

**FREE**

# School News

*Education + Communication = A Better Nation*

**Covering the Newhall School District**



Volume 2, Issue 5

October 2020–February 2021



**First Day of School Ready: The Montes De Oca Family from Valencia Valley!**

## SUPERINTENDENT

### Welcome back to the 2020-2021 school year

Our journey to the start of school has taken us all down a path of uncharted waters, yet we have all grabbed an oar and something to keep us afloat as we head off into the raging rapids of new learning for the students in the Newhall School District. We all miss in-person teaching and serving our students and families, but we must all step up to ensure the needs of our children are met to the best of our ability. What we do as educators has not changed, but how we are doing it, definitely has. The pandemic has demanded we instruct differently, but we still teach.

Parents are vital to the success of their students' learning more than ever in this new distance learning setting. Your guidance, support, and encouragement each day are instrumental in laying the groundwork to support their dreams and aspirations. I realize you are being asked to reach deep within yourself for more strength, courage, and patience to meet the challenges of this time, and meet them with poise and dignity, this does not go unnoticed by us and know we appreciate all you are doing.

The Newhall School District family deeply appreciates your time, energy, effort, and personal sacrifices you have made and will continue to make to ensure your children continue to be innovative and engaged in our rigorous academic programs. We collaborate, we persevere, and we excel!

I will leave you with this quote, NSD Board President Sue Solomon shared with our staff on opening day,

“When we least expect it, life sets us a challenge to test our courage and willingness to change; at such a moment, there is no point in pretending that nothing has happened or in saying that we are not yet ready. The challenge will not wait. Life does not look back.” — Paulo Coelho, writer.



**Jeff Pelzel**  
*Superintendent*

### Bienvenidos al año escolar 2020-2021

Nuestro viaje al comienzo de la escuela nos ha llevado por un camino de aguas inexploradas, sin embargo, todos hemos tomado un remo y algo para mantenernos a flote mientras nos dirigimos a los rápidos furiosos del nuevo aprendizaje para los estudiantes del Distrito Escolar Newhall. Todos extrañamos enseñar y servir en persona a nuestros estudiantes y familias, pero todos debemos dar un paso adelante para asegurarnos de que las necesidades de nuestros hijos sean cumplidas lo mejor posible. Lo que hacemos como educadores no ha cambiado, pero cómo lo estamos haciendo, definitivamente sí. La pandemia ha exigido que instruyamos de manera diferente, pero aún enseñamos.

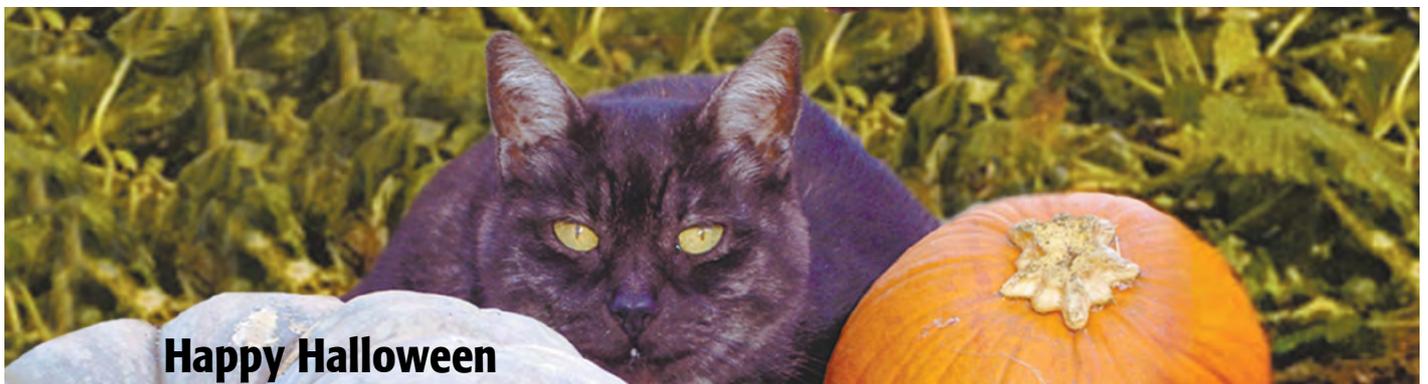
Los padres son necesarios para el éxito del aprendizaje de sus estudiantes más que nunca en este nuevo entorno de aprendizaje a distancia. Su guía, apoyo y ánimo cada día son fundamentales para establecer las bases para apoyar sus sueños y aspiraciones. Me doy cuenta de que se les pide que lleguen a lo más profundo de su ser para obtener más fuerza, valor y paciencia para enfrentar las dificultades de este tiempo, y enfrentarlos con estabilidad y dignidad, esto no pasa desapercibido para nosotros y sepan que apreciamos todo lo que están haciendo.

La familia del Distrito Escolar Newhall aprecia profundamente su tiempo, energía, esfuerzo y sacrificios personales que han hecho y continuarán haciendo para asegurar que sus hijos continúen siendo innovadores y comprometidos con nuestros rigurosos programas académicos. ¡Colaboramos, perseveramos y sobresalimos!

Les dejo con esta cita que la Presidenta de la Junta Directiva de NSD, Sue Solomon, compartió con nuestro personal el primer día de clases,

“Cuando menos lo esperamos, la vida nos da el desafío de poner a prueba nuestro valor y nuestra voluntad de cambiar; en ese momento así, no tiene sentido fingir que no ha pasado nada o decir que aún no estamos listos. El desafío no esperará. La vida no mira hacia atrás.”

— Paulo Coelho, escritor.



## BOARD OF EDUCATION



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### Distance Learning & Family Engagement

Raising a family is an awesome and shared responsibility! When families and schools work together, children are more successful and feel good about themselves, and their accomplishments. This is true whether children attend school, or when children learn at home.

Unfortunately, the pandemic has interrupted “school” as we know it. Now, we must reorganize our lives to include “schooling” from home.

Learning is learning no matter where it happens.

It is important to create a consistent learning space where the child knows to go each day for “school”. Children thrive on having routines both in and out of school. Ensure your child has a definite school start and end time with regular breaks built into the “school day” just like in school. Just like when “going to school,” there needs to be regular routines at home including bedtime. Parents also need built-in breaks and routines. Built-in breaks and routines support healthy physical and mental well-being and enable us to maintain a growth mindset.

As parents establish schedules, parents must work on their own mindset to ensure their children receive the support needed for learning. Education must be a priority in the home. Children will work hard when they see their parents actively making their education a priority. Parents must commit to continue the work they’ve begun with their child throughout the year.

It’s important to be positive and encouraging even when children struggle. Parents should never hesitate to ask their child’s teacher for help. Parents are truly partners with their child’s teacher in their child’s education, and kids love that. That is especially true when children see and FEEL just how much their parents and teachers, together, care about who they are, and what they do.

### Aprendizaje a Distancia y Participación Familiar

¡Criar una familia es una responsabilidad increíble y compartida! Cuando las familias y las escuelas trabajan juntas, los niños tienen más éxito y se sienten bien consigo mismos y con sus logros. Esto es cierto ya sea que los niños asistan a la escuela, o cuando los niños aprenden en casa.

Desafortunadamente, la pandemia ha interrumpido la “escuela” tal como la conocemos. Ahora, debemos reorganizar nuestras vidas para incluir la “educación” desde casa.

Aprender es aprender sin importar dónde ocurra.

Es importante crear un espacio de aprendizaje consistente donde el niño sepa que debe ir cada día a la “escuela”. Los niños prosperan teniendo rutinas tanto dentro como fuera de la escuela. Asegúrese de que su hijo tenga un horario definido de inicio y fin de clases con descansos regulares incorporados en el “día escolar” como en la escuela. Al igual que cuando se “va a la escuela”, debe haber rutinas regulares en casa, incluyendo la hora de dormir. Los padres también necesitan descansos y rutinas incorporadas. Los descansos y las rutinas incorporadas apoyan el bienestar físico y mental saludable y nos permiten mantener una mentalidad de crecimiento.

A medida que los padres establecen los horarios, deben trabajar en su propia mentalidad para asegurarse de que sus hijos reciban el apoyo necesario para el aprendizaje. La educación debe ser una prioridad en el hogar. Los niños trabajarán duro cuando vean que sus padres hacen que su educación sea una prioridad. Los padres deben comprometerse a continuar el trabajo que han comenzado con su hijo durante todo el año.

Es importante ser positivo y animar incluso cuando los niños tienen dificultades. Los padres nunca deben dudar en pedir ayuda al maestro de su hijo. Los padres son verdaderos socios del maestro de su hijo en la educación de su hijo, y a los niños les encanta eso. Esto es especialmente cierto cuando los niños ven y SIENTEN cuánto les importa a sus padres y maestros, juntos, quiénes son y qué hacen.



**Sue Solomon**  
*President*



RHIANNON L. AND DAUGHTER  
Member Since 2001  
Program Coordinator

# You're Our Reason

Extraordinary times can bring out the best in people. People like you, who have shown us all the meaning of dedication and community.

That's why we're honored to stand behind school employees and their families. Our entire reason for being is to help you prosper.

**Plan for the future. And navigate uncertain times.**

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If you're a school employee experiencing a hardship, we're here to help.

[schoolsfirstfcu.org](https://schoolsfirstfcu.org)

# School News

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Covering the  
**NEWHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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**Kay Coop**  
Founder/Publisher



Welcome back to another school year. This is our 2nd year publishing the excellence from the Newhall School District. There have been many changes throughout the years; however, I think we all agree this is the most challenging. Americans are innovative and educators are at the top of the list. Zoom has taken on a whole new meaning to this generation of students. Fortunately, students

and educators were proficient with technology to help with the seamless transition to distance learning. Families stepped up to the challenge.

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

Be sure to enter our word search contest on page 11.

Our next issue is March 10, 2021.



## Oak Hills PTA

<https://www.newhallschooldistrict.com>

### Together We Shine

By Sarah Scopio, PTA President

Oak Hills PTA has started off strong and is working hard to make this year as great as possible for our students, parents, teachers and the entire school community. Our theme for the 2020-21 school year is "Together We Shine!" Whether our families have chosen distance learning or the hybrid learning model, together we make Oak Hills a vibrant community.

We began this year by passing out ice pops and Oak Hills Coyote Pride pencils at our first materials pickup, making a personal connection with each family, and welcoming them to the new school year.

This year, we will continue to have favorites like the Reflections Art Program, virtual Scholastic Book Fairs, Yearbook, Spirit Days and Restaurant Nights. And the Oak Hills PTA is excited to be offering new programs like a free Virtual Paint Night to all of our students and teachers! Paired with a food drive for the Santa Clarita Valley Food Pantry, it's one way we are able to continue our school's commitment to community service.



## Dr. J. Michael McGrath *Elementary*

21501 Deputy Jake Dr., Newhall, CA 91321 • 661/291-4091 • www.mcgrathelementary.com



**Jennifer Boone**  
*Principal*

### Our Heroes

Behind the success of every teacher and student is a group of heroes, the Newhall School District classified staff. Classified staff

members have a variety of roles in our school community, each one critical to the achievement of our students. The roles include positions such as office manager, librarian, custodian, campus supervisors, grounds crew, technology support, health aide and payroll.

This year, the classified staff members have truly stretched themselves to serve families, teachers and students. Our office staff has gone over and above to



support enrollment in both the Distance Learning Academy and hybrid models as data migrated, new students enrolled, and parents asked questions about Google Classroom and technology. Our technology department has been instrumental in problem solving and supporting staff. Each classified member from the district office to our school sites demonstrates a high level of expertise. It is classified staff across the district that allows teachers to teach and students to learn.

Thank you, Newhall School District classified staff and McGrath elementary staff! We are so grateful!

## Meadows *Elementary*

25577 N. Fedala Rd., Valencia, CA 91355 • 661/291-4050 • www.meadowselementary.com



**Dr. Juliet Fine**  
*Principal*

### 'Every Mountain's Within Reach'

For the 2020–21 school year, Meadows Elementary School's theme is "Taking Learning to New Heights and Embracing How Every Mountain Is Within Reach if We Just Keep Climbing."

Every student at our school contributes to the communitywide art project, which displays our theme. Students decorate trees with words, symbols, colors and images to show how they embrace the opportunities that distance learning presents.

This theme reminds us how Meadows teaches students to keep a growth mindset and take every challenge as an opportunity. Our teachers build on this work and focus on how to support the social-emotional wellness of our students. Working with our full-time counselor, teachers find ways to support our community in the

digital environment. Through PBIS programming, teachers affirm positive student behaviors that contribute to a positive schoolwide culture.

We commit to taking one-step forward every day to support our students' academic and emotional growth.



## Newhall *Elementary*

24607 Walnut St., Newhall, CA 91321 • 661/291-4010 • www.newhallelementary.net



**Jackie Tapia**  
*Principal*

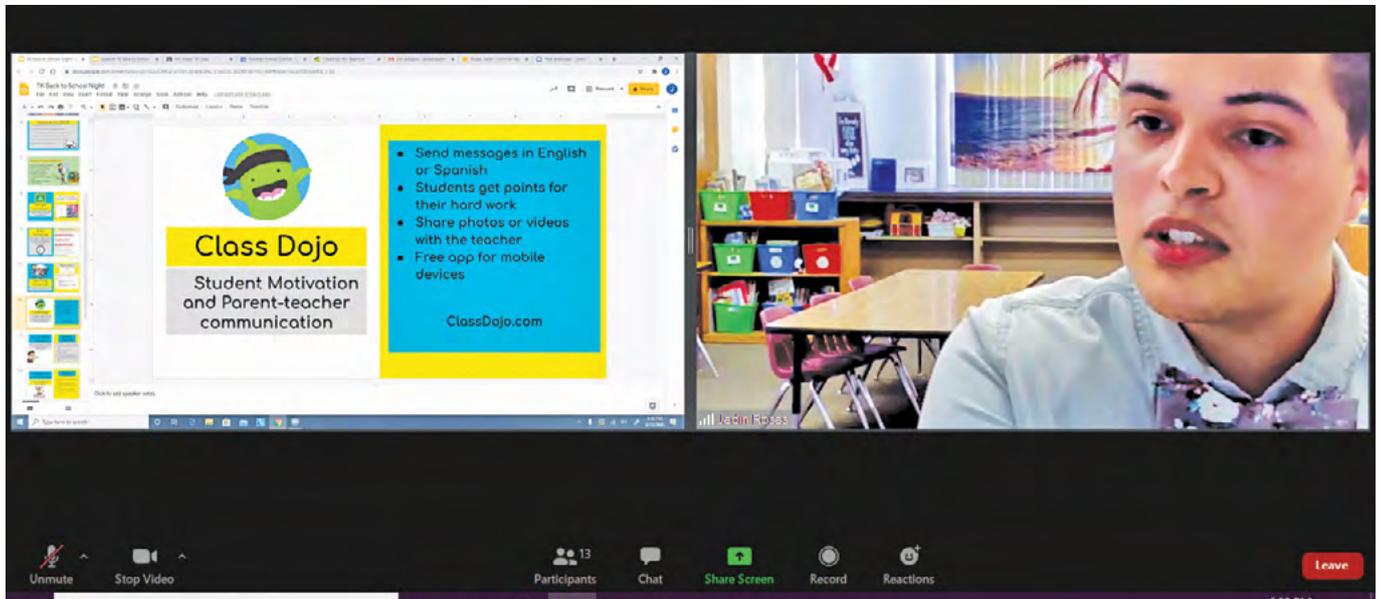
### From Brick to Click

The teaching profession changed “from brick to click” in a heartbeat, and Newhall Elementary teachers felt like first-year teachers all over again! They decided to embrace the uncertainty that came with being new at something and started off on the right foot.

The first step they took was to reconnect with their purpose. They revisited their philosophy of teaching and realized that they could still

impact the lives of their students regardless of the teaching platform. Then, they worked tirelessly to identify what could transfer from teaching face-to-face to distance learning. They were clear on their intention for the first days of school. They wanted students to experience the virtual classroom, establish norms and routines, and work together to create a space where everyone felt safe and connected.

We thank them for working through the struggle and spreading the joy of being first-year “digital teachers” with all of us.



## Oak Hills *Elementary*

26730 Old Rock Rd., Valencia, CA 91381 • 661/291-4100 • www.oakhillsschool.com



**Wendy Maxwell**  
*Principal*

### After-School Science Lab

Beginning in the 2019–20 school year, a group of seven high school students from West Ranch High School wanted to promote and inspire interest in young students in their community to explore the field of science. The club volunteered time to plan and launch a program at Oak Hills Elementary called “After-School Science Lab,” which began in the fall of 2019 and was intended to teach science in a fun and creative way.

Every Monday, a group of 20 elementary students conducted hands-on science experiments and other interactive activities to learn more about a variety of science topics. One of the program’s most popular activities was a solar-system scavenger hunt in which the students learned about astronomy in an escape-room setting, finding clues hidden around campus to ultimately find cutouts of all eight planets. Other activities included creating

contraptions based on their own designs to protect their eggs in an egg-drop contest, crystallizing pom-pom figures using borax, and building motorized engines out of empty soda cans.

By teaching science in an engaging and nontraditional way, Target Tutors hopes to expose elementary students to the fascinating world of science, inspiring them to continue learning more and possibly leading them to potential career opportunities in the STEM fields in the future. Last spring, the group also aspired to help third-through-sixth-grade students prepare for the upcoming CAASPP state test by providing math support, and the members held their first tutoring session in March. Unfortunately, the sudden and unanticipated end to the school year because of the COVID-19 pandemic put an immediate damper on the club’s math-program plans. However, the group of students are working to provide a virtual after-school class in which students are able to participate from home.

## Old Orchard *Elementary*

25141 N Avenida Rondel, Valencia, CA 91355 • 661/291-4040 • www.oldorchardelementary.com



**Ken Hintz**  
Principal

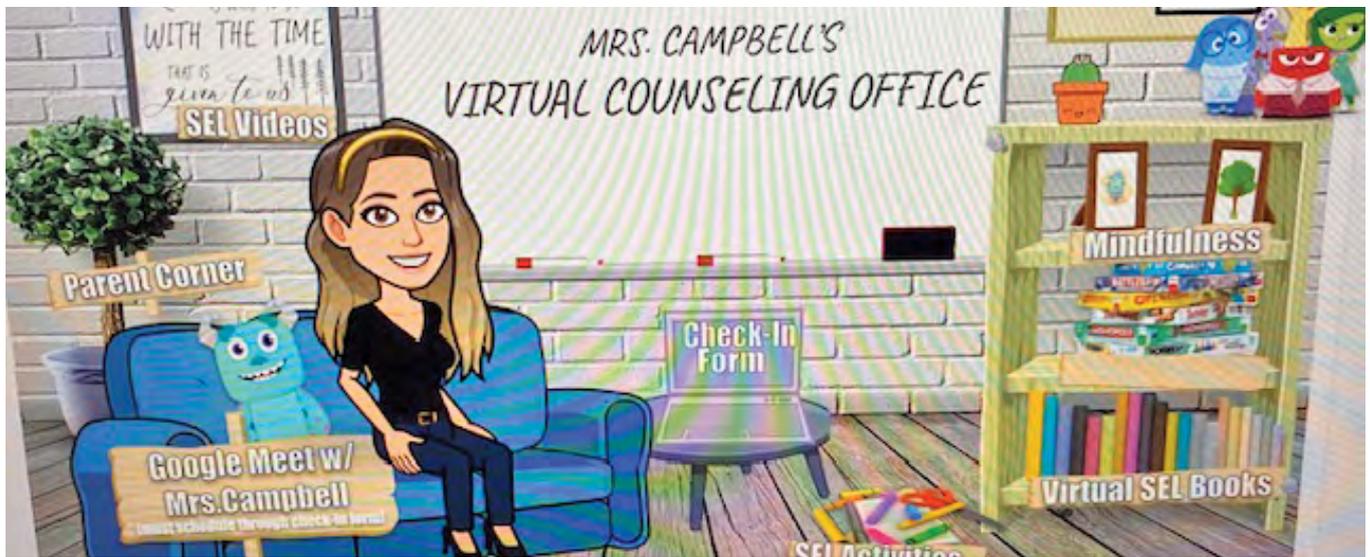
### The Social-Emotional Connection

In this time of distance learning, Old Orchard has emphasized an importance on social-emotional learning (SEL). Old Orchard's assistant principal Diane Diamond and school counselor Kristal Campbell have been at the forefront of SEL. In August, the duo held a parent-education night via Zoom to shared resources for students and families.

In Mrs. Campbell's virtual counseling office, you will find links to SEL activities,

videos, a parent corner, mindfulness and virtual meets links. In addition, she has set up a virtual Kindness and Empathy Library with e-books for our children. Mrs. Campbell continues to provide group and individual counseling via virtual meets. She is also keeping children connected socially through virtual Lunch Bunch meetings so they can connect and build friendships.

All of these efforts are important for our children's socioemotional well-being. We must be the link to building friendships and connecting our children during this time of distance learning.



## Peachland *Elementary*

24800 Peachland Ave., Newhall, CA 91321 • 661/291-4020 • www.peachlandelementary.net



**Diana Stenroos**  
Principal

### Surviving Distance Learning

With the unfortunate circumstances that COVID-19 has brought to our children, the Peachland staff is ready to partner with parents to make this the best it can be. We are lucky to have Kyle Schlehner, who serves as a behavior-support specialist. Together with teachers, he has come up with five easy steps to help your children become successful in a digital world.

The first is to have clear expectations for your children while learning at home. Spend time sharing with them even though they are home—this is also their new classroom, and learning expectations are there. Some examples are to find a place where distractions will be minimal, to have their supplies ready to go, to ensure that their computers are charged and working, and to keep their cameras on and ready to participate.

The second step is to ensure that your children have a consistent schedule to follow. Help ensure that they know when they are expected to attend live meets, when they have breaks, and when their individual work time will be. Keeping a schedule helps children succeed.

Third is to help your children have a relaxed learning space. This means that they have a dedicated space that includes a table or a desk, that it's quiet enough to focus, and that they have a chair that will help them sit for an extended period.

Fourth, some students also need a reward system to encourage them. Like adults, we all do well when we know we get something for that hard work! As adults, when we work, we get a paycheck. Children are not different. Offering appropriate rewards such as a break time to do a preferred activity is helpful.

Last, and probably most important, remember that your children's success is because of our team—students + parents + teachers = success. Join us on Sept. 23 for a more detailed presentation through Zoom.

## Pico Canyon *Elementary*

25255 Pico Canyon Rd., Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381 • 661/291-4070 • www.picoelementary.com



**Tammi Rainville**  
*Principal*

### Blue Ribbon Team

Just about one year ago, Pico Canyon School celebrated the fact that we were one of three elementary schools in the Newhall School District to be named a National Blue Ribbon School! We knew without a doubt that our shared work and resulting student successes would not have taken place if we did not emphasize building meaningful relationships with students.

Flash forward to the opening of the 2020–21 school year. We are back! And we are digital! This is the messaging that went out to all of our students and families as we opened up our year in distance learning. We understand the importance of the connections our students form with their teachers, and we are working on forging these same connections via technology to start. This is why we took

those crucial first weeks of school to set up structures and to spend time on nurturing our relationships with students and with their families, too.

Students will be getting feedback through daily morning meets, with live instruction in whole-group and small-group settings, and via one-on-one meetings during teacher office hours weekly. We will be giving our students encouragement, and we will be letting them know where they are at along the road to meeting grade-level expectations. Feedback is just one of the many ways we can connect with our students via the technology tools that are our “new normal.”

We began our year reminding ourselves and our families that Pico is a place where students and all staff learn together, collaborate, and take risks! We are a team—this is what is at the heart of a Blue Ribbon School, even in the context of a new distance-learning model for all!

## Stevenson Ranch *Elementary*

25820 N Carroll Ln., Stevenson Ranch, CA 91381 • 661/291-4070 • www.stevensonranchschool.com



**Chad Rose**  
*title*

### Nontraditionally Traditional!

The 2020–21 academic year is off to a start! At Stevenson Ranch School, there are many traditional routines taking place in nontraditional ways.

Teachers prepare standards based lessons and work with students in large and small groups discussing content, practicing skills, assessing knowledge, and moving learning forward. Students are working remotely and interacting with their teachers online.

We continue to promote school spirit by having a school-spirit-wear day, sharing photographs of our spirit online. Students run for student council by posting video campaign speeches and digital posters. After elections, our student officers will help support our school with digital theme days and look at incentives to support our Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports expectations, which also continue in our digital format.

Our school's Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) continues to hold its meetings monthly. A drive-through

school picture day will allow students to take that important fall picture and will enable our PTO to publish their annual yearbook.

Innovations is our schoolwide enrichment program and is provided to all students courtesy of our PTO. This year, our program will extend students' skills as they design neighborhoods, create time capsules, create a Santa Clarita fort, produce a stop-motion animation to solve a community problem, try out being political analysts, experience the stock market, and publish public-service announcements. Our innovations teachers are hosting students in the Innovations Digital Classroom.

In the near future, we hope to be able to offer virtual recesses for children, where they can visit with friends, share about a preselected topic and more.

We look forward to the day we can open the valet lane, turn the bells back on, and have our students in our classrooms and on the playground. Until then, we will continue to move forward, holding our traditional activities in nontraditional ways as much as possible.



## Valencia Valley *Elementary*

23601 Carrizo Dr., Valencia, CA 91355 • 661/291-4060 • www.valenciavalleyelementary.com



**Amy Gaudette**  
*Principal*

### **PBIS During Distance Learning**

Valencia Valley Staff and students have spent the last two school years on a quest to be “respectful, responsible and safe.” Our Valencia Valley Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) Team has worked to establish norms and expectations in each area of the school, including the classrooms, restrooms, cafeteria,

hallways and the yard. Now that we are learning virtually, we are learning what that quest looks like in the virtual classroom!

Teachers have spent the first 21 days of school establishing the norms, routines and procedures in their virtual classrooms. Our “quest” to be respectful, responsible and safe will be evident in those structures teachers have put in place and practiced with students. For example, students have learned to be respectful in their use of the

chat box during a meet in upper grades. Primary students have learned that in order to be safe in the digital-learning environment, they will always have a grown-up present and only go to school websites.

While the format of instruction has changed, our values around behavior support have not. Look for more information from our PBIS Team in the coming weeks. Vikings are proud to be respectful, responsible and safe!

## **GOOGLE MEET NORMS**

### • **BE RESPECTFUL**

- Stay on mute until it is your turn to speak
- Use the chat box appropriately (no side conversations)
- Be an active listener and participate

### • **BE RESPONSIBLE**

- Have a positive attitude
- Be on time
- Use school appropriate language

### • **BE SAFE**

- Be aware of your surroundings on camera
- Information shared should be school related and on topic



## Wiley Canyon *Elementary*

24240 W La Gloria Circle, Newhall, CA 91321 • 661/291-4030 • www.wileycanyonelementary.com



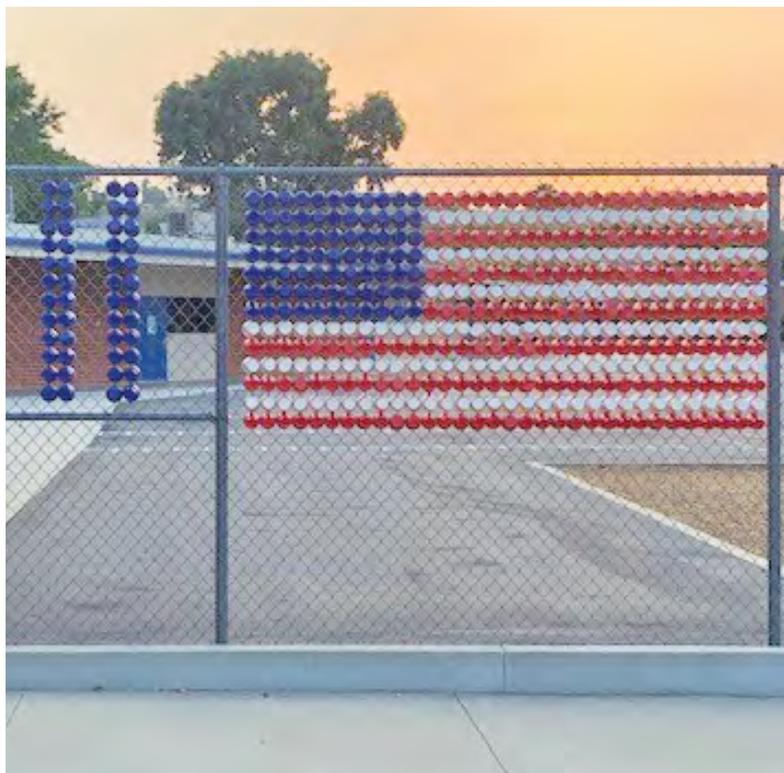
**Tim Lankford**  
*Principal*

### **9/11**

On Friday, Sept. 11, the Wiley Canyon School Community honored the men, women and children who lost their lives in the tragedy that took place on this date 19 years ago. Each year as a school community, we pay tribute to those families with a moment of silence and invite first responders to campus to thank them for service to our community and throughout the country.

This year, they honored the families virtually. A sign made out of cups designed by our PTA was hung on display on the front gate of our school as a tribute. Students wrote letters or sent an email through our office to first responders and men and women in our military. Students took and shared pictures of someone who is a hero in their life. All letters and pictures were taken to the local organization, Operation Gratitude.

The Wiley Canyon School Community remembers and will never forget.



# NSD Digital Learning Academies

<https://www.newhallschooldistrict.com>

## New Digital Academies!

By Daria Ramirez, Janette Van Gelderen, and Melissa Wilson, lead Administrators

We are "Trail Blazing"! "Soaring" to new heights and "Exploring" here in the Newhall School District! In order to best serve families that opted to participate in digital learning for the entirety of the school year, we have established three digital-learning academies. Our academies serve students from all 10 NSD schools and host teachers from all sites as well. Each academy is working to establish its own culture while still keeping families connected to their home schools. Academy teachers and students have had the opportunity to participate in selecting the academy names and mascots. Please allow us to introduce the Trail Blaze Academy, hosted by Pico Canyon; Soar Academy, hosted by McGrath; and the Explore Academy, hosted by Newhall Elementary.



Regardless of where school is happening for you, one thing remains constant: our teachers are trailblazing new paths, exploring digital tools to help our students soar to greater heights in their learning!



## Halloween 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 Newhall in the subject line)

Entries must be received by **November 30, 2020**  
From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes & Noble.

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| BLACK CAT     | HALLOWEEN      |
| CANDY         | JACK O LANTERN |
| CARVE         | MUMMY          |
| CEMETERY      | SKELETON       |
| COSTUME       | SPIDER         |
| DECORATIONS   | SWAMP CREATURE |
| FRANKENSTEIN  | TRICK OR TREAT |
| FRIGHTFUL     | VAMPIRE        |
| GHOST         | WEB            |
| GHOUL         | WEREWOLF       |
| GRAVE         | WITCH          |
| HAUNTED HOUSE | ZOMBIE         |





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