

**FREE**

# School News

*Education + Communication = A Better Nation*

**Covering the Newport-Mesa Unified School District**



Volume 17, Issue 93

June 2021



**Students return to full day, in-person instruction.**

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## SUPERINTENDENT



**Russell Lee-Sung**

### Looking Ahead to More Normalcy with Full Return to School in 2021-22

As we look ahead to the 2021-22 school year, we look back on the extraordinarily unique 2020-21 school year. We are grateful that we were able to return students to full day instruction, that our student athletes were able to compete, our performing arts students were able to perform, and that we remained committed to high quality instruction and the mental health supports, while maintaining a safe environment.

Looking ahead to the 2021-22 school year, we are pleased to announce our commitment to full day, in-person instruction for all students in the coming school year. We also will continue to provide our virtual school, Cloud Campus, for students who thrive in remote learning.

None of this is possible without the tremendous dedication and hard work of all of our employees. The work they collectively do behind the scenes to make in-person learning successful and safe is to be commended.

We also know that parents made efforts and sacrifices to ensure that their children continued learning and were supported throughout each transition, and appreciate their continued dedication and support moving into the new school year.

Have a great summer and we look forward to welcoming everyone back in 2021-22!

## Early Childhood Education

2985 Bear St., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-5000



**Michelle O'Neill**  
Coordinator

### Garden of Flowers and Drought Tolerant Plants

The students of Ms. Casey, Mrs. Cook and Ms. Vogler at Pomona Preschool are very proud to share their garden of flowers and drought tolerant plants. Each classroom has been studying the life cycle of plants and the Monarch Butterfly, which served as their inspiration to combine sensory activities with outdoor Science. The students visit and care for their garden each day, secretly hoping to see one of the butterflies that they released into the garden!



## Nutrition Services

2985 Bear St., Building B Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-5000 • <https://nmusd-ca.schoolloop.com/nutrition>



**Todd Hatfield**  
Interim Director

### Hot Lunch

*By Pam Williams, MPH, RD,  
Nutritionist*

Things always seem to change. Every spring brings new flowers, new leaves on trees, and sometimes a breath of fresh air. This time of year, we are finding relief from the pandemic. Schools are opening, students are in the classroom learning together, and the teachers are teaching.

Things are changing during mealtimes. Students are sitting at tables to eat lunch on our campuses. Even though it is at a distance, they get to chat with their friends at lunch. And now, we are firing up the ovens and stoves. Once again, we can provide hot lunches for our students. What was our first hot item in elementary school? Second-grader, Alize Salas from Killybrooke Elementary School, enjoys our first hot entree: Delicious hot burritos!

Our goal is to continue providing hot meals and delicious foods that give our students the nutrients they need to support learning. This is our goal!





**John Stephens**  
Mayor

**Resilient Students**

I'd like honor all of our students who faced adversity this year because they attended class online or through Zoom and missed out on sports, events, dances or other extracurricular activities.

These students sacrificed for the health and safety of the community, especially their grandparents and others who were more susceptible to the health risks of COVID-19.

They elevated public safety over their self-interests in a way not seen since World War II.

We should all thank and admire these kind and resilient students who undoubtedly saved lives through their collective unselfishness. They will be able to draw upon their experience to gain strength in years to come, knowing their capacity to overcome great obstacles.

This year is especially monumental for those seniors who finished their high school careers under unusual circumstances.

As the father of four, I know graduation from high school is an exciting time for the graduates and their families. On behalf of the City of Costa Mesa, I wish all graduates the best of luck in their future endeavors, and I know they have a bright future ahead.

77 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/754-5107  
[www.costamesaca.gov](http://www.costamesaca.gov)



**Dan Stefano**  
Fire Chief

**Helmet Safety**

Summer is almost here, and as we gear up for more outdoors and sports, please keep helmet safety a top priority for our students and families:

- Helmets are a proven protection line between extreme injury and safety for our children!
  - Proper fit – Have your child try on and test for the best fit.
  - Replace 5-10 years – Replacement should be based on helmet usage, wear and tear.
  - Safety over Style – Avoid nonessential designs that protrude from helmet. They look cool, but can prevent the helmet from functioning properly.
  - Different helmets, different activities – Different helmets protect from certain impacts associated with a particular activity.
  - Activities involving wheels require a helmet – Biking, skating or riding; wear your helmet!
- Have fun and be safe!

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**Kay Coop**  
Founder/Publisher



This school year is coming to a close and we are all looking forward to a healthy summer and “normal” school year in the Fall. I think the word normal may take on a whole new meaning, but I’m being optimistic that children will be able to share their happy smiles without a mask.

Thank you for continuing to include *School News* among your reading choices. We will continue with digital issues permanently as the response has been excellent.

Be sure to enter our word search contest on page 11 (all ages may enter).

Our next issue is October 13. Have a wonderful summer!



**Congratulations  
Class of 2021!**

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## Costa Mesa Public Libraries



### We look forward to serving you!

Services are constantly updating, be sure to contact our libraries for the latest news.



**Kristina Jones**  
Branch Manager,  
Costa Mesa  
Donald Dugan  
Library



**Vivian Strabala**  
Branch Manager,  
Mesa Verde  
Library

- Our stacks are open for browsing! Come find a new author, a favorite book or movie, or material you need for your research.

- Grab and Go Service:

- Designated self-service checkout of holds and materials
- Physically distanced single-user computers by reservation
- Curbside Pick-Up

- Get a Library Card! Cards are always free.

Find details at [ocpl.org/cards](http://ocpl.org/cards)

- Summer Reading Programs begin on June 12! This year's program is virtual and you can join at [ocpl.beanstack.org](http://ocpl.beanstack.org). Log your time reading and enter our opportunity drawings!
- Programming is currently virtual, but please check with our branches for the latest updates.

### OC Public Libraries

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

#### Costa Mesa Donald Dugan Library

1855 Park Avenue, Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/646-8845

#### Mesa Verde Library

2969 Mesa Verde Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/546-5274

Hours: Tues – Thurs 11am – 7pm

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# Newport Beach Public Libraries



## Reading Colors Your World!

This summer, let reading color your world by participating in the Newport Beach Public Library's Annual Summer Reading Program. Children going into sixth grade or younger can join the children's program. Enjoy a variety of free virtual shows and grab and go craft kits, and earn prizes while you have fun reading! The library has a rainbow of great activities to bring some color to your summer vacation.

**Christine Chapel**  
*Children's Librarian,  
Newport Beach  
Public Library*

Summer Reading Program: June 12-July 31

June 12-30 Sign-up, pick up welcome bag, receive free book

June 21-27 "Over the Rainbow" Grab & Go Craft Kit

June 28-July 4 Wild Wonders Virtual Animal Show

July 5-11 "Colorful Book Art" Grab & Go Craft Kit

July 12-18 Kids Imagine Nation Virtual Musical Show

July 19-25 "Steam into Color" Grab & Go Craft Kit

July 26-31 Turn in everything, Grand Prize Drawing

New this year, registration will be through Beanstack.

Beanstack will help you keep track of your reading time or literacy activities and notify you about prizes.

Like last year, we will be giving out welcome bags, and a free book for participating. You can pick up the book any time during the program while supplies last. In addition to keeping track of your reading, you can write or draw book reviews for a chance at winning a prize. For those who finish reading 10 hours or complete the Read-to-Me activities, there will be a grand prize drawing.

Participating in a summer reading program reduces learning loss while out of school and helps students perform better when they return in the fall. This summer, allow your children to choose books based on their own interests and have fun reading!

Learn more on our webpage [www.newportbeachlibrary.org](http://www.newportbeachlibrary.org) and at your favorite Newport Beach Public Library location!

Central Library 1000 Avocado Ave., Newport Beach, CA 92660  
949/717-3800 • [www.newportbeachlibrary.org/kids](http://www.newportbeachlibrary.org/kids)  
Mariners Branch 1300 Irvine Ave., Newport Beach, CA 92660  
949/717-3838  
Balboa Branch 100 East Balboa Blvd., Balboa, CA 92661  
949/644-3076  
Corona Del Mar Branch 410 Marigold Ave., Corona Del Mar, CA 92625  
949/644-3075



## The Art Below Your Feet

*By D.H. Coop*

During the 1950s and 1960s, "stop and smell the roses" was a popular saying, which had more meaning than just taking the time to smell a rose. It meant that life is full of wonderful little things that should be enjoyed.



One of those things is right below your feet, if you take the time to look down. It is the manhole covers you see in sidewalks and streets. Their circular shape is

perfect for the simple reason that it is the only geometric shape that will not fall into itself.



Some manhole covers are imprinted with a word to identify the type of manhole that is hidden beneath. Others have designs that share a location, while still others are used to display art. So, next time you are walking, take the time to stop and look down. You may see more than just a circular metal plate covering a hole. It may open your eyes to a whole world of possibilities!

D.H.Coop is a retired fire/paramedic and retired teacher having taught IB and AP World History 30 years. He continues to substitute, tutor and consult. [www.HistoryDepot.com](http://www.HistoryDepot.com)

Have a fun summer and remember to include the library among your activity choices.

## Adams *Elementary (K-6)*

2850 Club House Rd., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7935 • adams.nmusd.us



**Stacy  
deBoom-Howard**  
*Principal*

### Great Ending to the Year!!

What a great way to end the year back in school full day!! As we all know this past year has brought many challenges, changes and so many successes to our All-Star Community. It would not have been possible with our amazing All-Star Staff who on a daily basis came to work either from home or at school with a smile on their face, a what can I do to help philosophy and always having the

students best interest in their heart. Thank you to each of you!!

Thank you to our students who make each day extra special. You have done a great job this year with various schedules, new procedures and shifts in learning. We are so proud of you and look forward to seeing you on August 23rd!! We hope you have a safe and relaxing summer! Remember to READ, practice your Math Facts, rest and smile!

## Roy O. Andersen *Elementary (K-6)*

1900 Port Seabourne Way, Newport Beach, CA 92660 • 949/515-6935 • andersen.nmusd.us



**Tiffany Lewis**  
*Principal*

### There is a Lot to Celebrate!

There have been a lot of words used to describe this school year with a lot of focus on what didn't happen. At Andersen, we are choosing instead to focus on the positive, and celebrate all of the wonderful people, events, and strength that we as a community have found this year.

Our amazing PTA does an exceptional job of making sure that our staff members and teachers feel appreciated, and this year they added an additional week to appreciate our students. The students were treated to fun theme days and homework passes, and they were also able to design and create their own tie-dye shirts. We had a field day doing this, and ended the week with a sweet treat!

Our staff and students certainly appreciate all that our parents do for us, and we want our parents and community to know how much we appreciate them! Never has "It takes a village" meant more. While we are busy planning for next year, and excitedly making plans to help make it amazing, it is important to stop and recognize all that we have accomplished and celebrated together. Have a restful summer, and see you in August!



# Back Bay/Monte Vista *High School*

390 Monte Vista Dr., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6900 • backbay.nmusd.us



**Mike Wagner**  
*Principal*

## Great Character

As we move into the final weeks of the 2020–21 school year, preparation and anticipation grow for our upcoming graduates. Needless to say, it has been a difficult year for all schools, but for our students, this pandemic has presented a unique challenge.

Back Bay High School will be holding its graduation at a local hotel in a beautiful open-air venue. Even with audience restrictions, this will prove to be a great year for all that make it to the finish line. Hard work and dedication by the staff, students and teachers will make for a truly magical day. Back Bay students have worked especially hard this year academically to hit this final achievement, and we couldn't be more excited for them. It will be a day of celebration and gratitude.

In addition to graduation, we honor Maddie McNamer, Back Bay High School Student Character Award recipient. Maddie came to Back Bay during her junior year of high school, behind in credits. She has shown great tenacity, motivation, dedication and hard work to get her high school diploma. She is a shining star, for sure.

Character awards are given to those students who stand out in their school community, both in academics and helping fellow students. Maddie has never backed down from a challenge and has put in hours of extra work to get her diploma. She always lends a helping hand to students who need support and encouragement, which makes her a well-rounded student in all aspects.

As we move into the next chapter of this pandemic, we are all very hopeful that next year will bring us back to a school and a learning environment that we all love. Great things are around the corner, but for now, we take all the accomplishments that we can.

Congratulations to our graduates and their great futures ahead!

# California *Elementary (K-6)*

3232 California St., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7940 • california.nmusd.us



**Ryan Longacre**  
*Principal*

## Cougar Core Values

Each Wednesday, our team dedicates a portion of our Flag Deck celebration to acknowledge students for their respectful, responsible, and ready-to-learn behavior – our Cougar Core Values.

We recite our California Cougar Oath, and we always end with an enthusiastic “GO COUGARS.” As we close out this incredibly challenging year, it seems appropriate to express gratitude for one of the key factors that has given us strength and contributed to our success – school spirit. Our school spirit – a collective affinity and respect for our school community – has seen us through three major programming transitions. It has inspired our students, our parent community, and our staff to remain positive, to stay focused on our learning, and to be open to change. While some days have been more challenging than others, we are lucky to have spent our days together, as members of a supportive learning community bound together by our Cougar Core Values – Respectful, Responsible, and Ready to Learn.



**One of many expressions of school spirit posted around our campus by the amazing California PTA.**

## Cloud Campus (TK—12)

<http://www.nmusd.us/cloudcampus>



**Dr. Mike Sciacca**  
Principal

### Plethora of Events

Cloud Campus is excited about the plethora of events we have planned for our students to close out the 20/21 school year. Our kindergarten and 6th grade students have week full of promotion activities including movie night, picnic in the park and student awards. Our 8th grade students each received a Cloud Campus Promotion yard sign and will be honored in our virtual

promotion ceremony on June 9th. Our Cloud Campus graduating seniors are in for an amazing close to their high school career. We have a virtual graduation ceremony on June 9th, in which the students will be recognized for their accomplishments. Each senior hand a custom yard sign with their name on it delivered to their homes by Cloud Campus staff. Despite the “uniqueness” of this school year, every effort has been made to ensure this is a special end of school for all of our students.

## College Park Elementary (K-6)

2380 Notre Dame Rd., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7960 • [collegepark.nmusd.us](http://collegepark.nmusd.us)



**Jake Topete**  
Principal

### Great to be Back!

College Park is thrilled to have students back to a full time schedule. Once again our staff, students, and families have done an amazing job preparing and executing our return to our full time schedule. Our students are once again working in our

science lab, playing ukuleles in music, participating in PE, enjoying whole class discussions, and interacting with peers during recess. College Park’s continued resilience and positivity throughout the past year has been inspiring and energizing. It was a beautiful sight to see something that I had seen hundreds of times before in my career, a full campus for a full day! I am so proud of our entire College Park community! Go Cougars!



# Corona del Mar High School (7-12)

2101 Eastbluff Dr., Newport Beach, CA 92660 • 949/515-6000 • cdm.nmusd.us



**Dr. Rebecca Gogel**  
Principal  
7-8 Grade



**Josh Hill**  
Principal  
9-12 Grade

## CdM's Course Selection Process

*By Kaydence Osgood,  
Ninth-Grade Student*

With the 2020-2021 school year ending, preparations for the 2021-2022 school year are already taking place at Corona del Mar High School. Course selection is a big part of those preparations.

Although this year has been completely chaotic, and many things have not gone the way people hoped, course selections were one of the few things that went smoothly. Unlike the ever-changing schedules and uncertainty of each day, our CdMHS counselors had a firm hold on the selection process and completed it with ease.

The week before selection opened on Aeries, a counselor visited the English classes and went over all of the different options for the upcoming year's courses. They also reviewed graduation requirements, explained credits, and discussed various other aspects of the schedules. They

answered questions with much knowledge, and clarified things for students of all levels.

Along with explanations, the counselors also went through a step-by-step explanation of how to get to the course selection on Aeries, which was a bit complicated. Thankfully, their demonstration made it much easier to get there when needed.

Once the selection timeframe started, the students went onto Aeries and through the available courses to choose the ones they wanted. This process wasn't as easy, as Aeries had multiple glitches and not everyone's course selections were saved. Our counselors were able to remedy these problems and place the students where needed.

Following the Aeries' process, the students met with their counselor one-on-one to discuss the courses and make sure that their desires were considered, as well as the overall workload for the year. If there were any problems or any courses that weren't available for selection, the counselors helped the students consider alternative options. Our counselors' knowledge and expertise truly shined throughout the process. CdMHS is so lucky to have them!

## Road Trip-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 NMUSD in the subject line.

Word Search Contest Sponsored by  
**Barkate Orthodontics**  
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Entries must be received by July 15, 2021  
From the correct entries one name will be drawn to win  
a \$20 gift card to Barnes & Noble.

- |           |            |
|-----------|------------|
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| BLANKET   | WATER      |
| GPS       | SUNSCREEN  |
| PILLOW    | CLOTHING   |
| MOTEL     | CELL PHONE |
| HUMOR     | RADIO      |
| HOTEL     | MONEY      |
| CAMERA    | FLASHLIGHT |
| CAR GAMES | CREDIT CAR |
| BOOTS     | SPARE TIRE |
| SNACKS    |            |

**Congratulations to Jami Paley**  
Winner of our April Word Search Contest!



# Costa Mesa High School (7-12)

2650 Fairview Rd., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-8700 • cmhs.nmusd.us



**Dr. Eugene Kwong**  
Principal  
7-8 Grade



**Jake Haley**  
Principal  
9-12 Grade

## Return to In-person & End of the Year Celebrations

Beyond a return to the classroom, Costa Mesa Middle & High School students have been able to participate in athletic competitions, drama performances, concerts, and will conclude the school year with in-person promotion / graduation!



The ability to not only return to the classroom but also safely facilitate meaningful extracurricular activities & opportunities is a testimony to the hard work of our students, school community, and staff. This year has been loaded with challenges; through the adversity we have emerged stronger as a school community committed to the educational opportunities for all students. We are proud of all the hard work and dedication this school year.



## Davis Magnet (K-6)

1050 Arlington Dr., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7930 • davisagnet.nmusd.us



**Christy Flores**  
Principal

### Thank You Everyone!

Every year the Newport-Mesa Schools Foundation (N-MSF) provides grant opportunities for teachers within the NMUSD. Thanks to generous donors, our teachers are able to purchase books, manipulatives, materials, tools, and much more to support the learning of our students.

Although this year looked different, the grant opportunities were, fortunately, still available. This year N-MSF received 85 grant applications from teachers across the NMUSD. We were excited to learn that Davis Magnet School received the most grants of any school, with 12 lucky Davis Ducks' grant recipients.

The twelve recipients include ABA preschool teacher Ms. Adams; second-grade teacher Mrs. Almeida; ABA preschool teacher Mrs. Denisi; first-grade teacher Mrs. Dormitorio; fifth-grade teacher Mrs. Ivey; second-grade teacher Ms. Lopez; kindergarten teacher Mrs. Madero; speech and language pathologists Mrs. McIntosh and Ms. Robinson; third-grade teacher Mrs. Ross; second-grade teacher Mrs. Shepler; and fifth-grade teacher Mrs. Steiner.

The time and effort these teachers demonstrated to bring in additional resources for their students are appreciated, and they give us great #davisduckspride! Our entire team is grateful for the opportunity, our generous donors, and the ongoing support from the Newport-Mesa Schools Foundation.

## Early College High School (9-12)

2990 Mesa Verde Dr., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7990 • earlycollege.nmusd.us



**Dr. David Martinez**  
Principal

### In-Person Wrap-Up!

ECHS was able to welcome students back to four-days a week of in-person instruction (Level 1) on April 26! The week began with Let's Be Kind Day as students received their T-shirts the week before and wore them to school. The remainder of the week was

devoted to Class Spirit lunchtime events. Also later in the week, ECHS was notified as being named a 2021 California Distinguished School. This is the third time ECHS has received this award, with the other two years being 2009 and 2019.

Our Annual Awards Night was held virtually this year in May as more than 100 students earned awards or scholarships. College courses will end May 27, with high school final exams beginning May 28. Finally, May 29 is reserved for our seniors to hold a Senior Send-Off Night formal event for them that evening at a clubhouse in Costa Mesa.



ECHS concludes the 2020–21 school year on June 3, when the Class of 2021 graduation ceremony is being held at Jim Scott Stadium on the Estancia High School campus at 5:30 p.m.



# Eastbluff *Elementary* (K-6)

2627 Vista del Oro, Newport Beach, CA 92660 • 949/515-5920 • eastbluff.nmusd.us



**Cheryl Beck**  
*Principal*

## Celebrating Our Success!

This has been a unique year! Eastbluff Otters, you have worked so hard, first through distance learning, then the Hybrid AM/PM model, and finally, when we were able to all come back in April to level 1, a full day of learning for all students each and every day. Students were so excited to come back to level 1 to be with their teachers and peers all day, work together, and build those relationships as a classroom community.

Students were also thrilled to experience playing on the playground again! Our playground reopened with a lot of exciting new games in the grade-level zones. Students, classroom teachers, specialists, RTI teachers and support staff have persevered and pivoted well, transitioning through all these instructional changes. We are so proud of how hard you all have worked and shown grit and perseverance as you navigated through these uncharted waters. We have stayed the course, focusing on what is best for our students' learning and working together, as always, as a collaborative Eastbluff community. Thank you to our families for your phenomenal support!

Our theme again this year has been kindness. Eastbluff students and staff have focused on being kind through their words and actions. We have filled our own and others' buckets with intentional acts of kindness at school, at home and within our community. Otters, you have striven to achieve your goals through hard work, enthusiasm and empathy toward others. We continue to implement our positive schoolwide behavior system and create a positive learning experience for all our students. This was accomplished by utilizing our John Wooden Pyramid of Pride Education Program, which assists students in making wise choices. PRIDE: prepared, respectful, integrity, determined and excellence.

We again this year recognize the excellence of our Eastbluff School. In addition to being a California Gold Ribbon school and receiving the Platinum PBIS Implementation Award, we were also honored to receive the Honor Roll Award from the Educational Results Partnership for the great growth of our students' academic achievement.

We will treasure these accomplishments and memories. They will stay with us for a lifetime. We are so proud of you all!



## Horace Ensign *Intermediate (7-8)*

2000 Cliff Dr., Newport Beach, CA 92663 • 949/515-6910 • [ensign.nmusd.us](http://ensign.nmusd.us)



**Jennifer Fox**  
Principal

### **AVID EXEL Elective**

Ensign Intermediate is excited to announce that they will begin enrolling students into the AVID EXCEL elective in the fall of 2021. We currently offer the AVID elective class and several Ensign students go on to AVID at Newport Harbor High School. AVID Excel offers a pathway into AVID for our long term English Learners

by providing academic language instruction and AVID strategies. Ensign is guided by the belief that all students should be able to access college and career and technical education pathways and believes in creating an inclusive school environment. As part of our PBIS and core values framework, Ensign is pledging to be a No Place for Hate school. Several campus activities and events will include opportunities to educate students and staff about how to prevent bullying and promote diversity through inclusion.



## Harbor View *Elementary (K-6)*

900 Goldenrod Ave., Corona del Mar, CA 92625 • 949/515-6940 • [harborview.nmusd.us](http://harborview.nmusd.us)



**Gabriel Del Real**  
Principal

### **Welcome Back 3.0!**

Brightly colored stars, books and pencil cutouts decorated the lawn in front of Harbor View Elementary School on an otherwise normal Wednesday in late April. An inflatable doughnut, a colorful banner and balloons added pops of color against the morning clouds in the beautiful neighborhood. Even during the eighth month of the school year, classroom teachers and other school staff anxiously awaited the arrival of students

with the anticipation of the first day of school. After all, it was the third “first day of school” this year! Welcome Back to School 3.0!

After extensive planning and preparation, Harbor View excitedly welcomed students back to our full-day program. As the gates opened, parents cheered and students raced to their classrooms alongside their peers. On the sidewalk, two second-grade students who were friends from previous school years jumped for joy and screamed with delight as they saw each other after a long COVID-19 hiatus.

Classrooms and hearts were full as school looked closer to normal once more!



# Estancia High School

2323 Placentia Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6500 • estancia.nmusd.us



**Michael Halt**  
Principal

## Competing Virtually

Estancia High School's Career Technical Education pathways have had a busy spring preparing for and competing in virtual competitions!

Two teams of Engineering Design Pathway students recently competed in the countywide Vital Link Energy Invitational Design competition. Students were

tasked with building their vehicles in addition to submitting a design report, a digital presentation and a video. The vehicles were judged on system design, engineering analysis, team organization and communication, economic considerations, and safety procedures. Team Havoc's energy-efficient vehicle and presentation scored first place.

Estancia Medical Academy students completed at HOSA State Leadership Conference. Of the 31 students who completed, 25 were successful in their Regional Competitive Medical Events category. Four of the students scored in the top five of all state leadership competitors. These four students competed in the categories of health-career display, health informatics and pharmacy science.

Building Industry Technology Academy students competed in the Design/Build Competition through the California Homebuilding Foundation. With sponsorship from a construction company and support from a union, students built a structure to specified dimensions and code on our school site to compete virtually against other construction programs across the state of California.



**Estancia High School's Design/Build Team**



**Estancia High School's Team Havoc celebrating their 1st place win in the Energy Invitational.**

## Heinz Kaiser *Elementary (3-6)*

2130 Santa Ana Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6950 • kaiser.nmusd.us



**Dr. Deborah Granger**  
Principal

### Walking Amongst Heroes

Throughout this year, heroes emerged across the Kaiser campus. A group of exceptional staff members stand out for their positivity, determination, and constant support. This group made the work of our teachers possible.

Kaiser

Elementary School's classified staff members were on campus during the summer to ensure that all students received their instructional materials before the school year began. They have been here to greet students daily, check in staff members, disinfect our campus, take care of under-the-weather kiddos, communicate with parents,

create videos and activities, keep students safe on the playground, sneak in a game of handball now and again, and share their love for the precious students who grace our halls daily. It is such an honor to walk amongst these heroes. What an incredible team!



**Miss Cindy sneaks in a game of handball with a lunchtime early bird!**

## Killybrooke *Elementary (K-6)*

3155 Killybrooke Ln., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7945 • killybrooke.nmusd.us



**Laura Sosa**  
Interim Principal

### Let's Be Kind Day

Killybrooke Elementary is the kindest school ever! We celebrated a week full of kindness hosted by our student council and in conjunction with Let's Be Kind Day. Kindness week involved a series of challenges posed to students tic-tac-toe style.

Students were encouraged to complete acts of kindness to earn a

kindness coin, a symbol of their efforts to display kindness. Challenges included drawing pictures for the front office, completing chores at home, and writing notes to frontline workers at HOAG hospital. Students completing an entire row of challenges earned a kindness coin. Students completing all nine challenges earned two coins and an opportunity to win a kindness basket. Additionally, classrooms created collaborative art with inspiring messages they proudly displayed for all to see. Overall it was a remarkable week, but at Killybrooke we know that kindness extends beyond an assigned week and strive to promote kindness each and every day.



## Abraham Lincoln *Elementary (K-6)*

3101 Pacific View Dr., Corona del Mar, CA 92625 • 949/515-6955 • lincoln.nmusd.us



**Dr. Kristin DeMicco**  
*Principal*

### The Force is Strong at Lincoln

We are so excited to have our students back to school full time. To celebrate, we have been working closely with our PTA to infuse an extra layer of fun into the final weeks of our school year. One example of this was our “May the 4th Be with You” spirit day to kick off our Star Wars themed coin drive.

On May the 4th, students were greeted upon their arrival to school by Princess Leia and Chewbacca, and they had an opportunity to wear their favorite Star Wars apparel to school. In the following days, they participated in a coin drive complete with Jedi Mind Tricks and Quarter Strikes Back twists and turns. The event culminated with a Sabers and Sweets Dance Party with Chewbacca. We are so grateful to our PTA and Lincoln families for helping us make this event such a huge success.



## Mariners *Elementary (K-6)*

2100 Mariners Dr., Newport Beach, CA 92660 • 949/515-6960 • mariners.nmusd.us



**Matthew Broesamle**  
*Principal*

### Back in the Lab

Mariners’ fifth- and sixth-grade students are excited about the opportunity they receive each year to build rockets in science lab. Our science lab teacher, Mr. Hubbard, provides the students with a list of the supplies they are able to use, and the students must use the knowledge they gained

during science labs to construct a rocket that will travel the farthest.

The students spend time working on their rockets at home, working hard to build one that will take off and travel as far as possible. Mr. Hubbard controls the amount of air pressure, making sure that each rocket is provided the same force at liftoff.

This is without question one of the students’ favorite lessons each year. It is great to see the excitement each student has as they launch their rockets through the air, and the conversations they have in discussing with each other what makes one rocket fly the farthest. It sure is great to have our students back in the lab doing hands-on activities.



**A student gets ready to launch their rocket as Mr. Hubbard looks on**

## Newport Coast *Elementary (K-6)*

6655 Ridge Park Rd., Newport Coast, CA 92657 • 949/515-6975 • nce.nmusd.us



**Somer Harding**  
*Principal*

### One Big Team!

What a year it has been!

Having the students on campus full-time has brought a smile to so many faces: teachers, staff—and parents!

We love having our students back all day, love hearing them play. They are so happy to have one another and all of the caring adults here that are helping them thrive through these challenging times. I know that when

I reflect on this year, I will remember how the children led the way—how they showed tremendous resolve and determination, how they adapted so easily to things that I thought would be a problem, how much they enjoy being with one another, and how much they love to learn from

their teachers. I imagine that none of them will ever forget this year, and I truly believe that this experience will inform their choices moving forward and that they will become the leaders that will make this world a better place.

Our teaching staff has been impressive in its ability to pivot and adjust and continue to provide quality instruction. All other staff member that are not teachers have been our heroes, with no job too big or too small for them to handle. We found ourselves all part of one big team to tackle every challenge presented to us, all while keeping one another safe and healthy. We are excited for a restful and less anxious summer than we had last year, and we look forward to starting the year off in 2021–22 ready to learn and be together.

Happy summer, everyone!

## Newport *Elementary (K-6)*

1327 W. Balboa Blvd., Newport Beach, CA 92661 • 949/515-6965 • newportel.nmusd.us



**Amanda Estrada**  
*Principal*

### Hooray! We're Here All Day!

We celebrated another “first day of school” on April 21, when we resumed full-day instruction! I am so grateful for our team, who worked diligently to make it happen. There were many logistics to work out, new systems to implement, and safety procedures to put in place. But it was so worth it!

Our students were welcomed back with spirit, and since then, they have been enjoying the benefits of being on campus for a full day. Teachers have been building community in their classrooms and helping students make connections with

classmates they may not have seen in person in over a year. It is heartwarming to see students once again socializing during lunch and playing at recess.

During hybrid learning, some subjects like science, PE, music and reading support were taught on Zoom during the students’ at-home learning time. While teachers did incredible work over Zoom, they are thrilled to be providing the hands-on experiences to our students in person. Just this week, students have been launching rockets in science, learning to play the ukulele, and practicing lacrosse. I am so thankful for our school community and the opportunity to finish this year strong!



# Newport Harbor *High School (9-12)*

600 Irvine Ave., Newport Beach, CA 92663 • 949/515-6300 • nhhs.nmusd.us



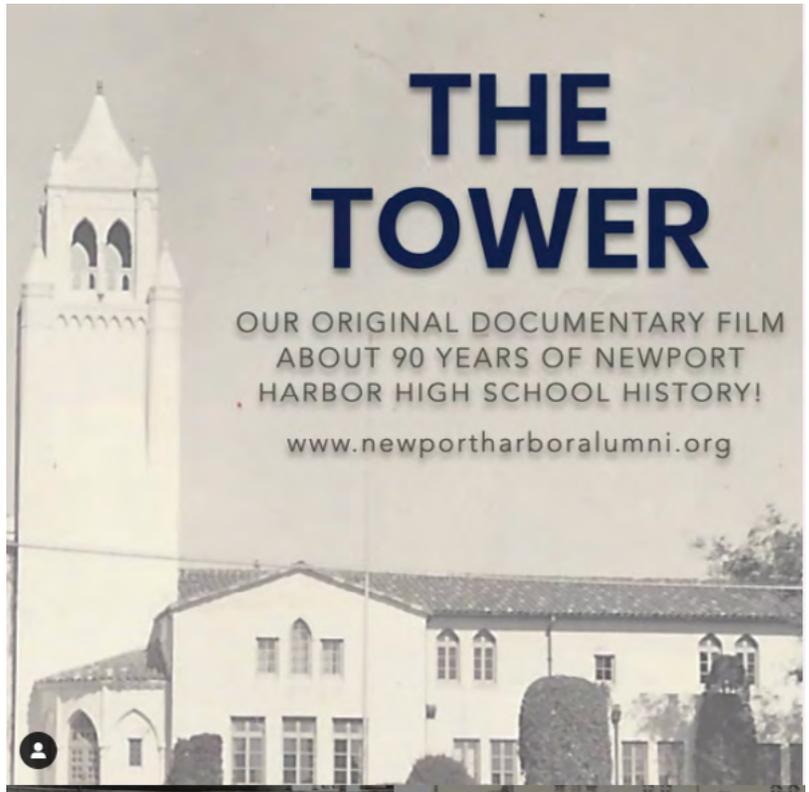
**Sean Boulton**  
*Principal*

## Private Documentary Showing

THE TOWER, a documentary about 90 years of NHHS history, on-line Sunday June 6th at 5:30pm PST!

We made this film to celebrate the NHHS spirit, so we're offering this one-time private showing on-line FIRST, that way our Sailor family can enjoy from wherever you live. There is no set price to view, so please donate what you can, as the proceeds support our Scholarship program.

Over the past four years, we've given away \$44,000 to help the career dreams of worthy NHHS students come true. We know we'll continue to see great need, so if you have \$5, \$50, or \$500 to support this important cause, we and the Class of 2021 would be very appreciative!



# Newport Heights *Elementary (K-6)*

300 E. 15th St., Newport Beach, CA 92663 • 949/515-6970 • newportheights.nmusd.us



**Terri Clarke**  
*Principal*

## Achieving Great Heights

May was a month of celebration for our teachers and staff members. This was when our community came together to recognize our dedicated staff during our annual "Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week," showering them with heartfelt thank-yous!

We also specifically celebrated several staff milestones with 10-, 15-, and 20-year NMUSD longevity pins. Congratulations go to Mr. Barney, Ms. Franko, Mrs. Hisaka, Mrs. Ota, Mr. Richards, and Ms. Wolf.

This year, six of our teachers have also been awarded grants through the Newport Mesa Schools Foundation "2021 Grants to Teachers Program." Please help me congratulate Mrs. Bell in first grade, Mrs. Bordelon in first grade, Ms. Davis in second grade, Mrs. Jones our music teacher, Mrs. Miller in third grade (pictured), and Mr. Richards in first grade for their efforts and creativity in submitting their winning grant applications. These grants ranged from \$1,000 to \$3,000 in the areas of performing arts, literacy, math, collaboration, and more.



We are proud of and grateful for our teachers' continuous commitment to providing students with many opportunities for success. Thank you, NHES teachers and staff!

## Paularino *Elementary (K-6)*

1060 Paularino Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7950 • paularino.nmusd.us



**Annalisa Schwartz**  
Principal

### Let's Be Kind

On Monday April 26th Paularino Elementary was part of Let's Be Kind Day. With a very generous donation from our PTA each student received a kindness t-shirt to wear and support spreading kindness. The Let's Be Kind foundation was started by a local Costa Mesa student to share kindness

one t-shirt at a time. The cities of Costa Mesa and Newport Beach both declared April as Kindness Month and Paularino wanted to be a part of this amazing community program. The foundation supplied beautiful yard art and balloons to help celebrate the day and our students showed up in their kindness t-shirts. Thank you to PTA for supporting this amazing event and thank you to Let's Be Kind for bringing kindness to our Panthers!



## Pomona *Elementary (K-6)*

2051 Pomona Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6980 • pomona.nmusd.us



**Cindy Pedroso**  
Principal

### Still Showing Spirit

We are fast approaching the end of another school year. This year has proven to be as challenging as the last, but the resiliency that our community, students, and staff members have demonstrated is incredible.

Our students and teachers have recently been very busy ramping up the hands-on learning opportunities that our full-day, in-person schedule has provided. Students in the second grade were busy learning about volcanoes and hypothesizing about chemical reactions. They enjoyed a day of making, painting, and erupting their very own volcanoes. In the fifth grade, students created rockets and blasted them off in their science classes!



It is truly a wonderful thing to see our students so excited about their learning. We have also continued with our school spirit activities led by the student council, and the classes with the most spirit were recognized just last week.

The new energy on our campus during recess, lunch, and all of the outdoor activities is truly a wonderful sight to see. We are looking forward to a restful summer and a new year committed to more great things to come.

## Everett A. Rea *Elementary (K-6)*

661 Hamilton St., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6905 • rea.nmusd.us



**Dr. Duane Cox**  
*Principal*

### Being Our Best

The recent “Let’s Be Kind Week” at Rea Elementary School was a huge success! A big thank-you goes to Rebekah Robeck who, two years ago, started this movement when she was a sophomore at Costa Mesa High School. Rebekah wanted her fellow students to experience real kindness.

To kick off the occasion, our students wore “Let’s Be Kind” T-shirts and engaged in conversations like, “Talk about a time when someone did something nice for you.

What was it, and how did it make you feel?” On another day, students were provided with practical strategies for building friendships, and ideas on how to approach someone whom you have not yet met.

Other daily themes included be kind to our school, be kind to an adult staff member, and be kind to the community. The final activity included our students creating a “Kindness Flower Garden” where their kind acts were noted on the petals of each flower.

There is room for all of us to seek out opportunities to be kind to one another. Keep in mind that we have a role in bringing out the very best in those around us!



## Sonora *Elementary (K-6)*

966 Sonora Rd., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7955 • sonora.nmusd.us

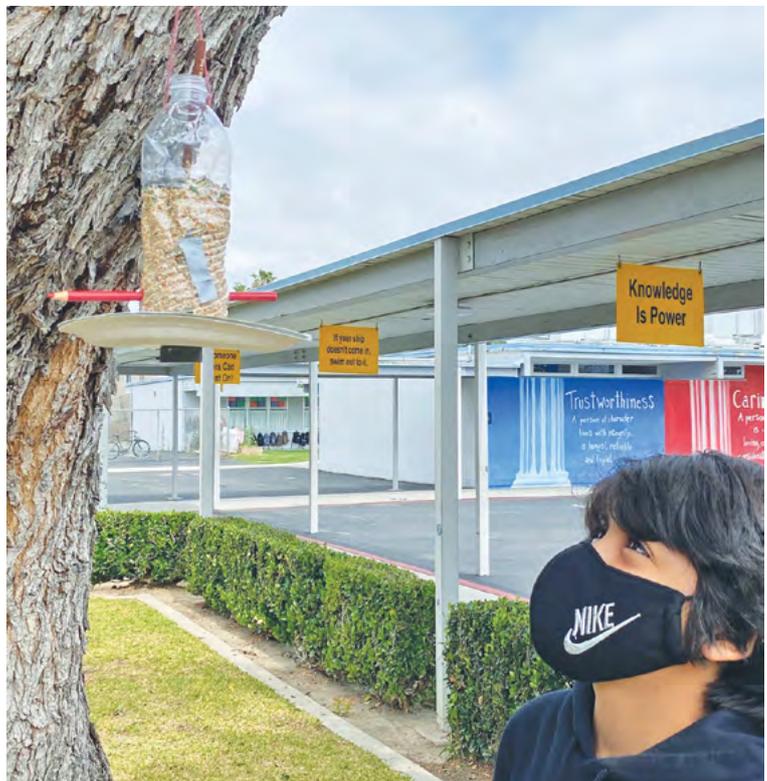


**Mia Doidge**  
*Principal*

### Beautiful Bird Feeder

One of Sonora’s fifth grade students, Carter, has really become passionate about several things during the pandemic. One of them has been an interest in how he can help to conserve our planet.

Carter started to think about all of the things that we use on a daily basis that can be reallocated or repurposed for something different. Carter decided he would create a bird feeder that would serve two purposes! He not only wanted to recycle plastic bottles, he also thought he could feed some of the birds that are home to Sonora. He used a water bottle, colored pencils, and a used paper plate and created this beautiful bird feeder. Both the birds and students are enjoying his creation!



## Charles W. TeWinkle *Intermediate (7-8)*

3224 California Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92626 • 714/424-7965 • tewinkle.nmusd.us



**Dr. Dipali Potnis**  
*Principal*

### To Our Eighth-Graders

Middle school is a very special time in a young adult's life. It is a time when you start becoming who you truly are. You begin to stand strong when you formulate opinions, and your ability to defend your thoughts and ideas solidifies. You also begin to become more curious and question why and how life works the way that it does. Your personalities shine. Your energy is contagious. And your ability to show empathy and receive empathy makes the world better.

During the last two years, our eighth-grade Trojans withstood so many transitions that on a larger scale impacted the way that they live life. On a relevant scale,

however, they impacted how they have done in school. We spent the last two years connecting in person, through Zoom and in breakout rooms, every day or every other day, via phone and email. It's been tough. The way it's been handled by our students amazes me. Our students were forced to be resilient in ways that many of us never experienced. Sometimes, it seemed unfair, and other times, I believe it provided our students an opportunity to rise together as a community even stronger than before, with more empathy for humanity and a greater love for one another.

As we send our eighth-grade students to high school, we wish them the best of luck in all of their experiences. But what I know with confidence is that our students will be able to take on all opportunities and challenges with heart and strength, because they are the real heroes.

## Victoria *Elementary (K-6)*

1025 Victoria St., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6985 • victoria.nmusd.us



**Dr. Aaron Peralta**  
*Principal*

### "Choose Kind" Campaign

Two years ago, Victoria began a journey into the world of kindness with our "Choose Kind" campaign. The goal was simple – make a choice to be kind. It was a significant investment to provide each student and staff member with a shirt and we blanketed the campus with messages of kindness. This year, we partnered with "Let's Be

Kind" who graciously provided shirts for each student and staff member. Having an emphasis on kindness has been transformative at our school. Each day, I receive reports of students opening doors for each other, writing heartfelt thank you notes, or drawing a picture for a friend. I also see students who, despite wearing masks, make deliberate eye contact and smile. It's been a year like no other – and the message of kindness is needed in our world perhaps more than ever. We are pleased that it began in us!



## Whittier *Elementary (K-6)*

1800 Whittier Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6990 • whittier.nmusd.us



**Dr. Santa Gabriela Acuña**  
*Principal*

### **Reclassification for Our Dolphins!**

Our goal at Whittier Elementary school is to ensure that all English language learners reclassify by sixth grade. We want our students to obtain English proficiency in order to be successful in their future educational careers.

When one of our Whittier Dolphins reclassifies, it indicates that the student classified as an English language learner on the initial ELPAC test. Students are reclassified to fluent English proficient (RFEP) as measured by the following criteria: achieving an overall score of 4 on the ELPAC test, indicating a well-developed command of the English language, demonstrating basic skills in English language arts, evaluation and recommendation by the classroom teachers and English language coordinator, and parent consent to support the

decision to reclassify the student. This criteria are not easy, and it takes hard work and dedication from a student to meet these requirements.

Reclassification happens when a child demonstrates sufficient language proficiency for success in their academic classes. A high level of English proficiency is necessary to provide access to college and career. This year, we are so proud that 16 Whittier Dolphins have met these criteria and have reclassified in the 2020–21 school year. Preparing them to be continuously successful throughout their educational path is important to all of us at Whittier Elementary School. This was not an easy task for our students given that we have had to adjust our in-person learning because of the pandemic, distance learning and learning in a hybrid model.

Nonetheless, these 16 Whittier Dolphins were able to persevere, shine, and be successful in their English language development. We are so proud of them!

## Wilson *Elementary (K-6)*

801 Wilson St., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6995 • wilson.nmusd.us



**Dr. Jennifer Heckert**  
*Principal*

### **Wildcats Appreciate and are Grateful!**

Wilson Wildcats have much to appreciate and be grateful for at the close of the 20-21 school year! Our students, teachers, staff, and families have transitioned and persevered throughout this unprecedented school year and have demonstrated resilience, kindness, and strength up until the very end! We have reopened to Level 1 successfully and are so happy to have our entire Wilson family back together again and so incredibly proud of our wildcat

community!

Social emotional learning has been a source of strength and guidance for Wilson this year. We have focused on various monthly strategies throughout the year to encourage our resilience, such as creativity, play, self-care, mindfulness, compassion, empowering stories, adapting to change, and appreciation/gratitude. Students and staff are provided with daily announcements with encouraging reminders and prompts. Wildcats have engaged in various extension activities each month, such as making gratitude flags in one sixth grade classroom. Wilson Wildcats are kind and strong...and resilient in 2021!



# Woodland Elementary (K-2)

2025 Garden Ln., Costa Mesa, CA 92627 • 949/515-6945 • woodland.nmusd.us

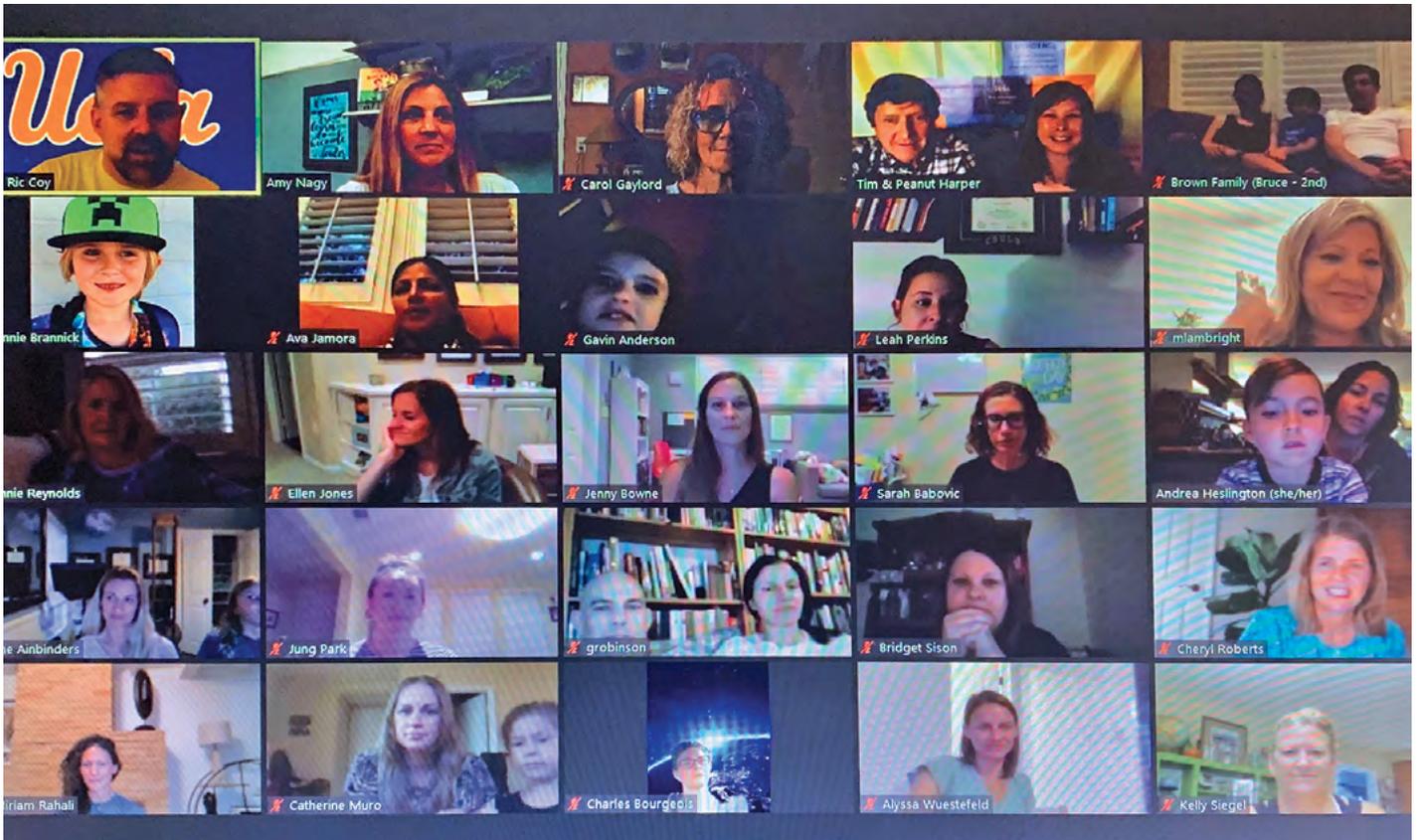


**Dr. Amy Nagy**  
Principal

## Role Models

As part of our parent engagement series, Woodland Elementary recently hosted a virtual evening event with Peanut Harper, co-author of Coach John Wooden's, *Pyramid of Success* children's book, *Inch and Miles: The Journey to Success*. Joining Peanut was her husband, Tim Harper, President and Co-Founder of Harper for Kids Organization and Ric Coy, UCLA Director, Student-Athlete

Development and the Wooden Academy. These special guests encouraged families to develop their own definition of success and parents to teach and model this for their children. Many families, after creating their definition, sent them into the classroom for students to share. In May, Peanut and Tim Harper followed up with another virtual lesson for students. They had a special guest, Olympic Swimmer, Kathleen Baker. She shared how using the building blocks has helped her reach her goals.



## Parent To Parent



**Jodie Lynn**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, often our kids were on their devices upwards of eight hours per day. What can parents do to keep them safe online and on their cell phones? It seems like more than ever, kids are getting spam emails, calls and texts from unknown sources. This is not acceptable, quite scary and exhausting to try to constantly monitor.

COVID-19 has isolated the majority of us and leaves us with levels of uncertainty, unusual scariness and frequent loneliness. Individuals are in a vulnerable place, especially our kids. This is the perfect time for sexual predators to approach them as it can come in many forms.

Give your kids a set of online safety rules that they will understand with explanations that they will believe and take to heart.

It's important for you to know which online games that your kids are playing. Many are multiplayer games where several online players can be together playing at once or just watching. These games have text and voice chat capabilities from around the world. This is highly dangerous because people can pretend to be someone else and of a certain age and can expose kids to unsuitable and unacceptable predatory language and content. These individuals can develop friendships with kids and eventually encourage them to meet in real life. It's important to recognize that each game has specific settings which you should check out and change for better online safety.

Remember not only to talk with your kids frequently about staying safe online, but also explain that anyone at any age can be cyberbullied. If a person or group want them to chime in about someone, tell them to ignore the request and don't return to that area and group. Explain why it's so important to think about what they are going to post at any given time or in any area before doing so, to keep their passwords safe, to always log off and not to click on links from people that they don't know. The right thing to do is to report the cyberbullying to an authoritative figure as well. They may just save a life.

You could also take their electronic devices away for a few hours each day, but for those hours that they're on them, rules and guidelines still need to be in place. Even if your kids seem to have level heads on their shoulders and you feel like you can trust them, they can still be sneaky.

It's easy to hide all kinds of online activities from parents with various apps:

Snapchat is a program where people can send images, videos, etc. to friends which will disappear within 10 to 30 seconds. It's pretty popular among teens. The hidden danger is that those "private" moments are not really deleted. They're hidden in files on most phones. Even more devastating and scary is that if someone takes a screen shot, the message, image or whatever can be posted anywhere.

Finsta is a fake Instagram account where anyone can create photos, conversations, etc., staying anonymous and keeping everything private through sharing with a few close friends and can be hidden on devices. But again, just like anything else, if a screen shot is taken, boom, it can show up anywhere online.

Be sure to read about popular apps and arm yourself with knowledge for options that you as the parent can do to help your kids be safe. Below you'll find a few but there's many others that you can find by doing an online search: Instagram, YouTube, Kik, Telegram, TikTok

There's also several phone apps offered to parents to help them monitor their kids' phone and online activities.

For unwanted calls or texts, it's simple to register landlines and cell phone numbers with the office of your state Attorney General's No-Call list for unwanted calls or texts. It's available online, free and will cut down on both. While it does take a few weeks to actually go into effect, it's best to get that done straight away. Do a little research and you'll also find several other government agencies where complaints can be made. Unfortunately, it's not going to totally eliminate them and that is even truer for robot calls. Learning some basic rules to share with your kids can also help.

For example: Don't answer any calls that are not in your contact list. If it's truly someone trying to reach you, they'll leave a message. If they don't, the number can quickly be blocked. The same goes for unwanted texts. The exception in this situation is going to be from "Unknown" or "Private" numbers, which are really hard to trace because no number shows up. However, there are phone apps to help with this. As far as spam email goes, if it's opened, don't click on any links. Look up how to set up filters and teach your kids how to recognize, delete and block it.

As you are well aware, this whole cyber safety situation is extremely exhausting. But, there's no way of getting around it if you're going to be proactive in protecting your children.

Jodie Lynn is an award winning, internationally syndicated family/health and education columnist and best selling author. Her column Parent to Parent™ ([www.ParentToParent.com](http://www.ParentToParent.com)) has been successful for more than 20 years. She is a regular contributor to several sites including *School News Roll Call* and has written four books and contributed to three others, one of which was featured on the Oprah Winfrey Show. *Mom CEO (Chief Everything Officer)*, *Having Doing*, and *Surviving it All!* and *Syndication Secret—What No One Will Tell You!* [www.ParentToParent.com](http://www.ParentToParent.com)

# Unprecedented Disruptions



**Dr. Al Mijares**  
*Superintendent*

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented disruptions to our communities, at times making it feel as if our lives were suspended indefinitely. And yet, schools in Orange County found ways to move forward.

In October, our county was credited with the largest return to school for a major metropolitan area in California. About six months later, 21 local middle and high schools have earned the state's highest level of recognition as 2021 California Distinguished Schools, a title annually granted to campuses that demonstrate exceptional student performance and narrow achievement gaps.

Orange County was also well-represented on the annual list of the country's best high schools published by U.S. News & World Report, with Oxford Academy ranking No. 1 in California and No. 11 nationally.

Despite the challenges, our schools, students and staff continued to earn distinction through one of the most trying years in modern history. At the same time, far too many children and families struggled under the weight of the pandemic, with an untold number of students facing hurdles to remote learning.

While we're not out of the pandemic woods yet, COVID-19 transmission rates have plummeted thanks to modern science and this county's vigilance, enabling an increasing number of students to return to their classrooms five days a week. In fact, school districts are now eagerly making plans for the start of the next school year, and many will offer robust accelerated learning programs this summer.

For its part, the Orange County Department of Education, which provides direct instruction to the county's most vulnerable students and supports local districts with services necessary for their operations, will prioritize three critical areas in the 2021-22 school year:

- Accelerating student learning with a focus on in-person instruction while building on the technological innovations developed during the pandemic
- Supporting the mental and physical health and wellbeing of students, staff and families
- Promoting civic learning and engagement opportunities that equip students to contribute to healthy, just and thriving communities

Each of these objectives aligns with our department's ongoing mission, vision and values, and we believe we have a strong infrastructure in place to successfully check these boxes.

In 2016, the state selected OCDE as the lead agency in an initiative to help schools and districts implement the California Multi-Tiered System of Support framework, which aligns new and existing strategies to meet students' academic, behavioral and social-emotional needs.

MTSS may look different depending on each school's strengths, but the idea is to empower educators to intervene and resolve issues before they become barriers to learning. The MTSS framework builds a baseline level of support for all students, additional assistance for some, and targeted interventions for those with the greatest needs. And it starts with knowing the name, face and story of every student at a school.

Recognizing that depression and anxiety were on the rise even before the pandemic, OCDE's education and health experts have also been working with our local schools and districts to specifically address the complex mental needs of students. Along with creating new resources for families, our teams regularly offer no-cost trainings for educators covering trauma-informed support, substance abuse prevention, social-emotional learning, restorative practices and suicide risk assessment.

Finally, we continue to build collaborative partnerships with legal professionals and local business leaders who can help students engage civically with their local communities.

In 2019, OCDE launched the Orange County Civic Learning Partnership with the goal of equipping the next generation with the rights and responsibilities that are foundational to American democracy. Since then, educational leaders in California have further incentivized civic awareness by creating a Seal of Civic Engagement that students can earn for their diplomas, transcripts or certificates of completion.

The new seal was the focus of a virtual symposium in April that brought together nearly 75 educators, law professionals and community leaders for a meaningful discussion on how to deepen students' Constitutional knowledge and amplify civic engagement.

This past year has tested all of us in ways previously thought unimaginable, taxing our bodies as well as our minds. Yet the pandemic has also revealed our collective resiliency. As educators, we are driven by a noble purpose and a spirit that cannot be defeated by a virus. We have been called to shape this generation of young learners into the leaders of tomorrow, and we will do exactly that.

The challenges ahead are real and they are fierce. But our eyes are clear and so are our goals for the year ahead. And on that basis, there has never been a better time to be in education.

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