

FREE

# School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation



Covering the Vista Unified School District

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 15

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2016

## Remarkable Progress Being Measured at VUSD



**Dr. Devin Vodicka**  
Superintendent

As we look ahead in the Vista Unified School District to an exciting year in which we build on the strengths of each student, I look at our performance over the past few years as an indication that we are moving in the right direction.

Thanks to the hard work of our teachers, principals, counselors, support staff and so many others, the improvements we've made are paying off with student test scores, engagement and enthusiasm on the rise.

More students are staying in school to earn their diplomas, more are completing the courses they need to get into college, and more are taking the rigorous advanced placement and International Baccalaureate classes to earn college credit while they're still in high school.

More students also are taking what they learned in the classroom



and applying it to solving real world problems through service learning projects that benefit the community, such as visiting nursing homes and producing public service videos.

It is especially gratifying to see that our graduation rate has gone from 81 percent in the 2012-2013 school year to around 85 percent in the 2014-2015 school year.

We don't yet have figures for the graduation rate in the 2015-2016 school year, but the change over the previous two school years is a fantastic improvement in such a short period of time. This important improvement means that hundreds of students will have a better chance of success and it

reflects one of the key goals the Board of Education has set for the district. Our goal for this school year is to raise the graduation rate to 88 percent.

At the same time that the graduation rate has improved, the number of students who are chronically absent has dropped from 12.9 percent in the 2014-2015 school year to 9.7 percent in the 2015-2016 school year. During the same period, the rate of students suspended or expelled has dropped from 2.9 percent to less than 2 percent.

We are also raising the level of challenge for our students. The number of high school students enrolled in one of more advanced placement or International Baccalaureate class has gone through the roof, from 2,028 in the 2014-2015 school year to 2,430 in the 2015-2016 school year. These are college level courses for which students can receive credit at many colleges and universities, giving

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## Values are Important

By Rich Alderson, President

Too often values within an organization are simply words on a page which sound good but may never be realized because the leadership of the organization does not really believe in these values as important or meaningful. In VUSD, that is not the case. Four years ago when Dr. Devin Vodicka was hired as superintendent, he presented the school board with three important values that he felt were needed to move our district forward. TRUST – RESPECT-COLLABORATION have become the guiding values that everyone in the district lives by and supports every day.

Starting with TRUST, the district has seen a significant improvement in staff morale simply because the teachers and support staff trust Dr. Vodicka. This trust was not easily earned. Many hours were spent by Dr. Vodicka and his staff listening to and valuing what employees had to say. First and foremost, staff shared that their jobs were growing more and more difficult since the budgets cuts of 2008 and the loss of nearly 40% of our revenue. Everyone knew that the housing crisis had nearly caused the collapse of our economy. VUSD had reduced staff to the bare minimum and we had reached a breaking point. Class sizes had grown to unmanageable numbers and frustration was very high

### Board of Education



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within the rank and file employees. Dr. Vodicka's efforts were to simply listen and begin to craft a plan to resolve the shortages keeping in mind that the education of our children was the paramount objective. This process took time but patience and perseverance were awarded as the VUSD employees realized

See **BOARD OF EDUCATION** • Page 13



When I learned about SchoolsFirst FCU at my school's district office, I opened my Membership on the spot. Being a Member has changed my life and I am so grateful for all they have done to help me."

**ARRONDA H.**  
Intermediate School Teacher  
Member Since 2013

## Now helping Members in Oceanside!

We're here to help school employees improve their financial lives and we're excited to now be a part of your community. Join us on October 8 for a Financial Fair at our newest branch in Oceanside and learn more about the products and services we've designed with school employees in mind.



### Stop by and enjoy:

- Financial workshops
- Fun activities for the whole family
- Free food, treats and drinks

### Saturday, October 8

10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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Oceanside

### Plus:

Members, bring in an eligible school employee or family member to join, and each of you can enter to **win a \$200 gift card.\***

[schoolsfirstfcu.org/financialfair](http://schoolsfirstfcu.org/financialfair)

\*NO PURCHASE OR PAYMENT OF ANY KIND IS NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. PURCHASE DOES NOT IMPROVE AN INDIVIDUAL'S CHANCES OF WINNING. Sweepstakes offer valid 9/12/16 - 10/8/16 at participating branches only. Official rules available upon request.

# School News

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

Covering the  
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**Kay Coop**  
Founder/Publisher



Welcome back to another school year. New beginnings are always exciting and particularly for students. It is a time of anticipation of seeing old friends, making new friends, meeting teachers, learning where the classrooms are and getting used to a schedule after summer break. Thank you for including *School News* among your reading choices.

In this issue we asked the principals to share their bios. It is fun to learn where they went to college, about their families, pets, hobbies, etc. We appreciate their dedication to education.

Our next issue is November 9.

## One Student: One Teacher

For Students Who Experience Significant Learning Challenges

- If your child experiences reading and/or school failure . . .
- If you home school because your child needs so much help . . .
- If your child learns best one to one, or needs a specific program . . .

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**"THINK FASTER TO LEARN MORE"**



# Teachers See the Possibilities

Whether studying cell membranes or the scientific method, students in Leslie Sandoval's seventh-grade classroom make connections—to the curriculum, with their teacher and peers, and to the world around them.



Lone Hill Middle School, Third Period, Life Sciences, Teacher: Leslie Sandoval, M.A.Ed. '04

Azusa Pacific's School of Education prepares educators like Leslie to see and cultivate the potential in every student. Graduates go on to make a lasting difference as creative, collaborative professionals and dedicated advocates for those they serve.

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(951) 304-3400

## School of Education programs offered:

### Master's Degrees

Educational and Clinical Counseling  
Educational Counseling  
Educational Leadership  
Learning and Technology  
Physical Education  
Special Education  
Teaching

### Certificate

LPCC Respecialization in  
Clinical Counseling

### Credentials

Mild/Moderate Disabilities Specialist  
Moderate/Severe Disabilities Specialist  
Multiple Subject Teaching  
Single Subject Teaching  
Preliminary Administrative Services  
Clear Administrative Services



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## New Endeavor

By Brad Peterson, President

For many years the Vista Education Foundation (VEF) has provided support for students, teachers and Vista Unified Schools. The primary focus of the VEF has been Arts, Scholarship and Technology. Through relationships with local service organizations such as the Lyons Club of Vista, the Vista Grange and Sunrise Kiwanis we offer scholarships to high school students who plan to enter particular career pathways (i.e Education, Agriculture, Arts, Media, Engineering, Health and Medical Technology). We have worked closely with the Vista Chamber of Commerce for the past two years to support the Rising Star of the Month Program which recognizes students in VUSD who have overcome personal struggles but have persevered to be successful in high school and beyond. We are now ready to add a fourth component to our pillars of support-internships. VEF has partnered with the Moonlight Cultural Foundation to promote the Moonlight Youth Theatre internship program. The year-round program will provide opportunities for middle and high school students in the areas of musical production and design. Interns will be exposed to production management, costume and make-up design and musical direction. The VEF is also working closely with the Career Technical Education (CTE) Program of VUSD. CTE provides students with courses that connect academics to real-world technical training. There are currently 15 Career Pathways in which courses are taught. Students also complete 60 hours of on-the-job training as part of their coursework. VEF and CTE will partner to identify Apprenticeships programs in North County where students may be placed for job shadowing, and paid or unpaid internships. A primary focus for the new school year will be to develop greater internship opportunities with Palomar Community College, Mira Costa Community College and Cal State San Marcos. The VEF welcomes input from the community and VUSD in this new endeavor.

## Another School Year Begins!



Judy Ritter  
Mayor

On behalf of the City of Vista, welcome students and their families to the beginning of the 2016-17 academic year. This is a great time for everyone as it provides for new beginnings and the start of a fresh experience.

Over the course of the new school year, students will have the opportunity to learn, play on sports teams or join clubs, develop friendships, and experience many other activities that make education fun and exciting. Some students are beginning school for the first time, some are moving into the next level, while others are celebrating their final year, yet all will have the opportunity to build on the important progress made over the past year.

We are extremely fortunate to live in a community that values education. As the school year begins, I applaud VUSD on their commitment to creating the best possible venue for learning and helping students reach their fullest academic potential. Investing in our future starts with giving our students the tools they need to be successful. I look forward to another exciting year of watching our VUSD students learn, achieve and grow. Have a great 2016-17.

## VUSD Innovation

1234 Arcadia Ave., Vista, CA 92084 • www.vistausd.org

## Vista Blueprint Reflects Community Voice

By Matt Doyle, Ed.D., Executive Director

The School Board approved revisions to the Blueprint for Educational Excellence and Innovation went into effect on August 17, 2016 in all 30 schools across the district. The Blueprint is our district strategic plan that defines where the district focuses finances and attention for the year based on a year-long process to gather community feedback. These improvements include the expansion of the Family Engagement Network to all schools in the district, improvements in the security of the technology infrastructure, expanded support for social/emotional programs including restorative practices, alignment of academic software programs students utilize in elementary through high school, increased focus on professional development and collaboration among teachers in mathematics and literacy, and continued focus on the implementation of the Strategic Arts Plan.

The Blueprint also ramps up the transition to a personal learning environment that is more student-centric, flexible and comfortable. Traditional classroom set-ups will be shifting to flexible, movable furniture that is comfortable for students and set the conditions for student-to-student collaboration; replacing rigid rows of desks and hard, uncomfortable chairs. A new focus was set to create greater support for (and access to) early childhood education such as quality rated preschool and parent education as a child's first teacher. Finally, the Blueprint for Educational Excellence and Innovation outlines a process for increasing the number of partnerships with local businesses and organizations so that students have access to service learning projects and other activities that provide students with relevant learning experiences aligned to the world of work. The Blueprint also serves as the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) for Vista Unified. More specific information about the Blueprint and LCAP can be found on the website at [www.vistausd.org/Blueprint](http://www.vistausd.org/Blueprint).



### When school is out, the Club is in!



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB  
OF VISTA

**Thanksgiving Camp: November 21-23**

**Winter Camp: Dec. 19-23, Dec. 27-30 and Jan 3**

**Spring Camp: March 27-31**

- Safe, fun and educational programs for all kids ages 5-18
- Sports activities, drama, technology and art classes
- Optional fun and educational field trips
- Cost for members (\$50 per year) is \$100 a week; \$25 a day; and free after 2 pm.
- Day Camps are offered from 7am-6:30pm

[www.bgcvista.org](http://www.bgcvista.org)

Boys & Girls Club of Vista, 410 W. California Ave, Vista, CA 92083

## YOUTH SPORTS AND EARLY EDUCATION THIS FALL AND WINTER!

*Check Out These Recreation  
and Education Programs  
for your Students!*



### YOUTH FLAG FOOTBALL

A non-competitive program consisting of four divisions: Tiny League (grades 1-2), Longhorn League (grades 3-4), Panther League (grades 5-6), and Charger League (grades 7-8). Practices and games are held during the week in the afternoons after school at the Vista Sports Park. Fees: \$84 Vista residents; \$101 non-residents.



### GIRLS VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

Girls in grades fifth through eighth are invited to be part of the North County Volleyball League. Practices are being held now with games beginning in October. It's not too late to register! This program is held at the Jim Porter Recreation Center in Brengle Terrace Park. Fees: \$84 Vista residents; \$101 non-residents.



### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Three programs are offered to give your child a head start in their education: Smart Start (for 3-4 years), Ready Set Learn (for 4-5 years), and Mommy's Little Learner (for 12 months-four years). Morning and afternoon classes held weekdays at the Jim Porter Recreation Center. Fees vary.

**REGISTER NOW!**

Online: [vistarecreation.com](http://vistarecreation.com) | Phone: 760.643.5275  
In person: Recreation Office, 200 Civic Center Dr., Vista

## HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT AT THE CITY OF VISTA'S MOONLIGHT AMPHITHEATRE!

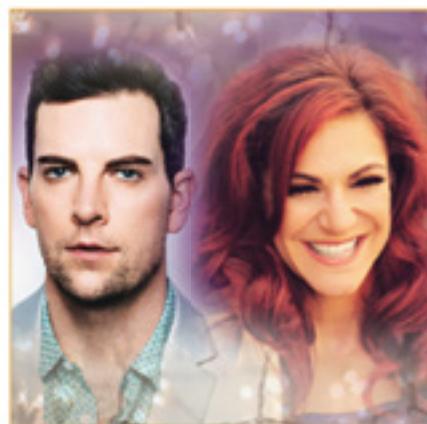


SNOW AREA FOR THE KIDS!

### LIGHTWIRE THEATRE PRESENTS "A VERY ELECTRIC CHRISTMAS" DECEMBER 3 AT 6 PM

Experience Lightwire's dazzling visuals that blend dance, puppetry and technology all performed on stage in complete darkness! Caroling worms, dancing poinsettias Nutcracker soliders, mischievous

mice and an evil Rat King are part of this tale set against a backdrop of holiday hits. Before the show, kids can frolic in the snow area on the Amphitheatre's Great Lawn! Tickets: \$10 - \$25.



### MOONLIGHT CULTURAL FOUNDATION PRESENTS A CLASSIC CHRISTMAS Starring Chris Mann and Shoshana Bean DECEMBER 10 AT 8 PM

Chris Mann rose to fame as Christina Aguilera's finalist on NBC's *The Voice*. Since then, his albums *Roads* and *Constellation*

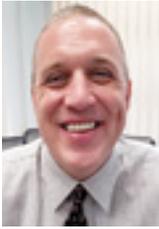
have topped the Billboard and iTunes charts and he's starred in his own PBS television specials, *A Mann for All Seasons* and *Home for Christmas*. Shoshana Bean is best known for her roles in the Broadway smash hits *Wicked* and *Hairspray*. *A Classic Christmas* is a holiday spectacular featuring timeless holiday music and will also feature beloved selections from the Great American Songbook. Tickets: \$20 - \$65.

**TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW!**

Online: [moonlightstage.com](http://moonlightstage.com) | Phone: 760.724.2110  
In person: VisTix Ticket Office, 200 Civic Center Dr., Vista

# Alta Vista *High School*

1575 Bonair Dr., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/724-3775 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Mike Sterner**  
*Principal*

Hi! My name is Mike Sterner, and I am excited to be a principal in the Vista Unified School District, and at Alta Vista High School. I have been a principal/assistant principal at high schools for the last thirteen years, and enjoy working with students to get them graduated! I was a Social Science teacher for seven years prior to being a principal, and a basketball coach.

In my career before teaching, I was a professional basketball player for six years, and played professionally in thirteen countries around the world. I am married to my wife Dina, and have two kids, Luke and Jordan.

# Beaumont *Elementary*

550 Beaumont Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-4040 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**David Moore**  
*Principal*

Mr. David Moore was born in Arkansas, where he lived until he was six years old. His family made several moves to Texas, Kansas, and Illinois before ultimately settling in California.

“The many moves our family made over the years had an impact on my educational progress,” said Mr. Moore. “As a result, my behavior began to reflect my academic frustration, and I increasingly became a behavior problem at school.

Finding the right school for me was critical, and they found it in a nearby Amish community in Arthur, Illinois. I was quickly enrolled in an Amish/Mennonite school and was given the

needed intervention to get back on track, both behaviorally and academically. The critical piece for me was the fact that I was greeted daily by teachers who believed that every ounce of my being was loaded with potential! Not only was I advancing academically, but I was also learning how to believe in my possibilities and talents. The teachers I encountered at this school made

a monumental imprint on my life. This has inspired me to help young people tap into their possibilities and potential.”

Mr. Moore has served in education for 21 years. “I began my teaching career with kindergarten, and I have also taught sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. For the past six years, I have served as an elementary school principal.”

Mr. Moore holds a bachelor’s degree in music with an emphasis in vocal performance and choral conducting. He also holds a master’s degree in educational administration from Pepperdine University. Mr. Moore is currently completing his doctoral studies in school leadership in urban settings at the University of Southern California.

Mr. Moore is the father of four: two boys and two girls, ages 27, 26, 24, and 18. “I enjoy spending time with my family,” he said. “I also enjoy reading, long walks with my wife, and frequent visits to Starbucks. Finally, I enjoy being involved in annual Christmas and Fourth of July choral and dramatic programs with my church choir and orchestra.”

# Bobier *Elementary*

220 W. Bobier Dr., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/724-8501 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Dr. Jenifer Golden**  
*Principal*

My name is Dr. Jenifer Golden, proud principal of Bobier Elementary School for the second year. The teachers and staff at Bobier are committed to treating every child like their own child and we take pride in providing every student sitting in the chair in the classroom with a personalized learning experience where the student has choices in their learning and their unique learning styles are accommodated. We take great pride in finding the strengths in every child and helping them refine their strengths as they explore their educational choices to become career, college, and life ready to compete and succeed in the

world. We are proud to be on board with Next Generation Science Standards and our staff is kicking off the year with lesson planning with world renowned presenter, Alex Kajitani, the rappin’ mathematician because at Bobier we make

learning fun and innovative and we will be sculpting and tailoring lessons that are challenging but engaging for each child. Bobier Elementary School is proud to be “The School with Heart.” Though we are 97% free and reduced lunch and have a high population of low income families our families have character and our community supports one another even donating over \$2500 to help build a school in Kenya because we know that others in the world do not have the advantages in school that we can access here in Vista, California. Our safety plan has contributions from staff, students, district, and our community keeping kids safe number 1! We are a 100 mile club school and support the California Thursday’s and healthy school lunch initiatives where we purchase healthy produce from local farm workers. Enter the gates to visit Bobier Elementary school and you will see healthy and happy students excited to learn every day!

# Breeze Hill *Elementary*

1111 Melrose Way, Vista, CA 92081 • 760/945-2373 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Rachel D'Ambroso**  
*Principal*

I am honored to serve as the Principal for Breeze Hill Elementary again for the 2016/2017 school year. I started working with the Vista Unified School District in May of 2015 and I am looking forward to my second year here at Breeze Hill. I have served in education for the past 18 years. During that time, I have had the opportunity to serve as Teacher, BTSA Support Provider, Instructional Specialist, Dean and Principal in both elementary and middle schools. I attended California Baptist University in Riverside receiving my Bachelors in Liberal Studies and Masters

in Education. I live in Oceanside after having moved from the High Desert two years ago. This past March I was married and recently changed my name, but I am definitely the same person! I have a twenty-two year old daughter and son-in-law who live in Nevada with my darling 24 month old granddaughter and 4 month old grandson. Along with being a Principal, I enjoy traveling, running, reading and sitting on the beach. I look forward to continue my journey with the Breeze Hill school community as a member of the best school in the universe!

# California Avenue

215 W. California Ave., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/630-4870 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Rachel Schmidt**  
Principal

Rachel Schmidt is beginning her fifth year as principal at California Avenue School, and her seventeenth year as an employee in the Vista Unified School District.

Prior to this role, she was a Speech-Language Pathologist in the district, a TEACCH trainer, and assistant professor at California State University, San Marcos. She was also a 2008 VUSD Golden Apple recipient.

Rachel was born and raised in Southern California. Both of her parents worked as dedicated educators in Vista Unified. Rachel

was educated in Vista schools and went on to attend Point Loma Nazarene College, San Diego State University, and the University of Redlands.

Rachel currently lives in Oceanside with her husband, Bill, and daughters Emily, Hannah, and Laura. The family enjoys traveling throughout the United States, participating in school and church activities, and spending time with family and friends.

Rachel believes that it is an honor and privilege to collaborate with parents and work alongside the exceptional staff at California Avenue School as they teach, nurture and serve the children in the school community.

## Career Technical Education

1234 Arcadia Ave., Vista, CA 92084 • [www.ctevista.org](http://www.ctevista.org)



**Kelly McKinney**  
Coordinator CTE

Kelly McKinney joined the C&I team as the Career Technical Education (CTE) Coordinator in the Vista Unified School District in July 2016. Kelly assists in planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating activities as they relate to CTE in the district. She is the liaison between the district and community agencies, the San Diego County Office of Education and local colleges regarding CTE programs. Additionally, she is actively involved in special projects for the district including events such as the League of Innovative schools visits and the 100th anniversary celebration.

Kelly has a bachelor's degree in Business Management with an emphasis in accounting, a masters degree in Secondary education and a certificate in School Business Management. Before coming to VUSD in 2001, Kelly worked in private industry at a local manufacturing company. While

working at a school site she served many roles. She was the ASB (student activities) Director, Yearbook Advisor, Cheer coach, student store manager, work experience coordinator and a classroom teacher.

In 2015, Kelly moved to the district office to serve as the WAVEpact Teacher on Special Assignment. In this role she was responsible for developing a college and career awareness program K-12. She coordinated college and career fairs, financial aid events and oversaw the MOU for guaranteed admission to CSUSM. She was a Naviance Summer Institute presenter in 2016 with the focus on WAVEpact program at the middle school level.

Along with Kelly's CTE responsibilities at VUSD, she is also the district's Perkins Coordinator. She is responsible for ensuring that VUSD's CTE programs are in compliance with all regulations affecting program improvement and effectiveness. Kelly is also responsible for monitoring the CTEIG and CCPT grants for the district.

Kelly is excited to work with the outstanding CTE staff and work together to enhance and expand opportunities for all students to succeed in their career path.

## Casita Center *Elementary*

260 Cedar Rd., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/724-8442 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Laura Smith**  
Principal

In May of 2016, Laura Smith was honored by the Classroom of the Future Foundation as the Innovative Principal of the Year. She gives credit to Casita's incredible staff for implementing the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program with a focus on science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM). Casita's goal is to maximize each child's unique potential through a wide variety of inquiry based learning opportunities with a focus on educating the whole child in a 21st century learning environment. Casita strives to become an IB Authorized School in 2017 and to personalize learning for each child.

Mrs. Smith's teaching career began during Roosevelt Middle School's third year expansion to eighth grade. During this time, she received the VH1 Good News People Award for her work with students in creating Public Service Announcements about bias awareness. In 1994, she became a member of the

founding faculty at Madison Middle School. She was instrumental in writing Madison's applications for California Distinguished School and National Blue Ribbon Awards. During her tenure at Madison, she was recognized as the VUSD Middle School Golden Apple Teacher. She was nominated for the California League of Middle Schools Educator of the Year and received the Superior Court of the State of California Ralph N. Kelps Award for her work in writing a Youth and Court simulation. In 2007, Laura served as Vista Magnet Middle School's founding Curriculum Coordinator and helped launch their successful IBMYP and STEM programs. In 2008, Laura became an Assistant Principal at Casita Center and in 2009, the Principal.

Currently, Mrs. Smith is involved with the Next Generation Science Standards Early Implementers Grant collaborating with educators from 8 districts and 2 charters to build a model K-8 NGSS implementation plan statewide and nationally with support from West Ed and K-12 Alliance.

## Empresa *Elementary*

4850 Avenida Empresa, Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/940-8454 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Dr. Cheree McKean**  
Principal

Dr. McKean and Mrs. Lee are excited about the possibilities for Empresa Elementary students and staff as they begin the new school year!

Dr. Cheree McKean has been the Lead Learner at Empresa for the past five years. Her educational philosophies are grounded in transformational leadership and trust theory where the practice of shared leadership has taught Dr. McKean the importance of creating environments which encourage building relationships based on a unity of purpose and trust. As a servant leader her biggest joy is serving and supporting teachers so they may develop their best practices which ultimately translate to student learning.

In combination with a strong focus on data driven results, Mrs. Lee brings expertise on the importance of concentrating on the social-emotional well being of every student. She has implemented a Pupil of Positive Praise certificate program in which students who have shown perseverance, growth, or overall stellar effort are recognized with a positive phone call home and a picture on the Empresa's Wall of Praise. Mrs. Lee is also trained in Restorative Practices and works with students to turn mistakes into learning opportunities.

Dr. McKean and Mrs. Lee look forward to maintaining the positive culture that embodies Empresa while they continue to dig deeper into the instructional shifts of the Common Core State Standards and embrace the school's new direction of personalized learning.

# Foothill Oak *Elementary*

1370 Oak Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/631-3458 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Sandra Ceja**  
Principal

Sandra Ceja is thrilled to kick off an amazing new school year as the proud principal at Foothill Oak! She is revitalized every day by her dedicated and professional staff that is committed to serving our students and community. Living our values of trust, respect and collaboration, we are achieving the goals they have set for ourselves and our stakeholders.

Mrs. Ceja brings a wide variety of experience as a teacher, reading specialist and administrator in grades K–12 as well as at the university level. Mrs. Ceja's areas of expertise include professional development and curriculum and instruction, with

a focus on English learners and students with special needs. She has been appointed to serve on several advisory panels for the State Board and California Department of Education and the Commission for Teacher Credentialing. In all capacities, Mrs. Ceja remains a passionate advocate for equity and excellence for all students and their families.

Mrs. Ceja's husband, Flavio, also works in education at the San Diego County Office of Education. Their son is in his third year of college and their daughter is in her second year of high school. As a family, they have been actively involved in sports, music and performing arts.

# Grapevine *Elementary*

630 Grapevine Rd., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/724-8329 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Rafael Olavide**  
Principal

My name is Rafael Olavide and I am the proud principal of Grapevine Elementary. I was born and raised in Madrid, Spain. In 1990 I worked as an English Language Development (ELD) coordinator at a summer school, where I met my future American wife, Debbie. Two years later we got married and in 1993 I moved to the United States. I attended USD to validate my studies from Spain while working in the Encinitas School District as an instructional assistant, reading intervention teacher, and serving in different leadership roles and capacities. In 1999 I started teaching at Grapevine Elementary where I was given leadership roles in bilingual education and ELD. In 2003 I moved to Temple Heights as Founding Faculty, where I taught and also served in different leadership roles. During this time I obtained both my master's degree in biliteracy from CSUSM and my administrative credential. VUSD provided me with many leadership

opportunities as I served on a variety of district committees and task forces, and in 2012-13 I was hired as Principal at Grapevine Elementary.

This year marks my 23rd year since I moved to the United States, where I proudly became a United States citizen in 2006. I have an amazing family: my wife, Debbie, who teaches in the Oceanside School District, and our two amazing children, Victoria, who is entering her second year in college, and Michael, a junior in high school. Soccer, biking and cooking are my other passions and my wife says I make the best paella!

I am honored to be the principal of such a distinguished school with a very dedicated staff that puts students first and a community of parents who value education as an investment for success in their children's future. This year with the support of my new Assistant Principal, Lisa Maguire, we will continue with our commitment to Grapevine students while focusing on their strengths, interests and needs.

# Hannalei *Elementary*

120 Hannalei Dr., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/631-6248 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Tracy Zachry**  
Principal

Hello, Vista community. I would like to introduce myself to you. My Name is Tracy Zachry, and I am the very proud principal of Hannalei Elementary School. I am a mother of three children all who attend or have attended Vista schools.

I began my career in the Temecula Valley Unified School District where I taught a variety of grade levels after receiving my bachelor's degree from San Diego State University. In 1998 I moved to the Vista Unified School District and taught second and third grade for two years. I then became a literacy coach and coordinator of programs for the next four years at

Grapevine Elementary School. During that time I received my master's degree at Cal State San Marcos.

Upon completion of my degree and administrative credential, I became the assistant principal at Grapevine for three years. The following year I was offered the position as principal of Crestview Elementary School and remained there until 2011.

Upon the closure of Crestview Elementary School in June of 2011, I became principal of Hannalei Elementary School, where I am now entering my sixth year. I have been in education for 27 years, and have enjoyed every moment. I am proud to be part of the educational community, and especially enjoy watching children learn, discover, and have fun.

Equally so, I love supporting families and helping them work through the educational process. It is my hope that if your child attends Hannalei Elementary School they too will discover the love of learning, along with a bit of fun! Not only do we offer all subjects, we also offer art, physical education, opportunities for students to use a variety of technology and a few after-school programs.

We have a very experienced and caring staff, the majority of whom have been at Hannalei since it opened in September of 2003. Hannalei Elementary School is a welcoming school where Character Counts!

Mahalo.

# Lake *Elementary*

4950 Lake Blvd., Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/945-5300 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Krista Berntsen**  
Principal

Krista Berntsen is thrilled to be serving her 3rd year as principal of Lake Elementary School. She came to Vista Unified four years ago after teaching elementary and middle school for eleven years. Krista served in Curriculum and Instruction as a teacher on special assignment and Coordinator in Vista Unified. Krista earned her BA in Communications and Spanish, her teaching credential, then later, her MA in Educational

Leadership. Krista loves reading, Jazzercise, watching football and spending time with friends and family. Krista loves working with students, staff and parents as a listener and servant leader. Krista is honored to be able to lead Lake's learning community to our vision of inspiring students through personalized learning to dive into the unknown with creativity and perseverance.

## Madison *Middle School*

4930 Lake Blvd., Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/940-0176 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Susan Ford**  
*Principal*

Susan Ford, Madison Middle School principal, is beginning her sixth year as a Mustang. Susan began her teaching career in the San Dieguito School District. There she taught college prep, honors, and A.P. English. She also created the school's first music program.

Susan then became an administrator in the San Marcos School District, where she opened Mission Hills High School. Susan came to Madison in 2011, to a school known for its strong family and community support. In the last four years, Madison has transitioned to Common Core, has built a strong STEM program, added several computer and science electives, and has focused on building strong relationships with students, staff, and parents. The school has adopted the values of Respect, Responsibility, and Relationship for all stakeholders.

While a university student, Susan was awarded a Rotary fellowship and

spent a year studying at the University of Kent in Canterbury, England. She also received her M.A. in educational administration from CSUSM, and completed her Ed.D degree in 2015. Her doctoral work focused on school leadership during the complex change process.

A native of California's Central Valley, Susan and her family moved to North County San Diego in 1996. The proud mother of four sons and three grandsons, Susan loves living in San Diego and leading Madison Middle School. This year, she will be teaching an online course in the CSUSM educational administration program.

As this new school year begins, Susan is looking forward to continued collaboration with the families, teachers, and staff at Madison. Their aim is to prepare all students to be college and career ready. At Madison, the focus is on high expectations in a supportive environment in order to prepare all students to be 21st century learners.

## Maryland *Elementary*

700 North Ave., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/631-6675 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Carol McKane**  
*Principal*

Hi, I am Carol McKane. This summer, I married a wonderful man, Rob McKane; and, blended our families each gaining bonus children. We spent two weeks in Europe exploring the Cliffs of Moher and the countryside of Ireland as well as castles and beaches of Portugal.

In my fourth year at Maryland, the staff and I continue to work as a team to create a rich learning environment for our students.

Together we developed a learning focus: Make an Impact:

Connect~Collaborate~Create. Our students need to know that they can Make an Impact on the world; and, teachers, staff, administration and parents can Make an Impact in a child's life. Our desire for Maryland students is for them to take an active role and be engaged in their education

## Mission Meadows *Elementary*

5657 Spur Ave., Oceanside, CA 92057 • 760/630-7884 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Dr. Bill Porter**  
*Principal*

I am very excited to begin my fourth year as principal of Mission Meadows Elementary School, a school known for its inclusive "heart." This year, Mission Meadows embarks on a Restorative Practice social/emotional journey to build and sustain positive relationships school-wide. I look forward to being on campus each day to help build positive and trusting relationships with students, teachers, and parents, in support of and in service to learning. I also appreciate the importance of working in a Professional Learning Community (PLC), where teachers and staff work tirelessly to design, teach, assess, and review California Common Core standards-based lessons in a continuous

improvement learning cycle using multiple modalities of teaching. I have been in education for over 25 years, both as an administrator and as a classroom teacher, in both the public and private sector. On a more personal note, I have been married to my beautiful wife Monica for 30 years, and we have three adult sons who are all proud products of a public school education. Our son Colin, is a 2nd Lt. in the United States Marine Corps Reserve (USMCR), and a graduate of UCSD. Our son Keegan, is studying to be a priest, and is a graduate of Northern Arizona University (NAU). Our youngest son Conor, is a senior at the University of Kansas (KU). Please come visit us at Mission Meadows, where we continue to learn and grow together as a learning community. We are the Mission Meadows Mustangs!

## Mission Vista *High School*

1306 Melrose Dr., Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/758-6800 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Nicole Miller**  
*Principal*

Nicole Miller is looking forward to her second full school year as the principal of Mission Vista High School. She joined the faculty in January 2015 after serving for eight years as an assistant principal at Fallbrook High School, where she worked in the areas of counseling, attendance, curriculum and instruction, data and assessments, and professional development. She was the district trainer for the Essential Elements of Instruction. Mrs. Miller also had the opportunity to oversee the WASC Accreditation Process, the Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program, the Single Plan for Student Achievement,

and a tutorial support program for students.

Prior to administration, Mrs. Miller taught English at Fallbrook and served as the GATE Coordinator, Department Chair and AVID Coordinator as well as Teacher on Special Assignment for professional development and curriculum and instruction. Before working in California, she taught at an Illinois magnet school for the performing after graduating from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Mrs. Miller is proud to be working with the faculty and staff at Mission Vista High School and looks forward to an exciting and productive 2016-17 school year.

# Monte Vista *Elementary*

1720 Monte Vista Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-0410 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Charlene Smith**  
*Principal*

Charlene Smith is honored and privileged to serve the students, families and staff as principal of Monte Vista Elementary School. Prior to arriving at Monte Vista, she worked as a classroom teacher with all elementary grade levels and as a literacy coach. She considers herself fortunate to begin her 22nd year as a member of the dedicated educators in the Vista Unified School District.

In addition to spending 11 years as a classroom teacher and literacy coach, Charlene provided site- and district-level staff development in language arts, instructional strategies, and Common Core State Standards. Charlene considers herself a lifelong learner and is always seeking opportunities to grow as a professional. She received her bachelor's degree, multiple-subject teaching credential, master's degree, and administrative services credential from California State University, San Marcos.

Charlene grew up in Ohio and has lived both on the East Coast and West Coast. Her youngest children, Mason and Cassidy, attend Vista High School. Her older children, Arianna and Breydon, are college students and her oldest son, Josh, lives and works in Vista. She enjoys participating in her children's various activities, playing pickleball, traveling, visiting family and friends, and reading.

Charlene feels blessed to serve the Monte Vista family. She is excited to continue her partnership with teachers, staff, and parents this year as Monte Vista continues its collaboration with the No Excuses University network of schools and The Leader in Me. Charlene invites you to visit Monte Vista, where you will find educators, staff, and families working together to ensure student success as collaborative and responsible members of society. She welcomes parent input and is always available to work with families to improve the education of their children.

# Murray *High School*

215 N. Melrose, Vista, CA 92084 • 760/631-2502 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Chuck Hoover**  
*Principal*

A native of Albany, Oregon (Go DUCKS!) and a graduate of Biola University, a Christian liberal arts university in La Mirada, California, Mr. Hoover began his career as a teacher and a coach at Dana Hills High School in the Capistrano Unified School District. During his time at Dana Hills, he served as a department chair, taught a variety of Social Science courses and coached some of the founding members of women's high school soccer in Southern California. He has been married for 35 years to Colleen, who he met in Washington D.C., where they both served as interns on Capitol Hill. During this time, he served in

Oregon Senator Mark O. Hatfield's office as well as on the House Education/Labor committee. The Hoovers are blessed with three adult sons, all of whom graduated from Vista schools and live near home.

With his family's move to Oceanside in 1989, Mr. Hoover was fortunate to be hired as a teacher and a coach at Rancho Buena Vista High School where he taught Social Science and technology classes while coaching Varsity Soccer and Cross Country. After 20 years as a classroom teacher, he entered the world of administration, having had the great fortune to serve in administrative roles at Vista Community Day, Guajome Park Academy, Madison Middle School and Hannalei Elementary. Currently, he is entering his sixth year as principal of Major General Raymond Murray High School, where the staff's purpose is to inspire and instill in every student the hope, courage and abilities to persevere in learning and life. One of Mr. Hoover's favorite writers, C.S. Lewis, summarizes his heart for education when he famously penned, "The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts."

# Olive *Elementary*

836 Olive Ave., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/724-7129 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Stephanie Vasquez**  
*Principal*

Mrs. Stephanie Vasquez currently serves the community of Olive Elementary as Principal. She joined the Vista Unified team in 2014. Mrs. Vasquez has served in education for the past eighteen years. She became an elementary teacher in 1998. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Studies from California State University of Fullerton, and a Master of Arts degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Grand Canyon University of Arizona. She obtained her Administrative Service Credential through the University of California, Irvine.

Prior to joining the Vista Unified School District, Mrs. Vasquez worked in the Murrieta Valley Unified School District for twelve years. For eight of those years she served as a school site administrator within the district. In 2010, Mrs. Vasquez was recognized as the Assistant Principal of the Year for her work in data analysis and student achievement.

Within the Vista Unified School District, Mrs. Vasquez serves as an active

member of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports Team (MTSS) and the Data Measurement and Monitoring Steering Committee. To help ensure a high-quality learning opportunity and to lay a strong foundation for future learning for each and every child, Mrs. Vasquez serves as a member of the district's P-3 Focus Group. She is also a lead learner in support of the early implementation of Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and has helped bring Olive Elementary into being a Personalized Learning Year One Challenge School.

Mrs. Vasquez is married to her high school sweetheart. They have two children, ages twenty-one and twenty-four. They enjoy biking, tennis, and boating.

Mrs. Vasquez makes it her highest priority to get to know each student and their families, to listen attentively, and create a safe environment for students to learn. She feels honored to be serving as the Principal of Olive Elementary. She works with her caring and dedicated staff to inspire every student to persevere as a critical thinker who collaborates to solve real world problems.

# Rancho Buena Vista *High School*

1601 Longhorn Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/727-7284 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Chuck Schindler**  
*Principal*

Principal Chuck Schindler begins his fifth year at the helm of Rancho Buena Vista High School (RBV). He was a high school principal in San Bernardino before moving to RBV. Chuck graduated from Humboldt State University with a BS degree and then from CSU San Bernardino with a Master's degree in Educational Administration. He has two grown children, Joshua and Liesl, and enjoys spending time at the beach and traveling. Chuck feels fortunate to be able to lead a great school at RBV with a supportive and caring school community.

RBV continues with strong academic programs such as IB and AP along with our AVID program. RBV has a Robotics

program and will begin an AP Computer Science course this year. We have many more programs to support all students being successful and meeting the Principal's three goals for all students: Be in class on time every day; earn all class credits with a 'C' or better; and graduate on time ready for college and career. We continue to have our Parent Center on campus to provide all parents access to computers, printers and information about RBV, College and Parent Organizations.

Students have the opportunity to participate in many clubs and athletic teams on campus. We are building great spirit and supporting great traditions for all Longhorns and looking forward to an exciting and productive year, academically and athletically, at RBV!

# Rancho Minerva *Middle School*

2245 Foothill Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/631-4500 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Ben Gaines**  
Principal

Benjamin Gaines Ed.D is in his 4th year as principal at Rancho Minerva Middle School. Together with his amazing staff, he has seen great steps towards excellence in teaching and learning. Rancho Minerva is partners with Digital Promise in the Verizon Innovative Learning Schools program. Students have 24/7 connectivity with 1:1 iPads. Rancho Minerva has also been

recognized nationally as a P21 Exemplar, as well as a recipient of the Digital Innovation in Learning Award. During the 2016-2017 school year, Rancho Minerva begins a partnership with Summit Basecamp, a personalized approach to teaching and learning for all students. Dr. Gaines is proud to lead such a strong team of educators.

# Roosevelt *Middle School*

850 Sagewood Dr., Oceanside, CA 92057 • 760/726-8003 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Elise Ochendusko**  
Principal

Elise Ochendusko is excited to begin her twelfth year in education and her third year as Principal at Roosevelt Middle School.

Ms. Ochendusko earned her bachelor's degree in history with a minor in Spanish from the University of San Diego and studied abroad in Madrid, Spain. After a brief stint in the business world, she earned her teaching credential from San Diego State University and also has a master's in Educational Administration from Cal State University San Marcos.

A native San Diegan, Ms. Ochendusko loves all things San

Diego. She also enjoys the beach and traveling, and is an avid runner who is looking forward to practicing with the Wildcat cross-country team in the fall.

She brings her passion for students, her love of education, and her desire to make each child's experience rich and memorable to Roosevelt Middle School. She is excited to continue to collaborate with the RMS staff and community to ensure that all students realize their potential and are well-rounded young adults who are prepared for high school and the world beyond. She is honored to be part of the Vista Unified Team, especially during this exciting time as it works to become the model of educational excellence and innovation and is looking forward to a great 2016-17 school year!

# Temple Heights *Elementary*

1550 Temple Heights Dr., Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/631-6242 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Kim Morton**  
Principal

Kim Morton is proud to be principal at Temple Heights Elementary School. She has built a shared vision with staff, students and parents to provide a personalized learning path for every student. The school is excited to be recognized as an Apple Distinguished Program and offers 1:1 iPads in all grades as a tool for building 21st century skills.

She started her career in the Vista Unified School District 23 years ago as a fifth-grade teacher at Casita Center for Technology, Science & Math. She transferred to Temple Heights as a third-grade teacher when it opened in 2003. She is honored to start her sixth year as principal at Temple Heights.

Growing up in Fullerton, Kim graduated from Sunny Hills High School with an International Baccalaureate diploma. She moved to San Diego, where she

attended the University of California, San Diego. During college, she studied psychology, ran on the track team, and spent her spare time tutoring students. She received her teaching credential and went on to earn a master's degree in teaching and learning with an emphasis on technology.

Kim loves to travel. She met her husband, Ben, on an airplane while returning from a trip to Cabo San Lucas. She has sailed in Croatia, whitewater rafted in Costa Rica, and run a marathon in Ireland. Her family owns a cottage on Lake Huron, where she spends time every summer fishing, hiking, and enjoying family fun.

Kim is excited to move Temple Heights forward with its focus on personalized learning and Vista's vision of being the model of educational excellence and innovation.

# Vista Academy *of Visual & Performing Arts*

600 N. Santa Fe Ave., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/941-0880 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Catina Hancock**  
Principal

The mission of the Vista Academy of Visual and Performing Arts is to inspire every student to be a confident global citizen and critical thinker through a rigorous, arts-integrated and innovative academic community. To do this, our site has adopted the following values:

**To Serve:** by engaging in service within the school and in the extended community.

**To Respect:** by honoring the creative process and treating each other with dignity.

**To Collaborate and Communicate:** by fostering strong home, school, and community relationships.

As a K-5 magnet school, our goal is to provide an arts integrated instructional day to include drama, dance, music and art. Four full-time specialists integrate the arts into grade-level content each week. We are also thrilled to be an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Candidate school that will spend the

next several years promoting inquiry, global citizenship and collaboration.

This year starts my fifth year at Vista Academy. Prior to joining the Bulldog team, I was a 13-year veteran of the Carlsbad Unified School District, having spent six years teaching and seven in administration. I married my high school sweetheart, Chris, and we recently celebrated our 19th wedding anniversary. We are blessed with two wonderful children, Davis, 15, and Holland, 13. Rounding out our family is 75 pounds of American Bulldog/Ridgeback named Louie.

We are thrilled to have been honored by the State of California this past year; earning the distinctions of "Gold Ribbon," "Title I High Academic Achievement," and "Excellence in the Arts." These accolades are moving us toward our vision to be the model of educational excellence through innovative arts integration and intercultural understanding.

I look forward to sharing our many successes throughout the year. For more information on our school, please visit our website, <http://www.vapa.vistausd.org/> and follow us on Twitter, @VistaAVPA.

## Vista *Adult Transition Center*

325 E. Bobier Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/758-3400 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Chris Altona**  
Principal

Mr. Chris Altona is in his 15th year as principal and Special Education supervisor at Vista Adult Transition Center (formerly Sierra Vista High School). He has been with Vista Unified School District since 1989, serving as a resource specialist at Olive, Crestview, and Breeze Hill Elementary Schools and the Vista Academy of Visual and Performing Arts. He then served as the assistant principal at Alamosa Park and Beaumont Elementary Schools. In all, he has been a public educator for 32 years.

Mr. Altona began his career as a first-grade teacher at Lassen Elementary School in the San Fernando Valley. A native of San Diego, he returned to the county and worked briefly as

a substitute and at a non-public school before joining Vista Unified School District.

Chris earned his bachelor's degree in psychology and his Special Education credential at San Diego State University, his multiple-subject teaching credential at California State University, Northridge, and his master's degree in education administration at National University.

Mr. Altona lives in Leucadia with his wife of seven years, who is a certified public accountant. He has traveled extensively with family and individually, is an avid bodysurfer, and holds a second-degree black belt in judo. He has high school sophomore son and two step-daughters, one residing in San Francisco, whom he and his wife visit frequently.

## Vista *High School*

1 Panther Way, Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-5611 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Anthony Barela**  
Principal

Mr. Anthony Barela is in his third year as the principal at Vista High School. He is very proud of Vista High School being designated an XQ Super School finalist this summer (the XQ grant is a \$10 million dollar competitive grant established by Laurene Powell Jobs to transform American high schools). As a finalist, VHS was selected from over 7,000 national applicants and was one of the top 50. Out of the finalist pool of 50, five schools will be awarded the XQ grant this fall.

This is his fourth year in the Vista Unified School district, having served as the principal at Roosevelt Middle School in 2013-2014. Prior to moving to the Vista Unified School District, Mr. Barela worked in the San Marcos Unified School District for five years, serving as a principal at Paloma Elementary School for two years and as an assistant principal at Mission Hills High School for three years. Both schools were

California Distinguished Schools.

Mr. Barela earned his Bachelor of Science degree in cellular and molecular biology from Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. He earned his Master's Degree from California State University, San Marcos, in educational administration.

Mr. Barela lives in Vista with Erin, his wife of 15 years. Mrs. Barela is a Vista native and was part of the first class at Rancho Buena Vista High School. She is a graduate of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. They have four children—Dominic, Michaelis, Gianna and Jude—all of whom attend schools in Vista. They enjoy spending time together in the community and serving their church.

Mr. Barela is honored to be part of the amazing Vista High School staff and proud to be a Panther. He looks forward to working with a talented group of educators, students and parents.

## VIDA *Vista Innovation & Design Academy*

740 Olive Ave., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/724-7115 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Dr. Eric Chagala**  
Principal

Dr. Eric Chagala is very excited about his 17th year in the Vista Unified School District (VUSD) and to have worked alongside amazing educators to open Vista's newest magnet school, Vista Innovation & Design Academy (VIDA)!

VIDA challenges students to stretch their creativity while designing innovative solutions to an array of problems. The backbone of the school's design process is referred to as Design Thinking, which was recently highlighted by the Harvard Business Review as a formidable approach for industry professionals.

Eric began his career with VUSD as a history teacher and coach at Rancho Buena Vista High School and then as an

assistant principal at Vista High School. These years of experience inspired him to join the middle school ranks, because he realized how critical it is to succeed in middle school. Eric is passionate about students being connected to the school community and persevering through challenging times. His doctoral research focused on the academic resiliency of students.

When not at school or working on school business, Eric enjoys spending time with his family. Eric's wife teaches literature and writing at the university level, and his two elementary-aged daughters are less than a year apart in age. Eric also enjoys golfing poorly and developing his own personal creativity. Follow Eric's professional feed on Twitter: @drchagala

## Vista Magnet *Middle School*

151 Escondido Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-5766 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Anne Green**  
Principal

Vista Magnet Principal Anne Green formerly served the Vista Unified School District as Director of Secondary Curriculum at the Vista Unified School District, and as Assistant Principal at Vista Magnet, her "happy place."

Prior to her time at VMMS, Mrs. Green spent many years at Vista High School teaching English, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate English, and English as a Second Language. She also served as honors coordinator, ELD coordinator, peer counseling advisor, freshman class advisor, and conflict resolution team member.

Mrs. Green is also a "short-horn," having taught at Rancho Buena Vista prior to several years spent working for the

California Department of Education and California Literature Project, directing the Middle Schools Demonstration Project.

Mrs. Green speaks Spanish and French, and originally hails from Vancouver, Canada, where she earned her Bachelor's degree (Honors) in English and Spanish. She has a Masters of Arts in British and American literature from the University of California, San Diego.

Mrs. Green has written children's literature for a publisher in New Zealand and is collecting all kinds of ideas for future books as she observes her middle school Vipers. She lives with her husband Jeff, who is an A.P. European history and I.B. Theory of Knowledge teacher at Vista High. She enjoys spending as much time as possible with him, along with their grandchildren in London, England, her daughter at UCLA, and her family in Vancouver.

# Vista Visions Academy

305 E. Bobier Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/724-4785 • [www.vistausd.org](http://www.vistausd.org)



**Dr. Erin English**  
Principal

It is my pleasure to start my third year as the principal of Vista Visions Academy and as the Director of Blended and Online Learning for the Vista Unified School District. I began my career in education 27 years ago as an elementary school teacher in Escondido. Over the years, I have been a teacher, an assistant principal, a principal, a technology coordinator and a technology director. Working with children, as an educator, is what I have wanted to do since I was a fourth grader.

My love of learning led me to earn my doctorate in the area of organizational leadership. I chose my dissertation topic "Principals' Level of Servant Leadership and Teachers' Job Satisfaction" because of my great respect for the amazing leaders and teachers I have worked with throughout my career. I believe we can all make a difference in the lives of those around us. I choose to make a positive difference.

Vista Visions is a unique 6 - 12 school. It is a school that every parent would want for their children. Dedicated, committed, caring, relevant, and forward thinking educators make Vista Visions the best school in the universe. Our caring staff go out of their way to make sure every child has their academic and emotional needs met in loving, nurturing way. At Vista Visions we strive to bring out the natural curiosity, intellect, and wonder in each child. We meet children where they are, and our goal is to help them reach their goals and instill in them a love of learning. Our students have a modified school week that allows them to learn at home and at school. Our students are typically self-motivated, inquisitive and thrive in small class environments. Our school is fully accredited and our high school classes meet the UC A - G requirements. We are also WASC Accredited and NCAA approved. If you are interested in learning more about our unique school, please contact our office staff.

## Vista Adult School

510 Sunset Dr., Vista, CA 92081 • 760/758-7122 • [www.vistaadultschool.org](http://www.vistaadultschool.org)



**Liz O'Shea-West**  
Principal

Liz O'Shea-West is in her third year and as principal of Vista Adult School. Previously, she was the assistant principal at Vista Adult School for three years and stepped in as interim principal for a year. She is currently involved in the AEBG initiative, working together with the North County Districts and Palomar College to create regional and dual-service educational opportunities for adult students.

Liz began working at Vista Adult School 12 years ago, with a focus on vocational education. Her job duties quickly expanded to

include ROP, Workability II counselor, high school diploma and medical program coordinator, and night supervisor.

Liz had earned degrees in two central areas: a Bachelor in Business Administration in Financial Accounting through National University, a Bachelor of Arts in psychology at UCSD, and a Master of Science in Vocational Rehabilitation at SDSU.

Since starting at Vista Adult School she has also completed her Designated Subjects Teaching Credential, Designated Subjects Supervision and Coordination Credential, and her Administrative Services Credential.

Liz and her husband, who is also an educator, have lived in Vista for the last 18 years. They enjoy traveling, family, and friends. Liz is a strong advocate for adult education, and is proud of the outstanding services that the team at Vista Adult School provides for adult learners.

### SUPERINTENDENT • From Page 1



**Dr. Devin Vodicka**

them a head start on their college career. Our goal is to raise that number to 2,550 this school year.

Not only are more students challenging themselves by taking those rigorous courses, but the number of students completing the courses they need to get into a four-year college rose from 29.9 percent in the 2013-2014 school year to 37.3 percent in the 2014-2015 school year. We still have a lot of room to grow, but to have that big a jump is phenomenal. We don't yet have figures for the most recent school year.

We still have a lot of work to do, but this is fantastic validation for all the people who are working to give students the support they need to stay in school, from teachers and principals to guidance counselors.

### BOARD OF EDUCATION • From Page 1



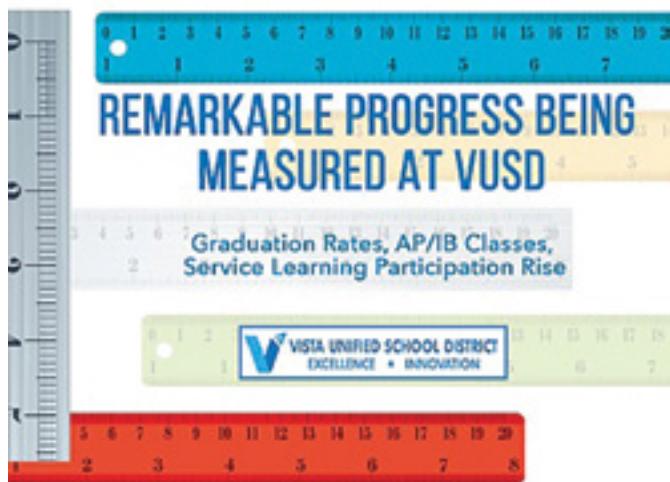
**Rich Alderson**  
President

that Dr. Vodicka was a man of his word. As the state economy improved, every effort was made to return our system to the levels of support prior to the recession. This was not an easy task and took many hours of work to accomplish the objective of serving all students.

In working with employees in this manner, Dr. Vodicka displayed to every person within our district, RESPECT. An old saying goes, respect is earned, not given. Dr. Vodicka certainly earned the respect of everyone in VUSD. His patience, soft-spoken manner indicates to everyone that he is interested in that person and how they are doing. One of his first tasks was to visit each classroom within the district. This endeavor took many hours but has paid tremendous dividends in the long run. Every employee in the district has personally met Dr. Vodicka and knows he cares about them. This level of RESPECT was earned and can be seen in the cordial relationships he has with both employee unions. It is clear that there is mutual respect.

Lastly, COLLABORATION is the fruit of the efforts to instill TRUST AND RESPECT. Once employees trusted and respected his efforts, Dr. Vodicka's ability to create an environment of COLLABORATION was greatly enhanced. The results of these efforts were calm and professional negotiations for employee contracts. Employees were very pleased and willing to be a part of the solution to problems, rather than only consider their position. Our employees kept the welfare of all children in VUSD in mind as we worked to improve conditions for all employees. The highlight of this work came with an addition of two instructional days to the calendar. Adding instructional time for students improves learning and affords teachers the opportunity to help all children.

In instilling these values within the school district, Dr. Vodicka has encouraged everyone including board members to exemplify our values. Everyone within the district has embraced these values and they can be seen in action on a daily basis. As we reach the four-year mark of Dr. Vodicka's tenure, it is clear that VUSD has become recognized for educational excellence throughout the state and nation. Vista is becoming the model for innovation and educational excellence.



In summary, students are attending school more, getting more out of it, and, when they graduate, they are better prepared for college and career. As the superintendent, it is gratifying to reflect on this progress and the know that these improvements

show that we are on a great path. Continued growth will be needed, but these results indicate that we are well on our way to achieving our vision to become the model of educational excellence and innovation.

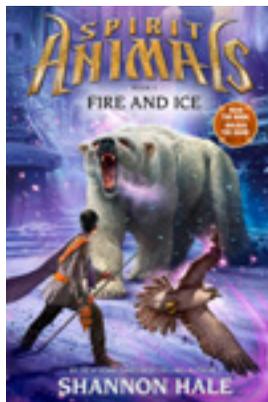
## Alana's Book Review

# Spirit Animals—Fire and Ice



Alana F.

By: Shannon Hale  
Follow the team of Meilin, Abeke, Conor, Maya, Tarik, and Rollan as they travel across Arctica to find Suka the polar bear in hopes of retrieving her talisman. After losing one of the teammate's family members, the team thought they had received their fair share of broken families but they seem to have thought wrong. What will happen when a close relative to one of the team members shows up in Arctica as a minion of the Devourer?



I won't spoil who this story is mostly about (although you can probably just look at the cover and tell) so that you will be surprised at who the relative is. I'd probably give this book four stars because while this is a fantastic story, it outlines one of the main character's confusion and depression so it makes me depressed.

Alana is a student columnist. When she doesn't have a book in her hands, she enjoys playing video games and writing fiction. She rates books on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest.

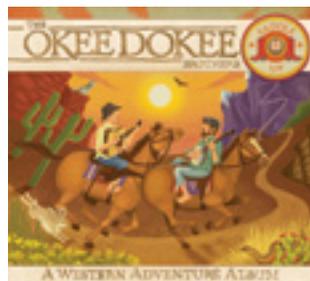
## Note-ables

# 'Saddle Up'



Kate Karp

Childhood buddies Justin Lansing and Joe Mailander—the brothers neither of them ever had—are off at a gallop with *Saddle Up*, a spirited musical jaunt along the Continental Divide region. The Grammy-award-winning pair gives cowboy, bluegrass and American Western music a good turn—sometimes right on the ear—and boy, howdy, can they rustle up a good band!



Lansing on banjo and Mailander on guitar join up with fiddles, acoustic guitars, steel drums, cardboard boxes, a washboard—of course—and a Nigerian Urdu drum. The Lovin' Spoonful's John Sebastian and his harmonica join the hoedown on "Lead a Horse to Water;" other guest artists—the Benally family's Navajo chant song "Sister Moon and Brother Sun" and Carlos Medina y El Trio Los Gallos "Somos Amigos"—illustrate how wonderfully diverse genuine American music is.

The Okee Dokee Brothers are home on their usual range of metaphor and an amazement and appreciation of nature, all expressed through tenderness and spicy, sloppy dollops of youngster-appealing humor. "The Jackalope" is a Holy Grail legend with a wink to the listener, and "Last Lullaby" gives a sweet treatment to "My Little Buckaroo" and comfort to the listener.

But hold your horses—there's another saddlebag full of goodies. The included DVR treats each song to regional geography and beauty, highlights the artists, and lassoes us in with spirited hijinks and home movies of the Brothers' childhood, nostalgic flashbacks on "Good Old Times."

Cowboy music has come a ways. Roy Rogers would be proud—maybe a little envious, too.

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

## Lucy's Book Review

# Marvelous!



Lucy Davis

*The Land of Stories: An Author's Odyssey*  
Author: Chris Colfer

I had been waiting for this book to arrive at my local library, and after much suspense, the story continues! Conner and Alex travel into Conner's short stories; in hopes of recruiting an army of different storybook characters: their own! With help from some leftover



Portal Potion, which allows people to travel into stories, the twins hope to recruit the Ziblings, Auburn Sally's crew, the British Navy, and many more.

Not much better things are in the other dimension: the Masked Man's Literary Army rebels and joins evil witches who plan to take over the Otherworld. Will they succeed?

Chris Colfer succeeds once more in continuing the series and relying on a readers imagination to create a marvelous story further extending the fairy-tale world we thought we already knew.

I give this book four bookworms for its imagination.

Lucy is a fifth grade student that enjoys theater, playing guitar and singing. She's a Harry Potter fanatic and hopes to one day publish a series of her own. Lucy will rate the books 1 to 5 bookworms with 5 being the best.

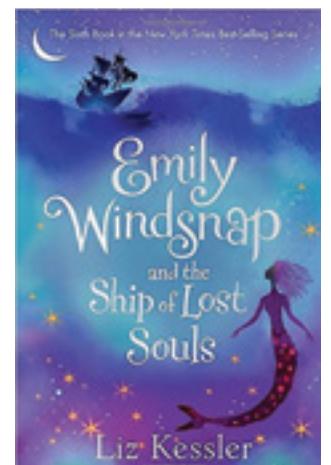
## Christina's Book Review

# Captivating to Read



Christina J.

*Emily Windsnap and the Ship of Lost Souls*, written by Liz Kessler, is about the main character Emily, who keeps seeing a mysterious ship appearing and disappearing without a trace, only at certain hours each day, growing fainter each time. Emily and her friends try to figure out the mystery



behind it, and the closest they could get to solving it is that a similar looking ship had recently disappeared with all its passengers on board. Later Emily finds herself near the ship and bravely accepts the challenge to solve its mystery once and for all. She meets people having a good time, without any care in the world about their past. Emily comes to realize that these people are the missing passengers of the missing ship and that they had their memories of the past slowly erased, and now they are stuck on this ship that is temporarily suspended in between our world and Atlantis. Emily only has a few hours to save the doomed passengers before they are all trapped in another dimension forever. With quick thinking Emily manages to find a way to save everybody and reunite them with their families.

I liked this book a lot. The story unfolded smoothly and was very captivating to read, keeping me guessing and worrying along the way with the main character. The suspense is great and the story itself is mind-boggling.

I rate this book 5 out of 5, with five being the best.

Christina J. is a 7th grader. She is an avid reader, who enjoys some peace and quiet with a good book about some great adventure. Christina is a young author herself, in 5th grade she wrote a book *Melody's Stories: I Am a Spy Now*, published by Studenttreasures Publishing (PIN #3582798).

**Please Drive Safely – Students are Back in School**

## Big Nate In A Class All By Himself



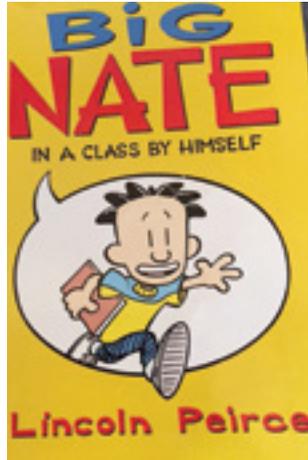
Michael H.

Nate knows he is destined for greatness. When a fortune cookie confirms that, he is very excited. The fortune reads "Today you will surpass all others." He soon learns that trouble seems to be following him everywhere. Instead of something good happening, bad things happen. He receives detention slips from all of his teachers. Confused by it all Nate tries to figure out, how it all went wrong.

Later he realizes that although he did have a really bad day, his fortune cookie was correct. He surpassed all others by establishing a new record. He was the first person to get 7 detention slips in one day! Nobody could believe it, but Nate was happy because his fortune came true.

I give this book 5 stars because it kept me interested the whole time. His adventure made me laugh and Nate didn't give up until he made his fortune come true. I may never want to come close to that record, but reading about it was fun.

Michael H. is a 4th grade student. Besides his love for reading, he also enjoys Karate, playing guitar and sharing new adventures with his mom. He will rate the books 1 to 5 stars with 5 being the highest.



## Keeping Kids Safe in the Car

By Heidi Heflin, MN, RN, CNS, CPSTI

Many parents look to the law to 'guide buckling up their children safely in the car'. From 1/1/17, all children under 2 years old (unless 40 lbs. or 40" tall or more) must ride in a rear-facing safety seat. Pediatricians and safety professionals recommend children ride rear facing for as long as possible, until the maximum height or weight on the seat. Rear facing is 5 times safer! After age 2, California law requires children ride CORRECTLY in a safety seat or booster until age 8 and then, until the safety belt fits properly. But today, children often fit in a forward-facing seat until starting elementary school or longer. Use a booster until the belt fits properly, usually between 10 and 12 years old. By law, ride in back until age 8; however, the back is almost twice as safe, and labels in cars read stay in back to age 13.

### Try this test in your car

1. Are you sitting all the way back against the auto seat?
2. Do your knees bend comfortably at the edge of the auto seat?
3. Does the belt cross your shoulder between your neck and arm?
4. Is the lap belt as low as possible to you, touching your thighs?
5. Can you stay seated like this for the whole trip?

SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. is the national non-profit organization dedicated solely to protecting children from death or injury in vehicle crashes through the correct, consistent use of safety seats and belts. For more information, visit [www.carseat.org](http://www.carseat.org) or call the Safe Ride Helpline 800/745-SAFE, 800/747-SANO. Heidi Heflin, MN, RN, CNS, CPSTI is a Program Consultant with SafetyBeltSafe U.S.A. She can be reached at [CarSeatRN@gmail.com](mailto:CarSeatRN@gmail.com).

# 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](mailto:Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com) (Please put VISTA in the subject line)

Entries must be received by October 15, 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 **Jane Shartle**  
Winner of the May Word Search Contest!

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(We'll even fill out the paperwork for you.)

\*\*Minimum balance required; see chart. Promotion ends 7/1/2017.

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Your kids are growing fast and your 529 college savings account needs to keep up. Luckily, right now you can give it a boost by transferring your 529 account into a ScholarShare account—one of the best 529 plans in the nation. Depending on your current balance, we'll give you up to \$500 to switch to ScholarShare (see chart below).\* You are permitted to transfer funds from another 529 college savings plan to an account in ScholarShare for the same beneficiary once within a 12-month period without incurring federal income tax. The 529 college savings plan from which you are transferring funds may be subject to differences in features, costs and surrender charges. You should consult your tax advisor or the other 529 college savings plan. State and local taxes may apply.

Balance amount	Bonus	Balance amount	Bonus
\$10,000 - \$20,000	\$100	\$40,001 - \$50,000	\$400
\$20,001 - \$30,000	\$200	\$50,001 +	\$500
\$30,001 - \$40,000	\$300		



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\*ScholarShare has received a Silver rating from Morningstar, making it one of the best-rated plans in the nation. In an annual review (10/20/2015) of the largest 529 college savings plans (64 total), Morningstar identified 29 plans that rose above their typical peers, awarding those plans Gold, Silver, and Bronze Morningstar Analyst Ratings for 2015. These forward-looking, qualitative ratings signal Morningstar's conviction in the plans' abilities to outperform their relevant benchmark and peer groups on a risk-adjusted basis over the long term. Morningstar evaluates college savings plans based on five key pillars — Process, Performance, People, Parent, and Price. For more information about Morningstar's overview of ScholarShare, go to [529.morningstar.com](http://529.morningstar.com). Past performance does not predict future results. Source: [529.morningstar.com](http://529.morningstar.com)



Consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses before investing in the ScholarShare College Savings Plan. Visit [ScholarShare.com](http://ScholarShare.com) for a Plan Disclosure Booklet containing this and other information. Read it carefully. Investments in the Plan are neither insured nor guaranteed, and there is a risk of investment loss. TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc., Plan Manager. TIAA-CREF Individual & Institutional Services, LLC, member FINRA, distributor and underwriter for ScholarShare College Savings Plan. Taxpayers should seek advice from an independent tax advisor based on their own particular circumstances. Non-qualified withdrawals may be subject to federal and state taxes and the additional federal 10% tax. Non-qualified withdrawals may also be subject to an additional 2.5% California tax on earnings. Before investing in a 529 plan, consider whether the state where you or your Beneficiary resides has a 529 plan that offers favorable state tax benefits that are available if you invest in that state's 529 plan. Neither TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc., nor its affiliates, are responsible for the content found on any external website links referenced herein.