

**FREE**

# School News

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**Covering the Orange Unified School District**

**VOLUME 8, ISSUE 40**

[www.schoolnewsrollcall.com](http://www.schoolnewsrollcall.com)

**DECEMBER 2012–MARCH 2013**

## **SUPERINTENDENT**



**Michael L. Christensen**

The California Department of Education released the 2011-12 Accountability Progress Reports later than usual this year. The long delay was well worth the wait for the Orange Unified School District. The District's State Academic Performance Index (API) score rose 16 points this year, from 820 to 836, exceeding the Orange County Average District API. OUSD also achieved the highest two-year gain of any Orange County K-12 Unified School District with an overall increase of 33 points.

Individual schools also showed great progress. Villa Park Elementary School's API grew 68 points to 980,

*SEE SUPERINTENDENT • PAGE 19*

## **Putting On Our Hats for Cancer**



**Crescent TK and kindergarten students support cancer patients during a "Hats off for Cancer" schoolwide campaign at Crescent Elementary School.**

*By Robin Nelson  
6th Grade GATE Teacher  
Crescent Elementary*

Student Council at Crescent Elementary sponsored a Mad Hatter Drive in October in order to collect funds and hats for children affected by childhood cancer. Students donated new hats to give to children and teens who have battled cancer in the past or who are currently battling cancer.

In order to raise funds, students were also allowed to wear their favorite hats at school all day for a donation of just \$2. All hats donated will go to CHOC (Children's Hospital of Orange County), and all money raised will go to Hats Off for Cancer, a 100 percent-volunteer nonprofit organization based in Calabasas. In just the one day, our Crescent students raised \$950 and contributed 30 hats!

## **Sixth Grade 'Rocks' Outdoor Science Camp**



*By Debra Larson, Principal  
Villa Park Elementary School*

What really "rocks, erupts with excitement, and brings out your wild side?" Outdoor Science Camp, of course! Sixth-graders just returned from an adventurous experience to remember. They searched for rocks and minerals that contribute to the earth's surface as they hunted for treasures along the riverbed during the geology trail.

Lessons about earthquakes, volcanoes and plate tectonics were played out in games and song. Eyewitness accounts from the ecosystem trail vividly described the wildlife, habitats and ecosystems of the many indigenous animals and plants residing in the mountain region.

New friendships were made and old ones were renewed. Students unable to attend used expert groups and multimedia to creatively explore these concepts back here at home while demonstrating their knowledge in skits for fifth grade.

## **Panorama Elementary School**



**Panorama Panthers are Bully Proof!  
(please see page 15)**

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**Kay Coop**  
Founder / Publisher



This is our 8th year publishing *School News* covering the OUSD. During those years there have been many changes in the curriculum and advancements in technology. We appreciate you being loyal readers.

Happy Holidays to you and your families. We are always mindful of the service men and women who will not be home for the holidays and appreciate their service.

Our next issue is April 17, 2013 just in time to bring you our special Camp/Activities sections. Until then Happy New Year!

# School News

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[www.schoolnewsrollcall.com](http://www.schoolnewsrollcall.com)  
Covering the  
ORANGE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



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13790-12

## Kids can be kids when their asthma is under control



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# Orange Unified School District Provides Classes in Full-Day Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten\*

Kindergarten Registration begins on  
**Wednesday, March 6, 2013**  
with the exception of McPherson Magnet School

To participate in the lottery at McPherson Magnet School (K-8),  
parents must attend one of the following orientation meetings at McPherson School:  
**February 5<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. or February 6<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m.**

For more information on the OUSD **Mandarin Immersion Program** at Fletcher Elementary,  
visit the OUSD website.\*\*

- To receive a Kindergarten Registration packet,  
parents must have all the required documentation:

- Child's birth certificate
- Child's current immunization records
- Two address verifications  
(Even if a sibling currently attends the  
school, verification is required as the  
family may have moved.)

- Each school site determines the date that  
packets must be returned to their site.

➤ For more information regarding Kindergarten Registration, parents should  
contact the school site directly or go to the OUSD website at  
<http://www.orangeusd.org/scs/#enroll>.

\* **Transitional Kindergarten** information— A parent information meeting will be  
held Tuesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, at the District Office—Board Room 3, Bldg H,  
from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

\*\* **Mandarin Immersion Program** information— A parent information meeting  
will be held January 16, 2013, at the District Office—Board Room 2, Bldg H,  
from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

## Open Enrollment Information:

K – 12 Open Enrollment will be held  
**March 4 – 15, 2013**

Additional information is posted  
on the OUSD website.

Orange Unified School District is located at  
1401 North Handy Street, Orange, CA  
[www.orangeusd.org](http://www.orangeusd.org)

# California *Elementary*

1080 N. California St., Orange, CA 92867 • 714/997-6104 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Laurie Dieppa**  
Principal

## California Bears are Fierce Learners!

This year, California Elementary School will continue to recognize individual students for their efforts. Those children who increased their scores last year will receive an award for their accomplishments in language arts or mathematics at our first trimester awards assemblies.

All of our students are setting new goals with their teachers and parents. This year we will continue to focus on reading comprehension and basic math facts. Our students are working hard to increase their comprehension by simply reading, reading and reading! Our incentive program allows them to track their progress on the reading success wall in the library, where they can also earn even more books to read.

One of our newest incentives for learning basic math facts in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division is a "Math Wizard" bumper sticker for the students who have passed their grade-level assessment. The classes with the most students passing will receive a trophy and bragging rights.

Every classroom, as well as the front office, will be displaying this year's goals and graphs to show how we are progressing. Parents will also receive student progress reports midway through the second and third trimesters for the purpose of communication and to increase student achievement.

Our Bears may be fierce about learning, but it is up to us to communicate with the parents to keep them focused and on the track for success!

# Cambridge *Elementary*

425 N. Cambridge St., Orange, CA 92866 • 714/997-6103 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Jeremy Mortensen**  
Principal

## It Takes Us All!

The Cambridge Elementary School students and staff helped *National Geographic Kids* attempt to set two Guinness World Records® titles: most people to run 100 meters in 24 hours and the longest chain of shoes.

Approximately 200 Cambridge students participated in the challenge by running 100 meters each. To break the first record, more than 5,000 people worldwide needed to run 100 meters between 12 p.m. Eastern Time (ET) October 26, 2012, and 12 p.m. ET October 27, 2012. More than 25,000 shoes needed to be collected and sent to National Geographic Society headquarters by November 9, 2012 to break the second record. Though the results have yet to be tallied, Cambridge is optimistic that both these records will be broken!

Cambridge hosted its annual Family Science Night in November. Students explored different exhibits and attempted numerous experiments with their families that evening. Thank you to all those who helped make the evening a success!

As always, Cambridge continues to strive toward academic excellence and enriching each student to his or her fullest potential. We encourage our staff, students, parents, and community members to continue to be a part of each of our students' learning. It takes us all!

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# Anaheim Hills *Elementary*

6450 E. Serrano Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807 • 714/997-6169 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Sandra Miller**  
Principal

## A Tradition of Excellence

I am proud to announce that Anaheim Hills Elementary School (AHES) has an Academic Performance Index (API) of 905! Students and staff worked hard and are committed to working hard to continue the tradition of excellence, high standards, and collaboration that has been established at AHES.

With the 2012-2013 school year in full swing, many exciting things have been happening at Anaheim Hills. LA Boxing presented their nationwide anti-bullying campaign at AHES to bring awareness to the students. Professional mixed martial arts fighters spoke to students about what a bully is, what a bully looks like, and what they should do if they are bullied or witness bullying.

AHES students were also lucky to have author Kevin Staniec and illustrator Patrick Ballesteros from Treehouse Bandits talk to our students about the writing process and what it takes to write and publish a book. They discussed the importance of learning to read and write and encouraged students follow their dreams.

# Canyon Hills

260 S. Imperial Hwy., Anaheim, CA 92807 • 714/997-6171 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Karen Hanson**  
Principal

## Fall Kickoff!

Exciting things are happening at Canyon Hills School! In September, the Parent Group hosted a wonderful Back to School Night dinner, dance and raffle for our families, with the assistance of a local church youth group. In October, students participated in the annual Pumpkin Patch, again provided by the Parent Group and local employees of a local department store. There was pumpkin decorating, refreshments, and a fun fall backdrop for individual pictures.

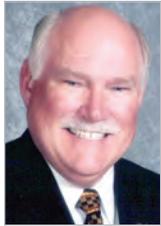
Red Ribbon Week was a time to celebrate community helpers. It included a visit from the JROTC Color Guard from Orange High School, who participated in the kickoff assembly, and a police officer and ambulance personnel who brought their vehicles to school for interactive experiences with the students.

The students at Canyon Hills thrive on multisensory experiences to improve communication and social and academic skills. Our school appreciates its wonderful Parent Group, all community partners and the staff who contribute to the stimulating learning environment at Canyon Hills.



# Canyon *High School*

220 S. Imperial Hwy., Anaheim, CA 92807 • 714/532-8000 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Dr. Greg Bowden**  
*Principal*

## Career Pathways

Canyon High School students have more opportunities than ever before to explore and prepare for careers through our Career Pathways program. Counselor Michelle Villanueva works with our teachers and counselors to help coordinate the program.

Every freshman has the opportunity to begin career exploration in a Freshman Seminar class, which uses the new web-based Kuder Navigator program. This allows the students to virtually explore different careers based upon their personal interests and aptitudes. The students have lifetime access to the program, and can revisit and revise their career searches as they mature and change.

Beyond Freshman Seminar, our students also have the opportunity to explore careers in a variety of industry sectors, including health services, public services, arts, media and entertainment, education and child development, and business and marketing, to name just a few.

One part of the Pathways Program, ROP (the Regional Occupation Program), gives students a chance to see the variety of different career options that lie within their field of interest. For instance, students enrolled in Career Focus Protective Services can explore careers as police officers, fire fighters and emergency medical technicians.

The students then have the opportunity to take more specialized courses in the area of their choice. Several of the courses offered at Canyon are articulated with the local community colleges. Involvement in the Career Pathways Program helps make school more relevant to our students as they work towards their career goals.

# Canyon Rim *Elementary*

1090 S. The Highlands Dr., Anaheim, Ca 92808 • 714/532-7027 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**David Appling**  
*Principal*

## Theory of Action: Academic Achievement Strategies

Teachers and students are working together smarter, not harder, to accomplish high expectations in the classroom. The Canyon Rim Staff is working steadily to increase student achievement, using three theories of action. The first theory: If we continually develop the instructional expertise and the analyzing of data with our teachers, then teaching will be strengthened and students will learn in deeper and more meaningful ways, such as Response to Instruction and Intervention; Thinking Maps; Step Up to Writing; cognitive guided instruction; GLAD; SDAIE strategies; differentiated instruction; ExCEL; and Check for Understanding.

Second, if we monitor students' progress through multiple formats over time, then we will be able to assess instructional effectiveness and develop focused intervention strategies by focusing on targeted students, data conferences, intervention-teacher collaborations with classroom teachers, data analysis of student progress, student goal setting and grade-level goal setting.

Last, if we develop the efficacy of students so that they become active participants in their learning, then students will engage in school and develop the habits of mind that lead to successful lifelong learning. To accomplish this, we utilize the foundations of the Common Core: communication objectives and response frames; differentiated instruction; ExCEL model; Check for Understanding through lesson standard, goal and objective; Student Data Chat; and student-led conferences.

Student achievement is a high priority, and we want to continuously support all learners in succeeding. This will help students to be lifelong learners and productive members of society.

# Cerro Villa *Middle School*

17852 Serrano Ave., Villa Park, CA 92861 • 714/997-6251 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Dr. Ken Miller**  
*Principal*

## Student Achievement Strategies and Focus

Cerro Villa earned the largest increase in school history on the Academic Performance Index for 2011–12. Our score revealed a 24-point increase, from 831 to 855. All core academic subject areas experienced growth. I am so proud of the hard work of our great staff, our students and our parents.

One item we added last year was the Student Dedication Form. Before the commencement of state testing, our students dedicated their efforts on the state tests to someone significant in their life.

This was documented on their Dedication Form along with the prior year's test scores, and the forms were then displayed in the students' testing rooms as motivation for the exams. With such stellar results, I know those honored individuals are very proud of each one of our students! This is a significant accomplishment for our community.

In addition to our focus on student learning, Cerro Villa continues to embrace a positive school climate with our Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies (PBIS), including antibullying. Our daily Viking spirit promotes high morale and mutual respect: C = Choose Respect; V = Value Yourself and Others; M = Make It Safe; S = Strive for Success. Students are rewarded for positive behavior with PBIS prize spirit cards and wristbands.

# Chapman Hills *Elementary*

170 N. Aspen St., Orange, CA 92869 • 714/532-8043 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Sandra Schaffer**  
*Principal*

## Formula for Success

This year, the students and teachers at Chapman Hills Elementary will be looking at the California Standards in greater depth. After each Paced Standards Assessment, each grade level will examine the results to identify the standards that were the most challenging for the students. We recently took the 35th-day PSA and have already begun to look at our results. The teachers determine which of the standards need additional review and plan their lessons accordingly. This data review allows us to differentiate instruction to make sure that all of the students' needs are being addressed. Since many of the standards contain multiple parts, the teachers will also be "deconstructing" to make sure that they teach every part of each standard. The PSAs also give our students the opportunity to see information presented differently from how it is in their textbooks. This is great practice for the CST in the spring!

Ultimately, we want our Bobcats to achieve success not just on the California Standards Test but also every day in school. We truly believe that the lessons learned today will guide our students throughout their school career and into adulthood. We incorporate social responsibility into our daily lessons as well in order to help our students be well-rounded, conscientious citizens both in and out of school. We are proud of all of the successes of our Chapman Hills Bobcats and strive to help all of them be the best they can be each and every day.



# El Modena *High School*

3920 Spring St., Orange, CA 92869 • 714/997-6331 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Rebecca Martinez**  
Principal

## Seek Success, Speak Success

El Modena High School continues to impress. Our new campaign, Seek Success, Speak Success, is progressing on a daily basis. Vanessa Breniz, a ninth-grade Vanguard, created the logo that expresses El Modena's desire to create not only successful graduates but also successful communicators in a global society. We congratulate Vanessa on her excellent design that supports our campaign focus.

In late September, it was standing room only in the EMHS library as over 100 parents and students attended an El Modena High School counselor-sponsored college-funding seminar. In October, over 300 students, primarily 10<sup>th</sup>- and 11<sup>th</sup>-graders, took the PSAT. From the results of last year's test, we had two semifinalists in the 2013 National Merit Scholarship Competition and six Commended students in the 2013 National Merit Program. We congratulate Vivien H. Ngo and Thaibao Q. Phan for their semifinalist performance and Regina Gonzalez-Arroyo, Jefferson T. Ha, Kaylee N. Hunt, Shirley Keating, Kendall L. Rasmussen and Ryan A. Towne for their Commended status with the National Merit Program.

Our El Modena High School Nature Center has become very popular. We continue to conduct tours for many OUSD elementary schools. This fabulous personalized field trip is conducted by our Vanguards, who encourage visiting elementary students to experience and appreciate all the phenomenal things nature has provided. Our students are trained to conduct informative and friendly tours.

We continue to be impressed with all the outstanding Vanguard accomplishments! Our teachers, students, parents, programs and community continue to support and model our mission and focus, Seek Success, Speak Success.

# El Rancho Charter *Middle School*

181 S. Del Giorgio Dr., Anaheim, CA 92808 • 714/997-6238 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**John Besta**  
Principal



**Michele Walker**  
Principal

## Adopt-A-Family

Every year El Rancho brings "Holiday Cheer" to needy families in Santa Ana. And this year will be no different. Each El Rancho class will get the opportunity to "adopt" a family by providing them with gifts, food, gift cards and many other items.

On December 14, the Associated Student Body class, as well as two representatives from each of the adopting classes, will be delivering these gifts and meeting with the families at the Southwest Community Center. It will be a great way to greet and bond with each family.

Watching the children from these families open their gifts with great anticipation is a wonderful sight to see. Our El Rancho students are being given a great opportunity to realize what a big impact they can make on a family in need.

Let us be grateful this holiday season for everything that we have. Happy Holidays!

# Crescent *Elementary*

5001 E. Gerda Drive, Anaheim, CA 92807 • 714/997-6371 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Randi Leach**  
Principal



## Putting On Our Hats for Cancer

(Please see our story on the front page.)

# Esplanade *Elementary*

381 N. Esplanade St., Orange, CA 92869 • 714/997-6157 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Amy Hitt**  
Principal

## Helping Us Each and Every Day

The students, staff and community of Esplanade are currently celebrating a 34-point improvement on our API score, which is now at 831!

One of the many components that contributed to this gain is the increasing amount of parental involvement that we are seeing in our educational programs. This includes our parent Rosetta Stone classes, Disciplina Positiva, our many PTA and school-sponsored events, and our parents generous donation of services.

One such parent is Ramiro Pantoja, the father of Ramiro, Rudy and Sofia. He recently shared his artistic talent with us by creating two beautiful murals for the campus. Each morning we also have several parents (led by Teresa Garcia) who greet our students at the drop-off, and also assist with the traffic as part of our GRIP program.



Rocio Revilla and Sofia Rocha also currently serve as our SSC and ELAC presidents, respectively. And we can't forget Willy and Martha Martinez, our PTA president and secretary. They coordinate most of our social events.

So thank you to all of the many parents who support our school. In both big ways and small, they help us each and every day!



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# Fairhaven *Elementary*

1415 Fairhaven Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/997-6178 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Kelli Keller**  
Principal

## National Blue Ribbon School

This month, Fairhaven Elementary School was awarded the National Blue Ribbon Award for producing outstanding student achievement results for six consecutive years. This recognition highlights the success of Fairhaven students, staff, and families, despite the great odds faced by our learning community. Only 24 schools across the state were recognized, with only three, including Fairhaven, named to the Exemplary Improving School category. This is the first nomination and award for both Fairhaven and Orange Unified School District.

Fairhaven is a Title I and Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) Class-Size Reduction Funding School with just over 550 students. Classrooms are capped at 20 students in transitional kindergarten through third grade and at 25 in fourth

through sixth grades. The smaller student ratio has allowed for more attention to each student's specific needs and has propelled individualized academic success.

This recognition is a confirmation of the hard work and the attainment of a long-held dream for our learning community. We believe and are proof that all students can meet and exceed their achievement goals.



# Fletcher *Elementary*

515 W. Fletcher St., Orange, CA 92865 • 714/997-6181 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Helen Chung Lu**  
Principal

## Premiering: OUSD Dual Language Immersion Program

*By Carla Deckard, K/1 Teacher*

Our Mandarin Dual Language Immersion pilot program is off and running with great support from our district, parents and the school site. As teacher of this class, it's an honor and a privilege to not only teach our next generation but to also be an active participant in working toward the OUSD mission statement of "being committed to planning for continual improvement, offering a learning environment of excellence, with high expectations, and to provide each student with the opportunity to be able to compete in the global economy."

Many of our kindergarten and first-grade Mandarin students already know numbers from one to 100, basic greetings and color names, all in Chinese. It's

amazing to watch their excitement as they learn a second—or, for some, a third—language. It can be a monumental undertaking for a child, but each student always approaches his or her learning enthusiastically and eagerly, wanting to learn more Mandarin.



# Handy *Elementary*

860 N. Handy St., Orange, CA 92867 • 714/997-6183 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



## Academics and the Arts

At Handy Elementary, our school motto is "Learning Today Makes A Brighter Tomorrow!" And so we are very excited to announce that our Academic Performance Index has increased by 27 points this year, to 811. We are also thrilled to announce that we have received a similar school API ranking of 9!

In addition to our great academic programs we also incorporate the arts into the curriculum, through the Art Masters program. Each year our parent organization partners with Art Masters, Inc.

to offer students an opportunity to study about and then create famous artwork from around the world.

Each student first studies a famous artist or era. This is followed by the special attention of professional artists, who work with each student to create individual student art pieces. This year our students are studying the ancient

Americas, Joseph Raffael, the African legacy, and Da Vinci.

At Handy, we believe that strong partnerships between academics and the arts can foster the kind of connected learning that will help each student thrive.



Handy students showcasing their work created during Art Masters.

# Imperial *Elementary*

400 S. Imperial Hwy., Anaheim, CA 92807 • 714/997-6282 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Ginette Kelley**  
Principal

## Strong Academics

At Imperial, we are proud to announce additional physical education and music education opportunities for our students. These new or enhanced programs have been made possible by generous contributions from the Imperial PTA.

Our P.E. program enables students to work on physical education standards through the coaching and instruction of a credentialed physical education teacher. Students meet twice weekly for instruction and activities.

Our music program offers students an opportunity to participate in basic music instruction. It gives them a good exposure to an aspect of the arts.

Imperial teachers know that learning a wide array of new words is important for students. New vocabulary words allow children to access the curriculum and grow intellectually. The vocabulary words taught in our classes can be split into three tiers. Tier 1 words are basic vocabulary, and Tier 3 words are advanced and context-sensitive.

Our teachers know that Tier 2 vocabulary words allow students to talk about subjects descriptively. This focus on vocabulary development will help all of our Imperial students grow academically.

Paced Standards Assessments have also been given in both math and English language arts throughout the Orange Unified School District. These PSAs are given periodically during the school year so that parents, teachers and students can assess growth and define goals.

Imperial students are continuing to show growth, too. The teachers at Imperial are using the results of these PSAs as an opportunity to have "Test Chats" and set further goals.

At Imperial, we continue to soar through our enriching activities and strong academics.

# Jordan *Elementary*

4319 E. Jordan Ave., Orange, CA 92869 • 714/997-6187 • www.oranged.k12.ca.us



**Andrea Roman**  
Principal

## "Together We're Better!"

After three months, it's obvious that the start of this school year has been very positive for Jordan's children and families. Starting with the Coffee with the Principal and followed by our Back to School Night and Dinner, students have been able to explore their school and share it with their families. At Back to School Night, information about students' school days, curriculum and grade-level standards was shared. We're pleased by the turnout and the students' passion about their school and achievements. Our goal this year is to make gains on our API and meet all achievement levels for all our major subgroups. We know that without everyone's commitment and support, we won't be able to achieve our goals!

Universal screenings took place during September, allowing us to identify which students might need some extra support and intervention. In October, our Response to Intervention Team at Jordan met with teachers to discuss student progress toward meeting grade-level standards and identify students needing more support. We believe parent participation supports their children's education. We hope to see our families participate in our parent groups such as PTA, School Site Council and ELAC as well as participate at school functions.

At Jordan, we strongly believe in our motto, "Together We're Better!" We appreciate our parents and community for their continued support in moving Jordan forward. Together, we're making strides to make Jordan Elementary School the best it can be. We ask for your continued support as together we contribute to a community of enthusiastic learners.

# Linda Vista *Elementary*

1200 N. Cannon St., Orange, CA 92869 • 714/977-6201 • www.oranged.k12.ca.us



**Sally Hughson**  
Principal

## Celebrations and Congratulations

Linda Vista Elementary School earned the honor of being named a California Distinguished School in 2012. We celebrated this wonderful achievement with a school-wide lunch block party last May. We now proudly display our Distinguished School flag and newly painted Distinguished School logo.

Linda Vista celebrated the start of a new year by hosting our New Family Orientation on in August. All kindergarten and new first- through sixth-grade families began the evening with pizza and cookies. Families were informed about Linda Vista's academic goals and PTA's goal to continue funding physical education, Art Maters, music and Science on the Go through our donation program.

We continued the year on a positive note by teaching our students what it means to be bucket fillers and bucket dippers. Ask your students about our bucket-filling school! We fill boxes, too—with food for the Orange County Rescue Mission. Linda Vista students collected 2,393 pounds of food, worth \$4,786.

We are celebrating birthdays in a new way by asking families to donate books to the library on their children's birthdays instead of sending sugary treats. More than 75 new books have been donated to the library so far this year.

Finally, we would like to congratulate the Linda Vista Elementary School 2012–2013 Student Council Board Members: Alessandra Spadaro, President; Libby Schrank, Vice President; Maisy Rankin, Treasurer; Shannon Swan, Secretary; Christian Sarmiento, Public Relations Officer; and Lucca Pracilio, Communications Officer. Student council's first community event will be a dress-up day and fund-raiser for the Red Cross.

# La Veta *Elementary*

2800 E. La Veta Ave., Orange, CA 92869 • 714/977-6155 • www.oranged.k12.ca.us



**Connie Smith**  
Principal

## Critical Thinking

*By the Gifted And Talented Education (GATE) Teachers*

Students and staff members at La Veta Elementary School are eagerly anticipating the adoption and implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in the fall of 2014. California, joined by 44 states and three U.S. territories, has adopted the CCSS, which will expand our current state standards by focusing on skills required for the 21st-century workforce.

In preparation for the implementation of CCSS, La Veta teachers are developing lessons which combine the mastery of critical-thinking skills. Students are being asked to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize concepts across the curricular areas through collaboration, communication, the use of technology, and product-based learning.

A critical component to the implementation of CCSS has been the use of Thinking Maps. Through the use of Thinking Maps, La Veta's students have been able to graphically organize information they have acquired in their CCSS lessons. The results have yielded students capable of problem solving on a higher level.



**Caden Perkins, Mikayla Reyes, Katie Real, and Will Cordett,**  
La Veta 6th grade students, review a group collaboration assignment.

# Lampson *Elementary*

13321 Lampson Ave., Garden Grove, CA 92840 • 714/997-6153 • www.oranged.k12.ca.us



**Dr. Maria Chairez**  
Principal

## Going Green and Parent Partners

Students at Lampson Elementary School will be celebrating moving up each five weeks with the help of their teachers. Literacy benchmarks have been created to show students and parents what is expected at each grade level. If students move up a level in reading fluency or reading, they are invited to a Green Celebration. This concept is based on the need to recognize students who are working hard to bring up their oral reading fluency. We enjoyed our second Green Celebration of the year in November, where students received green wrist bands and refreshments.

Parents have been volunteering in large numbers, and they have enjoyed being able to help out. This year, the principal has met with 39 parents who help at school, some as many as two or three times a week. The assistance they provide includes: making items for classrooms to use; helping with breakfast and lunch; helping in classrooms; and helping to organize the new Parent Portable. The school encourages parents to be helpers to promote student safety and provide our teachers with a little extra help preparing classroom items.

Ms. Pat Karamanongian, the mother of fourth-grade teacher Deryk Rawalt, has been volunteering in the library for years. She has increased her efforts to help get books on the shelves of our new library. Thank you to Ms. Karamanongian and all of our volunteers for their time and efforts to assist Lampson students.

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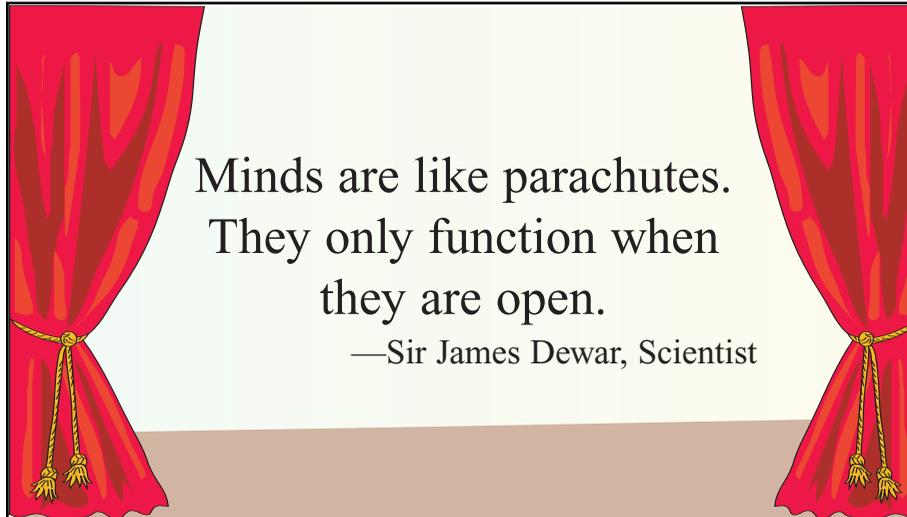


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They only function when  
they are open.

—Sir James Dewar, Scientist



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## Ask Dr. Shari

### Good for the Mind & Great for the Heart



Dr. Shari Sweetnam

The way we choose to spend our time and the activities in which we engage help form our value system. With a wide array of possibilities and opportunities, volunteering is a positive and vastly beneficial way of helping young people develop a strong sense of self.

Volunteering offers benefits spanning from the intellectual and spiritual to the educational and professional. As young people give of themselves and their time, they can learn about trades, people and being selfless. In a busy world of "pursuit of personal happiness," too often the intrinsic values of empathy and giving are the lessons that are overlooked. Helping others via a structured volunteer program is a positive and safe way to develop oneself in this regard.

#### Additional Benefits of Volunteerism:

- **Learning:** Acquiring a new trade or skill can help teens see the world in a bigger picture and be inspired to continue to expand intellectually.
- **Networking:** Volunteering brings people of like minds, interests and values together. This will inevitably lead to positive interaction and healthy relationships.
- **Building the Résumé:** Engaging in service to others and taking the initiative to learn new trades or skills is a brilliant way to expand your portfolio. This is especially beneficial for students and young professionals.
- **Personal Growth:** As Mahatma Gandhi said, "The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others." Teens who experience growth at an early age are likely to continue cultivating positive behavior and friendships.

Dr. Shari is the founder of the "Brainpower" program for schools, Author of "The Learning Toolbox - Memory Skills for Everyone" used in schools nationwide, "Inspiring the Love of Learning" and "The Algebra Toolbox - The UN MATH Solution" in schools Fall 2011. Dr. Shari is a syndicated columnist, radio host and author of over 200 articles on the topics of Learning and Memory. Contact Dr. Shari at [info@doctorshari.com](mailto:info@doctorshari.com). For a schedule of radio and television appearances see [www.doctorshari.com](http://www.doctorshari.com).

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## Things to Consider Before Saving for College



Susan D. Marshall

Saving for college can be an overwhelming thought for young families that are just starting out and are trying to buy a first home. If you are also saving for retirement, the cost of college can be paralyzing.

The changes in governmental rules also provide challenges. For example, 529 Plans originally were not considered in the financial aid calculation but now are. Here are four suggestions that can smooth your way.

- 1) Make sure you contribute to your retirement plan before you contribute to a college savings plan. Most advisors recommend contributing the largest affordable percentage that your employer will match. If you are a stay at home spouse, set up an IRA or a Roth IRA. Just be aware that these plans typically are invested in stocks, bonds and mutual funds that carry greater risk. The good news is that currently, retirement accounts are generally not considered in the financial aid calculation at most schools.
- 2) Buying your own home should be a top priority as soon as it makes financial and practical sense. It will serve as a future investment. You will build equity over time and it may provide you with collateral that may be used in the future to help pay for college.
- 3) Make sure your income is protected. What does that mean? Should you lose your job, become disabled or not make it home; will your family be able to have the resources to go on? Make sure you have the life and disability insurance to protect your family's future.
- 4) Have an accessible and safe emergency fund. The accounts that provide savings and liquidity are Long Term CD's, Fixed Annuities, Indexed Annuities and Cash Value Life Insurance. Many times working with a trusted advisor will help you find money you don't realize you have. By repositioning assets you may increase your cash flow and add to your savings. When you do begin saving for college, plan and save to maximize your funds and minimize any penalties.

Susan both educator and advisor specializes in college planning. She helps families save for and pay for college. If you have questions you would like answered in a future article e-mail her at [Susan@College4Less.com](mailto:Susan@College4Less.com).



# Softball Registration

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# Santiago's—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 is the word you email to: [Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com](mailto:Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com) (Please put OUSD in the subject line)

Entries must be received by December 15, 2012  
From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Slater's 50/50 6362 E. Santa Ana Canyon Rd., Anaheim Hills.  
Entries must be received by January 15, 2013

A special thank you to [Santiago Olsen](#), student, for suggesting this Word Search and emailing the words.

- |           |           |            |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| AWESOME   | FRIEND    | PLAYGROUND |
| BALLOON   | HELP      | RECESS     |
| BEAR      | ICE CREAM | SCHOOL     |
| BUDDY     | JUMPING   | STREET     |
| CANYON    | MONEY     | SUGAR      |
| CHASE     | OPEN      | WINDY      |
| CHOCOLATE | PARTY     |            |

D	N	S	F	M	A	E	R	C	E	C	I	R	B	J
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U	H	H	I	K	E	E	A	Y	E	N	O	M	Y	E
O	Y	J	E	B	S	L	C	K	U	E	P	T	A	Z
R	K	D	N	O	O	L	L	A	B	I	R	H	F	J
G	E	S	D	C	M	G	N	A	N	A	I	T	T	A
Y	V	C	O	U	E	A	R	G	P	Y	B	F	S	L
A	G	H	E	M	B	R	N	S	E	D	O	I	U	K
L	C	O	E	S	A	H	C	K	V	N	E	N	G	Q
P	X	O	X	W	S	W	D	W	U	I	E	V	A	Y
Q	B	L	G	G	G	V	E	R	K	W	V	P	R	W
E	O	T	F	A	P	E	B	Q	W	D	O	A	O	Y

Congratulations to Nikki Mazlomi  
Winner of the September/October Word Search Contest!

# McPherson Magnet

333 S. Prospect St., Orange, CA 92869 • 714/977-6384 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



## KIDS: Knowledge, Inspiration, Discovery, Success!

At McPherson, we assume that every child will meet or exceed his or her highest potential. In our professional learning communities, along with strong backing from parent groups and support staff, our data-driven instruction and research-based practices ensure that all children receive the best in education. Our school has increased its API score again this year, reaching 918.

**Jeanne Bentley**  
Principal

All learning is student centered and grounded in evidence. Currently, we are discovering better ways to teach academic vocabulary through communication objectives. We are implementing approaches with a grant in Positive Behavior Intervention and Support. All students receive outstanding everyday engagement and instruction through hands-on learning, project-based learning, Thinking Maps to teach students how to think, embedding much through technology, and embracing the new Common Core.

McPherson students pursue conceptual understanding, learn procedural skills, and successfully apply their understanding in a 21<sup>st</sup>-century world.



# Olive Elementary

3038 Magnolia Ave., Orange, CA 92865 • 714/637-8218 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



## Character and Test Scores Both on the Rise!

At Olive, we believe it is important for home and school to work together to build strong character in our children. Clearly, when it comes to character building, the family is key. There is simply no substitute for a mother or a father who form a loving and supportive circle around a child, providing guidance.

**Katherine Rizzo**  
Principal

Schools also have a strong supportive role to play in character building. Schools must not only help children to become literate and well formed but they must also help them develop the capacity to be responsible and demonstrate good problem-solving skills in difficult situations. Schools can reinforce those universal values we hope our children demonstrate when we are not around. When they are on their own, we want them to demonstrate universal character traits such as responsibility, honesty, respect, caring, perseverance, tolerance, kindness, cooperation and initiative. These character traits will help them be successful in life!

Each year, the California Department of Education reports schoolwide test results for all schools in California. The API (Academic Performance Index) score results for Olive School for the 2012 reporting period is 794. The score for the previous year was 783. Each school is required to show growth in test-score results. Olive school performed very well, with an 11-point growth! Congratulations to our students and staff for an outstanding API growth!

# Nohl Canyon Elementary

4100 E. Nohl Ranch Road, Anaheim, CA 92807 • 714/997-6203 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



## Forward!

Nohl Canyon continues on the road of academic excellence through commitment, collaboration and communication. Named as an Honor Roll school for the 2011-12 school year and a nine-point API gain, now at 953, we are pleased that our Roadrunners continue to progress.

As we reflect on the past school year, there are many factors that we attribute to this gain. Two new goals implemented at Nohl Canyon during the 2011-12 school year were Response to Intervention and Instruction, including a Collaborative Academic Support Team (CAST) and RTI grade level groups called Whatever I Need (WIN) time, focusing on reading comprehension. With these goals in place, we were able to instruct, monitor, and evaluate student progress in small groups. We were also able to analyze student data so that all students learned in deeper, more meaningful ways.

As we march down the road of academic excellence this school year, we will continue with these goals and past objectives that have proven to be effective. Additionally, we will continue to utilize researched-based instructional strategies and best practices. These include using Thinking Maps to construct meaning for reading comprehension and Write from the Beginning, continuing our Caring School Communities, using social-skills program during lunchtime, data days and academic vocabulary, to name a few. I look forward to our journey together as the rest of the school year unfolds, providing the very best for our students.



# Orange High School

525 N Shaffer St., Orange, CA 92867 • 714/997-6211 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



## Orange and Apple Make a Good Match

It is cool to be a freshman at Orange High School this year! Most freshmen will find themselves regularly using iPads to learn in classrooms. There are six iPad carts being utilized in ninth-grade classrooms across various content areas. It's great to see the students creating and interacting with the teacher and one another.

**Ernest Gonzalez**  
Principal

Additionally, over 20 teachers are using single iPads to enhance the learning in their classrooms. Initial reports are showing a high level of engagement and increased learning for students in these settings. OHS is well positioned for this type of initiative because the school qualifies for E-rate funds that allow the school to provide a robust infrastructure of wireless connectivity as these types of devices increase in number.



**Mr. Fisher's student teacher from Chapman University, Mallory Monasterio, guides math students in graphing on their iPads.**

# Palmyra *Elementary*

1325 E Palmyra Ave., Orange, CA 92866 • 714/997-6207 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



## Our Test Scores Soar!

Schools are held accountable to both the federal government and the state of California for their yearly standardized test scores. This past spring, Palmyra Elementary had impressive achievement gains on both indicators of the state Academic Performance Index (API) and the federal indicator of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Both the API and AYP results are drawn from individual student results on the statewide Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. Palmyra saw a huge gain in its API from 809 to 828, which far exceeded the state goal of 800. The AYP targets are based on the percentage of students reaching proficient and advanced levels in specific subgroups. We are proud that every significant subgroup showed improvement, which is testimony to the dedication of our teachers, students and parent community.

Our teachers worked extremely hard last year and are driven to do the same this year as well. Making those impressive gains in student achievement did not happen by accident. Palmyra teachers are a collaborative, dedicated group of professionals who truly put student needs first.

**Larry Hausner**  
Principal

# Prospect *Elementary*

379 N. Virage St., Orange, CA 92869 • 714/997-6271 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



## Fall Festival Fun

In October, Prospect's PTA held its first Fall Festival. The event was planned as a way to celebrate and congratulate the students for the amazing increase in student achievement over the past year: a total of 57 Academic Performance Index points and a celebration of the fact that our school exited Program Improvement.

It was also an exciting community event to get our families together for a fun-filled evening. We had cool Halloween-inspired game booths, a cakewalk, a costume contest, face painting, a spooky maze, plus food and drink. In addition, we had free slices of cake for all our guests in celebration of our scores. Our PTA did an amazing job with fall-inspired decorations to set the mood for our guests. Prospect staff, students and their families had a "spook-tacular" time! We hope to make this a regular tradition for our school.

**Elena Rodriguez**  
Principal



Prospect costume contest participants.

# Panorama *Elementary*

10512 Crawford Canyon Road, Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/997-6265 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



## Our Panthers Care!

The 2012-2013 school year is proving to be one of strong academic and social growth for our Panorama Panthers. The Panther Scholars earned an API score of 936 on their STAR tests, which has put Panorama within the top three district schools. Our teachers, parents and students work as a team each day to make sure that Panorama students will achieve their full potential.

**Kathryn Martin**  
Principal

But our students are not only high achievers, they also care about their community, and about being good citizens. Beginning in September, the students have been participating in assemblies that feature lessons about fire safety, poison control, positive decision making and how to be "bully proof."

Our students and their families are also incredibly generous. The Panorama Student Leadership Team and the Panorama PTA have sponsored various food drives and shoe drives. They have even collected donations for the local community and the victims of Hurricane Sandy.

Our Panorama Panthers take their motto to heart. They CARE, which we know stands for courtesy, achievement and responsibility for everyone.



Deputy Garrison encourages Panthers to make GOOD decisions.

# Portola *Middle School*

270 N. Palm Dr., Orange, CA 92868 • 714/997-6361 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



## Nothing Is Impossible

By Heriberto Angel, Assistant Principal

The 2011–2012 school year was one of Portola Middle School's most successful years in recent time. Our Academic Performance Index (API) increased by 29 points, from 737 to 766. We had 51 English learner students reclassified. Each of our four subgroups in English-language arts met the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria through the Safe Harbor alternative.

Portola Middle School's success can be attributed to our teachers, who are a team of passionate and diligent individuals who never hesitate to go above and beyond for our students. The school culture is positive and student-centered. Each day after the morning announcements, Mrs. Backstrom tells the students, "You are the best!" Our students believe these simple words, increase their self-esteem, and embrace the competitive spirit.

The message is clear at Portola Middle School. Schools can have an array of school-wide best practices; however, the most important piece to this puzzle is passion. Without passion, none of this could have been possible.

At Portola Middle School, our students' success is our priority, and we believe that nothing is impossible. This year we have high expectations for ourselves, as we attempt to reach 800 in our API. Remember—nothing is impossible.

# Richland *High School*

615 N. Lemon St., Orange, CA 92867 • 714/997-6167 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Ed Madrid**  
*Principal*

## Moving Forward

Over time, parents have come to realize that getting a referral to Richland High School is the best thing that could happen to a struggling student. Our small learning environment and nurturing staff members can make a tremendous difference for those students who need to get back on track towards graduation.

For a variety of reasons, some students can lose their way on the road to graduation. Our program of instruction focuses students on the core subject areas based upon the quarter system. Our Mission Statement is to either graduate students at Richland or return them back to their home schools.

When students follow our plan for graduation they find themselves back on track. Our counselor, teachers and support system encourages, prods and even pulls them to their graduation goal.

Over the last four years we have nearly doubled the number of students who graduate. Last year we returned over 170 students back to their home school to graduate with their class. After we examined the data, we found that of those who did return to their home school, over 90 percent ended up graduating with their class!

The cornerstone of any success is attitude accompanied by work. When students come to believe that they can accomplish their goals, and complete their work, they indeed become successful.

We take pride in our work, and always look forward to the day when our students will graduate. Richland is indeed a school of second chances.

# Running Springs *Elementary*

8670 E. Running Springs Drive, Anaheim, CA 92808 • 714/281-4512 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Lydia Roach**  
*Principal*

## A Redhawk Salute to Our Veterans

The Running Springs School community honored veterans during a morning schoolwide flag salute in November. Students were encouraged to invite a veteran to the school for a special flag salute.

Some students brought a photo of a veteran who was not able to come to school that day.

Students with their veteran guest or veteran photo were asked to walk to the center of the ceremony area to be recognized and honored as all students participated in a schoolwide flag salute led by Cub Scout Pack 546.

Fifth-grader Katelyn Steuernagel led us in a beautiful rendition of "America the Beautiful." Veterans were then invited to visit the classroom of the student who brought them for a short question-and-answer period. We were proud to honor these brave men and women with a Redhawk salute!



# Santiago Charter *Middle School*

515 N. Rancho Santiago Blvd., Orange, CA 92869 • 714/997-6366 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**James D'Agostino**  
*Principal*

## Striving for Excellence

Academically, Santiago Charter Middle School students continue to make great strides. This is the third consecutive year that our Academic Performance Index (API) has gone up by double digits. Over the past three years our scores have increased by 76 points!

Santiago's current API is 836. This is the result of a community-wide effort among teachers, students and parents. It takes all stakeholders to see such large gains.

Our focus this year is to implement academic language, support the English Language Learner population, improve our schoolwide math scores, and maintain rigorous academics for our GATE and Honors students.

One of the things that makes Santiago unique is that we offer a wide variety of elective classes. We currently offer German, French, Spanish, public speaking, industrial technology (woodshop), theater arts, choir, home economics, art, band, orchestra and dance. We also incorporate technology into each of our core classes by allowing the students to use one of our three computer labs or mobile computer carts. Each of these courses is offered as an elective class for either a trimester or year-long course.

Santiago also incorporates character education into the curriculum at every level. The foundation of each student is his or her own character, and so we design lesson plans that incorporate the making of good choices and thought-out decisions.

With our schoolwide focus on academics, plus the opportunity for exploration, and the development of personal character, Santiago strives to provide a quality education for all of its middle school students.

# Serrano *Elementary*

17741 Serrano Ave., Villa Park, CA 92861 • 714/997-6275 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Dr. Bobbie Lansman**  
*Principal*

## Recipe for Success

At Serrano Elementary School, academic achievement is a primary concern for all of our students. This year we have gathered our ingredients in order to prepare our "Recipe for Success."

As a California Distinguished School, we work hard to provide many exciting opportunities for student success in all curricular areas. Along with differentiated instruction in each classroom, every kindergarten through sixth-grade student participates in Excellence: a Commitment to Every Learner (ExCEL) reading. All sixth-grade students participate in Chatters and Blabbers, a junior Toastmasters program to support reading, writing, and public-speaking skills through competition. Other academic opportunities for achievement include Learning 2 Together, upper-grade study trips, thematic simulations, ExCEL math with the new Envision program, and science and social studies rotations.

A Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) school, Serrano works hard to meet the needs of all students. Mandatory Extra Learning (MXL) opportunities and intervention support are provided for students as needed. Teachers meet in weekly Professional Learning Communities to guide and strategize methods, resources and materials that will promote growth and achievement opportunities for every child.

Parents are working hard with their children, the teachers, and the school to maintain high standards for all of our 592 Serrano scholars.

# Sycamore *Elementary*

340 N. Main St., Orange, CA 92868 • 714/997-6277 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Erika Krohn**  
Principal

## Scholars Succeed!

The state testing results have been released, and there is cause for celebration around Sycamore Elementary School! As a united effort of the staff, students and families, Sycamore's API jumped up 56 points to 805! That's 104 points in the last two years. Even better news: Sycamore made its academic achievement goals two years in a row, so the school is no longer sanctioned by the NCLB legislation. Sycamore School has exited Program Improvement status!

In October, 381 awards were given out to students at an assembly to celebrate their academic success. Students who achieved Proficient or Advanced in ELA or improved 25 scaled points in one subject earned bracelets. Sixty-five students earned our most esteemed award by improving 25 scaled points in both ELA and math. These students were awarded with medals. Parents, families and staff cheered on the students!

In order to further increase student success this year, every teacher met with the Collaborative Academic Support Team this October in order to create student goals and intervention plans for struggling students. CAST comprises the principal, RSP teacher, school psychologist, speech teacher, instructional specialist, and a lead primary and upper-grade teacher. A total of 98 students were plugged into appropriate interventions both within the school day and after-school.

On behalf of our whole school community, we are incredibly proud of our scholars and the system of support we put in place to make it happen!

# Taft *Elementary*

1829 N. Cambridge St., Orange, CA 92865 • 714/997-6254 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Antionette Coe**  
Principal

## We Celebrate Success

Kendall Neisess, the principal who opened Taft Elementary School in 1962, decided that the mascot should be the "Taft Tigers," as the students had to learn to be strong, driven and persevering. Our Taft Tigers demonstrated those traits by exiting Program Improvement this year. All of our subgroups—all students, English learners, Hispanic/Latino and socioeconomically disadvantaged—met their Safe Harbor growth targets. Each subgroup increased its proficiency by 10 percent for the past two years. As a result of multiple years of success, we are no longer in Program Improvement.

Along with Principal Neisess, past, present and future Taft Tigers came together to celebrate their success and achievement at the 50th anniversary carnival. Principal Coe said of Principal Neisess, "She has never been more proud of the dedication and hard work from the staff, students and parents."

Our goals are to remain out of Program Improvement and provide the high-quality education our students deserve.



# Villa Park *Elementary*

10551 Center Drive, Villa Park, CA 92861 • 714/997-6281 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Debra Larson**  
Principal

## Sixth Grade 'Rocks' Outdoor Science Camp

What really "rocks, erupts with excitement, and brings out your wild side?" Outdoor Science Camp, of course! Sixth-graders just returned from an adventurous experience to remember. They searched for rocks and minerals that contribute to the earth's surface as they hunted for treasures along the riverbed during the geology trail.

Lessons about earthquakes, volcanoes and plate tectonics were played out in games and song. Eyewitness accounts from the ecosystem trail vividly described the wildlife, habitats and ecosystems of the many indigenous animals and plants residing in the mountain region.

New friendships were made and old ones were renewed. Students unable to attend used expert groups and multimedia to creatively explore these concepts back here at home while demonstrating their knowledge in skits for fifth grade.

# Villa Park *High School*

18042 Taft Ave., Villa Park, CA 92861 • 714/532-8020 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Ed Howard**  
Principal

## Students Succeed in SUCCESS

As educators, we often times reminisce about our past students. We are extremely proud of all of our graduated Spartans, especially those from our highly specialized SUCCESS program.

Under the watchful eye of Dr. John Erratt, this program rivals any in the state for the service provided for moderate to severe autistic students. Always a bright part of our day is the interaction with the students in this program. With all of the great programs we have on campus, I often point to this one as a benchmark for excellence. From the passion and dedication displayed by our professional staff to the work of the students, this program is a great source of pride.

Best Buddies is a club on campus that links the general education students with the students in this program. They come together to plan regular gatherings, as well as special events. Students from similar programs throughout the county join us for our Best Buddies Prom and enjoy a prom-style dance hosted by our Best Buddies.

Dr. Erratt is one of our unsung heroes on campus, and our SUCCESS program is a source of pride for all of us.

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# Yorba *Middle School*

935 N. Cambridge St., Orange, CA 92867 • 714/997-6161 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Kerrie Torres**  
Principal

## Online Learning

Yorba MS has challenged teachers and students to utilize online technology as a learning tool. Electronic learning is experiencing unprecedented growth and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. At Yorba MS, students interact with the online community in many ways. Teachers are using EDMODO, a secure social-educational online networking site. EDMODO allows students to collaborate and communicate with their teachers and other peers. Teachers can post lessons, assignments, assessments and notes, and students can interact with the materials. Students can use EDMODO to engage other students on and off campus to complete assignments, ask for assistance or ask questions. Our math department recently used Sumdog as an online learning tool to reinforce math skills. During a recent online competition, 353 Yorba students answered over 157,000 math questions with 86 percent accuracy. Yorba MS participated in a countywide contest and is entered into the national Sumdog contest in November. Currently, we have over 300 students competing online against 12,000 students nationwide.

Online learning assists students to become more engaged in school and more successful in the classroom. Self-esteem and engagement improve as students discover there is another forum for learning that meets their learning styles and fosters success. Teachers report increased motivation when students interact online after school and participate in online competitions. Online learning encourages interaction among students within the global online learning community and fosters the development of productive attitudes and life-long work habits. Yorba MS looks forward to building online programs that increase students' interest in their own learning.

# West Orange *Elementary*

243 S. Bush St., Orange, CA 92868 • 714/997-6283 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us



**Jennifer Bourgeois**  
Principal

## Exploration and Discovery

One of the best ways our students can deepen their understanding on the concepts they are learning is by extending their experiences beyond the textbook.

Our fourth-grade classes did just that! Recently, students learned about the food chain and the differences between predators and prey. One of the predators they studied was the owl. In order to examine the types of prey the owl had eaten, each group of students received an owl pellet to dissect. The students were able to pull out the bones of various small prey animals, such as rodents, moles, shrews, and birds, and sort them into various categories.

Not only did our students learn about how an owl eats its food, by swallowing it whole, they learned how to work together to arrive at conclusions about the life cycle process. These skills will help our students in the coming years as they explore and problem solve.



Mrs. Wong's fourth grade students,  
Victoria Elliott, Andrew Gonzalez, and Pierson Boyd,  
are going over the results of their bones from the owl pellet.

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## OUSD Alternative Education / ROP

1401 N. Handy St., Orange, CA 92867 • www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us

## Options for Students

By Dennis McCuiston, Coordinator

Community Day School utilizes a student level of intervention system. Level 3 students are the student leaders who have the opportunity to work with Adult-Transition special-needs students on the Regional Occupational Program campus. The students engage in physical activities, such as basketball and kick ball, as well as arts, crafts, and other team-building activities. This dynamic partnership encourages communication, interaction, and teamwork for both groups of students. Student leaders gain valuable life experience and develop positive personal qualities, such as compassion, understanding, patience, and determination. Tad Meyer, our leadership teacher, said, "Students learn how to function as ambassadors who will enable others to better understand the difficulties faced by people with special needs."

Educational Options is a new independent study high school established through the Orange Unified School District. Educational Options has the benefits of home school and virtual curriculum, blended with face-to-face instruction with highly qualified teachers in math, science, and English language arts. Tutorial labs are offered four days a week, where students get extra help with the math, science and writing skills necessary for academic success.

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**Michael L. Christensen**

one of the top ten elementary school API scores in Orange County. Fairhaven Elementary achieved remarkable, consistent gains, celebrating six-consecutive years of outstanding results, thereby earning recognition as a National Blue Ribbon School. Fairhaven was one of seventeen schools in the State of California receiving this distinction, the first such recognition for Orange Unified School District.

OUSD teachers and students are working hard to make significant gains. Ninety-two percent of schools met or exceeded their State Academic API targets. Twenty-six of thirty-five schools now exceed the state goal of 800 with fifteen of those scoring higher than 900.

The District's significant subgroups also continue to do extremely well. Students with Disabilities scores increased 31 points, English Learners gained 22 points, and the Hispanic/Latino subgroup improved 25 points. All significant subgroups targets must be met in order for a school and the District to make the API target.

OUSD continues to achieve gains on the federal indicator, Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), as well. The AYP targets are based on the percentage of students reaching proficient and advanced levels in specific subgroups. In 2012, OUSD saw increases in proficient and advanced students in all District-wide significant subgroups ranging 7.7% to 1.2 % more students being proficient.

Schools must meet State AYP criteria for two years in a row to exit program improvement. The following five Title 1 schools met all Federal AYP growth criteria in 2012 and three schools exited Program Improvement this year:

- Esplanade Elementary, Amy Hitt, Principal (Met all AYP criteria in 2012)
- Fairhaven Elementary, Kelli Keller, Principal (2012 National Blue Ribbon School, Exited PI in 2010)
- Prospect Elementary, Elena Rodriguez, Principal (Exited PI in 2012)
- Sycamore Elementary, Erika, Krohn, Principal (Exited PI in 2012)
- Taft Elementary School, Antoinette Coe, Principal (Exited PI in 2012)

The California Department of Education link to the 2012 Accountability Progress Report for the Orange Unified School District achievement results in API and AYP can be found at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov).

## Orange County Department of Education

200 Kalmus Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92628  
714/966-4000 [www.ocde.us](http://www.ocde.us)

## Transitional Kindergarten



**Dr. Al Mijares**  
Superintendent

The kindergarten classroom of today is a very different place than most of us remember. As we strive to remain competitive in a global economy, our youngest students face a more challenging educational climate, and kindergarten curriculum is more rigorous than ever before. The challenging curriculum, coupled with California's longstanding trend of starting children in kindergarten at a younger age than most other states, has resulted in too many students beginning school without the maturity or social skills needed to succeed.

Research indicates that giving students under the age of five an extra year of academic preparation before they begin traditional kindergarten can make a big difference in their long term academic success. In fact, children who receive high quality early childhood education are less likely to be placed in special education or to be retained in later grades, and they are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college.

California's Kindergarten Readiness Act, signed into law in 2010, changed the kindergarten entry date from December 2 to September 1 so that children enter kindergarten at age five. The new entry date is being phased in beginning with the 2012-13 school year with full implementation in 2014-15. Along with this historic reform to kindergarten education, California legislators also created Transitional Kindergarten (TK) to address the needs of children who no longer have the option of beginning kindergarten before the age of five.

Taught by credentialed teachers, TK is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program available to students whose fifth birthdays fall between September 2 and December 2. TK is aligned with California's kindergarten standards and offers curriculum and classroom environments designed to support growth in the cognitive, physical, and social-emotional domains of development. For many children who do not have access to quality preschool, TK could make the difference in providing them with the foundation they need to be better prepared for success once they enter traditional kindergarten.

The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) will support district leadership with implementing TK programs by offering a Transitional Kindergarten Teacher Spring Institute in May 2013 and creating a Transitional Kindergarten Teacher Network to focus on curriculum and assessment, along with planning and organizing the TK classroom. OCDE has also set up two model Transitional Kindergarten classrooms that offer tours and observations of teachers implementing curriculum. In collaboration with the California Kindergarten Association, OCDE will feature these model classrooms in a series of TK training videos that are scheduled for release in winter 2012.

High-quality early childhood programs like TK are designed to be a bridge between early learning and kindergarten. The academic and social gains provided by such programs are an important step to ensuring California's youngest students enjoy success in kindergarten and beyond.

For more information, visit [www.ocde.us/SEED/Pages/Transitional-Kindergarten.aspx](http://www.ocde.us/SEED/Pages/Transitional-Kindergarten.aspx).

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