board of Trustees



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WEF strived to unify the school and communities of the Wiseburn Unified School District. Please check out our newly updated website [www.wiseburnedfoundation.org](http://www.wiseburnedfoundation.org). We want to thank Abel Somilleda of Somilleda Business Solutions for helping us to enhance the website experience!

We are thrilled to announce the hiring of Carolyn Niman, our very first Executive Director for the Wiseburn Education Foundation. She comes with an extensive experience in fundraising and non-profit management that will help us to grow the foundation. We are so happy to have her as a part of our Wiseburn Family.

Now for some important dates:

- Annual Giving Campaign Kick Off coming soon
- Saturday March 24th – Rock Around the Block
- Wednesday, June 6 — Concert on the Green

As the Wiseburn Education Foundation continues to grow, we are always in need of volunteers. Whether you want to help with Rock Around the Block, Stargazing Night, help plan the parent party, or help us develop a new event or program? Just contact us at [board@wiseburnedfoundation.org](mailto:board@wiseburnedfoundation.org) or visit our website at [www.wiseburnedfoundation.org](http://www.wiseburnedfoundation.org) for more information.



## ECC INVITES YOU TO COLLEGE NIGHT!

Please join us anytime  
between 5:30 and 8:00 p.m.

### Wednesday, November 15

- Learn about ECC Programs and Resources
- Tour the Campus
- Attend Workshops:  
Financial Aid, Transfer Strategies, Athletics,  
and Career and Technical Education

RSVP: [www.elcamino.edu/collegenight](http://www.elcamino.edu/collegenight)



# El Camino College



16007 Crenshaw Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90506

## Community Makerspace



**Dr. Aileen Harbeck**  
Director

As the Wiseburn Unified School District gears up for another successful school year, we are excited to launch a new initiative focused on family engagement through the lens of Science, Technology,

Engineering, and Math (STEM) education. The new Wiseburn Community Makerspace is a dedicated space providing STEM learning options for parents, teachers, students and community members in the areas of science, technology and more.



**The new Wiseburn Community Makerspace is a dedicated space providing STEM learning options for students and parents**



**WUSD Parents learn about the new Community Makerspace at welcome event**



**Dana Middle School student Isabela Borth in the new WUSD Community Makerspace**

Newly housed on the Dana Middle School campus, the Makerspace is a hub of hands-on discovery and a place for learners, young and more experienced, to collaborate, share ideas, build interests, and create in a flexible space. The WUSD Community Makerspace is unique and is divided into six primary categories comprised of a Lego build team, tech workstations, basic circuitry, art design options, media creation with stop animation stations, video, and sound editing, and various science related opportunities and experiments. As an informal space, parents can connect and learn about school-related tech options to include Canvas at the middle school and online applications used by students in classes across the district.

The WUSD Community Makerspace promotes community building via a common interest in STEM education. The WUSD Community Makerspace is what's next for Wiseburn's families as the district works continuously to creatively involve families in the education of all students.

## TRUMBA

*By Carla Levenson, Director of External Relations and Dr. Chris Jones, Deputy Superintendent*

### You Asked, We Listened: Wiseburn Unified and Da Vinci Schools Launch a Coordinated Online and Mobile Event Calendaring System

Over the past few years, one of the most requested features across our schools has been a coordinated and web-friendly event calendaring system for all Wiseburn and Da Vinci families, staff, community members, and other stakeholders.

#### Wiseburn and Da Vinci have delivered a 21st century solution.

Launched last month, the new event calendars are online and mobile-friendly, making it quick and easy to stay informed and up-to-date, especially for families who have students attending both Da Vinci and Wiseburn schools.

Visitors to the Wiseburn Unified School District website ([www.wiseburn.k12.ca.us](http://www.wiseburn.k12.ca.us)) and to the Da Vinci Schools website ([www.davincischools.org](http://www.davincischools.org)) can subscribe to school, athletics and arts calendars and add events to their personal calendaring systems including Microsoft Outlook, Google Calendar, Apple's iCal, Facebook, and Yahoo Calendar. Users also can forward events to friends and families, be notified if events change, and set text message and email reminders.

Accessible to the public, the new calendars are powered by Trumba, an online calendar and event registration solution. The calendaring system includes all Wiseburn and Da Vinci schools and joint athletics and arts calendars, including:

- Cabrillo Elementary
- Dana Middle School
- Dana Athletics
- Juan de Anza Elementary
- Peter Burnett Elementary
- Da Vinci Communications
- Da Vinci Design
- Da Vinci Extension
- Da Vinci Innovation Academy
- Da Vinci RISE High
- Da Vinci Science
- Wiseburn-Da Vinci Academic
- Wiseburn-Da Vinci Athletics
- Wiseburn-Da Vinci Arts

Da Vinci and Wiseburn created a standard event template that both organizations use so they can easily maintain a consistent look and feel for all published calendars. Both organizations also are using Trumba to manage room reservations, especially for athletics across the district and for shared facilities at the new high school campus.

In the coming months, both Da Vinci and Wiseburn will introduce the calendars at each school site and will embed them into the individual schools' websites.

#### For now, the new calendars are accessible here:

Wiseburn Unified School District -  
<https://wiseburn-ca.schoolloop.com/calendars>

Da Vinci Schools -  
<http://www.davincischools.org/events/>

For more information about the online event calendars, please contact Dr. Chris Jones at [cjones@wiseburn.k12.ca.us](mailto:cjones@wiseburn.k12.ca.us) or Carla Levenson at [clevenson@davincischools.org](mailto:clevenson@davincischools.org).

## Anza PTA

### Culture of Continuous Improvement

*By Maria Ferrante, President*

The school year got off to a great start, and the Anza hallways and classrooms have been buzzing with excitement ever since. A new school year means fresh starts and new opportunities for our students to challenge themselves and grow in academics as well as citizenship. We in PTA want all our Anza Eagles to soar, and therefore, we were busy all summer planning and preparing to set our students and teachers up for a successful year. The PTA was proud to supply new playground equipment, art supplies, student planners and Anza folders to every classroom. In addition, we were able to provide access for our students to online learning support sites such as Raz Kids and Spelling City. The PTA also contributed toward this year's Secret of the Heart program for our kindergarten students and funded assemblies and field trips for every grade. It will be a busy and exciting year of learning!

In October, Juan de Anza PTA hosted our Annual Parent Education Night, which we opened up for the first time this year to all Wiseburn Parents. We invited back to Anza Dr. Nicoline Ambe, keynote speaker, educator, and bestselling author. Dr. Ambe spoke to parents about how to best manage screen time with their children. This is an important topic that many parents have expressed needing help and resources to navigate. Dr. Ambe is an inspiring speaker whose mission is to help children become high achievers through strategic parental support at home. Parents were captivated by her personal story and learned important strategies they could put into immediate action. Parent Education Night is another way the Anza PTA continues to improve the lives of our students and their families.

One way our PTA is able to fund programs that inspire and encourage our students comes from the tremendous support from Anza families of our annual Jog-A-Thon. This year, the Anza Jog-A-Thon took place in October. This event is fully planned and carried out by our Anza village, including the Anza PTA, teachers, student council, and parent volunteers. Each year, the support of our Anza community for the Jog-A-Thon, the Anza Membership Drive and other PTA fund-raising events grows.

We thank all who support the Anza PTA. It is through their generosity and community spirit that we can continue to improve and provide these opportunities for our students and families.

## Burnett PTA

### Culture of Continuous Improvement

*By Laura Heredia, President*

Welcome to the 2017–18 school year! Burnett PTA is excited to be back in the swing of things. We have spent time planning events and activities for our Bulldogs.

We started off the school year hosting School Year's Eve. Families came out to Burnett to see the class list, purchase their Bulldog spirit wear, join PTA, and catch up with old friends and make new ones. It was fun to see the excitement on the children's faces as they looked to see who was in their class.

We welcomed our new principal, Ms. Jones. She was able to share with us her hopes and new ideas to refresh our school site. We welcome her excitement and new ideas to continually improve and grow Peter Burnett Elementary School.

PTA just hosted our annual APEX Fun Run fall fund-raiser. We kicked off the festivities with a pep rally and had motivational coaches talk to the children about positive behavior and enforce Burnett's six pillars. Families were able to line the field and cheer on their runner while helping keep track of their laps.

We celebrated Red Ribbon Week with special spirit dress-up days that encouraged being drug free. We had a special visit by the police. They talked to the children about drug awareness and the importance of getting an education.

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We encourage families  
to purchase a  
PTA membership.

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Burnett will be starting their Growing Great Healthy Eating program. It is a five-lesson class spread throughout the school year. Parents are welcome to teach the class and do fun activities. We just got a donation of soil and seeds for our vegetable-and-plant garden. The children will have time to visit the garden and help keep it in shape. Our after-school movie is around the corner along with some restaurant nights and our Holiday Giving Basket collection that helps families in our community.

We encourage families to purchase a PTA membership. The money helps with the costs of many programs, assemblies, classroom supplies, field-trip costs, buses and activities that all Burnett students take part in. These things would not happen without the help and support of our Burnett families and community!

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## Cabrillo PTA

### New Ideas Abound!

*By Sarah Moulton, President*

Cabrillo welcomed in the school year with a new principal and a brand new PTA executive board, both of whom share the same enthusiasm and passion in helping our students, teachers and staff. We were all eager for the school year to begin so that we could begin implementing some of the ideas and events that we had planned over the summer vacation. The PTA has many new and exciting ideas that will help to raise support for our enrichment programs and to provide funding for additional resources.

Cabrillo PTA kicked off the year with our traditional School Year's Eve. This is truly one of our favorite events, as it is one that brings the community together and is based on the excitement of the upcoming school year. Besides selling memberships, Cub Wear and earthquake kits, the PTA Board wanted to warmly welcome everyone into the 2017–18 school year with complimentary warm apple pie and milk.

Our Fall Fundraiser was a success, and we sincerely thank every student and their families that participated. This kind of support helps to fund events and also our Student Success award prizes to continue. Student Success is a system that allows students to win books and other prizes to exchange for the cards they earned through a Positive Behavior System. By doing this, there has been a marked improvement in student citizenship.

Our year continued on with the Watch DOGS Pizza Night, an evening in which students are invited to bring their fathers or any other supportive

male family member or friend to enjoy a pizza dinner and learn the benefits of being a "Dad of Great Students." There was a family STEM Night put on by Hawthorne High students that emphasized the importance of this growing technological field. Family Literacy Night was once again a hit with both parents and students, and PTA was honored to be able to provide our book-loving students in attendance with their own book. We also hope you had a chance to stop by our Wild West Book fair while you were there.

National Red Ribbon Week took place the last week in October, which gave the police officers a chance to address some important safety issues right before Halloween at their assembly. The Hawthorne Police also provided hands-on experience for the children in which they were able to pet a police K9 dog and go inside a SWAT truck—all fun photo opportunities for parents! We had a fun time at Scooter's Jungle bouncing with our friends in support of the PTA.

The school year will continue to hold many events, and there are many opportunities for those who wish to become involved. We appreciate any amount of time that a volunteer is able to give and believe that volunteering is a great opportunity to strengthen bonds and relationships within the community. We are open to any new ideas or suggestions and would like to hear them at our Open Association Meetings, which are held the second Monday of every month in the PAC. Thank you again for allowing us to support the school that we are so lucky to be a part of!

## Dana PTA

### A Culture of Continuous Improvement

By Felicia Villarreal, President

Welcome back to school everyone! We are so excited about our upcoming year together. We are the Dana Middle School PTA, and are committed to constantly improving how we serve our students, families, teachers, staff, and community. We have been working extremely hard lately, and are looking forward to getting better every day.

Last spring we launched our first annual "Incoming Sixth-Grade Spring Mixer." It was absolutely awesome. We invited our incoming fifth-grade families from Anza and Peter Burnett. It was magical watching the students interact with our eighth-grade WEB leaders as well as school counselors Ms. Enge and Mr. Okasinski. Both groups were so excited and inspired. They played games, toured classrooms, and talked about what to expect during their first year of



middle school. It was wonderful to witness the traditional anxiety of middle school immediately transform into excitement and anticipation.

We also had the wonderful opportunity to thank our teachers, staff, and administrators during Teacher Appreciation Week. Our students and families all loved it! Just because they are in middle school doesn't mean that they've outgrown saying "thank you" to those they learn with every day.

During this week we created a Teacher's Favorites List and a theme for each day. Students brought in little "thank you" gifts, cards, and notes, and even walked up to their teachers just to give them a thanks! This was another event that was so powerful. It was amazing to be part of such an inspirational week.

We also kicked off the beginning of this school year with a sixth-grade orientation. We had bagels, coffee, and fruit for the parents as they arrived to host another school fair. The PTA set up a welcome tent just outside of the Wiseburn Community Makerspace, which also opened its doors for the first time to let our families see and experience what it was all about. The PTA also hosted art activities for the students and their families.

We have so much planned for this year, and would love for you to be a part of it. Please check our page on the Dana Middle School website for more information ([www.danamiddle.org](http://www.danamiddle.org)), or follow us on Facebook @danapta to see what is happening here in our Dana community!

Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve you. We look forward to seeing you many times throughout the year!



## HAWTHORNE NEIGHBORHOOD SPECIALISTS



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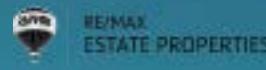
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**Dr. Matthew Wunder**  
Chief Executive Officer

## A Culture of Continuous Improvement

Believing that your qualities are fixed in stone – the fixed mindset – creates an urgency to prove yourself over and over. In the growth mindset, the hand you're dealt is just the starting point for development. It is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts. The belief that cherished qualities can be developed creates a passion for learning. Why waste time proving over and over how great you are, when you could be getting better? And why seek out the tried and true, instead of experiences that will stretch you? The passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (or especially) when it's not going well, is the hallmark of the growth

mindset.

— Carol S. Dweck, *Mindset*

The excerpt above from Carol Dweck's book *Mindset* is fundamental to who we are at Da Vinci Schools.

At Da Vinci, both students and staff embrace a culture of continuous improvement and growth in which we encourage new ideas and recognize failure, reflection, and revision as necessary components of growth.

One of our Core Values that has been adopted by our organization is:

*We approach our work with humility, honesty and a growth mindset, and we encourage and celebrate success, progress, and risk-taking.*

Our thinking about serving students well in a culture of continuous improvement is further codified in our joint Memorandum of Understanding with Wiseburn Unified:

*Students and staff embrace a culture of continuous improvement and a growth mindset through creative problem solving, in search of the best ways to serve students. We will vigilantly remain student focused. Adult issues will not alter or distract from the agenda, mission and vision.*

These core values and foundational elements are not merely words, but principles that guide our actions and behaviors on a daily basis.

## Student Culture

Our vision at Da Vinci Schools is that all students graduate as collaborative, informed, resourceful and reflective individuals who are college-ready, career-prepared and community-minded. Da Vinci Schools have created positive student cultures that support learning, growth, and success. We believe

that learning is a life-long process that includes far more than the acquisition of knowledge. We are committed to supporting each student in his or her continual growth of learning goals/essential skills/content standards and 21st Century Skills, as well as the Habits of Heart, Mind and Success. We know that this comprehensive focus will support and empower our students as they develop and share their own individual gifts.

Tracking each student's growth in a holistic way is accomplished through a combination of the following: report cards that capture the student's academic and personal growth; Presentations of Learning (POLs); Exhibition presentations which provide insight into student understanding of project goals, skills and knowledge as well as mastery of 21st Century Skills and Habits of Heart, Mind and Success; and Student Led Conferences which provide opportunities for all individuals to reflect on the student's growth and set future goals.

A mastery-based grading system (MBG) at the high schools provides meaningful feedback to students and families and keeps the focus on mastery of concepts ("Essential Skills"), rather than just calculating an average based on the total number of "points" they earn in a semester. Mastery Grading gives students and families specific feedback about what skills students have and have not learned. It is information that can be used to direct learning and growth. It measures demonstrated learning, not speed of learning.

At Da Vinci Innovation Academy, we use Measurements of Academic Progress (MAP) to provide a personalized education experience and identify student growth and need for support. It is an adaptive assessment tool that produces a measure of student growth and achievement. This information is used to personalize learning plans, create focused instructional groupings and, as needed, be a consideration in determining placement. Focused on growth rather than "proficiency," this assessment is administered in the Fall and Winter/Spring, providing an opportunity to track growth and create goals throughout the year.

From the beginning of freshman year in high school through graduation, creating and sustaining student cultures is a key component to our student and school success. Our close student-staff relationships, freshman Overnighter and other orientation activities, our advisory curriculum, and organization-wide focus on social-emotional strategies for success like grit and a growth mindset all contribute to student success.

## Adult Culture

At Da Vinci, we ask that each of us set and reach high goals. We reflect on our successes and our areas of growth in order to continue making our schools great for future Da Vinci and Wiseburn students.

New teachers at Da Vinci Schools receive approximately 25 days of paid professional development (continuing teachers receive about 22 days) for collaborative planning to ensure that every student who graduates from Da Vinci Schools is college-ready, career-prepared, and community-minded.

Every Da Vinci principal and director is asked to set school, program or department growth goals, as well as professional/leadership growth goals at the beginning of each year. These goals help to serve as a roadmap for how we can grow individually and collectively as an organization.

Professional development days are held at the beginning of each semester and about one day per month. Our professional development time is structured and usually begins with celebrations, a time for honoring each other and his/her accomplishments. Professional development occurs at each individual school site and across the organization in grade-alike and job-alike subgroups (i.e. all math teachers get together, all English, etc.).

Some recent professional development topics have included: Project Planning, Authentic Industry Engagement, Creating Positive School Cultures, Content Alignment, Analyzing Student Work, Collegial Coaching, Using a Strength-Based Approach in Special Education Programming, Compassionate Communication, Sharing Resources and Best Practices, Strategic Planning, and much more.

Da Vinci faculty members also make it a habit to get off campus and into the workplace during "professional partner visits." We have held several professional development days off site at our partners' places of business. Teachers tour our partners' workplaces while learning about the knowledge and skill sets that students need to know to be successful on-the-job.



**Teachers and students go all-out with first day introductions and celebrations with high-fives, scavenger hunts, school tours, and more.**



**Da Vinci Design teachers traveled to Guild offices to experience firsthand the creative intersection of art, architecture, design and technology.**

In addition, every summer the principals choose a book for their staff to read and then discuss the impact that the concepts of the book could have on their professional work, their students' lives, and on their own lives. Summer reading has included: *Essentialism*, *The New Art and Science of Teaching*, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, and more.

### Da Vinci Extension, Da Vinci RISE High, and Da Vinci F.U.T.U.R.E.S.

We're grateful that Da Vinci Schools has been able to impact students with a broader range of learning styles and needs, while maintaining a commitment to real-world college and career readiness.

In its third year, Da Vinci Extension (DVX) is a 13th and 14th year college completion support program. Students have the opportunity to earn college credits for free while they are at Da Vinci, reducing the time and cost of attaining a college degree. DVX offers two unique pathways leading to college degree completion: DVX-UCLA Extension and DVX-College for America at Southern New Hampshire University. The program offers a mixture of online competency-based and in-person classes with real-world projects and support by Da Vinci coaches. Students also have the opportunity to participate in internships and work experience.

RISE High was 1 of only 10 schools in the nation to win a prestigious 'Super School' grant to reimagine high school in connection with XQ: The Super School Project, funded by Laurene Powell Jobs. A non-classroom based independent study charter school, Da Vinci RISE High is the newest school in the Da Vinci Schools family. There is a small Da Vinci RISE High program serving about 30 students in Hawthorne. RISE High recently opened a second site in South Los Angeles to serve homeless, foster youth and other students in need of wraparound supports such as counseling and health and wellness services.

Da Vinci F.U.T.U.R.E.S. provides special day classes for special education students with mild/moderate and moderate/severe needs in grades 9-12. There is a small cohort of students that meet at the Da Vinci Communications campus.

### Transition to the New High School Campus

Everyone has had an exceptional attitude with regard to the delay in moving in to the new campus. A move-in date has not yet been set as finishing work is being completed and we are waiting for the final sign-offs. We are excited and appreciative for everyone's support and understanding.

For construction updates, please visit the construction blog at [www.douglasat201.org](http://www.douglasat201.org).

### Da Vinci Launches New Website

Da Vinci Schools has launched a new, mobile-friendly website – [www.davincischools.org](http://www.davincischools.org) – with many new features suggested by Da Vinci families, staff, and other stakeholders.

The new site features a clean, bold and uncluttered design; easier navigation; direct links to each school blog; and a central calendar system with events from all schools and athletics housed in one place.

Check it out!

See related article: You Asked, We Listened: Wiseburn Unified and Da Vinci Schools Launch a Coordinated Online and Mobile Event Calendaring System



Da Vinci launches a new mobile-friendly website that includes a robust calendaring system for all Da Vinci and Wiseburn schools.



**Dr. Chris Jones**  
Deputy  
Superintendent  
Instructional  
Services

### Wiseburn-Da Vinci Athletics: Growing and Improving

At a recent informational meeting for parents, the Wiseburn-Da Vinci Athletics leaders described the growth of the program and their commitment to continuous improvement. Applying the growth mindset model to athletics, Da Vinci students and staff are building a sports program that can make the community proud. While balancing the rigors of academic life with the commitment to their sport, our students are setting a high bar for excellence. The coaches are equally dedicated to building a balanced program where students learn about teamwork, camaraderie, and true sportsmanship. Athletic Director Michael Prendergast explains, "We are very pleased with the trajectory of our program. Building a highly successful high school sports

program is a lengthy process and we are working to set the foundation for many years ahead."

The Wiseburn-Da Vinci Athletics program is now in its third year of varsity level competition in a variety of high school sports in the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF). This year we have joined the Mullholland League, moving away from our previous status as a free-lance team without a league. This change should improve our ability to make CIF playoffs in a variety of sports. The athletic program currently fields CIF teams in soccer, basketball, volleyball, softball, cross-country, track and also non-CIF archery. Students from Da Vinci Design, Da Vinci Communications and Da Vinci Science all play for the same team: Wiseburn-Da Vinci Wolves.



DVS Senior William H. gives his all at a cross country meet.



The girls volleyball players and coaches celebrate with a photo after winning their pool at the PMA Tournament in Downey in September.

**Fall Sports Season Update:** The fall season is literally off and running with the cross-country team competing in several regional meets. Forty five students are participating on the team this year, an increase in twenty students from last year. In Girls Volleyball over 50 students tried out for the JV and varsity teams. In early competitions, the team is looking strong, with high hopes for making the CIF playoffs. Volleyball coach Jamie Larson shared her enthusiasm; "We have been working over the past few years to teach our players the fundamentals for all aspects of volleyball. With the current team, we are seeing that hard work pay off!"

# Juan de Anza *Elementary (K-5)*

12110 Hindry Ave., Hawthorne, CA 90250 • 310/725-2100 • www.anzaeagles.org



**Alberto Paredes**  
*Principal*

## Continuous Improvement

We at Anza believe that everyone is someone special. And so we want to provide a safe, supportive, and enriching environment where our students can develop a positive self-image, achieve academic excellence, and become responsible citizens.

For the last two years we have been working to develop a system that focuses more on expectations and positive behaviors and less on undesired behaviors. Together we developed "SOAR." SOAR is an acronym for Scholars, Outstanding Citizens, Accountable, and Responsible. It serves as a constant reminder for our students that we have high expectations for both their academics and behavior. Our teachers use SOAR to model and recognize positive behavior. Expectations are broken down into a behavior matrix that describes what each expectation looks like, sounds like, and feels like.



**Ms. Hayes guiding her kindergartens**

While the implementation of SOAR began two years ago, our official kick-off actually took place at this year's student "Welcome Back" assemblies. Students were reminded of their expectations, and also learned that they could possibly receive a reward for simply doing the right thing. Student rewards include

verbal praise, SOAR Slips (students can use these slips to enter a raffle), special lunch activities, and more. Those students who show outstanding behavior throughout the year will also be invited to participate in various activities led by Mr. Paz, our school counselor.

The impact that SOAR is having on our students and teachers is amazing! Students are continuously decreasing undesired behaviors because we are creating a culture that targets those which are positive. Anza Eagles SOAR!

Last year we also shared how Project Lead the Way (PLTW) promotes creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking in our students. Our teachers were trained by our very own fifth-grade teacher, Mrs. Candyse Crow. Mrs. Crow is a PLTW master teacher, as well as a Wiseburn Unified School District's PLTW lead teacher. She also recently received a recognition award from the PLTW for her extraordinary skill and expertise in leading professional development for America's teachers.

She continues to support multiple teachers throughout the nation as they implement the PLTW modules. These modules are standards based, and include multiple topics such as engineering, bio-medical science, and computer science. PLTW assignments are problem based and require students to work in teams. Teachers closely monitor students and provide guidance as needed.

More recently, Mrs. Crow has trained teachers to expand Project Lead the Way throughout the Wiseburn Unified School District. Guillermo, a fifth-grade student, shares that, "I like Project Lead the Way because it's fun and we get to use teamwork!"



**Mrs. Crow recently received a recognition award from the PLTW for her extraordinary skill and expertise in leading professional development for America's teachers.**

Prior to starting the Project Lead the Way modules, the third-grade students at Anza experienced the "Genius Hour." This is a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) activity where they learn about the steps to success with STEM. During the Genius Hour, students watched a motivational video about inventors. The video truly inspired our students. When asked, "What did you take from this video?" the students shared the observations "Don't stop creating" and "Try your hardest!" Even, "Messing up is okay!"

The students then listened to a story about engineers and what they do. Afterwards they were encouraged to discuss the following topic, "Why are engineers needed?" Following a very insightful discussion, the students then learned about the "Steps for Success" and how to apply them.

The Genius Hour shows students that continuous improvement is essential to our community, and that inventions can help our communities. The Steps for Success are:

**Ask.** What have others done? What are the constraints?

**Imagine.** What are some solutions? Brainstorm ideas and choose the best idea.

**Plan.** Draw a picture and make a list of materials.

**Create.** Create your design and test it.

**Improve.** Reflect and share your findings, then make changes to make it better.



**Mrs. Pittluck supporting Fourth Grade students as they use ST Math to develop their math reasoning skills.**



**Students working together on their first engineering challenge of the year.**



**Ms. Downer and her 5th grade students.**

Congratulations also goes to Ms. Liza Downer for being the recipient of WUSD's Teacher of the Year Award! We are very proud of her for continuously seeking new ways to improve her practice and encouraging others to do the same.

# Peter Burnett *Elementary School (3-5)*

5403 W. 138th St., Hawthorne, CA 90250 • 310/725-2151 • www.peterburnett.org



**Kimberly Jones**  
*Principal*

## Bringing Out Our BEST

At Burnett Elementary, we strive to bring out our BEST in all we do. While our BEST acronym guides us within our positive-behavior-reinforcement system—*B* for “be responsible,” *E* for “effort all the way,” *S* is for “safety first,” *T* for “treat all with respect”—it also stands for something more.

As 21st century learners, we know that “to be our best” involves being engaged and reflective citizens of the world. Our students, teachers and staff are all committed to putting their BEST foot forward and are eager to jump into learning with an open and curious mind.

Through programs like Project Lead the Way, our students have the opportunity to think critically and creatively through hands-on learning experiences. In this process, students think about a question or a problem, brainstorm potential solutions, act on or build those solutions, and evaluate the success of their solutions and their results in a scientific manner. This program gives students the opportunity to problem-solve and persevere as they see projects from beginning to end.

Our fifth-grade students have already begun their journey, taking part in projects such as the Human Knot Challenge and focusing on team building, collaboration and perseverance. Others, such as the Spaghetti

and Marshmallow Challenge, support students with building a growth mindset and the importance of learning from mistakes.



**Human Knot Challenge**

and Marshmallow Challenge, support students with building a growth mindset and the importance of learning from mistakes.



**Marshmallow and Spaghetti Challenge**

## 21st Century Skills

We see a culture of continuous improvement in all aspects of school life at Burnett. Students are learning to be flexible in their thinking, valuing mistakes as learning opportunities, and using one another as resources to enhance their learning. Students in fourth grade are demonstrating this skill through class presentations, integrating technology into their learning in meaningful and engaging ways.



**Students presenting to their peers**



**Students test their theories on how much weight paper structures can hold**

Our teachers at Burnett are also on a path of continuous growth and modeling to their students the growth mindset in action. Teachers are taking time to collaborate and think critically as we introduce our new language arts series, Wonders, and continue to develop and enhance our CGI curriculum. This process is showing our students that we are all lifelong learners, and our capacity to be flexible and adapt and change over time leads us to making deeper connections and insights into our learning.

Being our BEST is a continuous process that involves compassion, collaboration, creativity and community. We at Burnett are off to a great start and are excited for the year of learning ahead!



**Teachers engaged in Summer PD**

# Juan Cabrillo *Elementary (K-2)*

5309 W. 135th St., Hawthorne, CA 90250 • 310/725-5400 • www.juancabrillo.org



**Lisa Baggio**  
Principal

## New Principal's Welcome!

I am both honored and humbled to begin the 2017-18 school year as the new principal of Juan Cabrillo Elementary! This year kicked off with an amazing "School Year's Eve," hosted by our phenomenal PTA. The night was full of apple pie, catching up with old friends, and meeting new ones!

The first weeks of school were very busy. We had our kindergarten/TEDDE orientation, the start of rigorous academics such as CGI, and our new English language arts Wonders curriculum. I even found the runaway gingerbread men from Ms. Schumacher's TEDDE class! I look forward to more fun learning adventures.

## Effective Programs and Systems

Cabrillo Teachers are dedicated to ensuring that all students receive the best instruction that meets their needs. Our Early/Late Bird program began in September. This program provides the staff with designated time to work with a smaller group of students on targeted skills. In addition, Cabrillo is still learning and growing in math by using Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI). CGI is based on 30 years of research on the way children think about mathematics. In the book *Children's Mathematics Cognitively Guided Instruction*, the authors state that "CGI teachers have found many ways to productively pose problems, elicit their children's mathematical thinking, and engage students with each other's mathematical ideas." Our Cabrillo teachers are active in utilizing CGI strategies daily in their classrooms.

Our staff has also been implementing the new English language arts curriculum, titled Wonders. The staff has been collaborating with their grade-level teams to become familiar with the curriculum and the correlation to the Common Core State Standards. Throughout the year, teachers will be given collaboration time to dive deep into the new series. We are excited to embark on this new adventure!

Cabrillo's Positive Behavior Support System (PBS) is a huge success. Our school counselor Ms. López and our PBS team have worked hard to train the entire staff and student body on the 3 B's—be respectful, be responsible, and be safe—and our schoolwide behavior expectations. We launched the new school year with grade-level-expectation assemblies to review both Whole Body Listening and Behavior Expectations.

We are very proud of all of our students for practicing the 3 B's, earning Cub Cards, and being role models to their peers. Keep it up, Cabrillo superstars!



Counting Collection Photo of Ethan Custer and Aidan Atkins



# Richard Henry Dana *Middle School (6-8)*

5504 W. 135th St., Hawthorne, CA 90250 • 310/725-4700 • www.wisburn.k12.ca.us



**Dr. Blake Silvers**  
*Principal*

## Continuing to Thrive

Dana Middle School is back in session, and with this brings the excitement of new opportunities for our students to learn and grow.

In the similar fashion of years past, Dana Middle School strives to stay current and continuously evolve as a center of learning that will inspire our students and challenge them all through the middle grades, while at the same time supporting the “whole student.” Dana Middle School and the Wiseburn Unified School District share the mantra that through both continuous improvement and a laser-like focus on the whole student, we can prepare children to become life-long learners and valuable members of the local community and greater society.

It's fitting then that the 2017-018 school year marks Dana Middle School's fourth re-designation as a National Forum School to Watch. This recognition is not an award, but rather a process of goal-setting and refinement of programs so that we can continue to boast high levels of student achievement and engagement in academic and extracurricular activities.



**Dana Middle School prepares for the National Forum Schools To Watch redesignation and school site visit in October.**

Dana has thrived over the last 12 years. As the Dolphin staff team has reviewed our signature practices in preparation for the upcoming School to Watch designation, we are filled with pride because of the positive evolution of these implementations. What stays near and dear to all of our decision-making is a collective agreement that students will support their growth by taking ownership of their learning and behavior, and that the school culture will foster an environment that personalizes the experience for all students.

Today, the desire to continue improving remains strong, as we look for new and innovative ways to address and support 21st-century students. Along these lines, Dana is a 1:1 Chromebook-to-student setting. Our Future Ready Advisory Team leads the charge of infusing technology seamlessly and effectively into the classroom. Members of the Future Ready Team have also begun the process of restructuring and redefining the way classrooms look and operate by creating student-centered and flexible settings to promote collaboration and problem solving. This is also evident in the new Maker's Space, where students are invited to spend time and, simply put, create.



**Students working in the brand new Active Learning Center funded through a grant from Steelcase written by Maria Garcia.**



**Future Ready Advisor and Math 6 Teacher, Ms. Evelyn Andrade engages students in a classroom based on a flexible setting philosophy.**

As the 2017-2018 school year takes off, we are reminded every day that middle school is a dynamic time for students. Questioning, problem-solving, laughter, and smiles are all elements that define the Dana Dolphins. It is the mission and vision of Dana Middle School to stay on the cutting edge and adapt and improve accordingly so that our students can continue to thrive and compete in the world of college and careers.

## WISEBURN • From Page 1

As we begin our ninth year of providing School News door to door to every household in Wiseburn, Del Aire and Hollyglen, each of our schools will be shining a spotlight on the different forms that “continuous improvement” takes at each of our schools. The improvement process in Wiseburn is very thoughtful and intentional. As a specific example, the beginning of every school year in late August, our leadership team of teachers and administrators meets to review data and evidence related to academic goals from the previous year, and establish academic goals for the new year. As you are probably aware, our entire District K-12 has been working hard over the past two years to strengthen our achievement in mathematics. We have teamed with the Cotsen Foundation and Loyola Marymount's Math Leadership Corp to support this effort. I am very pleased to share that our hard work is paying off. The percentage of Wiseburn students who are proficient (meets or exceeds standards) in mathematics on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP), rose by 9% in 2016-17. This was the

highest rate of growth by any district in the South Bay. To continue this growth, we will be working with Cotsen and Loyola Marymount again this year and we have set very ambitious growth goals for 2017-18. With a growth mindset and an optimistic outlook, the growth possibilities for 2017-18 are boundless! Here's to another great year in 2017-18!

## Dr. Johnstone Announces Retirement

In closing, I wanted to share with all of you in the community that this year, my tenth year as superintendent in Wiseburn, will be my final year and that I will be retiring on June 30, 2018. I have enjoyed a very fulfilling 38+ year career in education, all in two districts: 28 years up the road in Lennox and the past 9 years in Wiseburn. These past nine years have been the most exciting and rewarding years in my career and I have been blessed beyond my wildest dreams to have had the opportunity to work with and serve you in Wiseburn! I thank all of you and very much look forward to working hard this year and having our best and most productive year ever! Thank you!

## Wiseburn: A Culture of Continuous Improvement

By Danny Juarez, Community Relations Director

The theme of this edition of School News is “Wiseburn: A Culture of Continuous Improvement”. It did not take long for me correlate this edition’s theme to the work of a group of dedicated volunteers and school staff under the auspicious of the citizen’s Measure CL Oversight Committee. As Committee Chairperson, we see firsthand the benefits of the culture of continuous improvement every time we meet.

One needs to go back and recall the purpose of Measure CL. This new source of income to the school district is used to ensure that our students get a solid educational foundation in academic subjects such as math, science and English, helping prepare them for entry into college and to compete in today’s tough job market. In today’s high-speed, technologically advanced economy, it is critical to maintain up-to-date computer and learning technology programs for our students that will help prepare students for high demand jobs of the twenty-first century. Without question Measure CL will stay on course and implement the culture of continuous improvement for the advancement at each school throughout the Wiseburn Unified School District.

Like the Wiseburn Unified School District, United States Soccer Federation endures to evolve through continuous process improvement for the best experience of its member organizations. AYSO, a unique world-class youth sports organization, is a member of the United States Soccer Federation. Through continuous improvement, AYSO has been the leader in establishing groundbreaking youth soccer programs in the United States. The organization is proud to have paved the road for youth soccer and looks forward to meeting the challenges of the 21st century.

Soccer enthusiasts could not have asked for more of a soccer-filled summer than what we experienced. The United States Men’s National Team (USMNT) made soccer history by inking a 2-1 win over Jamaica that sealed the 2017 CONCACAF Gold Cup title. It should be noted that our hometown grown hero Gyasi Zardes who played in AYSO 21 Hawthorne scored a crucial goal in the quarterfinal match against Cuba. Eight months since Jurgen Klinsmann’s subsequent dismissal and Bruce Arena’s appointment, the USA is 9-0-5. Its 2-0-2 qualifying mark. This dramatic, costly coaching change left the program in a World Cup qualifying crisis and drifting in a state of significant uncertainty, the mood around the USMNT seems better than it’s been for years. USA is continental champion for the first time in four years.

2017 has been the period of news regarding past and future coaches. In June Tony DiCicco, a fixture on the American soccer scene who coached the United States Women’s National Team on their memorable run to the 1999 World Cup title passed away. Sigi Schmid was named Los Angeles Galaxy Head Coach. Schmid, a two-time MLS Coach of the Year and two-time MLS Cup winner from his previous time with the Galaxy, Columbus Crew SC and Seattle Sounders FC. Bob Bradley was named the first head coach in club history for the Los Angeles Football Club (LAFC) – the newest MLS team. Bradley is a two-time MLS Coach of The Year and former U.S. Men’s National Team coach and brings over 20 years of head coaching experience.

September marks the start of a new Fall soccer season. AYSO is a soccer organization, a community, a lifestyle, a family, an adventure, a learning experience, a place to make memories and a season of exciting and busy Saturdays and Sundays, all wrapped up in color-coordinated jerseys and cleats. Giving our youth the opportunity to play soccer and learn about life,

sportsmanship and the fun of competition and physical activity with a soccer program that has been kicking around since 1964. No one ever knows what will come of this unique experience in AYSO.

AYSO Region 21 Hawthorne was charted as an official region back on December 15, 1972. On September 9th, we kicked off our 45th season serving the youth of our community. Regional Commissioner Darryl Letchworth blew the whistle at the first match and we now are in full swing with about 1,100 players and 115 teams participating in this local premier soccer program which includes boys and girls with ages ranging from 4½ to under 19 years of age.

The youth organization received rave reviews about the Under 5 Jamboree Program. Unfortunately, due to the low number of girls registered, the U5 Jamboree Program changed for this year. There is a Under 5 Program is for boys only. The Under 5 Girls was combined with the Under 6 Girls Program. It should come as no surprise that there is a big difference in attention span and abilities. The Under 5 Jamboree Program just for 4-year olds has been successful in other cities across the country. Due to the age of the children the Jamboree program does not conform to the more traditional “team” format as the older children do. There are no practices and no team assignments. The Instead, the skill training (practice) and games are incorporated into the weekly Jamboree sessions held every Saturday morning by the seasoned Board Member Ramon Pulido. We hope to bring back the traditional Under 5 Jamboree Program next year.

2017 marks the 27th anniversary of the AYSO Very Important Program (VIP). We have once again registered many players who participate in the VIP Program. This program provides a quality soccer experience for children and adults whose physical or mental disabilities make it difficult to successfully participate on mainstream teams. Disabilities may include blind or visually impaired, amputees or with conditions that impair mobility, mentally or emotionally challenged, autistic, Down’s syndrome and Cerebral Palsy. On Saturday, October 21, 2017, we hosted the 18th Annual VIP Handicap Soccer Friendship Festival at the Dana Sports Complex. This was a fun-filled day for participants and their families.

We are very appreciative to the Wiseburn Unified School District for the use of the all soccer fields (Aviation & Juan de Anza in Del Aire and Peter Burnett, Juan Cabrillo & Richard Henry Dana in Holly Glen) within the district boundaries. Juan de Anza is a premier synthetic field and the envy of other regions. With the groundbreaking behind us, the future for two new soccer fields at the old Richard Henry Dana and the Wiseburn High school sites will soon become a reality. Just a friendly reminder to visitors to the playfields, the fields are not a dog park.

The success of AYSO is based on the hard work of VOLUNTEERS. Every aspect of running the region depends on individuals who step up to be a coach, an assistant coach, referee, team mom, team dad or board member. If you want to be part of a world-class and unique experience – carve some time out of your busy schedule and VOLUNTEER. If you are too busy to volunteer, make sure that you thank board members, coaches, referees who have stepped up to volunteer.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact Regional Commissioner Darryl Letchworth at (310) 739-3933 or dletch38@yahoo.com .

See you all on the pitch (soccer field)!!!





**Dr. Tom Johnstone**

As a school community and Wiseburn community, we must constantly remind ourselves that we respect, celebrate and embrace our incredibly diverse population. As we start the new school year we must remind ourselves that all students and their families are welcome in our schools and will be protected regardless of race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, disability, citizenship status, sexual orientation or gender identity.

We look forward to a peaceful and productive year in Wiseburn Unified School District! Thank you for all of your support and for entrusting us with your children.

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## Word Search Contest

### Words from Superintendent Dr. Johnstone's Message

**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 Wiseburn in the subject line)

Entries must be received by **December 15, 2017**  
From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win  
a GAZUMP card/dice game - fun for all ages!

- |           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| WELCOME   | AFFILIATION |
| WISEBURN  | DISABILITY  |
| UNIFIED   | CITIZENSHIP |
| SCHOOL    | STATUS      |
| DISTRICT  | IDENTITY    |
| PROTECTED | ENTRUSTING  |
| RETIRING  | SUPPORT     |
| RACE      | CHILDREN    |
| ETHNICITY | TOLERATED   |
| RELIGIOUS | COMMUNITY   |



## Employees of the Year (Continued)



during World War II at Manzanar. She attended Arlington Heights Elementary School for K-4 and was one of the pioneer students accepted to the first magnet school in LAUSD called the Center for Enriched Studies, which is now referred to as LACES (Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies). Our Classified Employee of the Year was active in youth sports and enjoyed playing basketball for the Tigers Youth Club as a player and eventually a youth coach. She continues her involvement in youth basketball today as a Board member for the Jets/Jetts organization.

After graduating high school, Mrs. Tsubaki attended West Los Angeles College and CSUN before deciding on a career as a court reporter and graduated from Merit College of Court Reporting as a State Certified Court Reporter. She worked as a freelance court reporter for Barkley Court Reporters and other agencies and spent some time working as a court reporter pro tem for the Los Angeles Municipal Court.

Wendy took a rather circuitous route in getting to Wiseburn. In her application to Wiseburn, she wrote, "What I bring to Wiseburn is my love and desire to work with a team of individuals and my thirst to be trained and constantly learn. But most of all, I love working with children and the hope to better myself in working in an education-based field."

On the road to Wiseburn, Wendy took lots of detours, working as a Scopist and Editor during her school years at Merit, as an Office Manager at Cushner Reporting Service, a freelance Court Reporter, she became a Sales Coordinator for Fullmark International Import-Export Company, and worked at Delta Airlines in Customer Service. Her love of youth sports and working with children is what brought her to Wiseburn and she has never looked back.

Our 2017 Classified Employee of the Year was hired in Wiseburn on January 1, 1999 as an Account Clerk/Receptionist in the Business Office. Her supervisor, Faye Higashi noted, "Wendy is very reliable and requires minimal supervision. She cheerfully volunteers to help support critical timelines, is very resourceful and makes thoughtful decisions. She is a fast learner and was very instrumental with the Business Office conversion to a new LACOE accounting system. Wendy continues to help train others." On July 11, 2002, Mrs. Tsubaki was promoted to Buyer in the Business Office and a few years later earned additional Business Office knowledge and took on the role of Payroll Technician.

Over Wendy's 18-year Wiseburn career, there have been a multitude of words used to describe her performance...words like feisty, ferocious, tactful, diplomatic, tenacious, compassionate, high energy, loyal, bright, thoughtful, logical, good listener, communicator, accurate, detail oriented, doer, stubborn, team player, servant, and Mom. Wendy is married and has two children – one of whom is a 2017 graduate of Dana Middle School.

On July 13, 2009, Mrs. Tsubaki was promoted to the position of Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, where she has excelled for 8 years. In this capacity, there is virtually nothing that she doesn't do to support Wiseburn, the Board of Trustees and her Superintendent. Dr. Johnstone recently wrote, "Wendy is exceptional in every way. She is universally respected and loved by the Wiseburn staff and community. She is a master at solving problems --- not only Wiseburn's but Da Vinci's as well. She is able to take initiative on wide ranging projects and successfully completes them with very little direction. She has been my right hand for 8 years and she has been indispensable in the success that we have achieved. I feel blessed to have Wendy as the captain of our District Office Team. She is truly a gift!"

Our 2017 Classified Employee of the Year is the face of the District in so many ways, whether it's the Opening of School Barbecue or the South Bay Classic Golf Tournament to support local schools, her fingerprints are on everything and everyone knows Wendy Tsubaki. She is unparalleled in taking care of the Superintendent and Board of Trustees and at keeping the Superintendent in line. Wendy is so deserving of this prestigious award!



at California State University, Northridge, CSU Long Beach and the University of San Diego.

Coming out of the University, Our Teacher of the Year completed credential work at CSUN and did student teaching assignments in LAUSD at Marquez Elementary School in Pacific Palisades and Carpenter Avenue School in Studio City. At Marquez, Ms. Downer's university supervisor wrote, "In just a short time, this teacher has learned how to focus "wiggly" 6-year-olds in a positive way. She is friendly, flexible and creative. Liza will be an asset to any school staff." Ms. Downer's Master Teacher added, "She

has been quite skillful in the ability to ask the kinds of questions which help children think and grow in their ability to analyze."

Ms. Downer started in our district as a substitute teacher on February 5, 1991. Twenty-six years ago Wiseburn's enrollment was only 1,400 students. Due to the fiscal crisis of the early 1990's Liza ended up having to substitute teach for a year and a half while also serving as a lifeguard/swim instructor for Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation. She also honed her skills as an Administrative Assistant at the Reading Center in Manhattan Beach.

On September 10, 1993, Ms. Downer launched her career in Wiseburn at Dana Middle School in the 6th grade, teaching all subjects. Her principal, Dr. Kay Plush, described her as "very enthusiastic with a great desire to continuously improve. She has very good rapport with students and is truly a concerned and dedicated teacher." Like all new teachers in Wiseburn Liza got involved in everything – the Dana Talent Show, Outdoor Science Camp, the PTA Pancake Breakfast and numerous conferences.

One of Liza's most outstanding qualities is her advocacy and patience for students with severe special needs. During the past school year Wiseburn had a non-public school student return to one of our elementary schools. This student began the return to Wiseburn on a restricted shortened day schedule. Within weeks this teacher recommended that the student be placed on a full day schedule with no restrictions – with some hesitation from both the Director of Psychological Services and the Principal, both who felt that the student was not quite ready for a full-day, regular schedule. Ms. Downer persisted and she was right. The student was placed on a full-day schedule and thrived largely due to the faith and determination of the teacher!

Liza successfully transferred to Anza Elementary School to begin the 1994-95 school year as a 5th grade teacher where she has remained for the last 23 years. Ms. Downer was part of a team that watched Anza grow from a school of under 400 students in 1994 to a school with nearly 700 students by 2013. At Anza she provided leadership in School Site Council, the Student Recognition Committee, the Reading Textbook Adoption Committee in 2003, the Program Quality Review Team, Anza Leadership Team, Student Council Advisor, Technology Mentor, Teaching American History Grant, Talking Teaching, a COTSEN CGI Fellow and for most of the past 14 years, Wiseburn Faculty Association President. Along the way, Ms. Downer has received abundant praise from her principals. In 1994 Helen Bell wrote, "Heightening student self-esteem appears to be at the core of her teaching. She treats each individual with respect and her genuine interest in each of her students is wonderful to see." Five years later in 1999, Mrs. Bell expressed, "Liza is an excellent teacher! Her content exciting lessons are developmentally appropriate and always reflect the higher levels of the thinking hierarchy. Teachers such as Liza are critical to our school's success and are an asset to Wiseburn School District and to our profession." Wiseburn Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Chris Jones, described our Teacher of the Year like this, "In the classroom, she is a consummate professional. Her positive demeanor and relaxed attitude combine to create a positive learning environment for students. She takes a personal interest in the lives of her students and they respond to her by giving their best efforts in their work. At Anza, and districtwide, she is a true leader."

When Ms. Downer is not burning the midnight oil in Wiseburn, she loves to travel. Whether here in the U.S. or over in Europe she is most in her element riding with a friend on a Harley Davidson or Ducati enjoying a life of adventure.

In closing, Wiseburn Superintendent, Dr. Tom Johnstone shared, "As the Superintendent, I cannot even begin to express how much I appreciate Liza. For me, she is the essence of the Wiseburn culture. Her leadership and steadiness were so instrumental in helping our district survive and thrive through the worst fiscal crisis in our State in 80 years. Liza is an awesome problem solver! She is truly an outstanding Teacher of the Year, Anza Teacher, and Wiseburn Treasure. Nobody could be more deserving of this award!"

**Wiseburn Unified School District**  
**13530 Aviation Blvd., Hawthorne, CA 90250**  
**(310) 643-3025**

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Domino's Pizza  
The Donut  
El Segundo Brewing Company  
El Segundo Fish Company  
Fantastic Café  
Farm Stand  
Good Stuff Restaurant  
Hana Naru  
Hanabi Japanese Grill  
Harry O's  
Havana Sandwich Co  
The Hummus Factory  
I Love Teriyaki  
Indian Summer  
Little Gourmet  
Main St. Café  
Mandy's Family Restaurant  
The Office Downtown  
Old Town Patio  
O-Shun  
Our Daily Grind  
Playa Blanca  
Purple Orchid  
Richmond Bar & Grill  
Rinaldi's  
Rock & Brews  
Second City Bistro  
Siam Bay Thai Cuisine  
Starbucks Coffee  
Steve's Burgers  
Stix & Straws  
Stuff Pizza  
Taco Mex  
The Soup Bar  
The Tavern on Main  
Viny's Pizza  
Wendy's Place Café

For a complete listing of Downtown  
Restaurants, Shopping & Services,  
Downtown El Segundo Guides are  
available at the Wiseburn School  
District Offices!



## Discover Downtown El Segundo

Enjoy a walk along beautiful tree lined streets as the incredible aromas from over 50 restaurants entice your taste buds. Discover unique stores tempting you with fabulous selections from the hottest designer fashions to popular surfwear. A sampling of fabulous Downtown El Segundo Retailers...

Banner Stationers  
Beadtopia  
Colors Custom Furniture  
Cooke's Family Market  
D'Arte Connection  
El Segundo Tailors  
Electric Bikes LA  
Frocks & Rocks  
Gasoline  
Holly Main Liquor  
Industrial Lock & Security  
The Jewelry Source  
Kahanamokus Swimboat  
Natural Simplicity  
R. Chameleon  
The Slipt Stitch  
Studio Antiques  
Studio Joseph Watts  
Tawnie's Pet Depot  
Tyler Surfboards  
Vintage Canvas  
Wrapsody



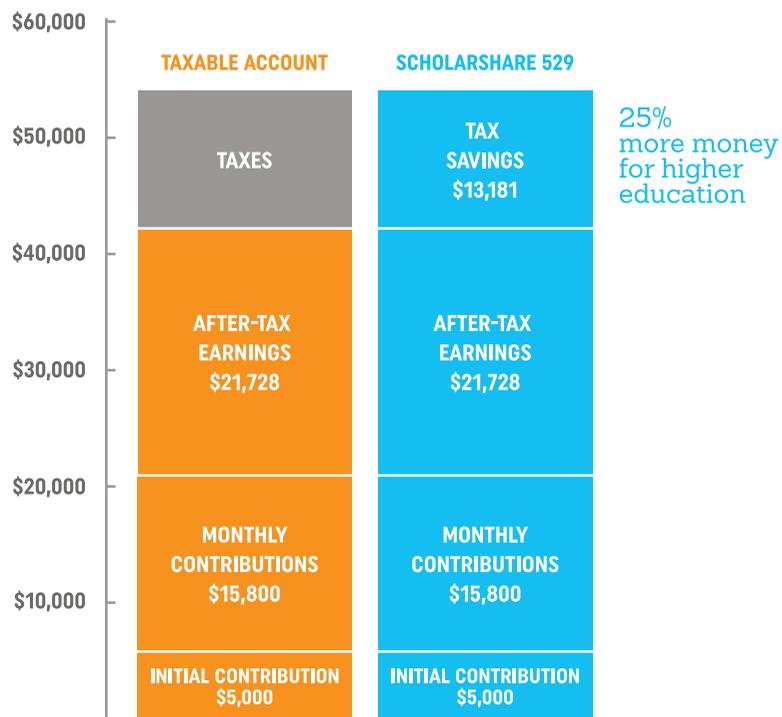
el segundo chamber of commerce  
427 main street • el segundo • california 90245  
310-322-1220 • fax 310-322-6868

 [www.elsegundochamber.org](http://www.elsegundochamber.org)

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This hypothetical example assumes a \$5,000 initial deposit, \$50 per month subsequent deposit for 18 years and 7% annual ROI. Tax calculations assume the maximum federal tax capital gains tax rate of 20% and the maximum CA marginal tax rate of 13%. This hypothetical example is for illustrative purposes only and does not reflect past performance or guarantee future performance of the ScholarShare 529 College Savings Plan or investment portfolios offered through the ScholarShare 529 College Savings Plan. These illustrative results also do not reflect any reduction for expenses.



To learn more about the California 529 College Savings Plan, its investment objectives, tax benefits, risks, and costs, please see the Disclosure Booklet at [ScholarShare529.com](https://www.ScholarShare529.com). Read it carefully. Check with your home state to learn if it offers tax or other benefits for investing in its own 529 plan. Taxpayers should seek advice from an independent tax advisor based on their own particular circumstances. Investments in the Plan are neither insured nor guaranteed and there is the risk of investment loss. Non qualified withdrawals may also be subject to an additional 2.5% California tax on earnings. TIAA-CREF Individual & Institutional Services, LLC, member FINRA, distributor and underwriter for the California 529 College Savings Plan. 277543