

SUPERINTENDENT



**Raul
Maldonado**

Just as our students have goals and milestones in their education, our school board and district have goals we work toward. Our last set of district-wide goals will expire this year, and we are in the process

of setting new ones. We call this our district's strategic plan.

The purpose of our strategic plan is to set our overall goals as a district and to develop a plan to achieve them. In doing so, we have the opportunity to draw up a road map for the next few years. This will describe our vision, mission and goals as a district, with an eye toward helping all students be successful.

The strategic planning process is thorough and will take some time to complete. This is because we want to form challenging goals that benefit our students and community, that are also realistic and attainable. To reach these goals, we are developing well thought out and detailed plans

See **SUPERINTENDENT** • Page 11

Assessment: An Instructional Strategy for College and Career Readiness

*By Diana Nardi, Coordinator,
Testing and Assessment*

Palmdale School District is always in a continuous improvement mode to be able to offer our students opportunities for success.

As part of this process, teachers and administrators use assessments as an instructional strategy to support learning, drive instruction and monitor progress.

Classroom and District

Teachers have common formative assessments (CFAs) which they develop with their professional learning communities to assess direct instruction in the classroom. The district benchmarks monitor progress toward common core standards at the end of each quarter. These new benchmarks are known as Common Core Progress Monitoring (CCPMs). For 3rd – 8th grade, these assessments are administered online and consist of many of the question types they will experience with the new state assessments.



Other Assessments

This year, randomly selected students in the 4th grade at Ocotillo and Chaparral and 8th grade at Desert Willow participated in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). David G. Millen students in the 8th grade will participate in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). For more information on these nationally administered assessments please visit:

NAEP: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/>

TIMSS: <http://timssandpirls.bc.edu/>

At the end of the year, students in grades 6th – 8th grade will take the Math Diagnostic Testing Project (MDTP). Developed by the UC/CSU system,

See **ASSESSMENT** • Page 11

FUNtervals for Health & Physical Well-Being

*By Todd Cherland, Director
Child Nutrition, Health and Physical Well-Being*

Keeping children fully engaged in the classroom is no easy feat, but a new technique incorporating high-intensity interval training may be the answer to every teacher's prayers.

Just four minutes of physical activity has been shown to greatly reduce fidgeting and inattentiveness for second- and fourth-grade students. Canadian researchers from Queen's University are calling the quick spurts "FUNtervals." These brief breaks give children an opportunity to release all of their pent-up energy into highly-focused and applicable activities, such as collecting firewood, starting a fire, making s'mores, or simply exploding into exercise with squats and jumps.

For three weeks, researchers compared a classroom with incorporated FUNtervals to a classroom without breaks and observed how many times children became distracted or fidgeted during their lessons. In just 50 minutes, the results were obvious. Children give breaks with quick, enthusiastic

See **FUNTERVALS** • Page 2



FUNtervals (continued from page 1)

movements directed toward a common goal were able to learn with better attention and effectiveness. The FUNtervals were easily conducted in small spaces, without the need to budget for expensive exercise equipment, making it completely applicable for any classroom setting.

Exercise has become a highlighted topic for doctors, teachers, administrators, and parents who are concerned their children may fall into the unhealthy habits lurking everywhere in the United States. Children are more susceptible to weight issues than any other population because they're at the mercy of someone else's decisions, priorities, knowledge, and wallet. Recess is a key tool in fighting this life-threatening epidemic. These overweight and obese children are more likely to grow up to be disease-ridden adults with expensive health bills, which could cripple the country's financial status.



A school without a playground sends a very loud and ominous message: exercise is not prioritized. Palmdale School District is proud of its well-equipped and extensively used playgrounds throughout the district. Students are active at recess and lunch breaks as well as during the physical fitness classes. We encourage the incorporation of FUNtervals at school and at home!



Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



As the last half of this school year is quickly coming to a close the students are focused on their academic goals and on the front page Superintendent Maldonado wrote about the District goals and strategic plan. Throughout this issue the common thread is the importance of parent and community involvement.

Thank you for including the *Launch Pad* among your reading choice to keep abreast of the excellence in the classrooms.

Our next issue is May 6. Until then have a fun Spring Break!

School News

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Covering the
PALMDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT

FOUNDER/PUBLISHER: Kay Coop
562/493-3193 • kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com

ADVERTISING SALES:
562/493-3193

CONTENT COORDINATOR: Barbra Longiny

GRAPHIC DESIGNER: Meshel Negrete

COPY EDITORS:

Lisa Brock, Kate Karp & Anna Zappia

CONTRIBUTING CARTOONIST:

Netragrednik by Neta Madison



SCHOOL NEWS ROLL CALL, LLC
P.O. Box 728, Seal Beach, CA 90740
562/493-3193

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Palmdale School District
Alternative Education Programs



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Now accepting applications for the 2015-2016 school year!

ECE is recruiting eligible children birth to four years of age, including services for pregnant women and their families. Our programs provide support in the areas of: Health, nutrition, social services and academic readiness. Parents who have children with disabilities are encouraged to apply. Placement Pending Least Restrictive Environment as specified by their child's IEP. Early Childhood Education promotes school readiness for children 0-4 years old.

All families are encouraged to apply including: Homeless, Foster Caregiver and families who have children with disabilities.

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Palmdale, CA 93550
(661) 273-4710

Or

Lancaster Area:
540 E. Lancaster Blvd. #101
Lancaster, CA 93535
(661) 942-2450

www.Palmdalesd.org

Select: Early Childhood Education

Our District also sponsors the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The program is available without charge to all children enrolled in participating programs. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. Early Sponsored by: CCRC, funded by Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services, California Department of Education, Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP).

Palmdale School District's Sage Planetarium

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Public Nights \$5 Per Person

By *Jeremy Amarant, Director*



March 5

4:30 Pre-K and Kinder Planetarium Show
 5:30 A Planetarium Show for All Ages
 7:00 Public Star Party (Free)
 Telescopes in front of the Palmdale School District's SAGE Planetarium

March 19

4:30 Pre-K and Kinder Planetarium Show
 5:30 A Planetarium Show for All Ages
 6:30 Scout Night

April 16

5:30 Pre-K and Kinder Planetarium Show
 6:30 A Planetarium Show for All Ages
 8:00 Public Star Party (Free)
 Telescopes in front of the Palmdale School District's SAGE Planetarium

April 30

4:30 Pre-K and Kinder Planetarium Show
 6:00 A Planetarium Show for All Ages
 7:00 Scout Night

May 14

4:30 Pre-K and Kinder Planetarium Show
 5:30 A Planetarium Show for All Ages
 8:30 Public Star Party (Free)
 Telescopes in front of the
 Palmdale School District's SAGE Planetarium

May 28

4:30 Pre-K and Kinder Planetarium Show
 5:30 A Planetarium Show for All Ages
 7:30 Scout Night

Special Event

April 4 (Before Sunrise on Saturday Morning)
 Lunar Eclipse Viewing (Free)
 3:15 am until 6:45 am

Special Event

April 11
 2:30 The Proper Care of Telescopes
 (Free to PSD Employees and their friends and family)
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- ▶ Paraeducator - Certified Interpreter (Deaf and Hard of Hearing)
- ▶ Sub Early Childhood Education Teacher Assistant
- ▶ Sub Paraeducator - Moderate to Severe
- ▶ Sub Special Education Instructional Assistant

Click on the link to "Apply."

To be notified of future job opportunities, submit a "Job Interest Card" located under the Section Contents column.

The Personnel Commission has relocated to 37230 37th Street East, Palmdale, CA 93550 661-285-2902

Barrel Springs *Elementary K-6*

3636 Ponderosa Way, Palmdale, CA 93550 • 661/285-9270 • www.palmdalesd.org



Kimberly Wright
Principal

Buddies, Not Bullies!

“Be a buddy not a bully” is Barrel Springs’ anti-bullying slogan this school year. Each year, Barrel Springs School implements our schoolwide Positive Best Behavior program, which not only gives students tools for life but tools for problem solving as well. During morning announcements, students are given a character trait from Words of Wisdom. Students are reminded about the expected behavior. At the end of the announcements, students recite the school’s Anti-Bullying Expectations and on Fridays listen to our theme song, “Happy” by Pharrell Williams.

At the end of each month, students who consistently made good choice participate in fun activities that are tied to the standards for Monthly Incentive Day (MID). Classes with no discipline referrals to the office are also rewarded by the administration each month. Since the beginning of school, the numbers of classes with no discipline referrals has doubled! Go Bulldogs!

This month during our Character Education Assembly, students will be taking the Stop a Bully Pledge: I pledge to stand up and speak out against bullying. I recognize the inner worth and value of everyone. I show others kindness and respect, and eliminate hurtful behavior. I recognize my ability to create change.”

We are proud of our school and our students!

Cactus *Intermediate 7-8*

3243 East Avenue R-8, Palmdale, CA 93550 • 661/273-0847 • www.palmdalesd.org



Ruth James
Principal

Family Fitness Night

The Cactus Intermediate School Physical Education Department held its first Family Fitness Night in December 2014. It was a huge success; bringing in Cactus families, students from our feeder schools, and local fitness professional Ashley Seeger to a positive, fun workout environment. Raffle prizes were given away as participants worked hard during a mini boot-camp and other physical challenges. Thank you to everyone who came and supported this event! Another Family Fitness Night is planned

for the spring. We hope to continue the supportive relationship with the community by bringing in more local fitness/activity groups or professionals and providing more opportunities for parents to get involved in Cactus students’ physical fitness goals, as well as a chance for our families to enjoy being active together.



Buena Vista *Elementary K-6*

37005 Hillcrest Drive, Palmdale, CA 93552 • 661/285-4158 • www.palmdalesd.org



Chris O'Neill
Principal

We Appreciate Parent Support

We’d like to give a shout out to our small, but mighty PTA! Our PTA revolves around two fantastic, hardworking, dedicated women: Lisa Bulsombut and Tracy Freeman. Lisa has been on our PTA Board for 7 years. Tracy came on 4 years ago. They work tirelessly every day, with the help of some of our caring parents. Our PTA does soooo much for our school! Some of the fun activities they provide are : all field trips, our Book Fair, the Holiday Store, Family Nights, Box Tops Contests, our BEST Behavior Panda store, Spirit Wear sales, Teacher welcome back luncheon in August and Teacher Appreciation luncheon in May. But our PTA is in danger...we need more parent support and participation, so we’re asking for help from our Panda parents. We need you!



Chaparral *Elementary K-6*

37500 50th Street East, Palmdale, CA 93552 • 661/285-9777 • www.palmdalesd.org



Tom Pitts
Principal

Building Community

If it’s happening at Chaparral, then you can probably be sure that the Associated Student Body Council has had something to do with it!

The Chaparral ASB is on the move this year raising money, sponsoring field trips, and reaching out to the student population and beyond. At the heart of the ASB are our 24 elected student representatives from the fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade classes. Working together, these student leaders are definitely making a difference at Chaparral.

In addition to funding class field trips, our ASB has also reached out to the community to sponsor our annual Holiday Canned Food Drive. They have promoted student achievement with the Bobcat Spelling Bee, and have even gotten the Bobcat parents dancing in our popular father-daughter and mother-son dances. A year-long slate of activities keeps our ASB Council active and involved in all aspects of school life.

At Chaparral, ASB members also develop a variety of valuable skills during their term of office. Working as an organized unit, they learn to run professional meetings, make responsible financial decisions, and plan, budget, and produce a variety of programs and activities that benefit the entire Chaparral student body.

From Wacky Week, to Camp Read-A-Lot, to the Bobcat Talent Showcase, our Chaparral Associated Student Body Council works hard to build a sense of community on campus.

Cimarron *Elementary K-6*

36940 45th Street East, Palmdale, CA 93552 • 661/285-9780 • www.palmdalesd.org



Kathy Wehant
Principal

Keyboards are Here!

The Forte keyboards are here at Cimarron Elementary School! All third grade classes are eagerly learning how to become expert typists! The Forte keyboard has Perfect Form Keyboard Instruction

consisting of 120 self-paced instructional lessons. This feature allows proper home row finger placement, requires proper shift key usage and tracking, along with monitoring individual student progress. In addition, the keyboard has writing and math activities. Our kids LOVE the keyboards. Students are extremely focused and trying their best! Everyone is in READY POSITION which is sitting up straight, feet on the floor, fingers on the home row keys, and the keyboard at the edge of the student's desk. Each class gets to practice three times a week for 30 minutes. It is amazing what third graders can accomplish using the newest in 21st century technology.



Desert Willow *Intermediate 7-8*

36555 Sunny Lane, Palmdale, CA 93550 • 661/285-5866 • www.palmdalesd.org



Melanie Culver
Principal

Annual Winter Concerts

On December 16 and 18, the students in the Desert Willow band and strings group held their annual Winter Concerts under the direction of music teacher Angela Clayton.

The Concerts showcased the talents of our beginning band and strings, as well as our advanced band and strings students. They all put on an amazing performance of holiday songs featuring special music from the movie Frozen. Our very own Assistant Principal Mrs. Moshier, an accomplished flautist herself, also played a few songs with the advanced band students.

The Concerts were both very well attended, with standing room only! We want to thank Ms. Clayton and our DW musicians for their hard work and two wonderful evenings of music.

If you would like to come hear our wonderful Desert Willow musicians, we will also be having the following events. The band's annual Spring Concert will be on May 26, and the strings' annual Spring Concert will be on May 28.

Desert Rose *Elementary K-6*

37730 27th Street East, Palmdale, CA 93550 • 661/272-0584 • www.palmdalesd.org



Melanie Pagliaro
Principal

Positive School Culture

Here at Desert Rose we are all about working as a productive Professional Learning Community, and building a positive school culture. Recently at a staff meeting we used the district writing rubrics to collaboratively score writing for every grade. Then grade level teams used these papers to guide discussions about the progress of their students and plan instruction. In order for our teachers to understand the progression of writing across grades, we decided to collect writing samples to display in our



hallway. Our next step is to do a learning walk to provide a visual progression from one grade level to the next. This allows Desert Rose teachers to collaborate as a staff effectively. We think taking time to analyze our student data will help us make informed decisions about student progress.

Dos Caminos *Elementary K-8*

39175 Palm Tree Way, Palmdale, CA 93551 • 661/947-1849 • www.palmdalesd.org



Marlene Batista
Principal

Congratulations Miriam Torres

Dos Caminos is so proud to be home to Miriam Torres, the CAFE 2015 Teacher of the Year! Miriam has been a 1st grade teacher here at Dos Caminos since the opening of the grade level in 2012. We see this not only as a win for her, but a win for our entire school! This award speaks to the dedication and hard work of all our teachers, that makes our dual language program a phenomenal success here at Dos Caminos and Palmdale School District. Our school has proudly been following in the footsteps of our amazing sister school, Los Amigos, and we are excited to be recognized and have this as Dos Camino's first of what we anticipate many wins at CAFE!



Golden Poppy *Elementary K-6*

37802 Rockie Lane, Palmdale, CA 93552 • 661/285-3683 • www.palmdalesd.org



Ryan Beardsley
Principal

Patience, Experience and Expertise

Mrs. Wanda Ezozo is the Student Intervention Specialist for Golden Poppy. Her specialty is stopping problems before they start. Her duties include facilitation of peer mediation groups, supervision of the students during lunch recess, initiating proactive parent contact for support, and checking in and out on a daily basis with students who need a little extra attention. She has even been known to play D.J. for kids on Friday afternoons during lunch time! We are thrilled to have her patience, experience and expertise working each and every day to keep Golden Poppy students focused, on task, and in the classroom.



Juniper *Intermediate 7-8*

39066 Palm Tree Way, Palmdale, CA 93551 • 661/947-0181 • www.palmdalesd.org



Dr. Donna Campbell
Principal

A New Way

Juniper has been enjoying the benefits of a school-community partnership through its Pen or Pencil program. Program volunteers and teachers have been spending Thursday afternoons tutoring and mentoring approximately 60 students.

The program has a two-pronged approach: mentoring and tutoring. Three tireless volunteers – Ms. Culver, Ms. Tillman, and Mr. Huff – each arrive on Thursdays at the end of the school day bearing snacks, drinks, and a positive approach to working with students. Other teachers who have participated in this great after-school program are Mrs. Lengyel, Ms. Lighston, Ms Morefield, Ms. Harris, Mrs. Noshkin, and Mr. Oliver.

Pen or Pencil also provides field trips. In past years they have had special tours of Edwards Air Force Base, the Science Museum in Los Angeles, and the opportunity to attend the Pen or Pencil National Convention in July.

The opportunities that this after-school program offers are tremendous. The partnership between school and community is helping build a stronger future for us all.



Students on a recent Pen or Pencil field trip to the Science Museum.

Joshua Hills *Elementary K-6*

3030 Fairfield, Palmdale, CA 93550 • 661/265-9992 • www.palmdalesd.org



Regina Tillman
Principal

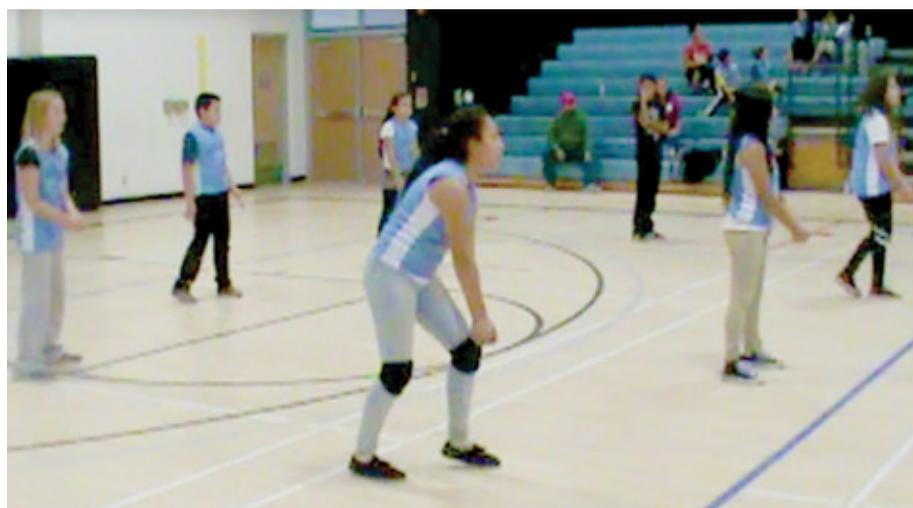
Inspired About Sports

Here is what our students have to say about volleyball!

Alexa Placencia said, “Volleyball gives me spirit. It is a life sport that I want to continue playing in the future.” Riley Lind told us, “When I step on to that court, all my stress and worries go away. I feel like nothing is wrong and the whole world is at peace.” Ali Asp remarked, “Volleyball makes me feel like I could do anything, it gives you courage.”

Karina Jones said, “I don’t have to worry about being judged when I’m at practice. I made new friends.” Ebony Cobos added, “It gave us a reason to be excited about school.” Rebecca Delcid said, “It inspired us to do more sports. It was an inspiration to be an athlete.”

Pamela Landaverde remarked, “We felt supported by teachers, coaches and each other.” And Angela Becerra said it best: “We were like a family.”



Los Amigos *K-8*

6640 East Avenue R-8, Palmdale, CA 93552 • 661/285-1546 • www.palmdalesd.org



Maria Elena Esquer
Principal

Learning Outside the Classroom

Student activities are as important as learning here at Los Amigos School! Our students have the opportunity to join Junior Optimist Octagon International (JOOI) Club, Associate Student Body (ASB), Chess Club, after-school sports in seventh and eighth grades, and Folklorico. Many students participate, giving them an opportunity to learn and have fun in the process! We are very grateful for the adult volunteers who make them possible.

Our ASB students attended a special leadership day at Quartz Hill High School before Christmas. This day was filled with activities that developed their leadership skills and helped them learn to resolve conflict, encourage others, motivate others to learn, become better friends and citizens, and use strategies to face issues that teens experience. Our ASB leaders recreated the experience for 60 eighth-grade students and are planning to do so again. These young leaders are committed to making their school a better place for all!



Manzanita *Elementary K-6*

38620 33rd Street East, Palmdale, CA 93550 • 661/947-3128 • www.palmdalesd.org



Kelly Jensen
Principal

Singing Our Heroes!

A student's day doesn't necessarily begin and end with the classroom teacher. In order for students to be successful, it takes a team to strengthen a school community.

Campus supervisors greet students at the gate and ensure safety on the playground. Manzanita is lucky to have classified employees that assist all of our students throughout the day. We start with a warm, yummy breakfast prepared by a team of cafeteria workers that start before sunrise to prepare students' meals. Our custodial staff works to make sure that thermostats

are set and facilities are clean. Aides attend to students' individual needs to support them both inside and outside the classroom.

Our office staff not only answers phones and takes care of records but also makes sure that students have their supplies. Our health aide provides ice packs, Band-Aids, medication, and more importantly, a warm smile and a caring attitude. With the help of our student interventionist, students are provided with anti-bullying lessons and assemblies to encourage citizenship; she recognizes them with words of encouragement, weekly prizes and awards. As we prepare our students with skills to move through the 21st century, we have a technology technician and a librarian to assist our students with resources to explore new ideas.

If you visit our campus, you will see smiles, high fives and children earning rewards by unsung heroes that do a specialized job that ultimately supports student achievement.

David G. Millen *Intermediate 7-8*

39221 22nd Street West, Palmdale, CA 93551 • 661/947-3075 • www.palmdalesd.org



Brian Williams
Principal

Academic Achievers

Millen Intermediate had a great first semester. We finished with 99% of our students passing with a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or higher. We also finished the semester with hundreds of students receiving Honor Roll Awards. With so many students achieving academically, we wanted to find new ways to challenge students.

Mesquite *Elementary K-6*

37622 43rd Street East, Palmdale, CA 93552 • 661/285-8376 • www.palmdalesd.org



Sonia Salcedo
Principal

Free Money!

Mesquite Elementary School's fifth-grade students are very busy this year learning about the earth and how to take care of our planet. The fifth-grade teachers received an \$1,800 grant, 2014 California Edible School Garden Grant, from the Western Grower's Foundation. With the support of Todd Cherland, Director of Child Nutrition, Health and Physical Well-Being, Dan Swift, Assistant Director of Grounds, and the district's grounds staff, the students were able to work the soil, plant, and see the growth of their seedlings.

The fifth-grade teachers also received an EnviroBus Buck Grant from the Mojave Environmental Education Consortium (MEEC) and received two free field trips for this year. They will be going to Vasquez Rocks and Devils



Punchbowl. The teachers attended the MEEC conference, where they learned about service-learning projects with students and received a drip irrigation system and a solar oven. All it takes is some Google power, and your class can enjoy similar adventures!

Beginning in March, we will be enrolling students in our new honors courses in Math, English, Science, and History for next year. We will also be starting some new clubs like a Drone Flying Club and a Robotics Team. Go to [Facebook.com/millenint](https://www.facebook.com/millenint) or [Facebook.com/Millenespanol](https://www.facebook.com/Millenespanol) for more information.



Oak Tree *Community Day School K-8*

38136 35th Street East, Palmdale, CA 93550 • 661/285-1548 • www.palmdalesd.org



Timothy Howell
Principal

Student Leadership Peer Advisory Panel

Oak Tree Learning Center is proud to implement our Student Leadership Peer Advisory Panel. These leaders use accountable talk strategies and anti-bullying disciplines to redirect and counsel students in need of intervention to change counterproductive behaviors that hold them back from the growth and development needed to return to their zoned school. A panel of leaders and staff members go through the intervention with the student. Behaviors are addressed, positive strategies are agreed on and the plan is implemented. Check-ins are used throughout the time period and a debrief wraps up the process. Students learn strategies to improve conflict resolution. Mutual trust is developed with-in the school. All of this “hands on” work is leading Oak Tree into 2015 with passion, direction and success.

Palmdale Learning Plaza *K-8*

38043 Division Street, Palmdale, CA 93550 • 661/538-9034 • www.palmdalesd.org



Danny Kanga
Principal

A Friendly Face

Mrs. Trish Ratcliff is the school secretary at the Learning Plaza and one of the friendly faces in our school office. She greets each child and parent with a smile

and is truly a great “director of first impressions.” She is also very organized and helps to keep the school running smoothly.

Mrs. Ratcliff has many hobbies. She and her husband, George, a night custodian at Summerwind Elementary School, love to play board games, and she also loves to sing. She has been a member of her high school alumni chorale for almost 40 years and has sung the national anthem at JetHawks Stadium a few times! Trish has a large collection of solar-powered bobbleheads on the corner of her desk, which are a source of interest and delight to most children (and adults) passing by.

Thank you, Mrs. Ratcliff, for your smile and for your invaluable service and dedication to our school.



Ocotillo *Elementary K-6*

38737 Ocotillo School Drive, Palmdale, CA 93551 • 661/947-9987 • www.palmdalesd.org



Ken Young
Principal

Parent Education Workshops

Ocotillo Elementary School has always had terrific parent support and community involvement, and that tradition continues! This school year, we have held several parent-engagement activities, including parent-education workshops.

At the beginning of the school year, parent surveys were utilized to determine parent-preferred workshop topics and times. These workshops cover the areas of math, language arts, nutrition and health, and technology. Workshops are held during the day and in the evenings to ensure that our parents have choices to fit their schedules. We also try to present our parent workshops in English and Spanish.

In January, math was the focus, and teachers planned and presented workshops at each grade level. During the math workshops, parents were able to participate in hands-on math lessons in the same manner that their children receive and learn. Parents were also able to experience the format of the new Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) tests. In February, our Parent Education and Engagement workshop focused on nutrition and health. This workshop was conducted by nutritionists from the Los Angeles County Office of Education.

At Ocotillo, we strive to provide engaging learning opportunities not only for our students but also our parents!

Palm Tree *Elementary K-6*

326 East Avenue R, Palmdale, CA 93550 • 661/265-9357 • www.palmdalesd.org



Gerald Luke
Principal

Full Steam Ahead

Palm Tree is moving “full steam ahead” with the Standards for Mathematical Practices. As we embrace the mathematical shifts of focus, coherence, and rigor our teachers are now making sure they teach students multiple representations in problem solving. Students are encouraged to come up with different ways to represent an answer which allows them to demonstrate their creativity. We are gaining momentum in the area of math.

This year we offer two days of extended day instruction in math. This happens for an hour after school on Mondays and Tuesdays. The class sizes are small and the teachers are able to re-teach common core standards using different strategies. The program is making a positive difference in student learning. We are excited to offer this program for the entire year to give students an extra boost in math.



School News

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Quail Valley *Elementary K-6*

37236 58th Street East, Palmdale, CA 93552 • 661/533-7100 • www.palmdalesd.org



Donna Lebitsamer
Principal

Off-Campus Learning

The Quail Valley School community is extremely excited that our students have an opportunity to learn outside of the classroom. For instance, our kindergarten and transitional kindergarten students will be going to the Los Angeles Zoo to explore science. When they return, they'll recall the information from that experience to help enhance their reading, writing, and speaking skills.

Our first-graders will also be heading to a local bowling alley, where they will use their fine-motor skills to learn how to handle and roll a bowling ball. The second-graders are heading to the Kidspace Museum to create all kinds of gadgets from everyday objects, and then use their imagination to create and build even more.

Our third-graders recently visited the SAGE Planetarium. Kyleigha Towns-Thompson remarked, "It looked like we were really in space!" Mykal Strickland shared, "I got to demonstrate how a planet orbits the sun." And Hector Garcia said, "I learned that if a meteor gets close to the sun, it will explode. I felt like I was really in space."

Our fourth-graders are heading to the San Fernando Mission, as well as the California Science Center, where they will explore the wonders of science through interactive exhibits, live demonstrations, innovative programs, and awe-inspiring films. The fifth-graders are going to Devil's Punchbowl in the San Gabriel Mountains to examine its geological formations, natural vegetation, and the different types of mammals in the museum.

Finally, the sixth-graders will travel to the California Science Center to see the Endeavor Spacecraft and learn about it through a variety of hands-on experiences.

Thanks to our teachers, parents, and community members, every student at Quail Valley will be participating in a field trip this year. So if you happen to see us traveling on a big yellow bus, don't forget to wave as we roll down the road!

Tamarisk *Elementary K-6*

1843 E. Ave. Q-5, Palmdale, CA 93550 • 661/225-9647 • www.palmdalesd.org



Martin Herrera
Principal

Capturing Kids' Hearts

One of the three main goals at Tamarisk is building positive relationships to promote a safe learning environment. Hence, Tamarisk is working on processes and procedures to accomplish this goal. For example, 90% of the certificated staff attended "Capturing Kids' Hearts" a three-day professional development provided by the Flippen Group. Flip Flippen states, "if you have a child's heart, you have his head." The certificated staff immediately began working on the "Social Contract" component of Capturing Kids Hearts. The Tamarisk School-Wide Discipline

Plan is helping students make choices that are safe, respectful, and responsible. A component of this plan are the monthly Positive Behavior Assembly where students are recognized and rewarded for their exemplary behavior.



Shadow Hills *Intermediate 7-8*

37315 60th Street East, Palmdale, CA 93552 • 661/533-7400 • www.palmdalesd.org



Barbara Gaines
Principal

Shadow Hills Granted WASC Accreditation

Shadow Hills Intermediate School received notification on February 9, 2015, that they have been granted WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) Accreditation. The school had their four day WASC visit in November 2014. A six member team spent four days on campus meeting with parents, students, teachers, cabinet and board members. Every classroom was visited at least once by a member of the visiting committee. Shadow Hills was granted candidacy in June of 2012. Shadow Hills will have a follow-up 2 day visit in the Spring of 2017.

Summerwind *Elementary K-8*

39360 Summerwind Drive, Palmdale, CA 93551 • 661/947-3863 • www.palmdalesd.org



Roberto Lopez
Principal

Our Student Interventionist

Summerwind Elementary School is pleased to have Mrs. Elisa Castillo as our student interventionist. Mrs. Castillo started in the Palmdale School District in 2009 as an instructional assistant for the K-3 class at Oak Tree Community Day School. She was then placed with the Ready to Learn K-3 class at Palm Tree Elementary.

In January of 2012 she was hired as the student interventionist at Summerwind Elementary. She enjoys working with the students, and does a great job of helping those who have behavior challenges.

Mrs. Castillo grew up in the San Fernando Valley. For the last 15 years she has lived in the Antelope Valley with her husband and two children, a 12-year-old son and a 10-year-old daughter. When she is not working she enjoys camping and spending time with her family. She also enjoys caring for her array of animals. Mrs. Castillo is a great asset to Summerwind Elementary.

Tumbleweed *Elementary K-6*

1100 East Avenue R-4, Palmdale, CA 93550 • 661/273-4166 • www.palmdalesd.org



H. Alex Morales
Principal

Critical Thinking

We continue to push our students toward critical thinking. In December, Tumbleweed Elementary School participated in the Hour of Code, an initiative to present computer coding to students. Student worked in groups or individually to solve puzzles using computers in the classroom, SMART Boards and pen and paper. Students were asked to move characters around the computer screen using simple computer coding. Their critical-thinking skills were put to the test as they solved the puzzle and wrote the code that would move their characters in the desired directions. It became a fun challenge as students worked in groups to achieve their goals. Many students expressed their desire to continue working on coding beyond the hour.

A sincere thank you to Mr. Hauptman for introducing Tumbleweed to the Hour of Code. For more information about code and the activities our students used, visit www.code.org.



Yellen *Learning Center K-8*

37015 Goldenview Way, Palmdale, CA 93552 • 661/456-1600 • www.palmdalesd.org



Colleen Sawyer
Principal

Thank You!

I would like to send out a special thank you to our staff members who support our program in the area of mental health. I do not think that our school psychologists, counselors, and therapists are thanked enough for their hard work and dedication to working with our students. Due to their support, our students are getting social and behavioral strategies to use at school and in other environments. Currently we have two Palmdale School District psychologists, Brett Vedomske and Mikhal Naftali. They work daily to help with classroom behavior management, crisis management, intake and enrollment of our new students, managing their own caseloads, and assisting throughout the district, as needed. We greatly value our school psychologists at Yellen Learning Center!

Yellen proudly works with the Child and Family Guidance Center, which provides ongoing therapy to our students in house. They play a vital role in the everyday workings of Yellen, and our students would not be as successful as they are without them. Finally, we have been very fortunate to have our own marriage and family therapist to work with our students who aren't able to have their therapeutic needs met through other available sources. We are grateful to the district for filling this valuable position. I would like to welcome Natasha Little to the Yellen team.

I know that we will have a very positive successful remainder of the school year, thanks to the excellent work of our mental health support staff!



Contest!

This picture is somewhere in this publication. When you find it, email the **page number** to:



Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com
(Please put Palmdale in the subject line)

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

Yucca *Elementary K-6*

38440 2nd Street East, Palmdale, CA 93550 • 661/273-5052 • www.palmdalesd.org



Pamela Egbert
Principal

Community Partners

We're very excited about what has been happening this year, and it goes without saying that it couldn't have been done without the dedication of our school staff, parents and community members all pitching in to help.

We've had several community partners reach out to us. A local church brought backpacks in August and came back in December with toys for over 50 children. An aerospace corporation generously provided school supplies and backpacks in September. Also, our "shoe connection" was just as successful, with Pastor Mark and his church providing over 75 pairs of new shoes to give away to any child in need. Our partnership with an automotive corporation has also been fruitful, bringing in much-needed school supplies!

As you can see, Yucca children are well loved and look forward to what the rest of the school year and our community partners have in store for us!



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Health Clinic	537-6137 (8:30am-11am, 1pm-4pm)
Special Education	456-1452
Student Services	456-1457
Superintendent's Office	266-7222 & 266-7220



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Closing the Attendance Gap!

ASSESSMENT • From Page 1

the results from this assessment will be one of the determiners to help place students in 7th, 8th and high school math classes. For more information on MDTP, please visit: MDTP: <http://mdtp.ucsd.edu/>

This spring, our 5th and 7th graders will be participating in the state Physical Fitness Test (PFT). Students are assessed in six areas to determine their Healthy Fitness Zone. The six areas are aerobic fitness, body composition, abdominal strength, trunk strength, upper body strength and flexibility. The PFT's main purpose is to establish lifetime habits of regular physical activity, so teachers have been working with students all year in their P.E. classes to prepare them for success in these areas. For more information regarding this assessment, please visit: PFT: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/pf/>

Smarter Balanced Assessments

Over the past two years, Palmdale School District has been moving toward adapting the rigor and format of the new Smarter Balanced assessments in instruction and assessment. Last year our students participated in the State Field Test. As a result of administering this field test, students had hands-on experience with a computer-based assessment, teachers and administrators gained valuable exposure to the administration process and the district benefited from having learned how our technology functioned so we could fully prepare for the operational assessments that will be administered this spring.

The Smarter Balanced assessments replace the STAR (Standardized Testing and Reporting) tests in English and Math for grades 3 - 8 beginning this school year. Developed with input from K-12 teachers, higher education faculty, and other experts, these new assessments measure critical thinking with questions that ask students to demonstrate their research, writing, and problem solving skills. Utilizing the results, parents, teachers, and policymakers will have better tools and information to monitor student progress and help them succeed. The new assessments are now known as CASSPP (California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress). Under this title are the Language Arts and Math assessment (SBAC), the Science assessments for 5th and 8th grade, and the alternative assessment for our students with severe cognitive disabilities. For more information regarding the assessments in the CAASPP system, please visit: CAASP: <http://www.caaspp.org>

The results of the assessments in the CAASPP system can be used in a variety of ways:

- By parents and guardians to talk with teachers about ways to improve their children's achievement of the common core standards. Results will be mailed during the summer.
- Along with other school and district reports and teacher information, results are used to monitor student achievement. Test results, however, should never be used as the only source of information to make important decisions about a student's education.
- To identify a school's programs strengths and weaknesses.
- Used for state and federal accountability programs that monitor the progress of each school district and school toward achieving established goals.

For more information regarding Smarter Balanced:

CDE Smarter Balanced Web page: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/>



Take the SBAC Practice and Training Tests!:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/practicetest.asp>

How Can You Help Your Student?

How a student performs every day in the classroom is the most important factor for success.

- Support your child in their academic career:
 - Provide a quiet, well lighted area with little distractions to help your child study efficiently
 - Ensure that your child eats a healthy breakfast and avoid heavy foods that may make him/her groggy and avoid high sugar foods that may make him/her hyper
 - Make sure that your child gets up early enough so that he/she will be on time to school
 - If your child is struggling at school, talk to them about it and meet with their teacher to find out the best way to help your child
 - Praise/reward your child when they do well



SBAC Testing Window:

March 30 – May 29.

Please contact your school for their specific dates and times.

SUPERINTENDENT • From Page 1



Raul Maldonado

on how to achieve them. Also included in the strategic planning process is the creation of a mission statement and other guiding documents.

How do we, as a district, envision our future? What specific goals, objectives, action plans, and tactics will carry us forward? These are some of the questions we ask as we develop our new strategic plan.

One of the most important parts of this process is input from our Palmdale families.

Every story has two sides, and we need to hear our parent's stories and insights about our mission, goals and how we plan on achieving them. The education of our students is a partnership between our students, our district and our dedicated parents. As you hear about strategic plan meetings and workshops, please make an effort to attend them and have your voice heard.

What does a strategic plan do?

- Establishes a vision, mission, and beliefs for the school district
- Relates organizational capacity to student and community need
- Reawakens and motivates everyone involved in our district
- Increases morale and develops a sense of trust and cohesion
- Allows for an understanding of how our district works, how finances are spent, and identifies the specific needs of our school district
- Raises board members' awareness of current issues and operations
- Establishes a path to accomplish our desired future
- Provides a path that allows our community to work together
- Allows our district to set specific data-driven priorities
- Serves as a tool for decision-making and resource allocation
- Reviews mission, vision, and guiding principles of the school district



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