

FREE

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Tehachapi Unified School District



Volume 2, Issue 4

January–March 2021



Meeting the Challenge



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Thank You Team TUSD

for all your efforts during these unprecedented times!



SUPERINTENDENT

We are Listening



**Stacey
Larson-Everson**

During these unprecedented times many of our TUSD norms and traditions have been challenged. Aspects of our daily lives, including schooling, have been impacted, creating numerous changes for students, parents, and staff. I have been inspired but not surprised at how thoroughly our collective team has come together on behalf of students. Although the changes have been profound, the responses from teachers, staff, families and students have been

equally profound as time, skill, effort, creativity, grit, and innovation have been poured into students' educational experiences. Although our students' learning has been primarily virtual this year, teachers and staff have worked hard to foster a strong foundation of respect, community and caring within their virtual classrooms.

We thank TUSD parents and families for their partnership with the District and their child's school. We truly value the hard work that you have invested in supporting your students' virtual learning and connectedness to their school, teachers, and classmates. Thank you for visiting our campuses and District Office to pick up student Chromebooks, learning materials and

supplies, assignments, art projects and other educational items. We understand how busy families are balancing their responsibilities and obligations.

The American Psychological Association defines school connectedness as "the belief held by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals." TUSD is grateful for your continued support with helping our students stay connected to school. We truly could not do it without you!

Please know that although physically our classroom doors are closed, in action, our doors are always open. We are here to provide for our students to the best of our ability. If you or your child need support, please reach out to your school or the District. We will do our best to provide you with the information or items needed. We are committed to open, on-going communication. We believe that two-way communication is essential to building relationships and a strong partnership. So...call us, email us, complete surveys, attend virtual meetings and I invite you to also join in monthly Superintendent Chats. These virtual conversations are held monthly online and are an opportunity for all parents and guardians to be part of the dialogue. Your voice and input matters. We are listening!

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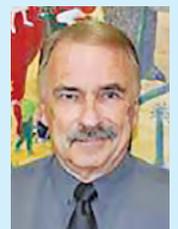
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Netragrednik

Happy New Year!

By now the year is well-underway. If you saw the movie Ground Hog Day, you may feel like you are living the movie. Each day seems the same. As you read the articles in this issue you will read ways the teachers are using fun and engaging ways to meet the challenge of staying connected virtually.

Superintendent Stacey Larson-Everson's message on page 3 is refreshing. Listening is important. How many times have you been talking to someone and you know

they are not listening? Often as you are speaking the other person is already thinking of what they want to say and not really listening to what you are saying. Hearing and listening are two different things...you can hear someone and not be listening to what you are hearing. It is refreshing to know someone is actually listening.

Thank you for you nice comments when you email your answers to our contests. Be sure to enter on pages 11 & 12 and remember all ages may enter. Have fun!

Our next issue is April 21, 2021.

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www.schoolnewsrollcall.com

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Hojat Entezari
Chief Administrator

Our Economic Future

In December, the president signed into law a COVID-19 relief-aid package to provide economic support for various federal initiatives. The controversial \$900 billion dollar relief package that included the \$600 stimulus checks we're all familiar with also included \$54 billion dollars to support K-12 schools. To put this amount into perspective, the federal government originally passed a

\$13.23 billion relief package in March 2020 that allowed the district to purchase Chromebooks for every student and provide sufficient personal-protective equipment (PPE) to mitigate the risks of COVID-19. On the surface, this is good news, but stimulus funding requiring billions of dollars circulated and spent on education at the same time comes with significant challenges. There is no timeline on the exact amount or date when the funds will become available.

The district is not simply relying on federal stimulus to address the needs of students. The district has been proactively looking to save funds without impacting the classroom. At the regular board meeting in December 2020, the board approved an agreement with a renewable-energy company, a partnership that will move the district toward powering all of our school sites with solar energy. This exciting project offers benefits for the environment as well as our bottom line. In June 2020, utility rates were projected to increase 11.7% for this year, which would cost \$100,000 dollars more each year. The solar-energy project will stabilize costs and save the district over \$5 million dollars over the 25 year agreement. Additionally, the solar project gets us closer to increasing resiliency to Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS). The solar project comes at no up-front cost to the district, is anticipated to commence this summer, and is projected to take eight weeks to complete.

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Student Services

300 South Robinson St., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2100



Dennis Ferrell
Director

Getting Started

Tehachapi Unified has recently redesigned its referral process for students being considered for Special Education assessment for the first time. This process is typically intended for students who are ages three or four, and who may have exhibited developmental delays that parents and guardians are concerned about. Classic areas of concern include communication skills,

gross motor skills, fine motor skills, problem-solving skills, and personal-social development.

Restyled by members of the TUSD Special Education Department, the referral process includes a referral packet that is designed to allow parents and guardians to document their concerns in the areas of development that they may be uneasy about. They can then provide the district with written feedback about these areas.

Referral packets include a demographics page, supplemental questions for psycho-ed, a speech/language checklist, health history and development, and age-appropriate “Ages & Stages Questionnaires” (ASQ-3).

Once the district receives the completed referral packet, the referral team meets to score and review the paperwork and discuss the next steps. Next steps may include gathering additional information, providing suggestions or interventions for parents and guardians to implement with their child, or a recommendation for formal testing.

The referral team is made up of an administrator, program specialist, classroom teacher, school nurse, school psychologist, and a speech language pathologist or specialist. The team meets twice a month to review the referrals that are returned by the parents or guardians.

Parents or guardians of children ages three or four who are concerned about the development of their children may contact the Student Services Department, located at the district office, to schedule a time to pick up a referral packet. Student Services can be reached at 661-822-2103.

District Nurse

300 South Robinson St., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2100



Jenna Burgess
District Nurse

Priority on Student Health

There are many people involved in keeping our students and staff safe and healthy at school. The health staff here at Tehachapi Unified School District is an essential part of district’s team. They are working together with the district office, maintenance, transportation, administration, and school site staff to ensure protocols and safety measures are accurate, consistent, and clear throughout the district.

The health staff includes two credentialed school nurses, three Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVNs), and one health clerk. The school nurses include Dusty Stripe, RN, and Jenna Burgess, RN. They are most often found participating in meetings, trainings and student health care at Tehachapi High School and Jacobsen Middle School. Our LVNs include Steffanie McCormick at Cummings Valley Elementary School, Gail Purdy at Golden Hills Elementary School, and Elizabeth Sheley at Tompkins Elementary School. Our health clerk, Ofelia Escoto, works at Jacobsen Middle School and helps with mandated screenings and immunizations throughout the district.

This has been a very busy school year for the health staff as they’ve been learning new protocols and safety information while still striving to serve our students and families with health care needs. The coronavirus pandemic has taught us the importance of clear communication and working as a team. To better inform the district’s site personnel, district nurses developed virtual trainings with short, in-person participation periods to help staff practice personal protective equipment use, medication administration, and healthcare procedure skills.

New information and guidelines on the coronavirus are presented to us nearly every day. It has been our challenge and our duty to work closely with the superintendent and our supervisors to put in place best practices to keep staff and students’ health and safety the priority.



Food Services

300 South Robinson St., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2100



Hortencia Tapia
Supervisor

Weekly Nutritional Analysis

The District's Food Service staff is striving to ensure that the meals we provide to our students are nutritionally

balanced. We are using a computerized menu planning program, which provides a weekly nutritional analysis.

Unfortunately, most children do not eat healthy and are not physically active according to the Dietary Guidelines listed below. Less than one in five children eats the recommended servings of fruit and vegetables daily.



- Aim for Fitness...
- Aim for healthy weight.
- Be physically active each day.
- Build a Healthy Base...
- Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.
- Choose a variety of whole grains daily.
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Keep food safe.
- Choose Sensibly...
- Choose a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.
- Choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars.
- Choose foods with less salt.

Transportation

401 East H. St., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2115



Robbi Miller
Supervisor

We Miss Our Kids

During these challenging COVID 19 times, transportation continues to provide students with Grab-N-Go meals. As we eagerly await the return of our students, we spend our afternoons helping at school sites, in classrooms and at the District Office sanitizing all high-touch areas and surfaces. We

have continued bus safety inspections required by law which includes the maintenance and repairs on all vehicles.

We truly miss transporting students! We also miss our daily routines, peaceful early morning pre-trip inspections, beautiful sunrises, and wandering wild life. We miss the laughter and smiles on those faces as we approached each bus stop, students anxiously waiting for that yellow school bus to STOP! We loved greeting each student as they scurried to find a seat; a bus rumbling full of noises, giggles and whispers, not to mention all the stories and tales. Our students are our world; we surely miss our kids.



Instructional Services

300 South Robinson St., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2100



Scott Heitman
Chief Administrator

Student Winter Bags

Braving the chill of winter, Tehachapi Unified staff passed out winter bags to TUSD students prior to the winter break. These winter bags, aimed at providing social emotional engagement, contained various items including jump ropes, stress balls, hacky sacks, face masks and fabric markers. A steady stream of cars lined the street as parents were treated to a curbside

pick-up. TUSD parents and students were appreciative and thankful for the early holiday cheer. TUSD was eager to afford students an active outlet given the current COVID-19 school closures. TUSD will continue seeking new and innovative ways in which to provide social emotional support for students and families. Social/Emotional and Mental Health resources can be found on the TUSD web site www.tehachapiusd.com in the Social/Emotional Mental Health Resources folder.



Jennifer Butler
Elementary
Academic Coach

Learning and Growth Opportunities

As 2020 has come to an end, we can reflect on the many opportunities provided to Tehachapi Unified School District educators to learn and grow. In August, our teachers new to the district were provided with training on our purchased learning-management system. The TUSD teachers are continually participating in district training and collaborating with one another to share ideas to provide the very best education.

Our amazing district was able to use COVID-19 pandemic-learning loss-mitigation funds to purchase online intervention programs to further support our students with virtual learning. Three math programs were purchased to support our students in developing their number sense and number fluency. Additionally, a science-and-math program was purchased to support our secondary students with their educational needs and enhance their learning as well.

Programs were also purchased to support reading fluency, comprehension and writing. Books at various reading levels are provided online to students so they can successfully read and comprehend the material.

Technology

300 South Robinson St., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2100



Ryan McKay
Director

Completing Postponed Projects

As 2021 has started, Technology Department's commitment to student learning continues to steer our actions. Since the last article, our Chromebooks have arrived and have been distributed to any student who was in need. The Technology Department has been completing projects that had to be postponed



due to the pandemic. Most recently the backbone of our internet was upgraded to a 5GB connection and a new firewall was installed to support that speed. This gives teachers more bandwidth for virtual teaching sessions and will also benefit students upon return to campus. As the school year moves forward, the TUSD Technology Team will continue to support the needs of teachers, students, and families in the midst of the pandemic.

Cummings Valley *Elementary*

24220 Bear Valley Rd., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2190 • www.teh.k12.ca.us/Domain/11



Traci Minjares
Principal

Fun and Engaging Virtually

As we continue with virtual learning, we have challenged ourselves to help our students feel connected to the Cummings Valley community. In November we held a Canned Food Drive in competition with other schools, to provide support for our Tehachapi families. In December we held a school-wide Holiday Drive-By, where students received a fun holiday slime kit from Student Council, gifts from their teachers and aides, and TUSD care bags with fun activities and games for them to do with their families. Since the fall, we have been holding a Principal's Reading Challenge where students are vying for a chance to meet reading goals and ultimately soak their principal with water. So far we have several students that have completed the challenge! We celebrate weekly Spirit Days, so kids can dress up in silly themes to encourage a fun learning atmosphere. School can still be fun and engaging, even virtually!



Golden Hills *Elementary*

20215 Park Rd., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2180 • www.teh.k12.ca.us/Domain/12



Kendra Bailey
Principal

Staying Connected

While a strong virtual learning program has created opportunities for students to stay connected to teachers, staying connected to school has been a challenge. Our PBIS program is key to school connectedness. PBIS involves acknowledging students for meeting established school wide expectations and fostering a safe and positive school community. This year Learning administration and staff have worked diligently to transform PBIS into a virtual setting. Teachers select students each week to be acknowledged for effort, improvement, or attendance and they earn the opportunity to be selected as Student of the Week. These students visit the front office to retrieve their certificate and prize bag. A student from each class is also selected monthly for Lunch with the Principal in which they spend an hour on zoom eating and talking with Mrs. Bailey. We feel that it is critical to stay connected during this time!



Jacobsen Middle School

711 Anita Dr., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2150 • www.teh.k12.ca.us/Domain/10



Sharon Heitman
Principal

Cocoa from Caring Parents

Three years ago, caring parents discussed ways to increase connections between our adult community and our students. They realized that having positive adult involvement with our students could provide support to their overall well-being. Parent volunteers teamed up to determine opportunities to create that encouraging presence.

Providing a cup of hot cocoa to every student before winter break was decided on. Parent volunteers came to our school to warm our students with a sweet treat and cheer. As holiday tunes filled the air, students lined up to receive their free cocoa, and a new tradition of “Cocoa from Caring Parents” began.

This year, our Parent Teacher Organization came together to keep the tradition going while our students were home. They mailed cocoa packets and winter wishes to every JMS student. We hope they enjoyed the greeting and know they are cared about. Small acts can make big differences. Thanks PTO!



Tehachapi Independent Learning Academy

400 S. Snyder Ave., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2124 • www.teh.k12.ca.us/Domain/9



TILA Update January 2021

*By Scott Heitman,
Chief Administrator
of Instructional Services*

The Tehachapi Independent Learning Academy Program has 624 current students enrolled in TK-12th grade. There is a lot of positive energy radiating from that one small space! Last week, the staff

successfully housed a drive-through for parents to pick up needed supplies to start Semester 2 off with a bang!

The Elementary program boasts a paper-pencil approach to home school, in which teachers organize materials and create lesson plans so that the parent or guardian can effectively teach their children at home. The teachers are available by Zoom, phone, and email to respond to parents' needs and requests throughout the week.

The Secondary program utilizes Edmentum, an online learning platform. TILA secondary teachers assist students via Zoom, messaging, email, and phone. Students have weekly lessons to complete with flexibility within the week, allowing students to work into the evenings and weekends to complete their assignments.



Tehachapi High School

801 S. Dennison Rd, Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2130 • www.teh.k12.ca.us/Domain/8



Cristina Libatique
Principal

Remind Account

Distance learning can be challenging. Mrs. Dees' Psychology students have been looking for ways to bring hope and positivity to better support students who are struggling. The class has started

a Remind account that sends out daily positive messages. Students can sign up for Remind by texting @findj0y to #81010. ASB has also been working hard to keep the positive energy for THS. ASB created a motivational video for students and posted on their Instagram @tehachapihighsb and the student news tiles. ASB is providing contests, games, information, and fun for students even from a distance. Another great resource for students is their counseling and careers tile in Canvas. There are mental health resources as well as information on college and careers. The tile contains a link to the Counselor connection where students can interact virtually with counselors Tuesdays--Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.



Tehachapi Adult School

400 S. Snyder Ave., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2112 • www.teh.k12.ca.us/Domain/567



Natalia Moessner
Adult Education
Coordinator

Job-Hunting Help

If something has been brought to light during the pandemic, it's the need for work training and the availability of jobs. One of our programs that is offered through Tehachapi Adult School is the Work Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA I) Program. Within this program, we help out-of-school young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 to obtain jobs as well as offer them other services.

We are also working with the Monroe Continuation High School administrators to help the Monroe students between the ages of 16 and 18 to enroll them in our In-School Program. Some of the benefits of the program are

job placement, resume and interview trainings, educational planning and financial literacy classes.

Our technicians work very hard to create partnerships with the business of our community as well as community services for our surrounding areas to offer our participants a variety of job opportunities and exposure. We are in constant communication with them, and we encourage them every step of the way to succeed in whatever they are trying to accomplish.

Offering this type of assistance to some of our younger members of our community helps them gain the confidence or the assistance they might need to move forward on their own. We are proud to continue this program after so many years of success stories.

Tompkins *Elementary*

1120 S. Curry St., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2170 • www.teh.k12.ca.us/Domain/13



Rebecca Castellanos
Principal

Acts of Kindness

This past year has undeniably been a trying one for all of us. However, it is amidst the backdrop of such hard times that acts of kindness and charity ring loudest, and we at Tompkins Elementary School have recently had the privilege of experiencing this first-hand thanks to the generosity of our community partners at Edwards Air Force Base, who donated an entire car full of presents to our students. At Tompkins, we offer our sincerest thanks to Edwards' staff member and all those who coordinated this donation. With many of us unable to celebrate alongside each other and some families battling economic difficulties in the face of this pandemic, the holidays have been more difficult than normal. The bigheartedness of those behind this donation has served as a welcome reminder to us all that, through altruism and togetherness, we may overcome.



Things in the Sky—Word Search Contest

Rules! One word in the list is NOT in the word search.

When you have completed the word search, one word will be left and that word you email to: Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com Please put Tehachapi in the subject line.

Entries must be received by **March 1, 2021**

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

- | | |
|----------|---------|
| STARS | RAIN |
| SUN | SNOW |
| MOON | SLEET |
| AIRPLANE | WIND |
| KITE | CLOUDS |
| BALLOON | SMOG |
| JUPITER | FOG |
| MARS | PLUTO |
| MERCURY | RAINBOW |
| SATURN | ROCKET |
| URANUS | |



Congratulations to Viviana Greenwood —Winner of our October Word Search Contest!

Seek 'N Find

Here's a fun game for all ages.

- 1) Find each picture below in this issue and fill in the blank with the page number.
- 2) When you have found all three pictures, add the three pages to get the total.
- 3) Then subtract the page number of this page. That is the answer!
- 4) Now email me the answer to be entered in the drawing for a chance to win a \$20 gift card to Barnes & Noble. One entry will be drawn on March 1, 2021.

kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com



Page _____



Page _____



Page _____

Add the three pages to get the total = _____

Now subtract the number of this page - _____

Great! This is the answer! _____