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School News

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Covering the Palo Alto Unified School District



Volume 4, Issue 10

November 2021–January 2022



Briones Music!



HoCo 2021 at Gunn High! Go Titans!

Back in Person



Hands-On Learning at Greendell School



Paly Class Games During Assemblies



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Superintendent of Schools

Face-to-Face Has Been Energizing

I recently met with our PTAC face-to-face for the first time in nearly two years. Things have come back in phases since March 2020 with different rules. The reunion with PTAC was another reminder of the importance of in-person interactions. It's just different when we are together!

Immediately before writing this piece, I walked around the Paly campus during lunch. My agenda was simple. I wanted to see and hear kids being kids. Earlier in the morning I visited Greendell with our youngest learners. In both cases, the energy and joy were palatable. Our high schools have held dances, participated in extra-curricular activities, moved from class to class, and have overwhelmingly returned to the activities we all remember from our time in school. Greendell students have never known school without masks, so they are just happy to be with their friends!

Our staff has gone from awkwardly passing in hallways in the beginning to returning to group discussions. They can be seen working directly with students, operating in teams, and laughing with each other. COVID is not eliminated. It is real and we need to maintain vigilance. We have learned how to manage COVID and operate our schools as well as anyone in the country. That is important because it has allowed us to keep our doors open for kids and adults who need to be together.

Thank you to everyone who has helped us to successfully navigate COVID and the ever-changing rules. Our ability to provide in-person instruction and activities should never be taken for granted. Let's keep doing the things that make it all possible!



Donald B. Austin, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Visitas Presenciales Han Sido Energizantes

Recientemente me reuní con nuestro PTAC cara a cara por primera vez en casi dos años. Cosas han regresado, en fases, desde marzo de 2020 con reglas diferentes. La reunión con PTAC fue otro recordatorio de la importancia de las interacciones en persona. ¡Es diferente cuando estamos juntos!

Inmediatamente antes de escribir este artículo, caminé por el campus de Paly durante el almuerzo. Mi agenda era simple. Quería ver y escuchar a los niños siendo niños. Más temprano en la mañana visité Greendell con nuestros alumnos más jóvenes.

En ambos casos, la energía y la alegría fueron agradables. Nuestras escuelas secundarias han realizado bailes, han participado en actividades extracurriculares, han pasado de una clase a otra y han regresado abrumadoramente a las actividades que todos recordamos de nuestro tiempo en la escuela. Los estudiantes de Greendell nunca han conocido la escuela sin máscaras, ¡así que están felices de estar con sus amigos!

Nuestro personal ha progresado de pasar torpemente por los pasillos al principio a regresar a las discusiones grupales. Se les puede ver trabajando directamente con los estudiantes, operando en equipos y riéndose entre ellos. COVID no ha sido eliminado. Es real y debemos mantenernos alerta. Hemos aprendido cómo administrar COVID y operar nuestras escuelas, así como cualquier otra persona en el país. Eso es importante porque nos ha permitido mantener nuestras puertas abiertas para niños y adultos que necesitan estar juntos.

Gracias a todos los que nos han ayudado a navegar con éxito COVID y las reglas en constante cambio. Nuestra capacidad para brindar instrucción y actividades en persona nunca debe darse por alto. ¡Sigamos haciendo las cosas que hace que todo sea posible!

面对面交流使人振奋

最近，我与我们的PTAC进行了近两年来的第一次面对面交流。2020年3月以来，生活终于又走上了正轨，但有些事情已经发生了根本改变。再次与PTAC相逢，使我们意识到面对面交流是多么难能可贵。当我们再次相聚的时候，情况与以往有些不同！

写这篇文章之前，午餐时分，我在Paly校园里四处流连。我的目的很简单。我想做为同龄人感受一下孩子们的生活。早上，我和学生们一起参观了Greendell学校。这两个学校都充满了活力和快乐。我们的高中举行了舞会和课外活动，从一个班级到另一个班级，几乎每个学生都沉浸在曾经的学校活动中。Greendell校园的学生们都佩戴着口罩，与朋友高兴地聚在一起！

我们的工作人员尴尬地穿过走廊，回到小组讨论中。他们与学生聚在一起，组成小组，并彼此欢笑。新冠病毒没有被消灭。它仍然真实存在，我们仍需保持警惕。我们已经学会如何与新冠病毒共存，以及管理我们的学校，正如我们国家中的所有。这非常重要，因为这样我们就能够为入学的孩子和成人敞开大门。

感谢所有帮助我们成功应对新冠病毒，以及制定正确应对规则的人们。我们拥有面对面教学和活动的机会永远不应被视为理所当然。让我们携手共进，让一切成为可能！



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This is our 4th year publishing the Palo Alto Unified *School News*. Each new school year is exciting, but this year is especially exciting for students being back in the classrooms.

The crispness in the air reminds us the holidays will soon be here.

Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday and at the top of my thankful list are educators and you—our loyal readers.

Our next issue is February 2, 2022. Until then Happy Thanksgiving, Happy Holidays, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



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Addison *Elementary School*

650 Addison Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301 • 650/322-5935 • addison.pausd.org



Amanda Boyce
Principal

Full-Time In-Person Instruction

After navigating a challenging year in 2020-21, Addison is thrilled to return to full-time in-person instruction! We have successfully implemented the most up-to-date COVID protocols which has kept our overall COVID cases very low and allowed us to focus on more traditional school practices, procedures, and programs.

This year, we are excited to welcome back all in-person enrichment programs taught in K-5. This includes Spectra Arts, Music, Library, PE, and Palo Alto Jr. Museum Science lessons. These courses provide engaging opportunities for students to stretch their minds and creativity skills beyond our traditional curricular areas. Additionally, we have limited parent volunteers on campus for the re-launch of our Project Cornerstone program where students are learning valuable lessons about being an upstander and other life skills.

Staff meetings have returned to in-person gatherings which have allowed us to work more collaboratively on important PAUSD initiatives including Early Literacy and

Equity. Together we have had hands-on exploration of our new Orton-Gillingham assessments and instructional materials. We've read articles related to Equity and had in-depth conversations regarding the identities we each bring to Addison and areas of educational equity that we'd like to explore. Mental health has also been an important priority for Addison staff so in early October, staff had the opportunity to break out in to small groups and focus on a self-care activity including mindfulness, stretching, painting, walking, and writing gratitude cards.

One of the most exciting aspects of returning to school in-person this year is watching students engage in natural play focused on individual interest. Last year, students had to remain in stable cohorts and rotate through play zones but this year, we are finally able to open our beautifully remodeled campus to give students a variety of play activities that meet all interests. The students' joyful body language and laughter is contagious which reminds us each day how lucky we are to work in schools. One student told me the first week of school, "Mrs. Boyce, I'll never take for granted the opportunity to be in-person at school ever again."

Barron Park *Elementary School*

800 Barron Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/858-0508 • barron.pausd.org



Judy Argumedo
Principal

Diversity is Our Strength

All great achievements require time.

— Maya Angelou

It takes time to learn how to walk, run, read, drive a car, or fly a plane, but we do it. As I start my principalship, I have to remind myself it will take time to get back into the

pre-COVID routine of school and work. We all

have learned and grown immensely during this challenging time and I am taking those lessons forward with me. I am confident that we will have a great year because Barron Park is a wonderful community for a variety of reasons. To name a few, we have over 17 languages represented, over 40% of students speak a language other than

English, and there are over 50 nations represented in our community. We are diverse in many ways and it is our strength. Diversity is our strength and it is also our theme for the year. At our bi-monthly morning assemblies, we come together and celebrate students who illustrate the Barron Park way of bee-ing kind, bee-ing respectful, and bee-ing our best.



Duveneck *Elementary School*

705 Alester Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94303 • 650/322-5946 • duveneck.pausd.org



Leslie Crane
Principal

Back in Person

The Duveneck Dragon community has had a wonderful start of the school year! It is so nice to have our students, staff, and teachers back on campus again. The sounds of the campus are alive with children and teachers learning and engaging with one another. We have missed this precious cadence and rhythm for quite some time, but it is back, and for that, our Duveneck community is very grateful.

There is nothing like a student in front of a teacher in a classroom. Our dedicated group of educators have been exceptional with their efforts assessing current achievement levels during these first months of school. This important data assists with charting a curricular course to meet and exceed the learning opportunities our students deserve. Duveneck educators are a very talented

faculty committed to engaging in high quality professional development that allows us to be our best for our students each and every day. Their efforts and dedication are the best insurance we have to help support our students to grow strong academic, emotional, and social skills for their future.

To further support school site and District goals this school year, we are implementing new strategies to make sure all students have positive attendance patterns as well as a strong, well-articulated phonics program in grades TK-3. Using the Orton-Gillingham approach for teaching the English language, this program believes that an explicit, systematic, multi-sensory application is the key to success in teaching reading, writing, and comprehension to students. We are excited to be using this new methodology to fidelity in all our TK-3 grade classrooms.

The Duveneck community is progressing forward with amazing Dragon spirit and pride. We are looking forward to a great 2021-22 school year!



It's great to be a Duveneck Dragon!

El Carmelo *Elementary School*

3024 Bryant St., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/856-0960 • elcarmelo.pausd.org



Aleyda Barrera-Cruz
Principal

Building Community

One of the biggest joys of being back in person is building community at the school and classroom level with our students, staff, and families. El Carmelo has been working very hard at building community this year as we welcomed back everyone to this full in-person year.

At the school level, we are starting a new tradition of having school community meetings twice a month. This is a special time to bring our entire school together and give our students the opportunity to share with our community what they have been learning. During our second community meeting, our wonderful 5th graders had the opportunity to share a little bit of what they have been learning in class these first few months. They shared their learning on ecosystems and food webs and presented their favorite quotes from their reading of the book *Wonder*.

In the classrooms, one of the best ways that I see our



Students gather around the playground for the El Carmelo school community meeting.

students and teachers building community is during the morning meetings. Morning meetings give the students the opportunity to greet each other, share out, and learn something. I look forward to continuing to build community with our wonderful El Carmelo students, staff, and parents.

Ellen Fletcher *Middle School*

655 Arastradero Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/856-9810 • fletcher.pausd.org



Melissa Howell
Principal

Welcome to the 2021-22 School Year!

A new school year means new beginnings, new adventures, new friendships, and new challenges. The slate is clean and anything can happen. — Denise Witmer

The new school year is here and we have settled back into the art of teaching and learning, all together and in person. It has been exciting to see staff, students, and families coming back together. The welcoming buzz of chatter, laughter, learning, socializing, etc. has been missed in our halls and classrooms. It has been a little while since we have had these opportunities together and in person.

We jumped right back into school, togetherness, and community-building. All grades were involved in reacquainting with their peers, staff, school buildings, and our school grounds with our first ever 6-8 grade Tiger



Fletcher Orchestra and Choir students come together again for the Fall Retreat

Camp. All students were able to engage in community-building activities for the first week of school. We have enjoyed spirit days, student government elections, music and drama retreats, AVID field trips, and many more class and bonding activities to get our school year off to an amazing start.

We are excited about what our school year has to offer. As we move into the second quarter of the school year, remember to be kind and take care of yourself and others (academically, socially-emotionally, and physically). We applaud the growth of all of our students, the hard work of

our staff, and the support of our community.

“The best way to predict your future is to create it.”

— Abraham Lincoln

We are Ellen Fletcher Middle School GO TIGERS!



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Escondido *Elementary School*

890 Escondido Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94305 • 650/856-1337 • escondido.pausd.org



Marcela Simoes de Carvalho
Principal

Live and In-person We are "Friends Around the World!"

The 2021-22 school year has gotten off to a wonderful start at Escondido. Our student body totaling 476 wonderful kids arrives each day eager to learn and play together.

Across our school, every teacher is focused on growing readers. Our K-3 teachers and intervention specialists have been trained in Orton-Gillingham multi-sensory methodology to teach phonemic awareness, phonics, morphology, and vocabulary. Earlier this month, all K-5 teachers participated in a full-day training on Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) scoring, calibration, analysis to inform, guided reading, and/or small group instruction. New this year is an instructional schedule that now provides a dedicated and protected time for reading intervention or extension for all grade levels three times a week. We call this our Response to Instruction or "Whatever I Need Time" (WIN Time).

"Through play, kids learn to make friends, solve problems and believe in themselves. Even in hard times."

Equally important is a focus on students social-emotional growth and well-being. Escondido has ramped up what we do for our students.

Partnering with our PTA, the Playworks TeamUp program has been launched at Escondido. Playworks brings healthy play and physical activity to school to create a positive environment for learning and teaching through Class Game Time and daily structured recess games. Playworks also provides a self-esteem building, responsibility teaching, and leadership-training program to an enthusiastic group of 3rd through 5th graders who are Junior Coaches. These young leaders work with the Playworks coach to prepare to support productive play at recess time with their peers.

It is very exciting to be able to come out of 18 months of non-traditional teaching and learning and be focused on what our students need.

Fairmeadow *Elementary School*

500 E. Meadow Dr., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/856-0845 • fairmeadow.pausd.org



Iris Wong
Principal

Happy to be Back in Person

We couldn't be happier being back in person here at Fairmeadow and across all of our school sites! The sounds of the morning school bell, laughter and chatter of students at recess and lunch, and seeing all our student's smiling with their eyes brings

back a joyful reminder of what school is all about. Our students, parent community, and staff are all doing an amazing job adhering to all of our safety protocols and procedures so we can continue to be on campus each day. Students are excited to be back and continue to learn how to be a student again after being on a computer screen over the last 20 months. Students and staff are fully adjusted to our new norms of wearing a mask all day long, maintaining as much distance as possible, and handwashing or using hand sanitizer throughout the day. School is actually beginning to look like school again! See attached photo for a snapshot of what our whole-school assemblies look like! Cheer Cheer for Fairmeadow School!



Assembly

Greendell School

4120 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94303 • 650/856-0833 • greendell.pausd.org



Shannon Coleman
Principal

So Happy to be Back at School

What a difference a year makes! We are thrilled to have all of our classes back in person at Greendell School. Our young students at Greendell already know the best way to learn is hands-on. They have a natural curiosity, exploring their environment and learning through play. Our early childhood education programs at

Greendell have always focused on educating children through engaging and meaningful learning, providing children with hands-on, play-based, literacy-rich experiences with their peers. The return to in-person learning has highlighted just how critical these experiences are for young children. It has been a reminder that so much of what we teach and what children learn occurs while

we are participating in the activities together. Playing a simple game with classmates teaches children social skills such as taking turns, sharing, following directions, having conversations, working as a team and encouraging friends. Social-emotional learning happens when children are interacting with each other, in person, together. We are so happy to be back at school nurturing a lifelong love of learning at Greendell!



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Frank S. Greene Jr. *Middle School*

750 N. California Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94303 • 650/494-8120 • greene.pausd.org



Sebastian Benavidez
Principal

Jaguar Journey

After welcoming our students fully back to campus with a school-wide Jaguar Journey orientation program, Greene quickly turned our attention to a major thing we'd missed during distance learning: school community. And what better way to build community than to host grade-level social gatherings?

At Sixth Grade Movie Night, more than 150 students gathered in the Hugh Center Court to watch *Shrek*. Before the movie, leadership students led 6th graders in a few dances, and during the movie they circulated concessions on the lawn. It was a great success!

The 7th and 8th Grade Dance was held the following week, with twinkle lights, balloons, streamers, and disco lights transforming our center courtyard. With a fantastic deejay spinning popular tunes, nearly 400 7th and 8th graders danced the night away. With all the experiences these kids lost last year, it was amazing to be back together on campus.



6th graders ready for movie night in Hugh Center Court.

Henry M. Gunn *High School*

780 Arastradero Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/354-8200 • gunn.pausd.org



Wendy Stratton
Principal

HoCo 2021: Destination Gunn!

Accompanying our return to campus this fall, are all of the missed traditions that exemplify the spirit of Gunn High. The level of engagement and enthusiasm coming from our students and staff is at an all-time

high. More students and staff are choosing to attend school events. Most recently at the Gunn Night Rally, our football stadium housed more than 1,400 attendees, who observed impressively high-caliber performances from our cheer and dance teams, along with the awe-inspiring annual air band competition. The theme for Homecoming 2021 is "Destination: Gunn." Now that we have arrived back on our beloved campus, we are energized and

full of gratitude for every opportunity we are granted to experience community. The photo below provides a glimpse into HoCo 2021 at Gunn High! Go Titans!



Gunn Quad – HoCo 2021

Herbert Hoover *Elementary School*

445 E. Charleston Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/320-8106 • hoover.pausd.org



James Sherman
Principal

Hello Families!

I can't tell you how exciting it is to have your children back at school in person with us! Having nearly 400 little hedgies on our campus is what we are used to and have been dreaming about for so many months. As much as



people talk about the academic downside of kids not being in school, we all know what kids really need is socialization. They have been craving time with other children playing games, talking, sharing, and catching up. Back with their friends and teachers is where they want to be! Our students are doing so well in reading, math, and science, but they are really honing their social skills.

Social-Emotional Learning is key for our children after many of them have been out of school for over a year. It takes practice to get along with others, and we are certainly practicing at Hoover. Our students are problem-solving in the classroom and out on the playground. I even see them working out differences during soccer or 4-square. They will stop, have a quick discussion or a “rock, paper, scissors” duel to decide, and then they move

back to the game. It is impressive the amount of work they are putting into making sure our community is a fair and respectful one.

Our classrooms are vibrant, active centers of learning. Children are members of the classroom community, and as community members they have roles and responsibilities. Being in charge of taking the library books back in the morning, passing out papers/supplies, ensuring book storage areas are organized, and helping others around them remember the expectations are just a few of the many roles your children are playing in the classroom. It's so exciting to see children take ownership of their home away from home this way. I hope their ability to be responsible in the classroom is translating to your homes!

We love your children, and we're looking forward to all the amazing discoveries we will make this year!

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Jane Lathrop Stanford *Middle School*

480 E. Meadow Dr., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/856-5188 • jls.pausd.org



Chris Grierson
Principal

JLS = 10/10!

During lunch the other day, I was chatting with a group of 7th grade students. We talked about the end of the quarter, they had questions about the upcoming (outdoor) dance and shared their Halloween plans. At a break in the conversation, one of the students

scanned the basketball courts and said, “You know what? In-person school is 10/10. Home school was really hard, but this, THIS is great!”

She’s right. For most of our students, being in-person at JLS is great! We have adjusted to wearing masks indoors and outdoors, we have enjoyed having school activities again, like being in a physical classroom with other students: working in partners, learning in groups, competing in teams. We are continuing to get

comfortable with the new block schedule, but it is getting a little bit easier and smoother each day. As we look forward to increasing our stamina, we also look forward to sharing more experiences (safely) in-person with our friends and families. Go Panthers!



The JLS Panther Association of Leadership and Service (PALS) putting on a Trivia Game at Lunch, October 2021.

Juana Briones *Elementary School*

4100 Orme St., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/856-0877 • briones.pausd.org



Katy Bimpson
Principal

Welcome Back!

The energy that is generated by a school full of children who are excited to learn, share their thinking, and reconnect with friends, staff, and the school environment has been palpable for both students and staff!

“It is so good to have all of the kids back!” is the sentiment

among staff, and when I asked students how they feel being back, words such as, “Epic!”, “Amazing!”, and “This has been the best day ever!” are examples of what I’ve heard.

Our students are transitioning back to school having had a wide variety of social, emotional, and academic experiences. However, the authentic connections being forged between students and adults on campus and the richness of learning that can only happen when humans interact in person, coupled with our students’ resilience and engagement, illustrates why there is NO substitute for being back in-person!



Measuring Stamina



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Lucille M. Nixon *Elementary School*

1711 Stanford Ave., Stanford, CA 94305 • 650/856-1622 • www.lmnixon.org



Amy Sheward
Principal

Routines are Important

The Nixon Dolphins are back in person! As we return to full-time, in-person instruction, we reflect on the importance of routines and connections.

Routines give us the predictability and structure we crave in times of uncertainty. Even in pre-pandemic times, routines were an integral part of helping students feel safe and secure at school. Now, having an established school routine is more important than ever. Our community has been wonderful about settling into the in-person routines at Nixon.

We are excited to connect in person! Classroom community-building activities build relationships, help students develop social skills, resolve conflicts, and work in groups. Playworks games, Junior Coaches, and cooperative play guidelines help students make friends and have positive interactions at recess and lunch. Across campus, students and staff are learning and working together to create a safe, supportive space for our entire community.

Nixon families and teachers communicate openly and build strong relationships to support our students. We are here to provide the support and care our students need, and we are incredibly grateful for the support of our amazing community.



Nixon Dolphins engage in a friendly game of Handball (a.k.a. Wall Ball) during recess.

Ohlone *Elementary School*

950 Amarillo Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306 • 650/856-1726 • ohlone.pausd.org



Dawn Yoshinaga
Principal

A Critical Lens

Ohlone is bubbling with learning, laughing, and playing in the sunshine. Students are inquisitive, explorative, and inclusive with open minds and hearts. They collaborate with peers, listen to others, express their feelings, and work together to problem-solve. It is school! We are back.

Ohlone staff are engaged in conversations around antiracism and educational equity.

Our courageous conversations about race, bias, and opportunity are critical and necessary in addressing the systems that impact the trajectory of success for our students who have been historically marginalized. Through our Every Student Reads Initiative, we are committed to elevating the reading growth of students who are historically underrepresented, English-language learners, socio-economically disadvantaged and students who have learning differences.

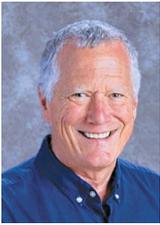
Ohlone sees the whole child, celebrates each student's unique set of gifts, and meets them where they are. Now,

we are intentionally adding an anti-racist and equity lens to everything we do. Through a book diversity audit, we are weeding our school and class libraries of books that do not accurately reflect cultural identities or perpetuate racial and gender stereotypes. We are adding literature to our libraries that reflects our beautiful diversity and provides mirrors and windows for our students. Our students need to see themselves in books. They need to see their families in books. They need to see their gifts and learning differences celebrated and uplifted. They need to see themselves included.

Our return to school has been long awaited and much needed. Being apart for so long comes with challenges and shines a light on areas that need attention. The new perspectives we have gained provide us with an opportunity to make change and have impact for our students and families. Ohlone students learn that their story matters from the caring adults in their lives. Our efforts to remain connected and engaged with each other reflects the strength of our Ohlone community!

Palo Alto *Adult School*

50 Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94301 • 650/329-3752 • paadultschool.org



Tom Keating
Principal

The Adult School is back!

The Palo Alto Adult School ended its centennial year online and this fall ushered in its next 100 years back in person. Adult School students in our English as a Second Language (ESL) Program, Community Education Courses, and PreSchool Family Parent programs were thrilled to be back in person at both Paly and Greendell campuses reconnecting in shared learning experiences.

This winter quarter, the Community Education Program is pleased to be offering a record 18 new classes which

include Comedy Sportz Improv, Vietnamese Cooking, Electric Cars Demystified, and Estate Planning.

In October, the ESL program at Greendell held their first-ever Principal's Chat with coffee and pastries. Students came equipped with prepared statements and questions. It was a great opportunity to meet students and learn about their personal stories and homes of origin.

Lastly, we invite everyone to join in the celebration of the Adult School Centennial and the 75th Anniversary of the PreSchool Family Program on April 15, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. to enjoy food, visit teacher and student booths while viewing their class projects, and hear our student musicians perform. Stay tuned for more details to come!

Palo Alto *High School*

50 Embarcadero Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94301 • 650/329-3701 • www.paly.net



Brent Kline
Principal

Back in Person at Paly

There is nothing that signifies our students being back in person than the excitement that participating in the Paly Spirit Week brings to our campus. After a two-year hiatus, Paly saw the return of Spirit Week, bringing back a tradition of themed

dress-up days, spirit rallies, class competitions, and a homecoming football game and dance. The Spirit Week events, which were coordinated by the Paly ASB,



Class Themed Dress Up Days, Freshman

is one of the most exciting times of the school year, providing students and staff members with opportunities to come together and make connections with each other outside of the traditional learning environment. By the end of the week, Paly showed to each other that unity and spirit is a Paly tradition that was able to be reignited and embraced by the entire student body and staff.



All Together Now --- Class Color Day

Palo Verde *Elementary School*

3450 Louis Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94303 • 650/856-1672 • paloverde.pausd.org



Annora Lee
Principal

So Much to Celebrate

Every 1st day of school is special, but this year felt especially sweet. Gone were clear shields from their desks and designated play zones. Children, outfitted in shiny new shoes and backpacks, skipped down our halls once again. Without the colorful array of masks, one would never know we were opening school in the midst of a pandemic.

To be back in person – after a year and a half of closure, hybrid learning, and then combined cohorts – is an incredible milestone for us all. Our community knows what it's like to be apart, and we will never take the act of being together for granted again. Our new safety protocols and reporting procedures are a small price to pay to be in school, five days a week, with friends and teachers that know and care about you.

At our staff development kickoff this August, teachers discussed their own personal educational journeys. We shared how our early experiences in education shaped us to become the people (and educators) we are today. Early memories in school, personal situations, and influential people were all spoken of. This activity helped launch our theme for this year: Every Child Has a Story.

It is our mission to learn your child's story this year. Whether it be our work in equity, social-emotional learning, literacy, maintaining attendance, promoting service to others, every child's personal situation will be heard and considered. We invite parents to join in this initiative because, as we learned so well during COVID, we are better together.

I write this message after completing nine weeks of school. While each classroom has already accomplished so much, I am energized by the prospect of how far the year will take us. There is so much to do, and so much to celebrate. Thank you for letting Palo Verde be part of you and your child's story. Here's to making memories together.

Walter Hays *Elementary School*

1525 Middlefield Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94301 • 650/322-5956 • hays.pausd.org



Mary Bussmann
Principal

Back in Person: Unified

We are thrilled to have students back for the 2021-22 school year! Since the beginning of school closure in March 2020, students and staff persevered through distance and hybrid learning. This was incredibly challenging for our entire community! I applaud the teachers for their work to make their

instruction meaningful and relevant for students to engage and learn. I cheer the students who worked hard to keep going during this isolating time. Both demonstrated resilience in the face of incredible obstacles.

We have much work ahead of us. Many of us have navigated through this time with loss and it is so important that we join together with gratitude for what we have, and empathy and understanding to support others, as well as ourselves during this time of hardship.

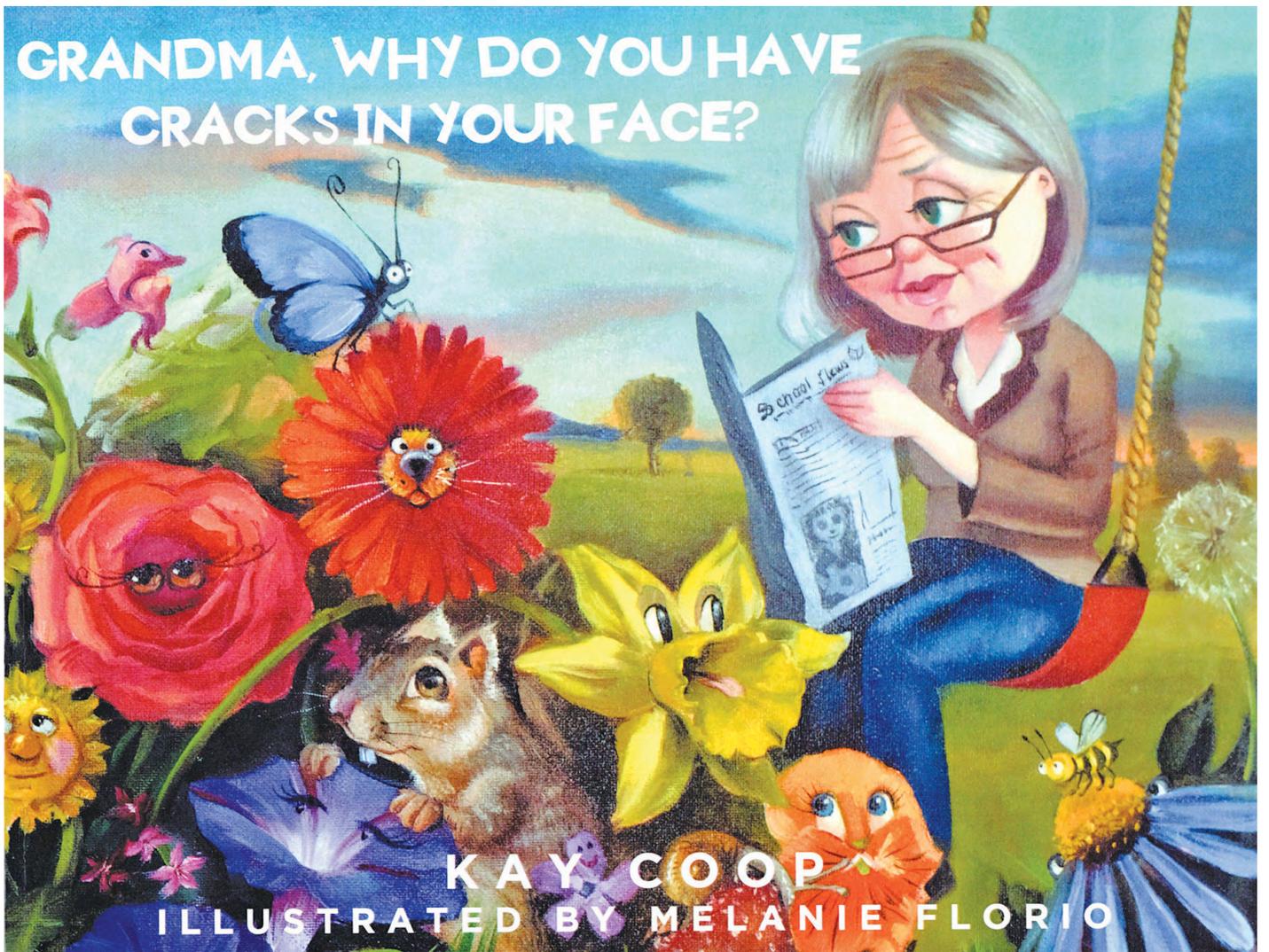
Yet, today I feel great hope as I observe children daily expressing joy, as they run, play, and learn because they are back together. Unity takes on more profound meaning this year as we are able to come together as a commUNITY.

Thank you, Walter Hays Community! Each of you are amazing people!



Walter Hays Students celebrate Unity Month!

GRANDMA, WHY DO YOU HAVE CRACKS IN YOUR FACE?



KAY COOP
ILLUSTRATED BY MELANIE FLORIO



Now Available on
**AMAZON &
BARNES AND NOBLE**

Grandma, Why Do You Have Cracks In Your Face? Is a question many grandmothers have heard from their grandchildren. When a grandchild finds her beautiful lost doll, she understands beauty is more than skin deep.