

FREE

School News

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Covering the La Habra City School District

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APRIL 2016

Opening Doors for Students

By Dr. Susan Belenardo, Superintendent

Preparing students with the knowledge and skills they need for success in college and careers is the focus of the La Habra City School District.

Toward that end, we have embraced the Common Core State Standards and are working to implement the 21st-century skills of creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication. We have invested in technology to provide our students with state-of-the-art tools and provided our teachers with professional development in order to use technology to support instruction.

We are also carefully examining our practices to ensure that we are honoring the diverse backgrounds of our students and providing equitable opportunities for every child to excel. It is critical that we identify the individual challenges faced by our students. We must examine our thinking and look to remove unintended barriers to student learning. All college- and career-ready students must have the necessary skills to be able to find information, assess the quality of information, and learn how to creatively and effectively use information to accomplish a goal. We must provide them with the challenge to be critical thinkers and problem solvers and give them opportunities to practice these skills in a safe learning environment.

Our district research-based initiatives are designed to provide instructional supports and enrichment. Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) enables teachers to provide core content instruction to students at all proficiency levels in a comprehensible and understandable way. Thinking Maps are a set of graphic organizers that provide a visual tool for learning. Students learn to use Thinking Maps to organize ideas, to think with depth, and to directly apply their thinking to complex tasks. Thinking Maps support effective instructional practice and improve student performance.

Our teachers receive training to become certificated in Gifted And Talented Education (GATE). This training provides teachers with strategies for differentiating instruction within the general classroom. They become familiar with instructional strategies to challenge all learners with complex tasks and create more meaningful learning experiences.

Project-based learning empowers students to learn how to take initiative and responsibility, build their confidence, solve problems, work in teams,



Washington Middle School Water Guardians being presented on the Senate floor.

communicate ideas, and manage themselves more effectively while solving real-world problems. Number talks and Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) emphasize the development of students' mathematical thinking and increase mathematical fluency.

Our dedicated educators are committed to instilling in our children how to access and properly use information. They are embracing their new role as partners in providing hands-on opportunities for even the most challenged students to grow and show their capabilities. Our classrooms have changed from rows of students working individually while teachers lecture at the front to students working in groups as teachers facilitate cognitively-guided, need-based instruction.

What truly matters is that all students have been taught the necessary skills to be successful as independent, lifelong learners who excel at critical thinking and problem-solving. La Habra City School District is preparing all our students for high school and beyond. We are removing barriers and building on our students' strengths. We are providing our students with opportunities to pursue real-world studies that will help them become successful, productive global citizens.

Visual and Performing Arts

By Sheryl Tecker Director Programs & Assessment

The La Habra City School District is opening doors to learning through the visual and performing arts (VAPA). Arts are a tool for student engagement and learning. Including the arts in the curricula offers students more opportunities to discover their individual talents. Knowing this, LHCS D parents, administrators and teachers, with support from the Orange County Department of Education, wrote an Arts Advantage Plan in 2013-2014. This year the 2015-2016 VAPA committee is working to bring the Arts Advantage plan to life in our schools. In the fall, LHCS D teachers responded to a survey to help the committee determine VAPA needs and priorities and create a plan to enhance VAPA at all schools. Do you have an idea for the visual and performing arts at your child's school?

If so, please contact Sheryl Tecker, Director of Programs and Assessment, or your school principal to participate on the VAPA committee.

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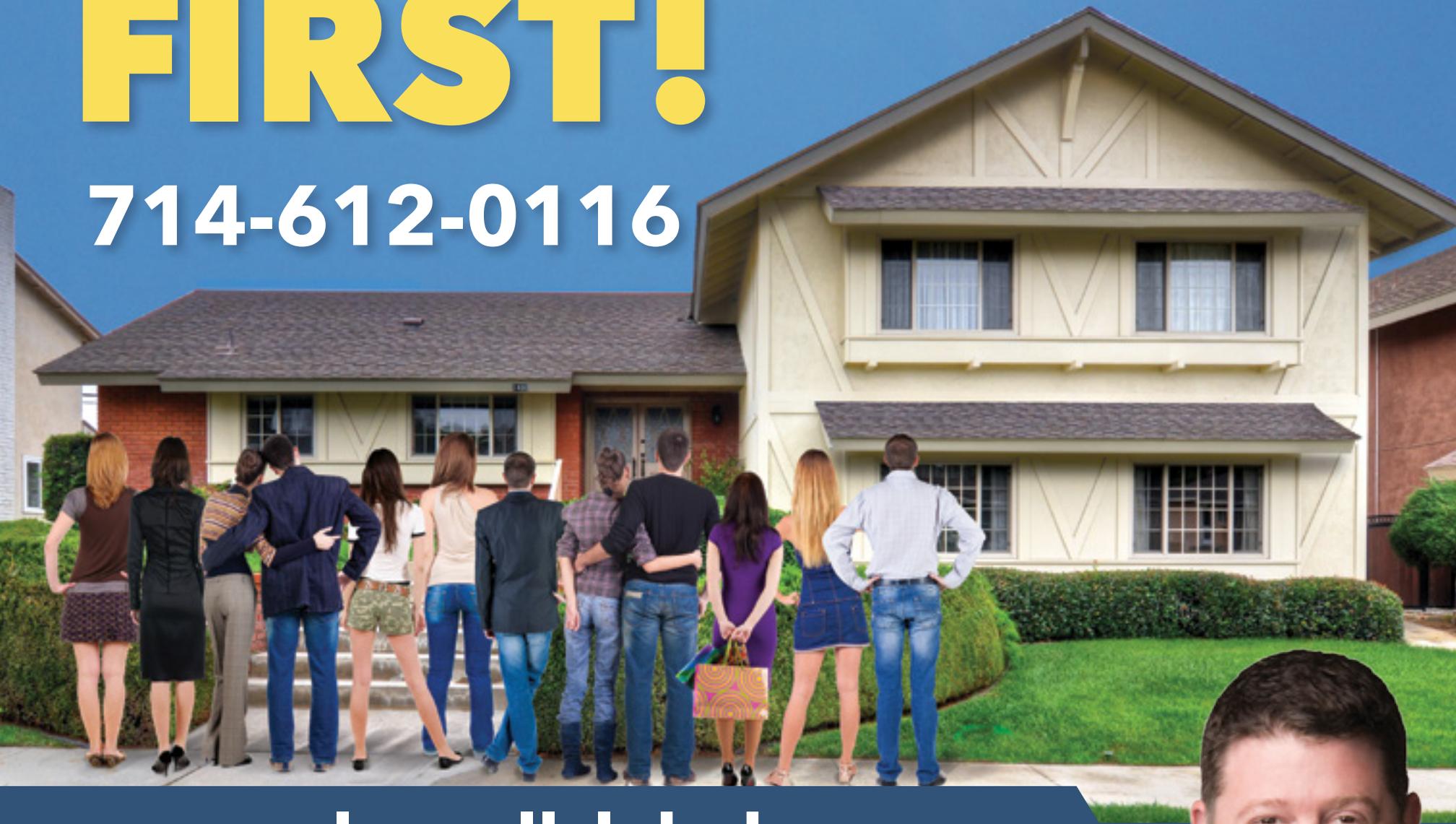


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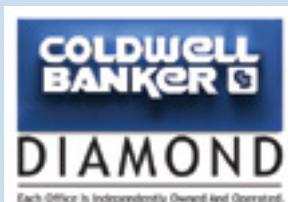
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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



The Superintendent's article on the front page is very informative and highlights the District's goal of preparing students for success in college and in their careers. Education has changed throughout the years, but the one constant is focus on students academic achievements.

As the end of this school year approaches, once again I want to thank you for reading *School News*.

Our next issue is October 12. In the meantime, have a wonderful summer and remember to include the library in your activity choices.

Educational Services

500 N. Walnut St., La Habra, CA 90631 • 562/690-2305 • www.lahabraschools.org

'Open the Door!'



Teresa Egan
Assistant
Superintendent

Our eight academic coaches "Open the Door" to learning for our dedicated teachers and instructional assistants. We are fortunate to have five literacy coaches, one math coach, one technology coach and one Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) coach. These coaches together form a team that supports our teaching staff as they refine their practice in using the most current research-based instructional strategies.

Deanna Putnam and Debbye Viveros, both GLAD-certified trainers, provide literacy support at our four K-2 sites. Dana Riggs shares her expertise with Literature Circles and more with our 3-5 schools. You will find Tanya Beck and Teri Jackson using their coaching skills to help all teachers integrate literacy throughout the curriculum at our middle schools. Shauhna Feitlin provides coaching in the area of mathematics, while Danette Brown, a Tier IV GLAD trainer, supports the integration of all district initiatives using the GLAD model. Jody Green, a Google Certified Innovator, rounds out the team as she helps teachers use technology and innovative strategies to access and successfully teach the state standards. All of our coaches use the Professional Learning Cycle as they work with our teaching staff. The coaches model, co-teach, provide resources, offer suggestions, and encourage our teachers to take risks as they learn new instructional strategies to help our students prepare for college, career and beyond.

More importantly, our students benefit from cutting-edge, research-based instructional strategies. Our goal is to "Open the Door" of possibilities for our students as they enter the 21st Century.




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El Cerrito *Elementary*

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Emily Szary
Principal

Moving Forward with Open Doors

Walt Disney said, “We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we’re curious, and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.” Doors are swinging open for not only the students, but also the families of our young Scotties at El Cerrito School. El Cerrito has a deeply embedded school philosophy of parent involvement. Recently, parents of our second-grade students were invited to visit the classrooms to see what their children are learning, to observe how the children participate in class, and even to interact with the lessons. With parents as partners, our students’ learning is enhanced and supported at home and school.



At a recent School Board meeting, students in our Success class collaborated with a second-grade classroom to create an interactive presentation outlining how to code using programmable robots. This experience opened doors for all students involved. They were able to step outside their individual comfort zones while collaborating, thinking critically, creating, and communicating.

Students at El Cerrito are 21st-century learners, thinkers, and doers.

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Arbolita *Elementary*

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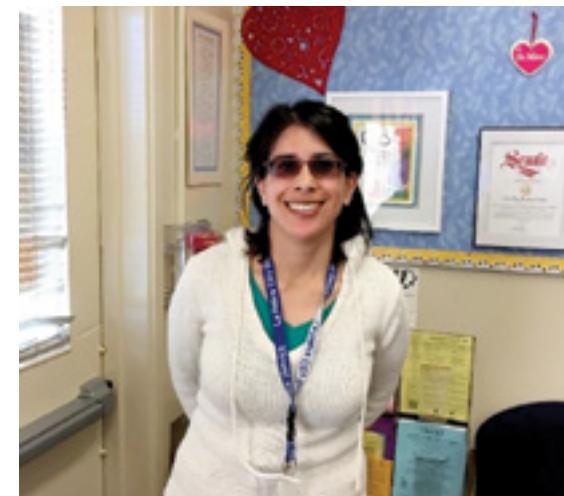
Rosamaria Murillo
Principal

Becoming Partners in Education

At Arbolita, we deeply value our school community’s diverse linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds. We welcome our community with open arms, and acknowledge how much we learn from our students’ families.

We are committed to providing a variety of opportunities for our parents and families to become partners in their children’s educational lives. This year, our community liaison, Cristina Jarrin, has been integral in providing many volunteer and learning opportunities for our community.

“Knowledge is power,” and with this thought, Mrs. Jarrin has been able to provide workshops for parents on homework strategies and parenting issues. She has also facilitated nutrition workshops through OCDE, and Thinking Maps instructional strategies with our instructional coaches.



Having parents on our school site is priceless. They help out during school events, cultivate our garden, volunteer in our classrooms, and tutor our students. With the support of our PTA, we are able to offer many family events throughout the year that include and support our families.

Imperial *Middle School*

1450 S. Schoolwood Dr., La Habra, CA 90631 • 562/690-2344 • <http://www.lahabraschools.org>



Cathy Seighman
Principal

Actively Engaged and Active

The possibilities for creativity and collaboration are bountiful here at Imperial Middle School. Throughout the day our students are presented with learning activities in engaging formats, as teachers open the doors of education for each child.

Project Based Learning provides students with the opportunity to explore and tap into grade-level content in a variety of ways. Student learning is guided by an “Essential Question” which allows students to demonstrate their learning across the curriculum.

But learning does not stop at the end of the school day for our Imperial students. After-school Academic Achievement and Enrichment Clubs also offer our students the chance to receive support and explore new activities.

Students work with teachers and peers daily in the Academic Achievement Clubs. Visual and performing arts experiences are also offered throughout the week, such as theatre arts, Ukulele Club, Dance Club, Design Club, Cartooning Club, Comic Book Club, Media Arts Club, and sign language. Students are able to experience computer science activities through our after-school STEAM Playground Club. We also encourage cooperative physical activity through intramural sports, Recreation Club, Fitness Club, and competitive sports.



Striving to keep students engaged and active is a priority at Imperial Middle School. Our students believe that they can learn and embrace challenges with enthusiasm. At Imperial, we open doors to opportunities for our students!

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Las Positas *Elementary*

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Mike Klewer
Principal

Being Inclusive

At Las Positas School, we are working hard to “open doors” every day. We design programs that are inclusive for all students and parents. Opening doors means that we strive to make decisions that are in the best interest of students in every situation.

We work hard to treat all students with dignity and respect. Opening doors means that we do our best to communicate with parents in their preferred language, whether verbally or through written correspondence.

Can we do a better job of this? Absolutely. We are continuing to work to provide opportunities for parents by carefully scheduling events that are more accessible. Next year we will be having one day of late afternoon/early evening parent-teacher conferences to accommodate our working parents.

We will also welcome children to our annual Back to School Night by offering child care and supervision on the playground. Any interested adult within a student’s family will be encouraged to attend our Coffee with the Principal event to learn more about our programs.

We hope that these changes, however slight or insignificant they may seem, will be meaningful for all of our families. We will continue to monitor our practices to be sure that Las Positas always has its doors open to students and families in every circumstance.

Please let us know how we are doing. We value your feedback, and want to do our best to include every family into the Las Positas family.

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George Lopez
Principal

Wonder, Discovery and Engagement

Ladera Palma staff is on the journey to opening doors to learning for all students. They understand the importance of designing lessons that are culturally relevant and are examining their instructional practices to ensure that they meet the needs of all students. They are differentiating instruction and class assessments and are providing students access through other means of learning. For example, in her kindergarten class, Mrs. Osborn has led her students through a Project Based Learning (PBL) science project on liquids, solids and gases. Through other means of learning, students were posed a challenge to create a “thing” that would keep an ice cube in a solid state for a long period of time. This PBL had offered our students access to wonder, discovery and engagement with their learning—we believe that traditional textbooks would have left that out.



This lesson offered all students multiple ways to learn about liquids, solids and gases. “Many of my students went home to rebuild and retest,” Mrs. Osborn said.

Mrs. Osborn has truly open doors for her students by creating a lesson that is all-encompassing to all learners. As a site leader, I strongly believe that change starts with us and if we truly believe in opening doors and inclusion for all students, we must be the first to set the example.

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Las Lomas *Elementary*

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Pam Cunningham
Principal

Creating Opportunities

The Las Lomas staff is dedicated to creating a learning environment that encourages and fosters our students' diversity, individuality and educational needs. Teachers feel that it is never too early to open doors for our students. What a better place to start than when they are just starting their educational journey!

Teachers understand the importance of designing learning opportunities that are engaging and develop the student's communication, critical-thinking, creative and collaboration skills to become college and career ready. In addition to meeting their educational needs, the Las Lomas staff members are always cognizant of their students' social-emotional needs and take the time to build relationships with the families they serve. Teachers are implementing the new Next Generation Science Standards to spark our students' interest in the sciences. During the month of February, we invited our students and their families to a Family Engineering Night. Families were able to experience the 4 C's firsthand when they were asked to design the highest tower using pipe cleaners, tape and string. They also designed a launching instrument and competed to see who could send a cotton ball the farthest. Families had to work as a team to successfully complete each task.



It was a great way for our families to learn the importance of working together!

Sierra Vista *Elementary*

1800 E. Whittier Ave., La Habra, CA 90631 • 562/690-2359 • <http://www.lahabraschools.org>



Anna Dorado
Principal

Looking Forward to College

Sierra Vista School's teachers and staff have adopted the belief of college readiness for all of our students. As a staff, we believe it is our duty to educate them in a way that will prepare them for a college education. We empower them so that they can make the choice when the time comes—truly opening the doors of opportunity for their future.

The third- through fifth-grade students we serve are already learning these important readiness skills. They are learning to be organized, follow a daily schedule, set goals, and make a commitment to their learning and achievement so they can begin forming the habits and skills needed to be successful in their current and future schooling.

Every classroom at Sierra Vista has “adopted” a college. Teachers have begun exposing students to the academic language needed to be prepared for college by using words such as grade-point average, A–G courses, dorms, and more. Some classes have had visiting speakers from their adopted colleges, some have taken field trips to various campuses, and some have learned their adopted colleges’ alma maters. We continue to open doors by planting the college seeds early and encouraging our students to wear college shirts every Friday!

Many times students don't discover what it takes to apply to a four-year college or university until they are in high school. By then it can be too late, especially if they haven't taken the correct courses or don't have a strong enough grade-point average to apply. Therefore, it is our obligation to begin preparing our students for college today. Our daily announcement reiterates our school motto and expectation: “After High School Comes College!”



Walnut *Elementary*

625 N. Walnut St., La Habra, CA 90631 • 562/690-2369 • <http://www.lahabraschools.org>



Susan Goellrich
Principal

Opening Doors

New doors are opening every day at Walnut School, as our students and teachers share the exciting learning that is taking place in each classroom.

Literatures Circles in every grade have allowed our students the opportunity to both stretch their reading and learn how to deeply discuss the meaning of the books they are reading. Teachers use GLAD Next Generation strategies to explore concepts such as endangered animals, California explorers and Missions, or the systems of the body.

The use of technology in each classroom also allows our students to have virtual field trips and visit places all over the world to help enhance their instruction. Parents also have the opportunity to open new doors through our Healthy Cooking Classes led by the Orange County Department of Education each Friday morning.

Walnut is ready to continue opening new doors and opportunities. Come visit us.



Washington *Middle School*

716 E. La Habra Blvd., La Habra, CA 90631 • 562/960-2374 • <http://www.lahabraschools.org>



Mario Carlos
Principal

A Future in STEM

It is the mission of Washington Middle School to prepare all of our students for 21st-century college and careers with a specific emphasis in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). At Washington, we feel very strongly that if such preparations do not begin today, many students may not be adequately prepared for the jobs and post-secondary programs that are in high demand. Through courses such as Project Lead The Way (PLTW) and a strong one-to-one device program, Washington students learn and develop skills on a daily basis that prepare them for the world of tomorrow.

One notable example on our campus is the Washington Middle School Water Guardians. Through guidance from science and engineering teacher Dr. Pirtchard and other Washington teachers, this group of six girls used the STEM skills they have learned to compete in a national competition focused on conservation. These students developed, implemented, and presented plans for conserving water at Washington Middle School to the La Habra City School District Board of Trustees, the La Habra City Council, and members of the California State Senate and Assembly. The Water Guardians' efforts were recognized in Sacramento by both Senator Bob Huff and Assemblywoman Ling Ling Chang. The Water Guardians were the only entrants in the state of California and one of four middle schools in the United States to be recognized as a top finisher in the challenge.

At Washington, our staff will continue to strive to provide the best and to provide all Washington students with the opportunity to thrive in the 21st century!



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