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School News

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Covering the Tustin Unified School District



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TUSD Holds First Middle School Robotics Competition



Pioneer Middle School's winning Robotics Team includes, from left, teacher-coach Matt Ireland and students Daniel Bui, Mehek Nirula, Bryan Huckleberry, Ryan Steinman (holding robot), Aidan Petrie, Harsheta Cavale, Alan Onuma and Jason Tran.
Not pictured: Alex Schweich. (please see story on page 31)

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Evelin Farias, M.A.Ed. '12
School Psychologist
San Jacinto Unified School District

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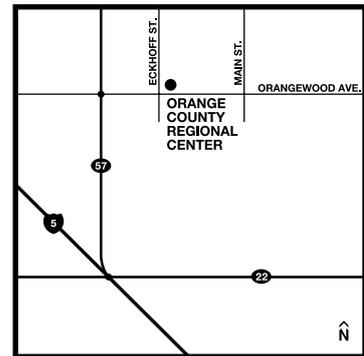
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'TUSD Connect' Supports Student Learning



Gregory A. Franklin, Ed. D.
Superintendent

In Touch with TUSD

TUSD Connect – the District’s instructional initiative – is well under way! The three components of TUSD Connect (rigorous standards, engaging instructional strategies, supported by technology) are in abundant evidence throughout the District. TUSD Connect represents a significant change to most teacher and school practices that will take time to fully implement at the expert level. Similarly, MEASURING this change

in instruction and student learning is very difficult and we should all be prepared for the new scores that it generates.

The new statewide assessment system to measure progress on the Common Core State Standards has been named CAASPP, but many people refer to it as the SBAC (Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium) because SBAC is the organization that created the tests. It differs from the old STAR testing in a couple of significant ways.

The Common Core State Standards include much of the same content as the standards developed in 1997; however, there is a much stronger emphasis on critical thinking and students’ ability to apply their knowledge. The new SBAC assessments are attempting to measure these important differences. While the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) tests measured what students knew in relationship to the 1997 state standards, the CAASPP measures student thinking and learning of the new Common Core State Standards. Since the two testing systems measure progress toward a different set of standards, the results cannot be compared.

In addition, the CAASPP is comprised of very complex test items in an attempt to measure how students think and how they can apply what they know. As an example of how much more complex the new testing is compared to the old STAR testing, there are SIXTEEN different types of test questions on the CAASPP, while the STAR had only one – multiple choice. The single fact that multiple choice questions on the CAASPP may have multiple right answers and students have to identify them all in order to get the item correct is a huge difference and makes the test very difficult. This is even more reason that the two tests – STAR from previous years and CAASPP from this year – cannot be compared. This year’s CAASPP scores will set a new benchmark to which future scores can be compared.

So, what does all of this mean? The results of the CAASPP tests that students will take in the spring must be viewed as stand-alone measures of students’ progress toward a new goal. They cannot be compared to old STAR scores. We should also expect initial scores on the CAASPP to be lower than what we are used to seeing. We must remember that we are starting a new and different journey. We have left the STAR mountain that we were climbing, and have switched to the CASPP mountain. We cannot expect to begin our new climb half way up the new mountain.

We can be sure that the great work of teachers, teacher coaches, principals and support staff will result in our students being more prepared to face a complex and uncertain world when they leave TUSD. As the District continues to focus on teaching and learning, our students will show continuous growth – a TUSD hallmark.

Go TUSD!

TUSD 2015 Administrators of the Year Announced

The Tustin School Management Association has announced its 2015 Administrators of the Year Honorees. They will represent the Tustin Unified School District at the 2015 Orange County Administrators of the Year Awards, sponsored by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), Region 17:

Middle Grades Principal of the Year – Tracey Vander Hayden, principal of Pioneer Middle School; Elementary Principal of the Year – Deanna Parks, principal of C.C. Lambert Elementary School; Central Office Administrator of the Year – Dr. Sharon Cordes, Director of Assessment and Evaluation; Elementary Co-Administrator of the Year – Kimberly Thompson, assistant principal at Jeane Thorman Elementary School; Secondary Co-Administrator of the Year – Troy Fresch, assistant principal at Pioneer Middle School; Career Technical Education Administrator of the Year – Dr. Grant Litfin, Director of Secondary Education; Special Education Administrator of the Year – Cherie Kuntz, Coordinator of Special Education; Curriculum and Instruction Administrator of the Year – Stephanie Yang, Coordinator of Curriculum and Special Projects; Continuation/Educational Options Administrator of the Year – Tim O’Donoghue, principal of Hillview High School, Sycamore High School and Tustin Adult Education; and Valuing Diversity Award – Erick Fineberg, principal of Jeane Thorman Elementary School and A.G. Currie Middle School.

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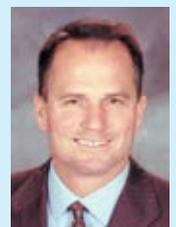
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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher

This is our first issue for the new year and we are pleased to be publishing TUSD in our new booklet format. Our distribution is also revamped with copies distributed at participating business locations throughout the community, residential distribution on a rotating basis and distribution to the District. We also post every issue on our web site and email free digital copies to our eSubscribers. We welcome your emails and comments.

In this issue the schools bring us up-to-date on classroom activities including a certified therapy dog participating in story time, Bite of Reality senior economics class, Hoop Shoot Contest, robotics competition, the DARE program, FITNESSGRAM and so much more...

Thank you for continuing to include *School News* among your reading choices.

Our next issue is April 15 — the bright spot on tax day!

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TUSTIN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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BEFORE



AFTER



★★★★★ 6/12/2014

First to Review

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TUSD Highlights...

By Mark Eliot
Director of Communications

Project Tomorrow Teacher of the Year

Ed Hernandez, engineering/math teacher and director of the T-Tech Academy at Tustin High School, has been named the 2014 High Impact Teacher of the Year in Science, Math and Technology by Project Tomorrow.

Hernandez received the High Impact Teacher of the Year Award at the Project Tomorrow Innovation in Education Awards. The joint ceremony between Project Tomorrow and the Orange County Tech Alliance celebrated innovative use of science, math and technology in the classroom and the community. Over 300 business and community leaders attended the event.

Hernandez was recognized for "his influence as a great teacher in the use of science, math and technology to significantly impact student academic achievement." He received a \$1,000 grant toward the Tustin High T-Tech Academy.

Project Tomorrow, a national education nonprofit organization based in Irvine, supports the innovative uses of research-based science, math and technology resources to develop critical thinking, problem solving and creativity in K-12 students.

CIF Championship Winners

Beckman High School Girls' Golf Team, led by Coach Penn Bushong, won the 2014 CIF Southern Section Girls Golf Championship. The girls' golf team won the Pacific Coast League with a record of 10 wins and no losses, and finished the season with a record of 11 wins and one loss. This is Beckman's second CIF golf championship. Last year, the boys' golf team, also led by Coach Bushong, won its first CIF Southern Section.

Foothill High School Boys' Water Polo Team, led by Coach Jim Brumm, won the 2014 CIF Southern Section Boys' Water Polo Championship. Foothill finished the season with a record of 25 wins and six losses, and secured its first CIF title since 2008. This is Foothill's third CIF water polo championship under Coach Brumm's leadership. The team also took the top prize in 1995.

Teachers of the Year Honored

Tustin Unified School District's 2014 Teachers of the Year – Jennifer Morrow, first/second-grade teacher at Hicks Canyon Elementary School, and Joy Wardlaw, sixth-grade Core teacher at Orchard Hills School, were honored by the Orange County Department of Education at its annual Orange County Teachers of the Year Dinner. Top teachers from school districts around the county were recognized. Morrow and Wardlaw were selected by TUSD to represent the District in the Orange County Teachers of the Year Program.



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Arroyo Elementary School

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Amy Jones
Principal

Arroyo Celebrates Literacy at Lunch

At Arroyo Elementary School, we know how important it is for students to be engaged in reading. One of the fabulous programs at Arroyo involves just that, and it is brought to us by the PTA's dedicated library committee and its volunteers.

Students have the opportunity to come into the library for a variety of activities, such as Brown Bag Book Club, Poetry Club, or Read-to-Art. These sessions take place during lunch time and are held twice a month.

For Brown Bag Book Club, students read the book chosen for the month and then come to the library ready to share their ideas about the book. Students have a mini book club discussion while enjoying popcorn! Not a bad way to spend a lunch period, don't you think?

For the Read-to Art sessions, students are exposed to quality literature and then do art activities to accompany that text. One such session gave students an opportunity to practice their imagining skills, which are important to reading comprehension. To practice this skill, students were blindfolded and asked to think about the visual images the author was trying to paint with words. Students

then used art to create the images that they saw in their heads.

Poetry Club exposes students to the different forms that poetry can take and then gives students the opportunity to create seasonal art projects to go along with the poetry that they have written. These projects are then displayed on the library's poet-tree, a great way to honor our blossoming poets!

We thank Alison Posner and the volunteers on the library committee for all they have done to promote literacy at Arroyo. Their commitment to our students is amazing, and we couldn't do it without them!



The first and second grade Poetry Clubs are instructed on how to create Cinquain poems about snowflakes by Mrs. Madden, parent volunteer.



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Arnold O. Beckman *High School*

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Adele Heuer
Principal

Bite of Reality

In January, Beckman High School presented the Bite of Reality program for our senior economics classes, sponsored by our local credit unions. This program is designed to bring financial literacy to life with a hands-on money management simulation that helps students understand the importance of saving money, developing wise spending habits, and living within their means.

Students were given fictional occupations, salaries, spouses and families, student loan debts, credit card debts, and medical insurance payments. Students visited various stations to “purchase” housing, transportation, food, clothing, household necessities, day care, and other needs. There’s even a “Fickle Finger of Fate,” which gave students unexpected expenses or surprise windfalls, just like in real life.

This interactive activity teaches students how to make financial decisions and gives them a better understanding of the challenges of living on a budget. Students had to deal with a pushy car salesperson and a commission-based realtor, while weighing their wants versus their needs.

Thirty volunteers from local credit unions guided students through the program. Although the students

are seniors, most have never written a check. Many were surprised at how expensive it is to live independently and how much it costs to have a family. One area that caught their attention was paying off student loans; they did not realize how long it takes to pay off a loan. They also discovered how easy it is to go into debt and how important financial planning is to maintain stability. They also commented on how expensive children are!

The program was well received by Beckman’s seniors. They said they were going home to thank their parents!



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Barbara Benson *Elementary School*

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Deena Vela
Principal

The Skills to be Brave and Safe

Benson Elementary School is excited to be participating in a partnership with a children's safety advocacy organization to help create safer communities for our children. This nonprofit group was founded in 2002 after the abduction, molestation, and murder of a five-year-old child.

The foundation's goal is to ensure that every student is exposed to personal safety education in order to cultivate and practice an instinctual response to avoid, and if necessary, physically resist and escape inappropriate behaviors or violence. To meet this challenge, the foundation has developed various programs to effectively reach every community member, parent, and child.

The organization's founder and director, Erin Runnion, along with Severine Hebras (a PTO parent at Benson), presented an adult education

night on January 8 in the school's multipurpose room. The program was well-attended by both parents and community members.

After the presentation, students and parents both participated in a Brave Workshop Event sponsored by the Benson PTO. This 90-minute event was designed to nurture every student's ability to recognize potential dangers, verbalize discomfort or a need for help, and

physically resist abduction or assault. The children were highly engaged in learning protective safety skills.

Benson School hopes to create a sustainable program that raises awareness, fosters vigilance, and empowers children with the knowledge and skills they need to be brave and safe. Our goal is to bring safety and empowerment education to the local community. We are very fortunate to have a partnership with this important organization that will help keep our children safe. We also look forward to having more evening events that promote health and well-being in the Benson community.



Benson students learn how to protect themselves in safety workshop.



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Benjamin Beswick *Elementary School*

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Eileen Delaney
Principal

A Sterling Day!

Every Friday morning, the Beswick learning community looks forward to the arrival of their dear friend Sterling. Sterling, a French bulldog, is a certified therapy dog that visits the school and participates in a very special story time.

Sterling is always in the company of his owner, Darlene Abbott. When he arrives, the office staff warmly welcomes him. He then trots off to the library where he waits for his friends to come visit. Students from all grade levels love to read to Sterling. He encourages them to develop their reading skills and their self-confidence by patiently listening to them as they read their books. One by one, students come in for their scheduled reading time with Sterling.

Sterling is certified as a BARK Dog—Beach Animals Reading with Kids. BARK is a volunteer

program that helps children become better readers by giving them a safe and supportive environment to practice their reading skills with a certified therapy dog. Students sometimes find it intimidating to read in front of classmates but love to read to a furry friend. By sitting down next to a dog and reading, all threats of being judged are put aside. The child relaxes, pats the attentive dog, and focuses on the reading. Reading improves because the child is practicing the skill of reading, building self-esteem and associating reading with something pleasant.

When Sterling is ready to go home, he always makes a final stop at the Beswick health office. He knows that health technician Melinda Formica will fuss over him, tell him how handsome he is, and then give him three crackers. It's now time to go home with Darlene.

Everyone in the office calls out a farewell to Sterling. It's been another Sterling day at Beswick Elementary School!



Beswick student Nathan Carracheo reads a book to Sterling in the school library.

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Columbus Tustin *Middle School*

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Dean Crow
Principal

Students Perform Meaningful Work

Columbus Tustin Middle School has implemented a positive behavior support called Meaningful Work. The program, coordinated by school counselor Beth Harding, is part of the Safe & Civil School Series, a set of resources to help educators improve student behavior and school climate. Meaningful Work helps students become contributing members of their school by

Eric Lomeli, Leilani Resurrection, and Marlene Hernandez have volunteered to serve as student supervisors.

The goal of Meaningful Work is to help meet student needs and provide them with an opportunity to experience success and develop a sense of purpose. These students, like all of us, are looking for an area in which to excel. A job at school provides an immediate reason to come to school—another purpose for showing up. Meaningful Work also provides high-quality, positive attention, recognition and acknowledgement. On a daily basis, supervisors



Students and staff do meaningful work at school.

encouraging them to create or apply for various jobs around campus. The students are supervised by adult staff members, who provide mentorship as well as direction. The role of the supervisor is to model, guide and encourage the student to work independently, while providing positive, descriptive feedback. This supervision and mentoring has helped students develop self-confidence and will ultimately ensure a successful work experience and a sense of community. Columbus Tustin staff members Albert Castro,

express their appreciation for the students' commitment to their work. In addition, a monthly staff meeting is held and a student is recognized as Employee of the Month.

In a short period of time, Columbus Tustin has noticed a transformation in its students. Each day, students can be observed doing a multitude of tasks, such as raising the American flag, setting up banners, assisting the custodian, delivering birthday greetings, and recycling. They are making a difference at school and in the community.

A.G. Currie Middle School

1402 Sycamore Ave., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7360



Erick Fineberg
Principal

Fired Up About Enrichment and Robotics

As part of Currie Middle School's continuing efforts to prepare its students for high school, college and beyond, students will be participating in a school-wide enrichment program. In lieu of the 30-minute tutorial time, students will select from a list of choices, including art history, three-dimensional computer design, Model United Nations, graphic design, interior design, smart shopping, keyboarding, yoga, computer coding, nutrition and fitness, and football, to name a few. The courses provide students with exposure to topics they would have otherwise not had the opportunity to learn about. The offerings are another step in the continued work to provide a 21st century education. As Currie moves forward, the school will host a career day, where community partners will share their experiences and offer training to the students. Students are looking forward to this exciting two-week period. Thanks to their input, there is no doubt this will be an invaluable experience for all students.

Currie would also like to recognize its robotics team. These students have been working hard to create an outstanding and efficient robot. The team, which began work last year and spent the summer together with the other middle schools as part of the Tustin Summer Academy's Advanced Robotics program, has done a terrific job representing Currie at the district and county levels in a variety of competitions. Despite having a limited background in robotics, the students have really done a fantastic job, finishing in the top two in two local competitions. Currie is very excited about this tremendous opportunity for its students, and the school is proud of them.



Currie's Robotics Team Members: Kevin Rodriguez, Geovanny Ramirez, Leonardo Gonzalez, Martin PeOaloza, Rafael Alvarez, Kevin Mosqueda, Julio Razo, Sebastian Rivera.

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Helen Estock *Elementary School*

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Beth Rabel Blackman
Principal

Celebrating 50 Years of Excellence

Estock Elementary School has turned 50! A celebration honoring a half-century of educational excellence was held on January 23 in the Estock plaza. Former teachers, principals, current students, parents and staff joined together to celebrate the accomplishments of Estock in the past 50 years and to kick off the next half-century of learning.

A sea of red, white, and blue scholars kicked off the event with the traditional Estock school song and “You’re a Grand Old Flag.” Highlights of the program were guest speakers, including former principals and teachers. One such speaker, longtime teacher Karen Bleiker, shared stories and inspirations from her time as an Estock Eagle. The moving presentations reflected on Estock’s



Estock students created technology presentations to share with special guests, showcasing the accomplishments of Estock Elementary.

accomplishments, such as becoming a National Blue Ribbon School, a California Distinguished School and a Title 1 Achievement School. In addition to honoring the 50 years of tradition and excellence, the ceremony welcomed in the next 50 years of growth and learning.

Following the ceremony, a reception was held in the multipurpose room with displays of student work, videos and slide presentations of student work, and artifacts from the school’s history. Photo books of students and teachers were on display, as well. Community members, teachers and students were invited to tour the classrooms and reminisce on their time at Estock. Guests particularly enjoyed visiting the kindergarten classroom and comparing it to their first memories of school.

Estock Elementary School, named for eighth-grade history teacher Helen Estock who taught in the district from 1940–1961, has been open continuously since 1964. It currently serves pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade students.

Foothill *High School*

19251 Dodge Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/ 730-7464



Dr. Nick Stephany
Principal

Students Get a Bite of Reality

In December, over 100 Foothill High School senior students participated in the Bite of Reality program, sponsored by a local credit union. The Bite of Reality program is a real-world economic simulation in which students were given an opportunity to gain a better understanding for practical economic principles that will greatly help them in the future.

When students arrived, they were given an identity, an income, a family and debt from education and credit cards. Then, students were tasked with visiting 12 different stations staffed by over 30 volunteers from the credit union where they had to “purchase” life essentials such as transportation, child care, housing and recreation. The catch was that they had to make this all fit into the budget aligned to their identity. For the students, the whole goal of the simulation was to create a lifestyle based on their income and financial obligations.

Student feedback from this event was remarkable. They really learned great lessons about how expensive reality is. They were able to experience the real-life decisions that people make every day. The program has made a real difference in the lives of many of our students. We hope to run this program again in the spring and next year as well.



Foothill seniors participated in the Bite of Reality program in the school’s Event Center.

Guin Foss *Elementary School*

18492 Vanderlip Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/730-7552



Kelly Fresch
Principal

The Hoop Shoot Contest

Each year, Guin Foss Elementary School holds an after-school Hoop Shoot Contest for students in grades three through five. For three weeks our students practice voluntarily on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30 to 3:30 p.m.

On the last day, they compete together by attempting to make as many free-throw shots as possible. Schools in both the Tustin Unified and Santa Ana Unified School

Districts are invited to encourage their elementary and middle school students ages 8 to 13 to participate.

The students were given 25 free-throw shots. With parents and siblings cheering them on, high school volunteers counted the number of baskets made from the regulation free-throw line. The first-place winners in each age group, in boys and girls divisions, advanced on to the next round in January.

The winners also have a chance to move on to Corona, California, then to Las Vegas, and eventually to Providence, Rhode Island. Here they will compete against students from across the nation at the Elks Lodge competition. Locally, fourth-grader Ameira Ludington and third-grader Kevin Miyashiro took first place, and third-grader Lanie Soria took second.



Student participants Alberto Rosales, Kevin Miyashiro, Clarisse Ceballos, Ameira Ludington, Lanie Soria, Sarah Soria, Kevin Zayas, Anthony Miyashiro, Jada Banks and Shannon Cunningham with Principal Kelly Fresch and coach Susan Cunningham.

We had two winners in each grade level advance on to the 33rd annual Santa Ana Elks Lodge Hoop Shoot Competition. On December 6, ten students from grades three through five joined with their families and Coach Susan Cunningham, along with Principal Kelly Fresch, to visit Century High School in Santa Ana for the early morning contest.

The three students will attend a formal dinner at the Santa Ana Elks Lodge on March 3 with their families to celebrate their accomplishments. We wish Ameira and Kevin good luck in the second round!

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Robert Heideman *Elementary School*

15571 WilliamsSt., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7521



Sean Lindsay
Principal

Working Together to Support Learning

Heideman Elementary School works hard to create opportunities for parents to better participate in their children's education, as well as with our learning community as a whole. I'd like to highlight three current initiatives that illustrate our commitment to creating such opportunities.

Every Wednesday morning, Heideman opens the doors of its technology lab to our parents and families at "Parent Tech Time." Our information technology specialist and community liaison work to provide parents with regular access to technology. They offer a dynamic learning experience that can nurture skills with computers and information technology.

Every Thursday morning Heideman also hosts "Parent-to-Parent," a 10-week parent

institute offered by the Orange County Health Care Agency. Over 50 parents come together each week to learn about child development and the different strategies of handling challenging behavior.

Kindergarten teachers, transitional kindergarten teachers, and instructional specialists have created a "Kindergarten Parent Institute" that is custom designed for the parents of our kindergarten students. Supported by a grant from the Cotsen Foundation for the Art of Teaching,

this talented group of educators is meeting parents for six training sessions throughout the year. Each session focuses on specific subject areas such as reading, math, and writing, all while creating a home "kit" of supporting materials.

Many thanks go to our involved parents for participating in this great program, as well as to Heideman's dedicated educators and community volunteers for providing the opportunity. Go, Roadrunners!



Heideman teachers Luz Cantrell and Melanie Iames meet with kindergarten parents.

Hewes *Middle School*

13232 Hewes Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/730-7348



Eric Kilian
Principal

Club Makes Public Speaking "Cool"

Against the flow of most children heading off for the weekend, every Friday afternoon more than 30 of our students voluntarily report to a classroom for an hour after school to learn about speech and debate.

Shocked? Perhaps these students are too as they feverishly partake in the practice of public speaking! Under the direction of Dr. Leo Cummins, our "Speak Up!" members

have been excelling in this special Hewes club for over 10 years.

Dr. Cummins is passionate that middle school is an excellent age for students to learn how to advocate for their viewpoints through critical thinking, articulate language, and, quite frankly, by making public speaking "cool." Following the format of Toastmasters International, the students learn to build in ice breakers, jokes of the day, and hot topic discussions

on subjects determined by student polls.

They also practice formal debate structure and develop skills for public speaking. Dr. Cummins insists on having the students themselves lead the process because he sees his own role as being primarily that of facilitator.

The students utilize their iPads to record speeches for reflection, and they make it standard practice to give both positive and constructive feedback. Additionally, they are also practicing the relevant life skills of communication, critical thinking, and collaboration, as many of their

debates are conducted by teams.

Over the years, many of our Hewes "Speak Up!" club members have gone on to participate on both high school and college debate teams. So if you see any of our students running to class on Fridays after school, you'll know now just where they are going: to the "Speak Up!" club. What a cool way to get plugged in at Hewes, while also developing essential real-world skills.



Students work as a team to prepare their rebuttal during a team debate.

Hicks Canyon *Elementary School*

3817 Viewpark Ave., Irvine, CA 92602 • 714/734-1878



Cindy Agopian
Principal

Be a Friend, Make a Friend

By Jackie Christy, Assistant Principal

Last year when students in teacher Christine Sherer's third-grade class read an article in "Scholastic News" about the buddy bench, they just knew that Hicks Canyon Elementary School had to have one!

Through a service project completed by a local middle school student, they got their wish.

A buddy bench is a place where students can go if they are feeling lonely or are looking for a friend to play with. Other students can then go and invite this student to play. At Hicks Canyon, our bench has the motto "Be a Friend ~ Make a Friend" painted on it.



Fourth-grade students who were in Sherer's class last year, Elizabeth Bassett, Jackson Schonfelder, Annie Huang, Ethan Frank, Monica Lee, Abraham Tannehill and Diba Zarkeshan Isfahani.

This way, students who want to be a friend for someone can also sit on the bench.

Students at Hicks Canyon learned how to use the buddy bench through an introduction by other students at an assembly. Students are encouraged to try to find something to do or someone to play with before they go to the buddy

bench. If they choose to sit on the bench, they must say "yes" to the friend who invites them to play. Students who are not on the bench are encouraged to look around from time to time, to see if they can invite someone from the bench to play.

Hicks Canyon's buddy bench encourages our student to show empathy toward others. And, by giving students a place to meet other students, friendships can be fostered.

Hillview *High School*

15400 Lansdowne Rd., Tustin, CA 92782 • 714/730-7356



Tim O'Donoghue
Principal

Dr. O'Malley Has a Passion for Learning

Hillview is very proud to have Dr. Dustin O'Malley serving as its new assistant principal. Dr. O'Malley joined the staff in August and has done a remarkable job assisting students, staff and families. He is also in charge of night school for concurrent high school students, Adult Education and Sycamore Independent High School.

Although new to the Alternative Education Program, Dr. O'Malley is no stranger to the Tustin Unified School District. He has a wide variety of teaching experience ranging from kindergarten to eighth grade. He taught various grade levels at Red Hill Elementary School for a number of years and also taught sixth- and eighth-grade core at Columbus Tustin Middle School. Last year, he served as a digital learning coach and worked with high school teachers at Foothill, Hillview and Tustin High to help them integrate technology and effective teaching strategies into their instruction.

As an educator and an administrator, Dr. O'Malley has demonstrated his passion for the effective use of educational technology to enhance learning. He was a presenter at the Computer-Using Educators (CUE)

Conference last year in Palm Springs, and he has led numerous professional development and technology trainings for teachers at the elementary, middle and high school levels. He continues to skillfully work with the staff and students at Hillview to help them get the most out of their Toshiba laptops.



Dr. Dustin O'Malley assists the staff and serves as a role model for students.

Dr. O'Malley is a dedicated family man and enjoys spending time with his wife and his two young sons when he is not working. One of his favorite activities is to go on long bike rides with his family on the different bike paths in Southern California. His other hobbies include trail running, swimming, reading and watching college football.

We are proud to have Dr. O'Malley helping out, as he is an awesome role model for students!

Ladera *Elementary School*

2515 Rawlings Way, Tustin, CA 92782 • 714/730-7505



Derek Pinto
Principal

Front Office Staff is Critical to Success

As anyone who has ever received a service knows, the greeting you get at the front door sets the tone for your encounter with the service-provider. Ladera School's front office is no different. The people that greet you and who address your questions and concerns can create positive relationships, generate energy and raise productivity.

The front office is known as the hub of the school building, and a common joke is that the school secretary is the one in charge. There is some truth to this, as the secretary serves as the chief public relations and information officer for the school and often knows more than anyone else with regard to happenings in the building.

Each day, the front office staff greets virtually every visitor that steps through the door and passes by their desks. They communicate with

most of the staff, answer countless phone calls and e-mails, and serve as safety monitors, ensuring that visitors record their visits by signing-in.

Ladera office clerk Holly Smyth, health clerk Julia Kaiser and school secretary Nancy Titterud are fantastic at doing what they do. They warmly greet each person that comes into contact with them, are ready to act quickly and decisively, communicate courteously with colleagues and the parent community, and are sensitive to the needs of the

students. They act as role models for the youngest through oldest students and are tremendous assets to the school and community they serve. Establishing a positive relationship with Ladera's stakeholders through the front office staff has resulted in a high level of engagement and support from parent and community members.

Principal Derek Pinto is cognizant of the critical role that the front office staff plays with regard to school success. "We have sought to create a service-oriented, family-friendly culture," he said. "When people step in the door at Ladera, we want them to feel special."



Ladera's new Leopard - secretary Nancy Titterud greets all who come through the front office.

C.C. Lambert *Elementary School*

1151 San Juan St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7457



Deanna Parks
Principal

Learning Math with Deep Understanding

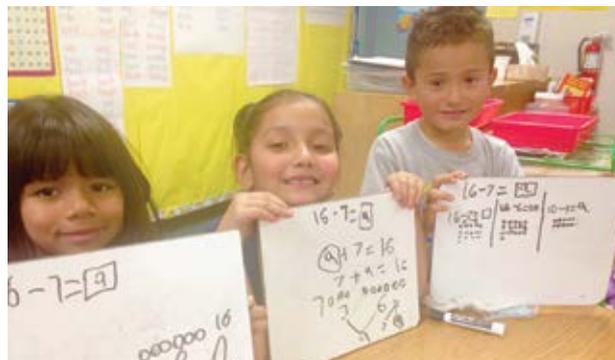
Across the Lambert Elementary School campus, students and teachers are enjoying math more than ever. With the new curriculum, Math Expressions, students learn various strategies so they see math work rather than just learning an algorithm without being able to apply it in new and different real-world situations.

Mary Berger, who teaches first and second grades, said, "This curriculum gives opportunities for students to explore different strategies to solve problems. It gives them many strategies, and students think so much more." Patricia Lopez, a first-grader, said, "Math is fun! I love the Making 10 strategy!" Benjamin Plascencia, another student, added, "I like counting on." Evelyn Cortes, in second grade, shared, "I like math. It's hard, but I'm good at it!" Becca Valdez, who teaches third grade, agreed: "The

new curriculum offers hands-on opportunities for students to apply math concepts and math vocabulary."

Math Expressions is helping teachers create an inquiry-based environment and encourage constructive discussion. Students invent, question, model, represent and explore but also learn and practice important math strategies. Math Expressions focuses on the priority core concepts at each grade level, identified by the Common Core State Standards, to build in-depth understanding of major mathematical ideas. The emphasis is on in-depth mathematics understanding through real-world problem

situations, modeling, conceptual language, exploration and math talk to help students build mathematical ideas that make sense to them. It is very exciting to see students grasping math concepts so they remember them and apply them in real situations. This type of learning is truly preparing them to be college and career ready!



First graders Patricia Lopez, Melanie Reyes and Benjamin Plascencia show off their problem solving strategies.

Loma Vista *Elementary School*

13822 Prospect Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/730-7528



Katy Sheyka
Principal

Fostering a Positive Learning Community

The Loma Vista Elementary School Cougars work hard to be kind, safe, and responsible citizens in all aspects of their day, knowing that these characteristics are the cornerstones to success. As a school, we understand the importance of fostering a positive culture where all community members feel safe and welcomed. We believe optimal student achievement

(academic and behavioral) can be attained by utilizing a proactive, systematic approach for creating and maintaining a safe and effective learning environment. To accomplish this, unified goals and expectations must be clear and known by all.

Our dedicated teachers have established a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) team to: create a sense of community within our school; reduce problem behavior and increase positive behavior; create consistent language,

expectations, and consequences; gather and use data to guide decision-making; and raise student achievement. Recently, students in first through fifth grades were taught expected school-wide behaviors. Teachers rotated all the children through various locations, where adults acted out the appropriate behaviors relevant to each area. Students were then asked to give feedback, providing an opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings or confusion.

As students shared what they learned, PBIS team members and other adults handed out Cougar Cards as incentives and motivators. Cougar Cards can be exchanged for different items from our Cougar Incentive Chart, such as pretzels, behind-the-scenes school tours, or pizza with the principal. Students can also drop their Cougar Cards into the Cougar-rrrrific Raffle Box in hopes of being selected to choose an item from a student-created incentive menu, with choices such as Hat Day Pass and DJ the Friday Flag Ceremony. Fifteen names are drawn each Friday morning and announced in front of the entire community at our Friday flag ceremony.



Teachers Leeann Liana and Teresa Rodriguez gear up for their Bus Waiting Area behavior skit.

Myford *Elementary School*

3181 Trevino Dr., Irvine, CA 92602 • 714/734-1875



Rena Fairchild
Principal

Myford Fifth-Graders Graduate DARE

This fall, Myford's fifth-grade students went through a Drug Abuse Resistance Education program called DARE, sponsored by the Irvine Police Department. For 10 weeks Officer Mendoza taught our students valuable life lessons about how to make the kind of choices that will positively impact their lives.

DARE's vision of "Teaching students good decision-making skills to help them lead safe and healthy lives" was given practical application through lessons about drug abuse and resistance, school safety, internet safety, community safety, and bullying awareness and prevention. Our students also learned effective strategies about how to become responsible citizens in the 21st century, which they have been able to apply at school.

In January, Myford was joined by Tustin Student Services Coordinator Sean Diaz and Director of Elementary Education Maggie Villegas to

recognize and celebrate these students at their DARE graduation. Prior to graduating, the students each wrote and recited their own pledge that promised to remain drug and alcohol free.

They also stated their individual goals for the future. A selection of students then shared their pledges during the ceremony. In addition, many of them demonstrated their learning through a poem, a poster, or an essay. Several students were recognized in each of the categories.

In the end, our Myford students learned many lessons that we hope will stick with them as they journey on. Walking through one classroom, I happened to notice a student who had captured some of these lessons on her name plate. Her favorites were:

"Show me your five friends, and I'll tell you who you are."

"Make a nobody into a somebody."

"Strength comes from the soul."

"Leave a trail of kindness behind."

"Make someone's day by using yours."

"A big heart is a big blessing."

"Kindness keeps the world afloat."

"One kind act can save the world."

All so true!



Sally Jebory was one of Myford's students recognized for her D.A.R.E. poster.

W.R. Nelson *Elementary School*

14392 Browning Ave., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7536



John Laurich
Principal

A Year of Adventures for Fifth-Graders

Nelson fifth-grade students arrived at school in December ready to experience the great outdoors. Students were prepared to leave for an exciting four days at outdoor science school. This year, they went to High Trails Camp Nawakwa in the San Bernardino Mountains just above Angelus Oaks off Highway 38, at over 6,000 feet in elevation. The weatherman was predicting snow for their arrival!

Three teachers and 97 fifth-graders boarded two buses and left here in search of adventure. They were not disappointed. Snow greeted the students as they unloaded their gear and moved into their cabins. This year's camp offered activities that many of the fifth-graders had never experienced before. The adventure trail gave them the opportunity to scale a rock-climbing wall and try



Nelson fifth grade Outdoor Science School teachers Todd Webb, Marlene Beisel and Michelle Bricks, and school secretary Paula Graham head out in the snow to meet fifth graders on the trail.

their bow-and-arrow skills at the archery station. During the four days, hikes were completed that focused on many topics including geology, wildlife and astronomy. Highlights included skits performed by each cabin and the teachers. Students returned to Nelson with enough memories to last a lifetime.

Upon returning from the winter break, Nelson fifth-graders began preparing their presentations for the annual Kids' Conference on Watersheds at the Ocean Institute in Dana Harbor. Since their first visit to the Institute in October, students have developed projects centered

around keeping the oceans clean. In January, they presented their findings to students from other schools around Orange County. Utilizing 21st Century presentation skills, each group shared its data, using presentation software on the computer or iPad.

From the mountains to the sea, Nelson fifth-graders have been able to experience programs that have produced memories and incredible opportunities for learning that they will carry with them forever.

Orchard Hills *School*

11555 Culver Dr., Irvine, CA 92602 • 714/730-2078



Rich Montgomery
Principal

Mr. Thompson's Opus

In his book *Building Engaged Schools*, Gary Gordon describes three characteristics that extraordinary teachers possess.

The first is an innate passion to teach. He says that when you love what you do, it comes through your pores. Jim Thompson, our school's founding music teacher, exemplifies this characteristic. His students feed off of his passion and give him their best efforts each day as they hone their musical talents.

The second trait of a great teacher is a gift for building relationships. Teachers create relationships of one kind or another with every student in their classroom, whether they intend to or not. Mr. Thompson has earned the respect of his students because he treats them with respect. Additionally, he also knows how to set the right expectations for each student to improve.

The third characteristic is an understanding of how to activate learning. Whether adopting new teaching techniques, spreading a love of music through his enthusiasm, or tapping the talents of those students who may see music as their element, Jim exemplifies this quality.

Jim Thompson will be retiring from Orchard Hills School at the end of this school year. As one of our founding teachers, Jim has been instrumental in helping our school accomplish many of its goals since opening in 2010. Mr. Thompson personifies the characteristics described by Gordon. He has truly been a world-class teacher!

The closing scene in the movie *Mr. Holland's Opus* has brought tears to the eyes of many. I believe that on June 18, 2015, there will be few dry eyes at Orchard Hills School when one of its most beloved teachers will end his illustrious career not just as a middle school teacher, but as a great individual who has touched the lives of many people through his gift of music.



Orchard Hills music teacher Jim Thompson, seen here in his Element, will retire on June 18, 2015.

Peters Canyon *Elementary School*

26900 Peters Canyon Rd., Tustin, CA 92782 • 714/730-7540



Brooke Carreras
Principal

Connect in Action

The fifth-grade scholars at Peters Canyon Elementary School are using technology in increasingly innovative ways, and across multiple subject areas.

For example, our students use Google Docs to collaboratively create documents, take surveys, and provide feedback. Through the use of iPads, they are also creating presentations using apps like Popplet to synthesize informational text and embed pictures and text material.

In social studies, scholars use close-reading strategies to comprehend informational text on, for example, the Pilgrims, and then embed key details into a Popplet project for presentation to their peers. Similar projects are created in science as well.

In math, scholars work in pairs to solve equations.



Fifth grade scholars use the iPad apps, Popplet and Educreations to create presentations based on informational text in science and social science as well as math.

They then use the Educreations app to create a narrated, step-by-step video of how to solve the equation. After creating this how-to video the students then present the solution to their peers.

During December, scholars in each grade level participated in the nationwide “Hour of Code.” Here the students accessed a variety of online games and tutorials about the basics of computer language. Many of them continued their inquiry beyond the “hour” simply because they found computer coding to be fun and challenging.

Our teachers are committed to growing their own professional practice in the use of technology. The school’s Digital Learning Coach provides one-on-one coaching and ongoing staff development to support our Peters Canyon commitment to TUSD Connect.

Rigorous standards and engaging strategies, supported by technology: that’s TUSD Connect!

Pioneer *Middle School*

2700 Pioneer Rd., Tustin, CA 92782 • 714/730-7534



Tracey Vander Hayden
Principal

Staff and Students Accomplishments

The start of the new year has provided Pioneer Middle School with much to celebrate. The Tustin Unified School District (TUSD) recently announced its honorees for the 42nd annual Administrator of the Year and Friends of Education Awards TUSD honored 10 administrators this year, two of whom are from Pioneer! Principal Tracey Vander Hayden was honored as Middle Grades Principal of the Year and Assistant

Principal Troy Fresch was honored as Secondary Co-administrator of the Year. Both Mrs. Vander Hayden and Mr. Fresch are humbled and honored by the recognition and will use it to fuel their pursuit of Pioneer’s mission: “Maximizing every student’s academic potential and personal responsibility.” Mrs. Vander Hayden and Mr. Fresch are dedicated to the Pioneer community and to making the school a beacon for the TUSD Connect initiative.

At Pioneer, students experience a rigorous curriculum through engaging lessons with the support of 21st-century technology. With the support of the Tustin Public Schools Foundation (TPSF), Pioneer’s robotics team participated

in its first districtwide competition and won! The group of students spent a number of hours, in and outside of school, designing and building an agile robot that was able to quickly maneuver around the ring while pushing, pulling and stacking obstacles. A special thank you to TPSF and Pioneer’s robotics coach, Matthew Ireland, for making this possible for the school’s community of learners.



Pioneer Principal Tracey Vander Hayden and Assistant Principal Troy Fresch were chosen among 10 TUSD Administrators of the Year for 2015.

Red Hill *Elementary School*

11911 Red Hill Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/730-7543



Will Neddersen
Principal

Student Council is Making a Difference!

Red Hill works to develop the three R's in its students, which are respect, responsibility and building relationships. We know that when students show these characteristics, it makes a positive impact at Red Hill. The student council is working to have students take the three R's out into the community.

One of the executive board members is focused on community service. This individual works with a committee to find ways to have students support others. Their goal is to help students understand that what they do for others has a positive impact.

During Halloween, Red Hill students supported Operation Gratitude Candy Collection. This collection was sent to the soldiers. Students filled over three trash cans. During the Thanksgiving holiday, the student council had a canned food drive for Operation Warm Wishes: Unity in the Community. The food collected supported the feeding of families in need at Peppertree Park. In December, the student council teamed up with the California Highway Patrol to participate in the CHiPs for Kids program. For a week-and-a-half, the student council collected new toys for the program. Chipper and Officer Fox came and picked up four bins full of new toys to share with others.

As the New Year began, there was more that Red Hill students planned to do. In January, the student council encouraged students to support a project created by a Red Hill Rocket, titled "Blankets for Wet Noses." Student brought in new or gently used blankets that were taken to the Orange County Animal Shelter for caretakers to



Student Council Executive Board gives toys to Chipper for Chips for Kid program.

use during the winter months. In February, the student council hosted a Heart of Gratitude table where students were able to write a note of appreciation for the troops.

Red Hill students are making a positive impact in their community!

Jeane Thorman *Elementary School*

1402 Sycamore Ave., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7364



Erick Fineberg
Principal

Lifelong Readers

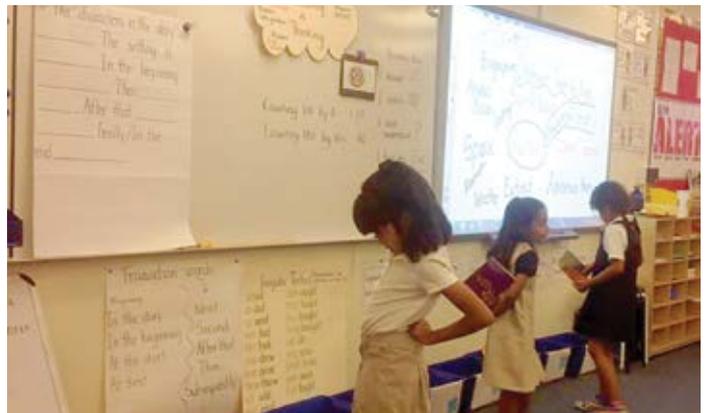
Thorman Elementary School's teachers are meeting the needs of 21st-century learners through engaging teaching strategies every day in the classroom. These strategies have a healthy balance of reading, writing, collaboration, choice, and creativity.

One of the most valuable ways teachers help students to be successful is encouraging them to develop a love of reading through providing access to a variety of books at each student's individual reading level. Thorman teachers and staff are finding ways to build classroom libraries as well as home libraries for all students.

This year, Thorman has brought back the Reading Is Fundamental program. Students are able to select books from a variety of levels and genres, and every student in kindergarten through third grade gets the opportunity to take home three free books throughout the school year. Also, the Thorman Book Fair provided an opportunity for parents and students to purchase books for their home libraries. The money raised was used by PTA to provide free novels of their choice to students in fourth and fifth grades. Through community partnerships with AmeriCorps

and the Elks Lodge, volunteers have come to read with students and have delivered books to students in different grade levels.

In addition, Thorman's Family Literacy Night at the Tustin Library not only celebrated reading with students and families but also used book donations in order to send every child home with a new book for their home library. Thorman continues to emphasize the importance of reading in and out of the classroom and is working together to build a school community of lifelong readers.



Second grader Betsy Benitez Guerrero debates the next genre of book to read.

Tustin High School

1171 El Camino Real, Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7414



Christine Matos
Principal

College & Career Academy Program

Last fall, Tustin High School students participated in the first annual College & Career Readiness Day. The freshman class took the ReditStep test, which measures the skills students needed to be on track for success as they transition to high school. Simultaneously, the sophomore and junior classes participated in the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), assessing reading, math and writing skills, and providing excellent practice for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

and 20 minutes about twice a month, students have the opportunity to explore their plans for after high school by using their laptops to log into their Naviance accounts.

Naviance is an electronic, college data-management system used by the counseling department to keep track of student data, including student grade-point averages, standardized test scores, college choices, college application information, and personality and career assessments. For more information about CCR Academy and getting ready for college, please visit the Tustin High Web site at www.Tustin.k12.ca.us/TustinHS.



Tustin High School seniors visit the University of California Irvine campus..

The seniors visited a local college of their choice: Irvine Valley College (IVC), California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), or University of California, Irvine (UCI). The students' energy was contagious, both before and after their trips. Many students exited the bus with comments such as, "Best day ever" and "I'm going to Fullerton!" One senior said the UCI trip was fantastic and that it inspired her and a friend to see all of the local University of California campuses. She said the trip got them in college mode, and they are planning an excursion to University of California, Santa Barbara.

This experience was also the official launch of the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Academy Program at Tustin High School. CCR Academy time is dedicated to college and career readiness for all Tillers. For an hour

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Tustin Ranch *Elementary School*

12950 Robinson Dr., Tustin, CA 92782 • 714/730-7580



Tracy Barquer
Principal

Lights, Camera, Action!

Every child at Tustin Ranch Elementary is a star in their own right, and our school has the club to prove it!

Our Theatre Arts Program (TAP) started this year for students in grades one through five. The idea came while discussing various after-school club options that could help support our families with enrichment opportunities during the early-out

Wednesdays. We also wanted to provide experiences not readily found in the regular classroom curriculum.

production of *The Emperor's New Clothes* was selected. A talented acting coach and mentor, Kristi Hamelin, was also brought in to lead the classes with the supervisory support of our parents.

Weekly classes began in earnest once a week in our multipurpose room. After introductory lessons on stage design, costume design, lighting, blocking, and stage presence, the students then auditioned for specific parts in the play. This ranged from full solo speaking parts to cast choral responses, as well as opportunities to support activities behind the scenes. The parents even helped to design and sew costumes and practice applying makeup.



Tustin Ranch's Theatre Arts Program (TAP) cast and crew assemble for their first play.

The PTA decided to support the cause and need for after-school activities, and everyone agreed that a theatre arts program just might be the ticket. So an open casting call was held. We had 45 aspiring thespians audition for the program as stage crew members, sound and lighting technicians, or cast members.

After reviewing several options, the script for the first

The students rehearsed diligently every week, and they quickly gained confidence in their newly acquired skills. The first performance was held on January 29 at Pioneer Middle School in its performing arts center. The show was completely sold out! TAP was so successful that we will be holding a spring session to focus on classic Broadway show tunes. The stars are truly shining at Tustin Ranch Elementary School!

Tustin Memorial Academy

12712 Browning Ave., Santa Ana, CA 92705 • 714/730-7546



Wendy Hudson
Principal

Fit for Learning

Fifth-graders at Tustin Memorial Academy (TMA) have joined students throughout California by participating in FITNESSGRAM, a physical fitness test designed to help students establish lifetime habits of regular physical activity. TMA has a long history of emphasizing academics but also recognizes the importance of producing well-rounded scholars who are physically and emotionally primed to succeed in school and beyond. To accomplish this, the Parent Teacher Organization sought a highly qualified physical education teacher based on the belief that structured group exercise and moderate to high levels of physical activity help improve academic achievement, increase on-task time in class, and improve test scores while decreasing absenteeism and disciplinary referrals.

Stephanie Fairbanks has been TMA's physical education teacher and coach for three years. As a

fully-credentialed teacher, she has received extensive training and continues to expand her knowledge base with current, applicable research to help students reach their potential. She teaches all of our first- through fifth-graders twice a week and works on developing motor skills, strength, flexibility and endurance. The students adore her! On any given day, students can be seen starting their day with exercises to warm up the associated muscles before a particular activity, and then they are off to build aerobic capacity by running. Fourth- and fifth-graders practice running the mile throughout the year and record their own scores in order to beat their own personal best records.

Coach Fairbanks carefully crafts lessons designed to be fun and engaging while providing students with the knowledge, attitude, and skills to be active for a lifetime. When the most recent FITNESSGRAM scores were released by the state, TMA was not surprised to see that its fifth-graders had outpaced not just the district but the county and state as well. TMA students are indeed fit for learning!



A fourth grader gets ready to record his personal best time for running.



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Dean Jennings
Principal

The Falcons are Going to the Olympics!

The Utt Falcons are true Olympians. Science Olympians to be exact!

The Science Olympiad is a nonprofit organization set up to promote science, technology, engineering, and math thinking through competitive events (STEM). The competitive events have different focuses, including earth science, biology, chemistry, physics, inquiry, and engineering.

The team consists of 15 students from the seventh and eighth grades who participate in three to four events each. Though the participants are tested on their knowledge in traditional paper and pencil tests, they are also tested in non-traditional practical competitions.

For example, in the air trajectory competition, the teams will design, construct, and calibrate a single device capable of launching projectiles into a target, and then collect data about device parameters and performance. In the bridge building competition, teams design and build the lightest bridge with the highest structural efficiency that can span a given opening. In most cases, the level of required knowledge would match a high school AP course, and in some cases college-level understanding of science concepts.

The Utt team currently trains during their science class and after school. The training depends upon the event, but normally consists of researching information, reviewing material, and taking practice tests to hone skills.



Utt Science Olympians display their projects:

(b) Samarth Srinivasa, Umer Irshad, Giana Hennigan, Daniella Zuniga, Alayjia Sweet, Angela Quinnan, Daniel Gil and Amol Walia
(f) Casandra Olvera, Clarice Diaz, Alyssa Tang, Savannah Thorn, Tyler Bagnol and Will Carlen-Jones (Not shown Mikko Monte).

School News

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Other “building” events require students to make bridges, rockets, air cannons, or elastic-powered vehicles. These then need to be tested and calibrated so that on the day of competition our team can achieve outstanding results.

Utt Middle School’s Science Olympiad team has been competing since 2002, and has seen all levels of success. Several years ago they placed first in the Orange County Regional Competition, and have been invited to the State Finals a number of times. On top of that, many of the students have received individual medals for placing in their respective events. More importantly, the Utt Falcons also have fun. Our students walk away with a positive experience about STEM!

Marjorie Veeh *Elementary School*

1701 San Juan St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7544



Ryan Bollenbach
Principal

Viking Inventors

This year, Veeh Elementary School was excited to send 10 students to the Astounding Inventions competition in January at Irvine Valley College. By completing the steps that follow, the students

were led through the Steps of the Scientific Method: Ask a question, do background research, construct a hypothesis, test your hypothesis by doing an experiment, analyze your data and draw a conclusion, and communicate your results.

The competition began last November when students wrote an essay on something they would like to invent. The project then became hands-on as the students built their inventions from scratch. Students were encouraged to fail and make changes until they felt that they had the



Veeh's Inventors with their inventions: Itzy Torres, the Charge E Box; Angelica Estrada, the Trash Away; Briana Scheer, the Spy Laser; Angie Flores, the Juice Holder; Scarlett Lozano, the Automatic Dog Scratcher; Beyonce Rojas, the Cap; Serenity Fields, the Slipper Light; Anthony Medrano, the Balloon Box; and Adrian Taylor, the Dog Feeder. Not pictured: Eduardo Reyes, the Port-E-Binder; and advisor Katie Cross.

best invention. Once their final project was complete, the students created a poster board detailing their invention from an idea to a completed product.

Tustin Public Schools Foundation

150 El Camino Real, Suite 140, Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/832-6299 • www.tfsf.net



Carol Burby Garrett
Executive Director

Upcoming Events

Tustin Public Schools Foundation is hosting the 2nd annual Golf Classic on April 23rd, 2015. The Golf Classic will be held at the Tustin Ranch Golf Club. Lunch will be served on the course, followed by a BBQ dinner and auction.

Last year, Tustin Public Schools Foundation raised \$70,000, directly benefitting the middle school Robotics Program and providing 70 scholarships to the Foundation's Summer Academy. This year, funds will directly benefit the 28 schools in Tustin Unified and help to further excellence for 24,000 students.

Please go to www.tpsf.net for registrations and more information.

Countywide Day of Giving

Orange County Community Foundation has a 2015 initiative to instantaneously raise \$2 million dollars for Orange County nonprofits. The campaign, I Heart OC Giving Day, will begin at 6:00 am on April 21st and run through noon on April 22nd. The theme is "30 Hours to Give Where Your Heart Lives" and will serve as a major fundraising platform for Tustin Public Schools Foundation.



Be sure to visit iheartoc.org to donate to the Tustin Public Schools Foundation during the 30 hour fundraising period in April. Stay tuned for more information. We appreciate your support!

Business Services

Tustin Unified School District, 300 South C St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7301 Ext. 302



Anthony Soria
Chief Financial
Officer

Over \$1 Million in Energy Savings

The Tustin Unified School District is pleased to announce that it has exceeded \$1 million in savings this fall as a result of its energy-conservation program. These are precious funds that the District has been able to keep in the classrooms rather than send to utility providers.

The conservation success is also helping preserve the environment. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the decrease in energy use is the equivalent of taking 411 cars off the local roads or planting 5,062 trees in the community over a one-year period.

It's obvious that the energy-conservation program that TUSD began with the help of an energy consultant is achieving its goal of changing the culture from unintentional energy waste to intentional energy conservation. This achievement would not be possible without the dedication and hard work of the District's faculty and staff. Tustin Unified will strive to continue to build a culture of energy conservation and work toward its next milestone.

Additionally, TUSD has many construction projects



Sub-contractor installs structural steel at Beckman's new Humanities Building.

in the works. They include the heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system replacement for the 100 building at Foothill High School and construction of a new 17-classroom Humanities Building at Beckman High School. The Foothill project entails a dedicated package unit and individual controls for each classroom and is scheduled for completion this spring. Beckman's project is progressing well and is on track for completion later this summer—classrooms will be open for student and staff use at the start of the 2015–16 school year. Each of these projects was designed with energy-efficient building components.

Educational Services

Tustin Unified School District, 300 South C St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7301 Ext. 309



Kathie Nielsen
Chief Academic
Officer

Developing Musical Ability

There have been many exciting changes in TUSD elementary classrooms this year. Our newly reinstated elementary music education program has our fourth- and fifth-grade students moving to a fresh new beat.

Stephanie Yang, coordinator of curriculum and special projects, has created and launched this music program in partnership with the Tustin Public Schools Foundation, local music organizations, stakeholders across the TUSD, and a team of five elementary music specialists.

As students rotate between three different courses over the school year, key skills and concepts are introduced and spiraled to help develop a deep understanding and application of skills. Every lesson begins by increasing music appreciation and listening abilities through a "Composer of the Week" building exercise.

The students then move into content-specific study. They can participate in anything from learning scales and note values on digital keyboards, recorders or violins, to composing their own songs using solfège and rhythm. Fifth-grade teacher Erica Mosqueda from Myford Elementary School shared that, "The children really love

the music program. I get to peek in on them during my released planning time, and I can see giant smiles on their faces and know that they are being very productive!"

Research shows that music education enhances the learning of other subjects, and helps develop skills that children can inevitably use in other areas. From language development to fine motor skills, the design of the exploratory wheel engages our students with music-rich experiences in singing, listening, moving, strings (fifth grade), winds (fourth grade), and music technology.

The District's music specialists in Jeannine Flores,



Arroyo Elementary School students Isabella Cantuna and Teagan Prowell are coaching each other on correct finger placement on their shared violin.

Victoria Cope, Katarina Giesler, Walter Wagner, and Elisa Bohm help refine and redesign a curriculum that will meet the demands of 21st-century learning.

Nutrition Services

Tustin Unified School District, 300 South C St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7301 Ext. 342



Teresa Squibb
Director

Smarter About Nutrition

A smarter lunchroom is one that nudges students toward nutritious foods. Over 30 million children are fed by the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). This program is an opportunity for students to select and consume a balanced diet. The Smarter Lunchroom applies research-based principles that lead children to make healthy choices when provided with the full spectrum of choice.

Nutrition Services is working with the Orange County Department of Education and the Dairy Council in piloting Smarter Lunchrooms at Utt Middle School and Estock Elementary School.

At Utt, the goal is to increase participation and encourage students to try new foods. In order to achieve this goal the district has completed a student and staff survey and a student focus group. We have added an additional serving line to decrease student wait times.



Individuals conduct the plate waste study: Pui Yin Wong, Dietetic Intern, Nutrition Services; Teresa Squibb, Director, Nutrition Services; Darshi Balasuriya, Rasha Abdrabou and Susan Magrann, all from OCDE.

We were also awarded a grant to paint a new mural and incorporate electronic menu boards. New food packaging and labels were also created.

At Estock, the goal is to increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, and milk. In order to achieve this goal, the district has completed a plate waste study to measure how much of these types of foods is currently being discarded by students. The district will also be measuring if the noon duty supervisor's positive comments encouraged the students to try their fruits, vegetables and milk. After the test period, another plate waste study will be conducted.

Tustin Unified School District's seventh annual Wellness Week will be held March 9–13. Schools will participate in a variety of ways, including highlighting fitness in the morning announcements, Fitness Fridays, sport activities, wearing colors to match veggies, fruit and vegetable tasting, and staff/student volleyball games. This year the district is also sponsoring a video contest for all grade levels. Students will create a short persuasive commercial on why it is important to eat healthy and get active.

Technology in TUSD Schools

Tustin Unified School District, 300 South C St., Tustin, CA 92780 • 714/730-7301 Ext. 306



Crystal Turner
Assistant
Superintendent
Administrative
Services

Digital Learning through Digital Coaches

By Crystal Turner and Garrett Kerr

After the passage of Measure S, it quickly became clear that training for teachers on how to best integrate technology into the classroom was essential. As a result, digital learning coaches (DLC) were hired and trained to provide support for next-generation teaching and learning in Tustin Unified. These dynamic educational coaches work daily with other teachers to improve instruction, all while integrating technology.

Fifteen DLCs support 125 teachers (TUSD Connect Fellows) who are intensely coached. Combined with their efforts in the 2013–14 school year, they have reached about 250 classroom teachers with coaching support. The Fellows have put in considerable time and effort discovering and exploring new technology and ways to integrate it into their instruction. The true beneficiaries of the lessons that the DLCs and Fellows design are

the students. The Fellows are developing engaging lessons that motivate students to want to expand the boundaries of learning. Students frequently use their devices to collaborate, communicate, create, and think critically.

In the 2014–15 school year, TUSD's educational technology department was increased when additional DLCs were added. There are currently 15 DLCs this year. At the elementary level, the coaches are Ashly McNamara, Brandee Ramirez, Jessica Bodas, Emily Cruz and Kristy Andre. The middle and high school coaches work with teachers in specific subject areas. The secondary coaches are Cari Williams, Miriam Prell, Michelle Ciecek, Andrew Stadel, Jamie Joyce, JR Ginex-Orinion, Roland Jones and Jaclyn Spangler. Two of the amazing 15 Digital Learning Coaches are Lauren Steinmann, who is assigned to Orchard Hills School, and Crystal Kirch, assigned to Beckman High School. Both are funded through a generous grant from a private real estate corporation.



Digital Learning Coaches provide support for Next Generation teaching and learning in Tustin Unified.

The partnership between the DLCs and the Fellows provides exceptional learning opportunities for TUSD students!

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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 contact her at Susan@College4Less.com or on her Web site at www.college4less.com



Kate Karp

Build It Back Again

I'm delighted whenever I come across a collection for children featuring music that isn't formulated, childishy cute or backed with electronic tracks. *Build It Back Again* by the Billy Jonas band is none of this, even with the use of a toy piano as a percussion instrument. The melodies are catchy compositions performed by a full range of vocal and instrumental mastery—even that little piano—and the lyrics do more than instruct and educate. They traverse sometimes wonky pathways to communicate profound messages of determination, maintaining humanity in a technological world, balance and historical significance.

The title song features a strong tempo with words to match. From the architecture of ancient Greece to the ravages of Hurricane Katrina—and certainly not stopping there—the band sings of the resolve of the human spirit to rebuild, often in new ways. The rollicking “Monkeys Driving Cars” tells how necessary it is to advance ourselves as humans to the same extent as technology if we want to survive as people. In a primal atmosphere of percussion, “Moment of Noise” seamlessly transitions from the creation of the universe to thankfulness and appreciation for every little sound and what causes it.

The CD is heavy but not any means ponderous. The songwriters also love wordplay, especially as it increases vocabulary and wallows in punning, as in “Hairy,” “Maybe Maybe Not” and “What Kind of Bear Are You?”

The Billy Jonas Band has dug a sturdy foundation in *Build It Back Again*— good stuff for any group discussion that involves young minds.

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

String Instruments Word Search Contest!

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

When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that word you email to:

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Please put **Tustin** in the subject line.

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From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.

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- GUITAR
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- LUTE
- LYRE
- MANDOLIN
- ORGAN
- PIANO
- SITAR
- UKULELE
- VIOLA
- VIOLIN
- ZITHER



Congratulations to **Kiley Hohenfeld** Winner of the Nov. Word Search Contest!

TUSD Holds First Middle School Robotics Competition

By Mark Eliot
Director of Communications and Public Information
Tustin Unified School District

Over 85 students from across all six middle schools gathered for the first ever after-school Robotics Competition on January 15 at Pioneer Middle School in the Tustin Unified School District.

Twelve teams participated in the robotics competition. Columbus Tustin and Orchard Hills came with four teams each. Currie, Hewes, Pioneer and Utt each assembled with one team. The students worked tirelessly in preparation for their first competition. Each team built a robot for this year's official VEX Robotics Game called "Skyrise." Team members collaborated on the design, building, coding and programming of their robot.

The robotics competition was conducted tournament style. There were four rounds, with winners of each previous round advancing to the next. Teams worked to move cubes around the competition ring and build posts in order to score points. Pioneer and a Columbus Tustin team advanced to the championship game. After two minutes of exciting competition, Pioneer



Middle School became the champions of the first robotics competition. Columbus Tustin/Team A placed second and Currie took third place.

"Middle school teacher/coaches and administrators worked hard to make this event such a big success," said TUSD Digital Learning Coach Cari Williams, who is coordinating the robotics league and competitions. "We also had a great turnout of parent spectators at our first competition."

The TUSD Robotics League was created to provide opportunities for students to develop skills and interest in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), computer science and programming through a competitive robotics program, according to Williams.

"Students learn valuable lessons through sharing designs, driving and collaborating on code

used to program the robots," Williams said.

A second robotics competition was held on February 10 at Columbus Tustin School and a third contest is scheduled for March 14 from 8 to 11 a.m. at Orchard Hills School.

The Tustin Public Schools Foundation (TPSF) is supporting the TUSD Robotics Program. The organization recently contributed \$10,000 to the program, which began at the 2014 Tustin Summer Academy and grew into an after-school program at the six middle schools.

The Foundation will again offer a robotics course at its 2015 Tustin Summer Academy, June 29 through July 23. Registration will begin March 1. There will be a Parent Information Night at Orchard Hill School in the spring (date to be announced).

"Students, teachers, administrators and parents are very excited about the robotics program," Williams said. "The District's goal is to add TUSD high school teams to its league and host other school districts."



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