

SUPERINTENDENT



Raul Maldonado

Our PROMISE to You!

Happy New Year! I hope you enjoyed your winter break with family and friends. We are off to a great start for 2016. It's been quite busy around the district office, as we continue moving ahead with the Palmdale PROMISE.

Last year, I shared with you about our exciting new literacy program, Footsteps 2 Brilliance. The program is aimed at helping students enrolled in kindergarten through third grade to improve their skills in English and Spanish. We launched the program back in November and already our students have read more than six million words! Imagine how many words our students will read by the end of the school year.

Please encourage your friends and family members who live in the zip codes of 93550, 93551, and 93552

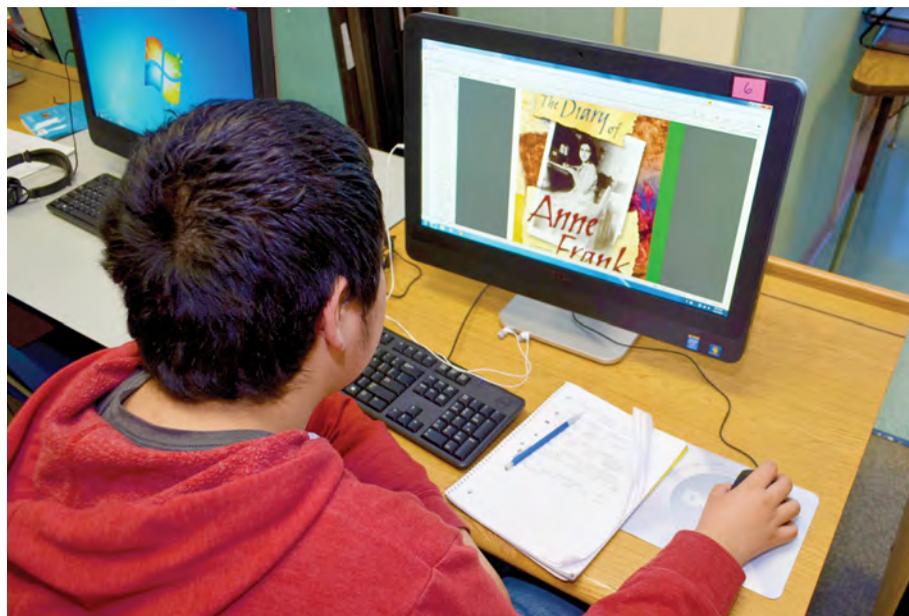
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Assessment for Learning!

PSD Assessment Window is March 29 – May 20, please contact your school for their specific schedule

Part of a Comprehensive Plan for Student Success

Knowing that public schools are preparing students for the challenges of the future, California has developed a comprehensive plan for high-quality teaching and learning in every school. The work is well under way, with higher academic standards, more decision-making in the hands of schools and communities, and more resources dedicated to schools and to students with the greatest needs. The system-wide changes we have begun are focused on helping students succeed in the long run, achieving their dreams of college and a career. Palmdale School District is part of this venture to give our students the best opportunities for success.



What are the Smarter Balanced Assessments?

The Smarter Balanced assessments are new computer based tests for grades 3 through 8 that measure student knowledge of California's English language arts/literacy (ELA) and mathematics standards. The first administration of these assessments was successfully administered last spring in Palmdale, across the state and in other participating states.

See **ASSESSMENT** • Page 15

The Best for Our Students

Without a doubt, the Palmdale School District continues to move forward with a common end goal in mind: to provide the best education possible to our students. The journey to our Palmdale Promise, our strategic plan, included informational meetings with community advocates, including parents and representatives from our two employee organizations, California School Employees Association (CSEA) and Palmdale Elementary Teachers' Association (PETA). These two employee organizations are crucial to the success of our students, from greeting the students at the gates at the beginning of the school day to providing the educational plans throughout the day, and all other services in between, including from breakfast, lunch, administrative support, and nursing services.

One of the principles in creating successful programs is the inclusion of other agencies by creating stronger partnerships to better serve our community. Your Board, with the proactive approach of Superintendent Maldonado, is working hard to create stronger partnerships, which include the city of Palmdale, the Palmdale Water District, the Antelope Valley Union High School District, and other outside agencies that help to prepare our 21st-century students.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Juan Carrillo
President

In implementing our vision—"Where every student leaves ready for success in high school and beyond, whether it being college or a career in the global world"—we are making way for our third dual-immersion school. Educational plazas and magnet school academies are also in the works. These three components will most definitely provide opportunities to our students to reach their full potential; our future doctors, technicians, attorneys, business entrepreneurs, engineers, musicians, artists, and civic leaders have begun their educational foundation in the Palmdale School District.

Part of an exceptional education must include physically active students; bringing back intramural sports was a must for this Board. And once again, our two employee organizations stepped up to the plate and are volunteering in afterschool sports programs and holding healthy sports competitions after school and on the weekends. These activities keep our students focused on success and out of trouble. It is no secret that professional athletes serve as role models; and who knows, the future Payton Manning, Kobe Bryant, Alex Rodriguez, or Lionel Messi could be participating in one of our intramural sports.

See **BOARD OF TRUSTEES** • Page 14



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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



By now students are focused on their end of the year goals and the District is committed to fulfilling the Palmdale Promise.

It is exciting to read about the activities in the classroom. In this issue you will read about arts, music, fitness, volunteers, gardening and so much more!

Thank you for continuing to include the Palmdale School District *Launch Pad* among your reading choices. Everyone is a stakeholder in our students education.

Our next issue is May 4.

School News

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**Covering the
PALMDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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CyberQUEST

The Multimedea Event for Kids Featuring Research, Technology and Presentation

**You are invited to Palmdale School District's
CyberQuest and STEM Showcase**

Location: David G. Millen Intermediate School
39221 22nd Street West Palmdale, CA 93551

Date: April 2, 2016
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

We are asking for volunteers for the annual CyberQuest event. We can use staff members and community members. Volunteers are needed to serve in the following positions

- Judges
- Runners
- First Aid
- Room Monitors/Tabulators
- Welcome Station – sign in table, provide maps and directions to visitors
- And much, much more.

If you are interested in participating please contact:

Janet Simons, Educational Services
39139 10th Street East, Palmdale, CA 93550
JLSimons@palmdalesd.org

Personnel Commission

Ronald Williams – Outgoing Joint Personnel Commissioner

For nearly forty years, the Joint Appointment of the Personnel Commission has been held by Mr. Ronald Williams. The Personnel Commission is a governing body that oversees the activities of the Merit System of the Palmdale School District under Education Code 45240 through 45320. The Merit System operates to ensure that employee selections and promotions are on the basis of merit and fitness to minimize preference or prejudice. The Joint Appointment is selected by the other two members; one member is appointed by the Palmdale School District and the other is selected by the California School Employees Association (CSEA), Chapter #296.



Vicki Galli, Director Personnel Commission; Superintendent Raul Maldonado, Ronald Williams, Outgoing Joint Personnel Commissioner; Nancy Smith and Dennis Trujillo, Board Members.

Mr. Williams has been a member of the Personnel Commission since 1976 and is not seeking another three-year term. Mr. Williams, and his wife, Sylvia, have been residents of the Antelope Valley for over 50 years. Mr. Williams retired from FAA/CAA as an Air Traffic Controller. As an acknowledgment for his dedicated service to the Merit System, Mr. Williams was awarded the “Distinguished Service Award” from the California School Personnel Commissioners Association (CSPCA).

A new appointment for the Joint Personnel Commissioner was made on December 9, 2015. Mrs. Deneese Thompson was appointed as the Joint Appointment to the Personnel Commission.

Deneese Thompson – Incoming Joint Personnel Commissioner



On December 9, 2015, Mrs. Deneese Thompson was appointed as the Joint Personnel Commissioner. She was selected by the two existing Commissioners: Mr. Ned Beadel and Mrs. Kathe Duren. Commissioners Beadel and Duren requested that the competitive examination process be applied to recruiting the Joint Commissioner. The position was posted and supplemental narrative questions were completed. The responses to the supplemental questions were sent to subject-matter experts for rating and then interviews were held in open session at a special Personnel Commission meeting.

Mrs. Thompson is a retired classified employee from the Palmdale School District. In 2009, she retired with 28 years of dedicated service. She was a volunteer in her children’s classrooms commencing in 1979 and then became an Instructional Assistant at Manzanita Elementary. Within a few years, she was promoted to Media Center Clerk and then to School Secretary. She opened Airport Elementary which was piloted for the year-round school calendar. Most of Mrs. Thompson’s career was as School Secretary at Cactus, in the location that is currently The Palmdale Aerospace Academy. Mrs. Thompson recalls “training many an Administrator” in her days. As School Secretary, Mrs. Thompson coordinated the educational activities of students, parents, and staff, both certificated and classified.

Mrs. Thompson is a long-time Antelope Valley resident and community advocate. Being married to Mr. Fred Thompson (City of Palmdale Councilman) for forty-two years, they have four children who attended the Palmdale School District. Their oldest daughter, Erika, (41) lives in Australia. Their son, Michael was killed while serving in the military in 1996. Daniel (35) still participates in Special Olympics as an athlete in bowling and track. The youngest daughter, Kimberly (29), works with disabled adults and is pursuing a career in law enforcement. Last but not least, there is one grandson, Avery (9) who currently attends Summerwind Elementary School.

Being a Commissioner is not the only job Mrs. Thompson has had since retiring. She is currently the Area Director for Special Olympics in the Antelope Valley. Special Olympics provides an opportunity for people with intellectual disabilities to compete as athletes in golf, softball, basketball, Bocce, and track. A wide age range (8 to 60 years old) competes in this annual event. Mrs. Thompson started volunteering with Special Olympics 27 years ago when she felt that she could make a difference to kids with disabilities. She started by coaching the boys’ basketball team; her autistic son was a competing athlete. Her involvement has included being the women’s basketball coach and the assistant coach for men’s basketball. Mrs. Thompson is grateful for the many volunteers; she confesses that her management style is to “surround yourself with people that know more than you do” which allows her to coordinate the many volunteers in the program. This year, the event is scheduled at Palmdale High School for the last week of April or early May.

Mrs. Thompson serves our community through Special Olympics as well as gives back to the Palmdale School District by serving as a Commissioner. As Vice-Chairperson of the Personnel Commission, Mrs. Thompson oversees the administration of the Merit System to obtain qualified classified employees as classified employees are an integral part of the implementation of “The Palmdale Promise.”

School News

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Barrel Springs *Elementary K-6*

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



Kimberly Wright
Principal

Barrel Springs Bulldogs

Student involvement in any form of creativity can improve motivation, concentration, and confidence in students. Barrel Springs Elementary currently provides opportunities for students in both dance and music. The Barrel Springs Choir has performed annually at the Palmdale School District and site functions for over seven years.

In addition, the Laity Arts Institute has provided art and music lessons in the past and has provided ballet classes for over three years. We are so excited to provide more opportunities for our students to get involved in the future!

With Bulldog Pride.



Buena Vista *Elementary K-6*

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



Chris O'Neill
Principal

Folkloric Group

Buena Vista is proud to announce the beginning of our own Folkloric group. Due to an overwhelming response of 400 students, from grades kindergarten to sixth, a lottery was used to select the first 46 participants. It is run by a volunteer parent, Susana Zendejas and a sixth grade student assistant, Suzzanne Pelayo. The first performance is scheduled to be March 2, during Read Across America at Buena Vista. They will also be dancing during our Parent Volunteer Breakfast.

Chess Match

Sixth grader Gia Croos-Peterson, three-time world champion, is teaching Buena Vista students in grade 1st through 6th, how to play Chess. They meet every week to learn strategies and skills to compete in a Chess Match. There was an over whelming response of over 300 students who were chosen from a lottery. Gia is already bragging that the students are learning “serious moves.”



Cactus *Intermediate 7-8*

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



Ruth James
Principal

Focused on Excellence

At Cactus Intermediate School, we have been putting together our Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) mid-cycle report. We are looking forward to very positive feedback from the committee's February visit because of

the excellent things we are doing for the students.

Another focus has been establishing our Health and Technology Academy. We are working with several new community partners to make this possible. Our Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Project Lead the Way, and robotics programs are all helping us to lay the foundation for this transition.

Also, Cactus is pleased to announce that we have won two coveted trophies. In the fall, our seventh-grade girls were champions in the soccer tournament. In the winter games, our seventh-grade boys prevailed over Palmdale Learning Plaza to win the basketball trophy. We are looking forward to the volleyball season, which will be coming soon. Go, Coyotes!



Cimarron *Elementary K-6*

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



Kathy Wehnt
Principal

Student Safety

Cimarron Elementary School students can rely on our fabulous crossing guard, Tammy Kinnamon! Tammy was born in Bloomfield, Iowa, the youngest of five children. At a young age, Tammy enjoyed helping animals. As she got older, she knew she loved helping people as well.



It was only natural that in 2002 she was hired by the Palmdale School District (PSD) Transportation Department as a crossing guard. Shortly thereafter, she was asked to help with a special-needs student. Tammy agreed and became the first bus assistant for PSD. In May 2006, after the student moved away, Tammy went back to the outdoors to be a crossing guard again. Now Tammy assists students from Cimarron, Shadow Hills, and Los Amigos Schools with safe street crossings, wearing crazy holiday hats and costumes to make the students, parents, and staff smile.

Tammy loves what she does, and she continues to help people and animals each day! Thank you, Tammy, for all you do to keep our students safe!



Desert Rose *Elementary K-6*

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



Melanie Pagliaro
Principal

Making Progress

To establish cohesion across grade levels, the staff at Desert Rose Elementary School has been trained in Thinking Maps. The trainer of trainers started the year introducing Thinking Maps and how to use them effectively in the classroom across all academic disciplines. It is evident that having a common thread creates better collaboration, encourages common language, and improves school culture.

We have hired an attendance clerk to monitor chronic attendance issues. Current data shows a decrease in student absences across grade levels. With such a large student population, the addition of an attendance clerk has allowed us to collaborate more effectively with district personnel to resolve attendance issues.

The addition of a student interventionist has proven to be beneficial in monitoring student intervention strategies. She supports teachers and administrators by monitoring behavior contracts and provides students with alternative methods to deal with their specific behavior issues. Our student interventionist provides incentives for students and is in charge of Student of the Month and the weekly Roadrunner Rock Star program.

Our parent liaison has worked toward increasing parent involvement through Parenting Partners, Parent Academy, Latino Literacy Project and adult English as a Second Language classes. We also have a room dedicated to parent trainings and activities. Planning is in the works for a computer class and an English session of Parenting Partners.

We are pleased with the progress we've made thus far and continue to strive for excellence with the staff and students at Desert Rose.

Desert Willow *Intermediate 7-8*

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



Melanie Culver
Principal

Busy Time

Great things are happening at Desert Willow Intermediate School!

At the end of January we scheduled our “Rachel’s Challenge” on-campus assemblies and training.

The assemblies and training focused on anti-bullying and

how acts of kindness can go a long way in maintaining a positive culture and climate at school.

The impact of this presentation was nothing short of amazing for our students. We had over 150 children participate in the training portion with our staff members. The following day the students began to sign up to join the Friends of Rachel Club (FOR), which focuses on creating a culture of kindness in school.

It has been very heartwarming to hear our students speak during the training (and throughout the week) about how this presentation caused them to look at the ways they have personally treated others, or how they have been treated themselves, and how we can all make our school a better place to be.

Each week our Friends of Rachel Club comes up with kindness challenges for the school. This week the challenge is to help someone “enter with a smile.” The students are giving each other compliments, high fives, encouragement, and friendly greetings to help start the day on a positive note. We can already see the difference that these assemblies and the Club are making in our students!



Dos Caminos *Elementary K-8*

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



Marlene Batista
Principal

Learning and Growing

Dos Caminos School (DC) is a far cry away from being the tiny little starter school it was five years ago! Not only do we now have almost 600 kindergarten through fourth-grade students, 2015–2016 has been a huge year for growth in many different areas for our school. After gaining access to the Juniper campus this year, DC was able to open the Family Learning Center, which offers parents a place to check in, volunteer, receive trainings and workshops, and have coffee with fellow parents.

Based on the results of a parent survey, Dos Caminos has also offered a huge array of activities for both our parents and students this year. Through the amazing work of our parent liaison, Ms. Daniela Langlotz-Heinze, parents have been offered the opportunity to participate in Parenting Partners, Parent Academy, beginning computer classes, nutrition workshops, Family Math Night, Coffee with the Principal, volunteer orientations, family yoga, and Mommy Boot Camp. We plan to continue offering our parents whatever they feel will help them to be better partners in the education of their children.

As for our students, this year they have had opportunities to participate in activities such as Boys and Girls Club, the Dos Caminos Salsa Kids, Chess Club, Lego Club, art, music and drama classes, folkloric/Latin dance, and Science Olympiad. There is also tutoring for at-risk students, and we even started two Girl Scout troops on site this year.

We look forward to our continued growth. We are able to offer our students a wide range of opportunities, thanks to the hard work of our staff and families!

Joshua Hills *Elementary K-6*

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



Regina Tillman
Principal

Cardio Latinos Fitness

This year at Joshua Hills the owner of Cardio Latinos Fitness is holding fitness classes for our parents for free. Astrid Mendez is a full time fitness instructor who holds these classes every day of the week. She also volunteers her time to coach volleyball and soccer for our students. One of our parents Maria Ochoa shared “because of the exercises I do in the morning with Astrid, I have felt better and I have lost some weight and I like that very much.” Another parent and campus supervisor Violeta Lobato said “I feel good with this class. It gives me a lot of energy and I feel happy

to spend time with friends.” A third parent Leticia Brerciani said “Since I’ve been exercising I have been feeling good. The exercises are done and guided according to your level. I feel great physically and emotionally.”



Ryan Beardsley
Principal

Mrs. Albornoz Receives Statewide Recognition!

Mrs. Jessica Albornoz has been recognized by the California Association for Bilingual Education as the Para Educator of the year for the entire state! Serving in her fourth year as Parent Community Liaison for Golden Poppy, Mrs. Albornoz has been a key to the rapidly growing number of parents taking an active role in the education of our students, making the Palmdale Promise a reality. Mrs. Albornoz will be formally recognized at the state CABA conference in San Francisco this March. She will also be recognized as the Golden Poppy classified employee of the year for her service.



**Ryan Beardsley, Principal, Jessica Albornoz, Parent/Community Liaison
Rosa Armstrong, CABA Representative, CABA Para Educator of the Year!**

Los Amigos *K-8*

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



Sonia Salcedo
Principal

Without Collaboration It Is Just Labor!

In order for our students to become good 21st-century learners, we must learn to model and incorporate opportunities for creativity, communication, critical thinking, and collaboration.

Collaboration is the crucial skill that will encompass the rest of these three C's. But as educators, we must also embrace the concepts of collaboration and teamwork. Los Amigos teachers believe that strong teams can benefit students. Consequently, our teachers were recently asked to work with grade-level teams to participate equally in the design, planning, presentation, and delivery of this model to the rest of our staff. This is what we expect of our students, and so we must be willing to do the same.

The teachers stepped up to the challenge and did an excellent job. During these presentations they were placed randomly into groups and tasked with a problem whose solution required creativity, communication, critical thinking, and collaboration. They all had a great time producing commercials, blindly building similar Lego structures, and participating in an egg-drop, to name just a few.



Manzanita *Elementary K-6*

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



Roberto Lopez
Principal

The Dance Force

Manzanita Elementary School is excited to have our fifth- and sixth-grade students participate in the Dance Force Youth Ballroom program. Our school sent Mr. Figueroa and Ms. Fisbeck to a training with professional ballroom-dance instructors. Then, our teachers returned to our school to teach our students the dance program.

The students get to learn different dance styles like the fox-trot, merengue, rumba and East Coast swing. Our teachers and students have been practicing after school every Friday for an



hour. The benefits of this program are immense. Students learn important social skills, and it builds a great deal of confidence. Through the process of learning new dances, partnering skills and competition, students are given an opportunity that they will never forget. The culmination of the program is a competition between the participating schools, which takes place at the High Desert Dance Classic. Our students and families are excited about this opportunity at Manzanita Elementary.

Someone once said, "Life's like a dance—you learn as you go. Sometimes, you lead and sometimes you follow." With this opportunity, Manzanita students are becoming leaders.



Mesquite *Elementary K-6*

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



Ken Young
Principal

The Learning Garden

The Mesquite Elementary School Learning Garden has become a great instructional tool for our campus, where students are actively engaged in environmental education and gardening. Students have learned about composting, best planting practices, irrigation, and plants. The garden's weather stations are utilized to measure rainfall, temperature, and wind speed.

Students use math to measure plot areas, plant growth, and many other things. The scientific method is incorporated as students perform various experiments. Students have also gone in the garden to enjoy reading and to watch the bugs at each stage of their life cycle. They have even experienced the taste of fresh green beans, strawberries, tomatoes, and mint. Upper grades students are also sharing their knowledge with our primary students to enhance cross-curricular learning.

Students beg and "bug" their teachers to go to the garden, and teachers love to watch student in the garden, where learning happens "organically" The Mesquite Learning Garden is an awesome addition to our campus!



David G. Millen *Intermediate 7-8*

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



Brian Williams
Principal

Black Student Union

Our Black Student Union (BSU) is doing some phenomenal work all year long at Millen Intermediate. The BSU coordinated a pep rally where we set out to do a school-wide Wobble. While not all of the students danced, it

was fun to see some of our teachers and administrators giving it a shot. Additionally, the BSU contributed to the morning announcements during Black History Month by sharing the stories of famous African-Americans that made a difference in history. The BSU also partnered with our Youth Empowerment program to attend the Black College Expo. We are excited to see what they have planned next.



Oak Tree *Community Day School K-8*

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



Timothy Howell
Principal

Leadership

Oak Tree Learning Center continues to progress toward closing the achievement gap and supporting the district's goal to prepare students for the 21st century. Oak Tree's unique program has a foundation in restorative justice and team cooperation. Students are placed in a structured environment

and given multiple opportunities for successful learning. Students are taught social skills, team cooperation, accountability, and academic indulgence.

Students have the opportunity to participate in Leadership Program, Peer Advisory Counsel, the Oak Tree Honor Guard, and the Oak Tree Drum Line. These activities promote respect, responsibility, and cooperation. The Oak Tree Honor Guard, led by Mr. Fred Jaramillo, is an afterschool program to teach students the history and tradition of presenting the United States flag.

Oak Tree has implemented an Individualized Growth Plan (IGP) for every student, which is supervised by our school psychologist, Mr. Ferrell. These IGPs provide clearly stated goals and plans to help students improve themselves in order to transition from Oak Tree. IGPs support positive behavior, attendance, and academic success.



Ocotillo *Elementary K-6*

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



Larry Lueck
Principal

Dance Force

Each Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, the Ocotillo Elementary School cafeteria is alive with more than 40 sixth-grade boys and girls dancing to ballroom music. The students are under the direction of three Ocotillo teachers—Peggy Morley, Mona Barrios, and Wynne May. The dancers have worked hard to prepare for their dance competition in March at the Antelope Valley Fairgrounds. They learned to foxtrot, merengue, salsa, swing, and line dance.

This program provides education in dance history, basic dance footwork and partnering skills, as well as dance and social etiquette. Our dance program focuses on developing confidence, poise, and positive peer relationships. Ballroom dance programs can spark an interest that will last a lifetime.

Our dance group's first fund-raiser, a breakfast at a local family restaurant, helped to purchase neckties and hair ribbons for our dancers. If you want to see some great dancers in motion, come out to the fairgrounds on March 13 and cheer on our team.



Palmdale Discovery Center

1330 W. Elizabeth Lake Rd., Palmdale, CA 93551 • 661/274-0849 • www.palmdalesd.org



Colleen Sawyer
Principal

Lots of Support!

This year, we have welcomed many new staff members and are very happy to have them as part of our team. These positions include an APE teacher, an SDC teacher, a speech and language pathologist, an occupational therapist, para-educators and special education instructional assistants. I am so thankful to all of our staff members for their continued dedication and hard work.



At PDC, we have a sizable support team. We are so thankful to our support providers here at PDC who are part of an excellent assessment team and provide valuable support to our students in classrooms. Classroom staff members are working harder than ever

to provide relevant instruction supported by efficient data collection for our students. Preschool teachers and staff are continually receiving new students throughout the school year and are always prepared to meet their very individual needs.

Our staff members receive weekly training on the strategies and techniques needed to work with students who have autism. This year, staff members have been provided with onsite training with a CARD (Center for Autism and Related Disorders) case supervisor as well as consultation from BCBA Cathy Carpenter. Our first-grade teachers will be receiving training in Footsteps to Brilliance and will be implementing this in their classrooms very soon.

Seeing Stars!

This year, students have participated in some field trips. We sent all grade levels to the Sage Planetarium, where they were able to enjoy a different type of learning experience. We would like to thank Jeremy Amarant for welcoming our students and providing them with a fabulous experience. Students also participated in an in-house art experience. Students were able to paint individual plates or coffee mugs brought in by a local paint-it-yourself pottery business. It was a great experience for our students.



The 2015-16 school year has been very exciting for Palmdale Discovery Center!



Palmdale Learning Plaza *K-8*

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



Danny Kanga
Principal

Sustaining Positive Relationships

One of the many aspects that make the Palmdale Learning Plaza a unique learning community is strong parental support. We offer a variety of opportunities for parents to get involved with our learning community.

The Puma Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is the cornerstone of providing parental support through the fund-raising efforts, special event planning, and volunteer services they provide to our school. In addition to the PTA, last year we implemented Parenting Partners, PIQE, and the African-American Parent Committee (AAPAC) to help build and sustain positive home-to-school relationships between our parents and school faculty.

This year we have recently established a GATE parent-support group to provide resources and support to the parents of GATE learners. The English Language Advisory Committee (ELAC) and parent members of the School Site Council also continue to work collaboratively with our school leadership to



provide us with their recommendations for student success at the Plaza.

The Palmdale Learning Plaza continues to strive in its commitment to create an effective school climate that is dedicated to partnering with parents and community members to ensure the success of all children.

Palm Tree *Elementary K-6*

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



Gerald Luke
Principal

Activities Abound

Palm Tree Elementary School is becoming more active. You are liable to find student and parent activities going on at our campus as late as 6 p.m.—and sometimes later! This increase is due to an expansion of our arts and athletics program. Now Palm Tree offers soccer and basketball two days a week, in addition to our visual arts class and our dance class. In collaboration with Palmdale Learning Plaza, we offer a digital animation class and an African American Parent Advisory Committee. The home of the Parrots has the Boy's and Girl's Club of America on campus from dismissal until 6 p.m. daily. We strive to provide more services for our students and families to help them to see our school as a great place to learn and have fun.

Continuing the theme of increased activity, we added one more grade level to our extended-day intervention program in language arts and math. Coming soon, we will offer Imagine Learning, and afterschool program for students acquiring English. Folkloric dance is also in the plans as an offering to expose students to culturally stimulating activities.



Finally, we continue to increase our parent participation with the re-opening of our family center, where parents can participate in parent program meetings and volunteer at the school through the coordination of our parent community liaison. We held graduations for parents who completed Parent Academy and Parenting Partners. We also have great attendance at our English Language Advisory Committee and School Site Council meetings. Fulfilling parent needs and requests has resulted in this increased participation.

Parrot pride abounds on our campus, because people love being here.

Quail Valley *Elementary K-6*

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



Kathleen Moshier
Interim Principal

Amazing PTO!

Maricel Kertsen, Lisette Calbario, Veronica Garcia and Stella Garcia—these committed ladies make up Quail Valley's executive board for our Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Last year, these ladies accepted the challenge of bringing parent and community involvement to Quail Valley. They wanted to provide opportunities for our students and their families to be engaged in fun school-sponsored activities both during and after the school day.

PTO sponsors schoolwide fund-raisers that fund class field trips, dances, our Scholastic Book Fair and anti-bullying assemblies. Most recently, they opened up our Chameleon Store. The PTO supplies the entire inventory for the store. The purpose of the store is to allow students to shop with their Chameleon Cash earned for being safe, responsible and respectful.

Most recently, they helped make the Breakfast with the Superintendent successful by providing homemade refreshments like cheese enchiladas and pozole. They also gifted Mr. Maldonado with a banner signed by our students, the book *A Color of His Own* by Leo Lionni, and his personal chameleon.

Quail Valley is a much better, more active school with these ladies on board. We are very grateful!



Shadow Hills *Intermediate 7-8*

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



Dr. Donna Campbell
Principal

Past and Future

Wreaths across America is an organization that remembers our fallen veterans and honors those who have served our country. They coordinate wreath-laying ceremonies at cemeteries in all 50 states.

Shadow Hills Intermediate has participated in Wreaths across America for many years. Students raise money to purchase the wreaths, and this year, there was enough money to purchase 22 wreaths. Our Builders Club students came out to our oldest cemetery in Palmdale on a December morning to lay wreaths on the graves of the veterans that are buried there. Guest speakers were present as well as the press to share in this special moment. This program is a wonderful opportunity for our students to be a part of something bigger than they are while giving back to the community.

In February, we had 35 students attend the Black College Expo at the Los Angeles Convention Center. This was a great opportunity for students to be exposed to the wonderful opportunities of a higher education. As a group, we were able to attend seminars like “The Benefits of Attending a Historically Black College University (HBCU)” and other sessions such as “No



More C's.” Students were able to speak to at least one hundred universities, gather information on job opportunities, and win prizes. I believe this was an experience that opened students’ eyes to future possibilities that they may not have envisioned for themselves.



Summerwind *Elementary K-8*

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



Dr. Linda Brandts
Principal

College Bound

Summerwind 6th grade students worked very hard on AVID reports where they researched colleges and universities. As a result of the research, one lucky Summerwind 6th grader got the opportunity to meet Antelope Valley College’s president and tour the campus. David Jackson was accompanied by Tanisha Johnson (mother), Mrs. Beardsley (teacher), and Dr. Brandts (principal). David enjoyed talking with AVC President Mr. Knudson, touring the campus, and eating lunch in the AVC cafeteria. David saw the AVC men’s basketball team practicing and toured the gym and new science building. He was even informed about AVC’s new Law school strand since David wants to be a lawyer when he grows up.



Tamarisk *Elementary K-6*

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



Martin Herrera
Principal

CABE Parent of the Year

Tamarisk is infinitely proud to be celebrating parent Maria Guadalupe Ocegueda for winning the CABE (California Association for Bilingual Education) 2016 Parent of the Year award. Mrs. Ocegueda volunteers not only at Tamarisk but also at many other PSD schools.

On any given day, you will see Mrs. Ocegueda in a computer lab teaching a parent computer class. In



addition, she serves as DELAC vice-president and ELAC representative, serves on School Site Council, and is also on the Tamarisk PTA executive board. In conjunction with teacher Marcia Saldaña, Mrs. Ocegueda also teaches an after-school Spanish class for second-grade students at Tamarisk.

Mrs. Ocegueda will be honored on March 24 at the annual CABE Conference held in San Francisco. Mrs. Ocegueda is the epitome of parent involvement, and Tamarisk is grateful to have her be part of the Tamarisk Elementary family.

Yucca *Elementary K-6*

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



Pamela Egbert
Principal

Deputy Challenges

Each Thursday our fourth- through sixth-grade students look forward to their weekly “deputy” challenge. Two students are chosen from each of the classes to participate in various sports activities, such as soccer kick, football toss, basketball, hula hoop throw, free throw, bowling, Frisbee toss, etc.

Deputy Ray Wilson and Deputy Dale Lovvik also visit Yucca on these Thursday afternoons to join in the friendly competition. The students are split into two teams, with each visitor a captain.

These games were created so that the deputies can have a positive interaction with our students. The competition is an opportunity for students to get a better perspective on law enforcement. It lets them know that deputies don't just reprimand people who get in trouble. The children soon see them in a different and much more positive light.



The students receive restaurant vouchers at the end of the games. They then crowd around the deputies with notebook paper and ask them for their autographs. Constructive interaction occurs between our students and deputies, which allows the children to gain a more positive attitude about law enforcement.

Yellen *Learning Center K-8*

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



Colleen Sawyer
Principal

We're Ready!

It is a busy time of year at Yellen Learning Center! At this time of year, we are preparing for our SBAC training, our transitions to high school, and our end-of-the-year events. Our fifth-grade through eighth-grade students are diligently working on classroom assignments, using Google Chromebooks. The use of the Google Chromebooks is supporting the development of their keyboarding skills and preparing students for the upcoming SBAC.

Yellen Eagles are preparing for the annual Art Festival. This year's theme is “Nature”! We thank the AV Sunrise Rotary Club, which generously funds our Art Festival every year. Yellen students create brilliant works of art that are displayed at Yellen and then at the AV Sunrise Rotary Club annual brunch this April.

We recently hosted a Breakfast with the Superintendent at Yellen Learning Center. Students from Mrs. Chavez's and Ms. Mililo's classes provided us with a wonderful

performance to commence the breakfast. Parents were able to engage in one-on-one discussions with Mr. Maldonado about the Palmdale Promise and future hopes for their children. We also discussed LCAP goals and the ways in which we are meeting the needs of our students across the district. It was a very positive event.

We are excited about the remainder of this school year!



Tumbleweed *Elementary K-6*

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



Dr. Victor Torres
Principal

Parenting Partners

Tumbleweed Elementary School focuses on building and developing partnerships with our students, parents, and community, as well as promoting the Palmdale Promise.

We are enthusiastic about the lifelong relationships that we are building with our parent community. Parenting Partners was adopted by the Palmdale School District to encourage parents to become engaged in their children's educational journey. This seven-workshop series is designed to provide parenting skills and help parents to become more involved in their children's education.

Through fun and interactive workshops, parents discuss and share ideas about topics such as improving communication, creating confident children, practicing positive discipline, and promoting successful students. Workshop materials are provided to each participant.

Parents gain ideas and enthusiasm from one another as they participate in the collaborative learning process. The workshops also present a unique opportunity for participants to share the parenting challenges they face and to learn from each other. The workshop series has also helped parents to connect with other parents, building support networks and developing friendships.

Parenting Partners first started at Tumbleweed Elementary School in 2014-2015 with seven parents completing the workshop series. We are excited to see an increase in participation and have had 21 parents complete our first workshop series this year.



Ships Word Search Contest

Rules! One word in the list is NOT in the word search.
When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that word you email to: Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com (Please put Palmdale in the subject line)

Entries must be received by April 1, 2016.

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

- | | | |
|------------|--------------|-------------|
| BATTLESHIP | FRIGATE | SUBTENDER |
| CARGO | GUNBOAT | SUPERLINER |
| CARRIERS | ICEBREAKER | SUPERTANKER |
| CONTAINER | LANDING SHIP | TANKERS |
| CRUISER | MINE SWEEPER | TRANSPORT |
| DESTROYER | OILERS | TUGBOAT |
| FERRY | REPAIR | YACHT |
| FREIGHTER | SUBMARINES | |



Congratulations to Jake Sindelar
Winner of the December Word Search Contest!

SUPERINTENDENT • From Page 1



Raul Maldonado

to download the free program on their smartphones, tablets, or computers. They may register at www.myf2b.com/register/palmdale. Together we will help the community of Palmdale prepare their children for a better tomorrow.

During the winter break, the Child Nutrition Department was able to obtain six new refrigerators to expand our food donation program. In an effort to reduce food waste, we started a pilot program in the summer with one of our community partners, Food Bus Inc., to donate food to the Lancaster Community Shelter. Four of our elementary schools participated in the

program. After its success, we decided it was time to branch out to help those who live in Palmdale.

The following schools have now joined the program to donate food to the South Antelope Valley Emergency Services: Palm Tree, Dos Caminos, Barrel Springs, and Summerwind Elementary Schools, Palmdale Learning Plaza, and Desert Willow Intermediate School. Students will be able to give back to the community by donating items from their food trays once they are done eating. We hope to further expand our food donation program to all the schools in the district. Our school district is leading the way in the Antelope Valley.

As we move ahead, I look forward continuing our Breakfast with the Superintendent meetings. Each school has a schedule when I will come to visit and have a conversation about our new strategic plan, the Palmdale Promise, and also a discussion about the Local Accountability Control Plan (LCAP). I invite you to join me when I come to your local school. Being able to hear your feedback and suggestions plays a big role when we make decisions that directly impact you. The schedule for the breakfast is available at your school's main office and is posted on our district Facebook page.

Your involvement within the district makes a huge impact on our students. I am always happy to meet parents who volunteer their time to help us grow. In light of this, I would like to congratulate Maria Guadalupe Ocegueda, a Tamarisk Elementary School parent, who has been chosen as the California Association for Bilingual Education 2016 Parent of the Year. Ms. Ocegueda began her journey as the English Language Advisory Council (ELAC) president at Summerwind Elementary School. She now volunteers her time by offering computer classes to parents at Tamarisk and other school locations and as the vice president of the PTA. Mrs. Ocegueda also became a leader in the Parenting Partners program, which empowers parents to become involved not only in their children's schools but also with their community. I would like to give a big thank you to Mrs. Ocegueda and all of our parents for their hard work and dedication to our district.

If you have stopped by at one of our recent Board meetings, you may have noticed our new Board trustee. We welcome Mrs. Sharon Vega, who is no stranger to our district. Mrs. Vega is a retired Palmdale School District teacher and former president of the Palmdale Elementary Teacher Association (PETA). Her background in education will be a great asset to our Board. If you have a moment, I encourage you to introduce yourself and welcome her back at our next Board meeting.

As we continue into the year, I look forward collaborating with you and my staff to see our Palmdale PROMISE flourish. We are already accomplishing great things, and this is only the beginning.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES • From Page 1

We have come a long way, with the hard work from everyone involved, in the process of creating a healthy learning environment. More challenges lay ahead of us, and we will discover the solutions as we work together to become an attractive school district where we can provide a first-class education that is inclusive and equitable for all.

I want to thank everyone who is part of the Palmdale School District for your hard work, dedication, and leadership. I believe that there is nothing more rewarding than being part of shaping our children's future through the benefits of public education.

Lastly, I would like mention that there are a lot of incredible stories to be told about our programs. Our students are succeeding and finding their potential in art classes at Desert Willow, incredible young musicians are discovering their talent at Shadow Hills, and amazing young engineers not only participated in regional and state competitions but brought home trophies in their very first year participating in such prestigious events. I am impressed with One Love and their successful story. Do you know about One Love? Who and where they are? I hope that I have intrigued you and that you tell me about One Love. (I will give you a hint, it is NOT One Direction, that British music band.)

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Must be Present to Win!

Closing the Attendance Gap!



Child Nutrition, Health & Physical Well-Being It's As Important As Classroom Time

By Todd Cherland, Director

(ABC) -- As more schools cut recess in favor of classroom time, a new study suggests that the two can go hand-in-hand to stimulate a child's mind as well as their body. We now see that students who are aerobically fit do better academically than their unfit counterparts.

A study in the *Journal of Pediatrics* shows that children who are physically fit are more than twice-as-likely to pass standardized math and reading tests than those who are not. Researchers looked at more than 11,000 students from the fourth to eighth grades in 47 public schools. The association between aerobic fitness and improved academic performance was evident regardless of whether the students received free or reduced lunches, and their socio-economic status was not a factor.

The children's weight also had no effect on their performance on the tests. Only exercise made a difference, which led researchers to suggest that as much emphasis should be placed on physical education as on academics.

Keeping children fully engaged in the classroom is no easy feat, but a new technique that incorporates high-intensity interval training may be the answer to every teacher's prayer. Canadian researchers at Queen's University found that "four" is the magic number: just four minutes will hold a child's attention span in the classroom.

Because just four minutes of physical activity has been shown to greatly reduce fidgeting and inattentiveness in second- and fourth-grade students, they are calling these quick spurts "FUNtervals." These brief breaks give children an opportunity to release their pent-up energy into highly-focused and applicable activities, like collecting firewood, starting a fire, making s'mores, or simply exploding into exercise with squats and jumps.

"While 20 minutes of daily physical activity (DPA) is required in Ontario primary schools, there is a need for innovative and accessible ways for teachers to meet this requirement," said the study's lead researcher, Brendon Gurd, a professor at the School of Kinesiology and Health Studies. "Given the time crunch associated with the current school curriculum, we thought that very brief physical activity breaks might be an interesting way to approach DPA. We were particularly interested in what effects a brief exercise bout might have in the classroom setting."

For three weeks, researchers compared a classroom that incorporated FUNtervals to a classroom without breaks, and observed how many times a child became distracted or fidgeted during their lessons. In just 50 minutes the results were obvious. Children given a break with quick, enthusiastic movements directed towards 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, thus making it completely applicable to any classroom setting. So there's no excuse for school systems to refuse to try this research-based approach to help their children focus and learn more effectively.

Exercise has become a highlighted topic for doctors, teachers, administrators, and parents who are concerned that children may fall into unhealthy habits. Children are more susceptible than any other population because they are 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 that could cripple the country's financial status.

While many preschoolers still go out to play for 20-minute recess breaks if the weather permits, schools around the country are increasingly eliminating recess from their schedules. In 2001, the Clearinghouse on Early Education and Parenting found that nearly 40 percent of the nation's school districts were cutting recess from school days.

A school without a playground sends the very loud and ominous message that exercise is not prioritized. All of the current research shows that these actions are a bad idea. In 2005, the *Journal of School Health* clearly stated that physical movement increases a student's ability to perform in the classroom by boosting attention and increasing blood flow to the brain. Are we waiting until children are too overweight and obese to pay attention in the classroom? Filling children to the brim with junk food and sugar will never work, but these FUNtervals may set school systems back on track to a healthier conscientiousness.

Source: Gurd BJ, Le Mare L, and Ma JK. Classroom-based high-intensity interval activity improves off-task behavior in primary school students. *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism*. 2014.

ASSESSMENT • From Page 1

How are Smarter Balanced Assessments an improvement over previous statewide tests?

- The Smarter Balanced assessment system uses both computer-based and computer-adaptive tests, providing students with a wider range of questions tailored to more accurately identify the knowledge and skills individual students have mastered.
- The tests include performance tasks that challenge students to demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving, and to apply their knowledge and skills to real-world problems.
- The tests measure standards that our K-12 and higher education systems all agree address appropriate expectations for the preparation of high school graduates who are ready for success.
- The tests are taken online, and results are available to teachers, schools and school districts much more quickly than results from previous tests.
- The new computer-based tests include supports for English learners and students with special needs, allowing these students the ability to effectively demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- The new assessment system is designed to measure student growth over time, which was not possible in California's previous system, and will provide teachers and schools important information to guide learning.

How will this system help improve teaching and learning?

The Smarter Balanced assessments, both interim and summative, are an academic check-up, designed to give teachers the feedback they need to improve instruction. The tests measure critical thinking, analytical writing, problem solving, and subject area knowledge, providing teachers with multiple sources of actionable information about student strengths and areas where students need additional support.

How can you help your child?

- Discuss the new tests with your child. Make sure he or she is not scared or anxious about the new tests.
- With older children, explain that the new tests were created to help him or her better prepare for college and career.
- Explain to your child that the new tests may be more challenging for them, especially the first few times they take them.
- Tell your child that you and his or her teacher are both there to help them succeed every step of the way.
- Review test results with your child, bringing your child's teacher into the discussion as necessary.
- Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep and a nutritious breakfast before testing.

Score Results

We will use the scores from the new assessments as just one piece of information. Classroom projects, writing assignments, math exercises, and our own tests given throughout the year all contribute important information as we build a clear picture of how each student is progressing. As you assess your child's progress, we recommend that you too consider the annual state test scores as one piece of information. Take a look at your child's classroom accomplishments as well as the scores, and use this complete body of information when helping your child set goals for improvement.

Information from CDE – CAASPP Communication FAQs:

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

California PTA – Information to help understand the New Assessment System:

<http://capta.org/focus-areas/education/student-assessments/>

Palmdale School District Assessment Information website:

<https://sites.google.com/a/palmdalesd.org/psdassessment/>





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