

FREE

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation



Covering the Vista Unified School District

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 16

NOVEMBER 2016–JANUARY 2017

A Finalist for County-Wide Teacher of the Year

By Dr. Devin Vodicka
Superintendent

In Vista Unified School District we are focused on improving opportunities for students and we have an abundance of achievement data that indicates success.

More specifically, improvements in graduation rates, college and career readiness, test scores, participation in challenging courses of study, and declines in behavioral issues and chronic absenteeism are all areas of great celebration. To achieve these results, it takes the diligent and concerted efforts of our dedicated employees. We promote effective teamwork and collaboration with the knowledge that our impact is maximized through collective impact. The influence of our employees is also amplified by



Jenny Chien Anderson, one of five finalists for County-wide "Teacher of the Year."

excellent community partners who are similarly committed to student success.

At several points during the year we pause and recognize those employees that represent the best of our profession. Every year Vista Unified celebrates outstanding classified staff members, teachers, and administrators through our "Golden Apple" process. At the conclusion of our internal process, several employees are nominated to be considered as finalists in San Diego County. For the first time since 1991, this year one of our amazing teachers, Jenny Chien Anderson, was selected as one of the five finalists for County-wide

"Teacher of the Year." Jenny is a science and technology specialist from Casita Center who has implemented innovative programs to engage students with computer science, maker-lab projects, and solving real-world problems.

The finalists from each County then proceed to the state level for consideration as one of the five California Teachers of the Year. According the California Department of Education, there were 295,025 teachers in the state as of 2015. It is therefore an incredible honor to merely be considered as one of the top teachers in the state and even more remarkable to be selected as one of those top five teachers. I am thrilled to share that we have recently learned that our very own Jenny Chien Anderson is a California Teacher of the Year.

See **A FINALIST** • Page 11

How Collaboration Works in Vista Unified

By Rich Alderson, President, Board of Trustees

The term collaboration is often used in many settings regarding human interactions when attempting to describe situations requiring people within the organizations to work together. What does it really mean to collaborate? Is it collaboration when the boss gives orders and the employees follow those directives? Is it collaboration when union and management settle a labor agreement? Is it collaboration when congress works to pass laws that requires both political parties to agree? In each case, one side of each situation has a position of power and negotiates with the other side for concessions. Each side works to gain the most advantageous position possible in the process. What is lacking in the examples cited is a common goal among the groups. To truly collaborate for a common goal requires adherence to the principles set forth by a prior agreement. The agreement in Vista Unified is our commitment to the children of Vista. In the Vista Unified School District, the values of Trust, Respect, and Collaboration guide us each step of the journey toward Educational Excellence. I think it is important to note some significant achievements in the last three years that have illustrated our success in attaining our goal.

The first example of a collaborative effort involved the teacher's union and our recent contract negotiations. While the usual items pertaining to salary were discussed, the district and union leadership worked toward a common goal of improving learning for all children in our schools. To this end, an increased in the instructional days for the next school was agreed upon. Vista

Unified has increased the number of instructional days for students next year by two days. These additional days will afford teachers an opportunity to expand their teaching and have more precious time with their students. This adjustment is not a typical change that happens in most school districts. Without complete collaboration with the Vista Teacher's Association, this change would not be possible. As VUSD works to restore every aspect of our services available to children, adding days to the instructional year was a major change not often achieved by school districts. We must acknowledge and commend the teacher's union for their commitment to children and support to increase learning for all children.

Board of Education



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City of Vista Office of the Mayor

200 Civic Center Drive, Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-1340 • www.cityofvista.com

Happy Holiday Season



Judy Ritter
Mayor

As we break for the Thanksgiving holiday, I want to express how grateful I am for those who help make the Vista Unified School District a great place to teach, learn, and work.

With the holidays approaching and 2017 around the corner, we should take a moment to applaud VUSD's leadership, teachers, staff, and parents in working towards the goal that all Vista students succeed. VUSD is making positive and lasting differences in the lives of its students.

Congratulations to our talented, creative, and resourceful students who have been working hard this school year. You make our community a stronger and better place!

Best wishes for a joyous and happy holiday season. I look forward to a watching our VUSD students learn, achieve and grow in the coming New Year.



Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



This school year is going so fast. Superintendent Vodicka's message on the front page makes us aware the District is focused on collaborating for the success of the students.

In this issue, you will read about Personalized Learning, College and Career Ready, Volunteering and the fastest growing sport in America, and so much more...

Our next issue is February 15. Until then have a Happy Thanksgiving, Happy Holidays, and Happy New Year! We are always mindful and grateful for our men and women in the armed services who are not home with their families. Thank you!

School News Roll Call

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Covering the
VISTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Contest!

This little boy is in a picture somewhere in this publication. When you find him, email the **page number** to:

Kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com
Please put Vista in the subject line.



Your entry must be received by December 15, 2016. From the correct entries, we will draw a winner to receive a \$20 gift certificate redeemable at Barnes and Noble.

Congratulations to Brooke Romagnoli
Winner of our last issue contest.

Vista Chamber of Commerce

127 Main St., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-1122 • www.VistaChamber.org

A Nintendo Christmas

By Bret Schanzenbach, Chief Executive Officer

The 2016 Vista Christmas Parade will take place on Saturday December 3, 2016 at 1:00pm in downtown Vista. Our theme this year is "A Nintendo Christmas". We will be celebrating all things Nintendo, including Pokemon. Come enjoy community floats, military vehicles, school marching bands, equestrian teams, Star Wars characters, school mascots, Santa and much more. After the parade, come to the Cinepolis quad in Vista Village for fun selfies and photo opportunities with all our characters, mascots and Santa. Our route will begin on S. Santa Fe at Pala Vista Drive and will conclude at the Cinepolis. We will have two announcer stations that will provide information about the parade entries. One announcer station will be at Pepper Tree Frosty and the other will be on Main Street near Crozier's Flowers. For more information visit www.VistaChamber.org



VISTA CHRISTMAS PARADE

Celebrating a Nintendo Christmas!

COME ENJOY:
Marching Bands, Flag & Cheer Squads
Community & Military Floats
Equestrian Teams & Mascots

After the Parade, come to Cinepolis for Selfies with all our Star Wars Characters, Mascots & Pokemon!

www.VistaChamber.org

Saturday December 3, 2016
1:00pm
Downtown Vista

Del Norte Council PTA

1234 Arcadia Ave., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/815-4872

Parents Needed!

By Clay Colton, President

I'd like to give a big shout out to all of the parents who are making this school district such an amazing environment for our children. If you're reading this right now, you're one of them! Vista is a community of so many amazing and diverse people, and it is our responsibility to work together to educate our children. The teachers and administrators are the core of the learning process for our children, but it is up to parents to embrace the rest of their education through the sharing of experiences, skills, and passions.

I encourage everyone to volunteer for 30 minutes sometime before winter break. Go down to your child's school and say, "Hello!" Hang out with the office staff or supervise an activity in the classroom. Every time a parent walks on campus, students perk up. Dads, ask about the new WATCH Dads Of Great Students (DOGS) program. It's a great way to get some male role models into the schools. Knowing some of the staff members who influence your child's life can be a huge connection. Try it!

Great new things are in place this year for our children, and many more are on the way. The arts are making their way back into the classroom with dozens of new art and character education instructors. Beginning in elementary school, many children are now discovering computer programming! The district has also hired music teachers, and more are slated for 2017-2018. Thank you, Vista Unified School District (VUSD)!

So, keep up the good work, parents. Join the PTA. Be a hero at your child's school, and thank your VUSD staff members for making such an amazing environment for our children to grow up in!

Great new things are in place this year for our children, and many more are on the way... The arts are making their way back into the classroom... The district has also hired music teachers...

Cinépolis PRESENTS:

Winter Fest

IN THE VISTA VILLAGE

Sunday, December 4th

10AM to 6PM

Featuring:

- Santa's Village, "Lil Makers" Treat Workshop, Souvenir photos with Santa, "Vintage" Holiday Marketplace, Hot chocolate & cider stands, "Jingle Bell" carriage rides, Living Nativity, Rock & Country holiday bands, Milk, Cookies & a holiday movie, Church choirs, Carolers, Santa, Toys and decorations to make, Holiday minstrels in the Creekwalk, Shopping, Dining...

& a magical town tree lighting finale!

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VUSD Innovation

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



The Vista Blueprint in Action

By Matt Doyle, Ed.D., Executive Director-

Schools from around the district are in full swing and supporting student learning. Our Strategy 1 has expanded tremendously this year, placing a Family and Community Engagement Liaison into every school in the district. Strategy 2 of the Blueprint has also placed hundreds more computers and iPads into the hands of our students, while Strategy 3 is promoting restorative practice lessons that enable the students to develop greater levels of empathy and social/emotional skills.

Strategy 4 continues our central focus on developing literacy and math skills for all students, beginning in preschool. This strategy is also ramping up our focus on Next Generation Science Standards this year. Strategy 5 has made incredible progress this year as well, attracting over 100 applicants for each teaching position vacancy. This statistic truly shows how Vista Unified is recruiting and hiring the very best educators for our students.

Strategy 6 is capturing evidence of student growth academically and socially. Overall student achievement (as measured through state assessments) has improved by 3 percent in English language arts and mathematics. Our graduation rates are also up more than 3 percent (higher than the state and federal average); our chronic absentee rates are down significantly, and student engagement is at an all-time high as measured through UC San Diego's annual community survey.

Strategy 7 is laser focused on the "Go-Open" movement, meaning that teachers and students will have more open access to learning resources and instructional materials through a growing national movement. Vista Unified actually hosted a national Go-Open Summit in October of 2016. Strategy 8 (our moonshot) is rocketing forward as well, adding eight more schools to the Personal Learning Challenge. We now have 15 schools transforming a learning experience that places students in the driver's seat of their own learning path.

In the first three months of the school year, more than 50 superintendents from across the nation have visited our PL Challenge schools. More than 50 members of the Next Generation Learning Challenge have visited our PL Challenge schools. The California School Board Association has also identified the PL Challenge project as a finalist for the Golden Bell Award.

Finally, Vista High School's Personal Learning Academy won the XQ Super School Prize of \$10,000,000. This Personal Learning transformation is propelling us toward our vision of becoming the model of educational excellence and innovation. Onward and upward!

Vista Adult School

510 Sunset Dr., Vista, CA 92081 • 760/758-7122 • www.vistaadultschool.org



Liz O'Shea-West
Principal

Volunteering

Vista Adult School students will be focusing on giving back to the community through various events this year.

In September, some of our medical students worked a booth at Monte Vista's College and Career Fair, administering blood pressure screenings and discussing various health issues. They were excited to use these skills again at Vista Magnet Middle School's Family Night in October.

Also in October, students were proud to do their part helping to save lives by partnering with the American Red Cross in holding two very successful blood drives. Not only did our students donate blood, they also volunteered by checking in other students and working various stations.

Currently, we're proud to be working with Solutions for Change, which administers to San Diego's homeless population. We began hosting a Sheets and Blankets Drive on October 31, which will continue through December 9. Their clients are in need of new and gently used twin and queen sheets and blankets in order to have a clean and safe place to sleep as they get their life back on track.

If you would like to help with this worthy cause, please drop off your donations to our office at 510 Sunset Drive, Vista, CA 92081; or call 760-758-7122 for more information.

Career Technical Education

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



Kelly McKinney
Coordinator CTE

Become a Partner

One of the core components of the CTE program is giving students the opportunity to experience life outside of the classroom, in their area of focus. Whether it is volunteering, a job shadowing, or an internship in the VUSD, our students are beginning to build relationships that are critical to their becoming college and career ready.

Over the summer, Jeff Yee at Mission Vista High School organized an internship for four students with the University of California, San Diego. The students worked with a professor at UCSD to help write video games in Unity, the program they learned in their CTE course, for autistic students. In August, Chef Plunkett took a group of VHS students to the Western Foodservice & Hospitality Expo where they worked with industry professionals.

The students worked beside a chef, a marketing manager, a research and development team, and a sales team and manager. In October, Chris Tompkins and a group of students were the video production team when VUSD hosted the US Department of Education's #GoOpen Summit. Students interviewed representatives for the US and CA Departments of Education, district leaders, community and business partners, and educators from across the country. They are now busy creating highlight videos from the event that will be shared on a range of platforms.

These are just a few examples of the great work going on outside of the classroom. If you are interested in hosting an internship or job shadowing for our students in one of our many areas of focus, please contact Kelly McKinney (kellymckinney@vistausd.org), or James Hayes (jhayes@sagesandiego.com), to learn more about our CTE programs in the district. Become a partner in building relationships for the future.

Alamosa Park *Elementary*

5130 Alamosa Park Dr., Oceanside, CA 92057 • 760/940-0700 • www.vistausd.org



Cindy Anderson
Principal

Hello from Our Principal

My name is Cindy Anderson, and I'm thrilled and honored to be your principal! I'm passionate about education, and I look forward to partnering with the community to provide our students with rigorous, engaging and high-quality education.

I've been an active member of the VUSD family for 19 years. I've served as an elementary classroom teacher, a math/science middle school teacher, and the founding assistant principal/provost of Vista Innovation and Design Academy (VIDA). I've earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education with an

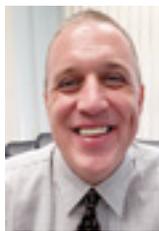
emphasis on math, science and technology and a master's degree in educational leadership and administration. I'm a past recipient of the San Diego Science Educators Teacher of the Year award and continue to be deeply involved in science-education leadership within our district, state and nation. Currently, I'm working with West-Ed and the NGSS Early Implementation Initiative to plan, design and roll out the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

I've lived in the Vista/Oceanside area for most of my life. My great-grandparents farmed the area off Grapevine Road in Vista, and my mother worked in the Child Nutrition Services department in VUSD. I attended Santa Fe Elementary School and Washington Middle School, and I graduated from Vista High School. I'm married and have two daughters and three grandchildren. Working for VUSD and in education is truly a family affair! My husband, Bob, is plant lead at Temple Heights Elementary, and my daughter Rya teaches at Temple Heights. My youngest daughter is on staff at the University of Arizona, Tucson. All my grandchildren attend the best district in the entire country—VUSD!

I'm proud to be an Alamosa Park Hawk and work with such an incredible staff. Our community is alive with innovative, creative ideas. I am looking forward to a year of adventures and learning with all of you. Go Hawks!

Alta Vista *High School*

1575 Bonair Dr., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/724-3775 • www.vistausd.org



Mike Sterner
Principal

Woman's Rugby

We have added women's rugby to our 21st century after school program at Alta Vista and we are very proud of our girls' team. We have helped start a continuation league with Major General Murray, Valley, and Twin Oaks. We share players and mix our girls team to compete together. Our teams also consists of students from our teen parent parent program. We are excited to see what the future holds for our girls' team. MiraCosta College is also offering a Rugby Club team and we know that our athletes now have a pathway to college in their pursuit of education and participating in College Rugby. When the continuation league ends will start regular high school season and our boys/girls team will compete against other comprehensive high school programs. Please come support and share in this exciting new adventure of rugby for our students at VUSD! #rugby #family #rugbyculture #community.



Bobier *Elementary*

220 W. Bobier Dr., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/724-8501 • www.vistausd.org



Dr. Jenifer Golden
Principal

Personalized Learning

Bobier has launched as a personalized-learning school with an emphasis on project-based learning and Project Lead the Way science curriculum. All students on campus have their own individual computers to use so that they have access to independent-learning programs at their level that are geared towards their strengths and interests. We would like to thank Dr. Kraft, Mrs. Guerrero, Mrs. Fernandez, Dr. Doyle, Dr. Vodicka, Ms. Haessly and Dr. Ruggles, who partnered with us for a successful start to the school year.

Last year, we improved in attendance and discipline, and continued to make progress toward more students gaining in their reading levels. according to multiple district measures. We are proud to be recipients of personalized-learning, MediCal and UCSD wellness grants that will help provide funds to sustain our data-driven goals to help all students become career and college ready when they complete their education in the Vista Unified School District.



Beaumont *Elementary*

550 Beaumont Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-4040 • www.vistausd.org



David Moore
Principal

Beaumont Welcomes An Assistant Principal to the Team!

We are exciting to grow as a team and to have a new, enthusiastic team member! This year Beaumont welcomes an Assistant Principal and her name is Mrs. Sochie Schmitz. Mrs. Schmitz has been with the Vista Unified School District 20 years. She is a long time Oceanside resident and is married to Jeff Schmitz of the Literacy Center and NGSS Director. Mrs. Schmitz comes to Beaumont with a wealth of knowledge from classroom teacher to resource teacher. Her exuberance punctuates the enthusiasm at this charming school ten fold! We are thrilled to welcome Mrs. Schmitz to Beaumont.



Mrs. Sochie Schmitz

Breeze Hill *Elementary*

1111 Melrose Way, Vista, CA 92081 • 760/945-2373 • www.vistausd.org



Rachel D'Ambrosio
Principal

AVID Elementary

We are pleased to announce that Breeze Hill Elementary School will begin Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Elementary School Implementation during the 2016–2017 school year for both fourth and fifth grades!

Fourth- and fifth-grade teachers attended AVID Summer Institute in June to begin the implementation process. AVID Elementary Essentials are embedded into the daily instruction of all elementary classrooms, across all grade levels. During the 2017–2018 school year, additional grade levels will begin implementation.



AVID Elementary Essentials focus on the four areas that ensure academic success: instruction, culture, leadership, and systems. It incorporates student success skills including note-taking strategies, critical thinking, and study skills. Students learn how to use organizational tools and practice time management and goal setting.

We are excited to provide the AVID Elementary program to our families as a necessary component for college and career readiness.

California Avenue

215 W. California Ave., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/630-4870 • www.vistausd.org



Rachel Schmidt
Principal

Halloween Fun

One of our students' favorite events at California Avenue School is the annual Halloween Parade. More than a "parade," this event is an opportunity for our students to practice their communication and social skills. Princesses, cowboys, firefighters, and other costumed preschoolers and elementary students patiently proceed through the halls, many alongside their parents, in search of treats.

Those students with delays in communication might practice their verbal skills, or use an augmentative communication device to request "trick or treat!" It is an opportunity to practice good manners as students wait their turn, greet their friends, and say "thank you."

Unlike most trick-or-treating experiences, the students at California Avenue

School are not collecting candy or sweet treats. Thanks to the generous donations of our parents, students excitedly receive treats such as stickers, bubbles, and small toys. This allows all students to participate in the parade, including those with allergies or other health needs. Following the parade, our students and their parents join the entire class for a special Halloween craft or snack.



Casita Center *Elementary*

260 Cedar Rd., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/724-8442 • www.vistausd.org



Laura Smith
Principal

Recipe for Learning

Teaching through inquiry puts students in the driver's seat with their learning. Recently, Mr. Luke "Jackson" Perez presented fifth-grade students with a problematic scenario: You want to make your grandma's famous pancakes, but the recipe card is missing the amounts of baking soda and milk due to many years of cooking breakfast!

Students gathered in teams of four to create several batches of batter using some constant variables, such as the amount of flour and eggs, to try to discover the perfect amount of baking

soda and milk to put into mixture. This realistic, hands-on science lesson was engaging and delicious!

Casita Center for Technology, Science, and Math is an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IBPYP) Candidate School. The IBPYP focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both within and beyond the classroom. It is our goal to become an IBPYP Authorized School by the end of the 2016-2017 school year.



Empresa *Elementary*

4850 Avenida Empresa, Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/940-8454 • www.vistausd.org



Dr. Cheree McKean
Principal

Watch D.O.G.S.' Tails are Wagging!

This year, Empresa implemented a new program to increase parent involvement. Watch D.O.G.S., or Dads of Great Students, is a "father-involvement initiative" with two goals: providing positive role models for students through their support of education, and providing extra eyes and ears on campus to help facilitate student ownership of actions.

Interested dads and father figures commit to spending an entire day at school, beginning at the front gate opening car doors and greeting students. During recess and lunch, dads can be found playing a competitive game of basketball or pushing students on the swings. The kindergarteners especially love racing them around the sidewalk!

The special thing is that the dads just don't come and volunteer in their own children's classrooms. Watch D.O.G.S.' daily schedule allows them to interact with many students on campus.

First-grader Noah Dominguez was so excited when his stepdad was a Watch D.O.G. for the day. "I feel proud sharing my stepdad with my friends!" Noah said.



Lots of smiles and high fives all around especially during basketball from Mr. Mageo and son, Lincoln.

Foothill Oak *Elementary*

1370 Oak Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/631-3458 • www.vistausd.org



Sandra Ceja
Principal

Room 24 Promise

At Foothill Oak, Roadrunners R.O.C.K.! Students are encouraged to take leadership responsibilities and some of our fourth grade students came up with a pledge to remind themselves about the kind of students they want to be everyday! They wrote their Room 24 Promise that they recite every morning and they came to present it to the student body at our Rockin' Roadrunner Assembly! We are proud of their initiative to make our school a great place to learn and grow!

Room 24 Promise: Today will be a good day. I will respect myself and other people. I will own my choices. If i make mistake, i will fix it. I will care for everyone. I will stick up for other people. I can fix problems and i don't give up. I will keep my focus in class and study at home. I am ready to learn new things. I will ask questions when i don't understand. I can go to college and get an important job. I am smart! I am a leader! I love a challenge! I am proud of myself! I am awesome! Let's do this!



Grapevine *Elementary*

630 Grapevine Rd., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/724-8329 • www.vistausd.org



Rafael Olavide
Principal

Glad to Be a GLAD School

Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) is an instructional model dedicated to building academic language and literacy for all our students. GLAD develops academic English and builds vocabulary and linguistic structures that students must use to engage in context-rich discourse. Grapevine embarked in the GLAD journey two years ago and by the end of this school year we will be a GLAD Certified School.

The goal of GLAD is to ensure that all students read and write grade-level text and access rigorous academic content. We accomplish this by training our teachers to use GLAD instructional strategies that can be integrated with any subject areas. Recently, one parent who visited a third grade classroom indicated that “I wish I had GLAD when I was in school. It is such a rich and engaging environment for my child”. Glad to hear that!



Sally Fox, GLAD Coordinator, at Grapevine Elementary

Lake *Elementary*

4950 Lake Blvd., Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/945-5300 • www.vistausd.org



Krista Berntsen
Principal

Music Program

We are thrilled to share that Lake Elementary now has a music program that currently serves our third through fifth-grade students, and will be expanding to include the second-grade students soon!

Students who are currently participating in music are receiving a music education that aligns with the Common Core and National Standards. They use music vocabulary to learn how to read rhythm, as well as Solfege techniques to sing and read pitch. Lake students have also been exposed to and are learning to play various classroom instruments, including drums, guiros, and xylophones.



Our students are even singing! They practice vocal technique, singing alone as well as with others. Many students also participate in our after-school third- through fifth-grade choir called The Dolphntones. In January they will soon be transferring their music knowledge to the recorder.

We are so excited that our students are able to receive the gift of the arts here at school, and are enjoying the new opportunity to perform for others!

Hannalei *Elementary*

120 Hannalei Dr., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/631-6248 • www.vistausd.org



Tracy Zachry
Principal

A Community of Opportunity

At Hannalei Elementary School we are so very proud of our new Community of Opportunity time. Every Monday for 45 minutes our school site provides all students with an opportunity to experience STEAM activities. This plan allows students to engage in opportunities they may otherwise not be exposed to at home. Activities include, worming, gardening cooking, a school wide recycling program, researching homeless shelters to provide boxes of toiletries, STEM boxes, Robotics, music and more. We



have seen such an improvement with student collaboration, oral language development, reading and writing skills as well as a motivation to learn about career possibilities. We are proud of our students, staff and the community for coming together to make the Community of Opportunity a valuable time and learning experience for all students.

Madison *Middle School*

4930 Lake Blvd., Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/940-0176 • www.vistausd.org



Susan Ford
Principal

Meeting Our Challenge

Our goal at Madison is to provide a challenging and fulfilling learning experience that builds on all students' strengths, interests and values. We understand how important it is for students to be connected to the school and to grow physically, emotionally and academically. So, in addition to academic support, we provide many clubs and activities for student enrichment.

We are also beginning the first year of our journey toward personalized learning for students. Personalizing learning is



8th graders collaborate on complex problems to open a locked chest in a “Breakout Room” activity.

a way to help students capitalize on their strengths and pursue their passions while learning. Our school is one of our district's Challenge Schools. We're embarking on a journey as a staff to learn more about how to personalize learning and how to change the learning environment in ways that increase student engagement. We welcome parent and community involvement as we develop our plan and capacity to provide this engaging learning experience for all of our students.

Maryland *Elementary*

700 North Ave., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/631-6675 • www.vistausd.org



Carol McKane
Principal

Involved Together

Maryland was the proud recipient of the North Coastal Prevention and Early Intervention Services through Palomar Counseling Services grant. This grant includes the Incredible Years program, featuring Principal Dina.

Our transitional kindergarten and kindergarten classes get weekly visits from Principal Dina. She talks to them about a variety of topics, including doing your best in school, how to be friendly, and how to problem-solve. Teachers in the first through

third grades will be able to request class presentations on setting personal goals, how to make good friends, learning how to follow rules, and cooperation.

The grant includes a parent education component as well. Our parents will work with the trainers to develop skills that can help them work with their students at home, and understand the computer programs they use in school, as well as a variety of other topics that encourage parents to become more involved. We feel fortunate to have this opportunity for our students and their families.



Mission Vista *High School*

1306 Melrose Dr., Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/758-6800 • www.vistausd.org



Nicole Miller
Principal

Our Standard of Excellence

Mission Vista High School is actively preparing for the first-ever National Magnet Certification. MVHS has the amazing opportunity to be part of this from the beginning, and will be working throughout the year to address each goal and submit our application in June. We feel confident that we are meeting the Standards of Excellence with our innovative curriculum, our high-quality instruction, our family and community partnerships, and our commitment to academic excellence.

We are encouraged by our students' performance on recent standardized tests. In the Smarter Balanced Assessment, 85 percent of our juniors met or exceeded standards in English language arts, and 52 percent met or exceeded standards in math. This places us at the top tier of the county in results for both exams.

In addition, we have award-winning programs in our Creative Arts department and Project Lead the Way program. We have over 60 clubs and 13 athletic teams. And, we are supported by two wonderful organizations: our PTSA (with over 600 members), and our MVHS Timberwolves Foundation.



Mission Meadows *Elementary*

5657 Spur Ave., Oceanside, CA 92057 • 760/630-7884 • www.vistausd.org



Dr. Bill Porter
Principal

Makers Lab Excitement!

Students and teachers at Mission Meadows Elementary School are excited to explore our new Maker's Lab, which is designed to allow students to investigate topics in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics (STEAM). All Mission Meadows students in Transitional Kindergarten through fifth grade will have the opportunity to utilize this new and exciting learning laboratory throughout the year to enhance their academic experiences.

Prior to opening the Maker's Lab to students, the teachers at Mission Meadows had the opportunity to preview, explore, and investigate as learners themselves, exploring all of the exciting, hands-on learning modules. The Maker's Lab provides all students with the opportunity to explore STEAM topics and focus on their individual strengths and learning interests.

The Maker's Lab is an open-forum, student-centered learning environment that is "powered" by prototyping and creating. This exciting educational learning laboratory will serve Mission Meadows students as an "incubator" to help their ideas to evolve.



Monte Vista *Elementary*

1720 Monte Vista Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-0410 • www.vistausd.org



Charlene Smith
Principal

Our College and Career Fair

To support our school culture of "Where Leaders Grow: College, Career, Life," Monte Vista Elementary hosted its second annual Elementary College and Career Fair in September.

Students and their families visited the booths of local colleges, VUSD middle and high schools, and businesses and civic organizations. UCSD, USD, CSUSM, MiraCosta and University of Phoenix were just a few of the higher-education organizations on hand to share their programs with families. VUSD middle and high school also participated to showcase their exciting classes and programs. Students spoke with members of the medical and legal fields, tradespeople, a musician, a financial planner and a Vista City Council candidate. Students also got to sit in a Vista fire truck, see the sheriff's canine unit, and sample healthy drink options with a registered dietician.

It was truly an event to remember—it opened up the endless possibilities for our students' futures.



**Monte Vista Hosts a
College and Career Fair**

Murray *High School*

215 N. Melrose, Vista, CA 92084 • 760/631-2502 • www.vistausd.org



Chuck Hoover
Principal

Rugby

What is the fastest growing sport in America? If you said rugby, you are correct.

Murray High School recently decided to support rugby as their fall season sport, replacing flag football. Although some questioned this change, our students didn't hesitate to pick up the sport and give it a try. New opportunities are available for students playing this sport, and they also learn to give added respect towards those around them.

Rugby leads to healthy relationships between teammates and coaches, and helps students cope with stress, both of which lead to better performance in school and everyday life. It also brings people from different areas of Vista Unified together in a respectful and interactive manner when their teams come together after the game to enjoy a friendly and peaceful feast together.

So if you are seeking to test your athletic abilities on the field, then we recommend giving rugby a try. Who knows? You may just fall in love with the sport.



Rancho Buena Vista *High School*

1601 Longhorn Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/727-7284 • www.vistausd.org



Chuck Schindler
Principal

College and Career Ready

Rancho Buena Vista High School (RBV) students are well into the first semester, and they are working hard on their academics as well as participating in numerous school activities. Over half the student population is involved in extracurricular activities, including sports teams, marching band, color guard, drama, and clubs, to name a few. We encourage all of our students to get involved in the wide range of activities at RBV, which will help them to become well-rounded individuals who are competitive in their college application process.

Our excellent International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) programs are very effective in preparing students for college-level work. RBV's diverse and exciting course offerings in these programs cover math, science, English, social studies, computer science, and the arts. In fact, RBV is one of the few schools to offer courses in all IB arts subjects, including film, dance, theater, visual arts, and music.

We are committed to the success of our students, and we are continually increasing the supports we provide so that all students feel empowered to challenge themselves. We are proud that 81 percent of the students who took IB assessments last spring passed these rigorous international exams. We are also pleased that 63.1 of our AP students earned 3 or higher on their exams last spring, which was above the state's percentage for passing College Board exams. In addition to the phenomenal preparation these programs provide, they also allow students the opportunity to earn valuable college credits as a result of their success on these exams.

As we move to developing RBV as a "world" school, our vision is to exemplify inspiration, discovery, and achievement as we support all students to be prepared for college and career in the 21st century.

Olive *Elementary*

836 Olive Ave., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/724-7129 • www.vistausd.org



Stephanie Vasquez
Principal

Personalized Learning

Olive Elementary is proud to be a Year One Personalized Learning Challenge School. Vista Unified's Personal Learning Challenge program is a part of the district's strategic plan. The plan is called the Blueprint for Educational Excellence and Innovation (strategy 7 and strategy 8), which further enhances student engagement and ownership of the learning process.

As a part of building a personalized-learning pathway, this year Olive's fourth- and fifth-grade learners are piloting a groundbreaking web-based K-5 learning-relationship management (LRM) system, called Epiphany Learning. It is designed to empower learners by giving them voice and choice in their learning. The first step that Olive learners have taken in creating their own personalized learning plan has been to build an individualized learner profile. Through the use of a learning inventory, students gain further understanding of their strengths and struggles, learning styles and preferences, and hobbies and interests. By creating a richer understanding of self, Olive learners transform from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset while supporting essential skills and positive habits.



Roosevelt *Middle School*

850 Sagewood Dr., Oceanside, CA 92057 • 760/726-8003 • www.vistausd.org



Elise Ochendusko
Principal

A Year of Exploration

The 2016-2017 school year is off to a great start at Roosevelt Middle School! This is a "Year of Exploration" for our students and staff. After over 30 years as a middle school in Vista Unified School District, the time has come to reexamine our school's vision and mission so we may continue to best service our students.

While taking stock of the current values and beliefs that make Roosevelt the special place it is, our teachers will engage in exploring the most current methods of teaching in order to best engage and support our students in their academic, social, and emotional growth. Students will be challenged to explore and engage in their individual strengths and access their own learning styles as we move toward a more personal learning experience for each child.

Our Positive Attributes Wildcats Show (PAWS), which our students selected during the 2015-2016 school year are collaboration, courage, creativity, determination, integrity, positivity, respect, responsibility, and spirit. These will be an ongoing integral part of our instruction as we continue to foster and nurture relationships with each other and our students and strive to sustain a school culture where students are supported in building confidence and pursuing their passions.

Also new for 2016-2017, all seventh- and eighth-grade students will be placed in core academic teaching teams, called prides. Students in a pride will share the same English, social studies, math, and science teachers. The goal of our prides will be to create a small-school feeling within the larger campus so students will have increased opportunities to connect with teachers and their peers. Teachers in each pride will have a common planning period, when they will develop cross-curricular learning opportunities in order to best support the students in their pride.

Rancho Minerva *Middle School*

2245 Foothill Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/631-4500 • www.vistausd.org



Ben Gaines
Principal

Personalized Learning Approach

Great things are happening at Rancho Minerva. The traditional classroom setting has changed to an innovative personalized learning environment. All of our sixth-graders work at their own pace to achieve success. Through a partnership with Summit Basecamp, our teachers and students are working together to co-facilitate learning. Students are at the wheel “driving” their learning with a personalized learning platform.

Our students are also engaged in project-based learning, and every student has an adult staff member as their mentor.

They meet with their mentor once every two weeks to set goals and check on their progress together. Learning is no longer a passive activity. Our students at Rancho Minerva are drivers of their area, and are working side-by-side in personalized learning.

At Rancho Minerva, we believe that school is no longer a cookie-cutter process. Every student should be able to respond to their own strengths and interests. Come along and visit Rancho. We'd love to have you!

Temple Heights *Elementary*

1550 Temple Heights Dr., Oceanside, CA 92056 • 760/631-6242 • www.vistausd.org



Kim Morton
Principal

Fun with Robots

Third graders at Temple Heights have been busy writing narratives about robots. Their challenge is to create a robot that can solve common problems. Some examples of their creations are Laundry Bot, Gopher Bot, and Homework Bot. You can imagine how writing about robots might help engage kids in the writing process, but there's more. In addition to writing about robots, these third graders will also learn to program a real robot! They will use a laptop computer to write the code and then download it to the robot. Then, they will observe the actions

of the robot to see if their code is correct. Students have already learned to program the robot to draw a square and follow a path. Now, they just need to teach it to do the laundry. Future plans include making video advertisements for their robots using their iPads and a green screen.



Every kids fantasy. The robot that does homework.

Vista Academy *of Visual & Performing Arts*

600 N. Santa Fe Ave., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/941-0880 • www.vistausd.org



Catina Hancock
Principal

The Place to Be

The 2016–2017 school year is off to an outstanding start! We rolled out the red carpet to welcome our bulldogs back and set the stage for a year full of learning, innovation, and creativity.

Last spring, we were one of only two schools in California to receive the Gold Ribbon, Title 1 Academic Achievement, and the Exemplary Arts awards (pictured above). It's exciting to see our students embrace our unique academic program every day. Although we are proud, there is still so much to accomplish this year and in the future.

We recently submitted our paperwork for our spring International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme authorization visit. We are thrilled for the opportunity to show off our award winning, arts-integrated learning design.

If you are considering sending your child to a school where learning is center stage and creativity is celebrated, Vista Academy of Performing Arts is the place to be!



Vista *Adult Transition Center*

325 E. Bobier Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/758-3400 • www.vistausd.org



Chris Altona
Principal

Growth and Expansion

The population of students at Vista Adult Transition Center (VATC) has grown with the addition of two new programs. We are continuing to build our campus to meet the needs of our widely diverse, wonderful students. In fact these two programs have quite different focuses from our other offerings.

The first, our Adult Transition Program for students with mild/moderate disabilities, has grown to the point that we will be adding a second teacher. This is a Learning Center model for students who are 18–22 years old and have not yet earned a high school diploma. The young adults in this class are supported just enough to gain gradually greater levels of autonomy by accessing public transit and developing employability, community college, trade school and adult school skill sets. There is also a focus on the development of essential “soft” skills, which will enhance our students' chances for success in life.

Our other new program is designed to support high-school-aged students with behavioral challenges. Vista Adolescent Learning Academy (VALA) is a comprehensive academic environment with a particular focus on social, emotional, and communicative growth within our pupils. This program also provides a safe haven for students who might otherwise attend non-public schools, saving the need to transport and educate these young people outside of their own community.

We have already experienced successes in each of these creations, largely because they have been built to precisely address the challenges our students face. Without a doubt, as we grow, we will become more and more versed in predicting and addressing each student's challenges and doing so with personalized methodology.

VIDA *Vista Innovation & Design Academy*

740 Olive Ave., Vista, CA 92083 • 760/724-7115 • www.vistausd.org



Dr. Eric Chagala
Principal

World of Work

VIDA has developed a very close relationship with Qualcomm and their “Thinkabit Lab” in San Diego. They have opened the doors of their Thinkabit Lab to our school for an amazing series of field trips. The UT San Diego referred to the Thinkabit Lab as “part art studio and engineering lab.” During the field trips, students work alongside Qualcomm engineers to build “RoboCrafts” that are mechanized by servo motors and programmed with Arduino microcontroller technology. Students also have the opportunity to learn about the “World of Work” and what it takes to be employed by a highly innovative firm. You may see the video footage of a newscast by FOX News 5 and this exciting opportunity by visiting our website at www.VIDASHARKS.com

Vista Visions *Academy*

305 E. Bobier Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/724-4785 • <http://va.vistausd.org/>



Dr. Erin English
Principal

Hands-On Learning

At Vista Visions Academy, we pride ourselves in small group hands-on instruction and personalized learning for our students. When our middle school students come on campus three days a week, part of their weekly schedule includes two science labs and a design lab. In the design lab, students are given a challenge and work together in multigrade teams to complete it.

The picture shows some of our students working together to make healthy energy bars. Not only did they make their bars but they also used mathematical skills to figure out the nutritional content of their creation, designed wrappers, and then created a commercial using iMovie to “sell” their finished products.

Through the learning process, they learned how important it can be to read nutritional labels on items they purchase and enjoy. This is only one example of many that focus on regular hands-on learning and giving students a voice in their learning process.



A FINALIST • From Page 1



Dr. Devin Vodicka

Jenny represents the excellence and innovation of our entire team. We are very fortunate to have wonderful teachers, classified employees, and administrators that embody our values of respect, trust, and collaboration. Jenny’s selection as one of the top teachers in the entire state is a testament to the high quality teachers, instructional aides, bus drivers, principals, and team members that are making a difference in the lives of our children each and every day. As we celebrate her selection as one of the top teachers in California, let’s also celebrate her colleagues and be proud that “We Are Vista Everyday.”

Vista *High School*

1 Panther Way, Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-5611 • www.vistausd.org



Anthony Barela
Principal

A Model for the Nation

It has been a great start to the school year, and there have been a number of great opportunities for our students. In September, VHS was named an XQ super-school, and one of only 10 in the nation! The monies from this will be used to redesign our large traditional school.

Vista High School will be using a rigorous, hands-on, collaborative approach to motivate its students to take on the real-world challenges defined by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. With a curriculum co-created by students and teachers, VHS will now focus more than ever on empowering its students to take full control of their learning, tackle real-world problems with empathy and collaboration, and act as agents of global change.

Continuing to showcase excellence, the 35th Annual Vista Invitational Field Tournament (VIFT) will be taking place on November 12. This prestigious field tournament will showcase premier bands from around Southern California.

Together, we are going to continue to celebrate the rich traditions that defined who we were, and look forward to building new ones based upon who we want to become. We are Vista every day, and we are becoming the model of educational excellence!

Vista Magnet *Middle School*

151 Escondido Dr., Vista, CA 92084 • 760/726-5766 • www.vistausd.org



Anne Green
Principal

The “I” in IB

Vista Magnet is “going global,” with many initiatives that will deepen our International Baccalaureate focus. And it looks like international fever is setting in!

Our after-school world languages learning lab, sponsored by Mrs. Zepeda, provides students with access to seven different languages via Rosetta Stone. Thanks to Mr. Magaña and Mrs. Adams, all Vipers now have Edgenuity accounts that enable them to pursue their Spanish studies in a blended learning environment. We also have a new Korean Language Club, founded by students and sponsored by our instructional aide, Mrs. Lee.



But wait, there’s more! Very soon you will see and hear the joyous dancing of Mrs. Degtyarev’s new Sangam Dance Club students, as they learn the intricacies of Indian dance. Finally, our seventh-graders are involved in a wonderful collaboration with sister schools in Pakistan, where together they will be completing an online course in global citizenship with the Global Nomads Group Campfire Program.

Watch out world, here come the VMMS Vipers!

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