

School News

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Covering the Fullerton School District



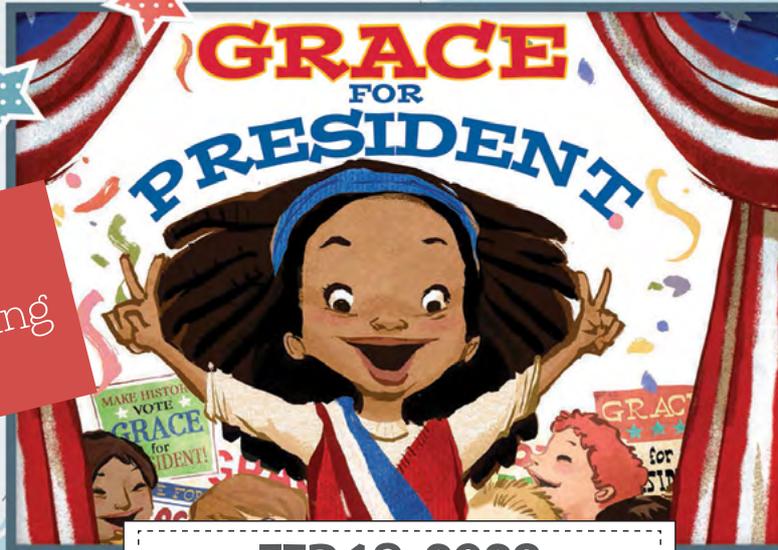
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February 2023



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Six FSD Schools Receive California Distinguished Schools Recognition



Dr. Robert Pletka
Superintendent

State Superintendent of Public Education, Tony Thurmond, recently announced the 2023 California Distinguished Schools. Fullerton School District (FSD) is proud to announce that six of 17 elementary schools

in FSD have received this prestigious recognition this year. Acacia, Hermosa Drive, Fisler, Beechwood, Laguna Road, and Sunset Lane Schools each received the 2023 California Distinguished School recognition.

The California Distinguished Schools program recognizes schools for their hard work, dedication, and resilience shown by educators and schools following the struggles faced by communities stemming from physical and mental health challenges as a result of the pandemic. Data used to select 2023 California Distinguished Schools includes assessment results, chronic absenteeism, suspension rates, and socioeconomic data.

Statewide, only 6% of all elementary schools received recognition as a 2023 California Distinguished School and FSD is home to six of the schools recognized, the most schools recognized in any Orange County School District. Dr. Caroline Llewellyn, Principal of Hermosa Drive School, shared, “Hermosa Drive is an inclusive, family-friendly community school where high academic standards and kindness are at the core. Students, teachers, staff, and parents have worked diligently to achieve exceptional student achievement and an overwhelmingly positive school climate. The 2023 California Distinguished School awards is a reflection of Hermosa Drive’s commitment to excellence, positivity, and collaboration. A variety of



programs and opportunities are provided to students to ignite their passions, provide experiences, and empower them to impact and serve their community. Through a whole child learner-centered approach, Hermosa Drive has a balanced and inclusive learning environment with high academic standards, rich integrated programs for healthy minds and bodies, and a community built on partnerships and strong relationships.”

“It is my pleasure to honor and recognize these 356 elementary schools for providing outstanding public education and opportunities to students. Their innovation and hard work have helped to ensure their students can heal, recover, and thrive—even in the toughest times,” Thurmond said in a press release. “California Distinguished Schools represent examples of not just excellent teaching, learning, and collaboration, but also highly successful, data-driven school efforts ranging from professional development for educators to mental health and social-emotional wellness strategies to address the needs of students and families.”



Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



Netragrednik

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FOUNDER/PUBLISHER: Kay Coop
562/493-3193 • kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com

ADVERTISING SALES: 562/493-3193

CONTENT COORDINATOR: Barbra Longiny

GRAPHIC DESIGNER/PRODUCTION:
Emily Ung and Mie Kawamura

COPY EDITORS: Kate Karp, Anna Zappia

SOCIAL MEDIA: Nancy Lueder

Netragrednik by Neta Madison



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SCHOOL NEWS ROLL CALL, LLC

P.O. Box 728, Seal Beach, CA 90740
562/493-3193

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Happy New Year!

This year is off to a great start. Dr. Pletka begins this issue with his message on page 3. Congratulations to the six schools recognized as CA Distinguished Schools. Congratulations continue with the PBIS awards explained on page 5.

In this issue you will read articles on many topics including the arts. You might want to find a comfy chair and plan to read awhile.

Be sure to enter our word search contest on page 20 (all ages may enter).

Our next issue is April 5.



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Dr. Chad Hammitt
Associate
Superintendent

Congratulations

At the October Fullerton School District Board of Trustees meeting, staff was acknowledged and celebrated for PBIS accomplishments district-wide.

PBIS stands for

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. PBIS is built on the premise that students do not come to school knowing behavior expectations. Rather, these expectations need to be taught directly and explicitly, in the same way we teach reading and math to students. Therefore, PBIS is not a curriculum, but a research-based framework of proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate behaviors. PBIS uses a tiered continuum of evidence-based supports and is inclusive of all school settings. It also closely connects with the work we are doing to support the Social-Emotional Learning, or SEL for our students.

The Fullerton School District (FSD) is known for unprecedented growth and achievement in meeting the needs of our learners. For this reason, we are excited to announce that ALL 20 FSD schools earned State-level recognition from the California PBIS Coalition. FSD has seen continual growth in PBIS recognition over the years. In a six-year time period, FSD has increased from TWO schools receiving Statewide recognition to ALL 20 schools!

Recognition was awarded by the state at the bronze, silver, gold, and platinum levels. PBIS recognition of any kind is an extraordinary accomplishment and is reflective of the individual growth at each school site in implementing PBIS with fidelity, based on the national framework. For the first time ever, all Fullerton schools earned recognition at the top levels of gold and platinum, with eight schools earning gold and 12 schools earning platinum.



The schools and awards are:

- Acacia Elementary School, Platinum
- Beechwood School, Platinum
- Commonwealth Elementary School, Gold
- Fern Drive Elementary School, Platinum
- Robert C. Fislser School, Platinum
- Golden Hill, Gold
- Hermosa Drive, Platinum
- Ladera Vista Jr. High School of the Arts, Gold
- Laguna Road Elementary School, Platinum
- Maple Elementary School, Gold
- Nicolas Junior High, Platinum
- Orangethorpe Elementary School, Gold
- Pacific Drive Elementary School, Platinum
- Parks Junior High, Gold
- Raymond Elementary School, Platinum
- Richman Elementary School, Gold
- Rolling Hills Elementary School, Gold
- Sunset Lane Elementary School, Platinum
- Valencia Park Elementary School, Platinum
- Woodcrest Elementary School, Platinum

During the 2021-22 school year, FSD also fully implemented PBIS on the Bus. We are one of the only districts in Orange County with PBIS on our buses. Fullerton School District is very proud of all the hard work that has gone into implementing PBIS with fidelity in our schools and on our buses.

Acacia Elementary School

1200 N. Acacia Ave., Fullerton, CA 92831 • 714/447-7700 • acacia.fullertonisd.org



Rachel McCormick
Principal

STEM Lab

Acacia Elementary's STEM Lab is busy with curious minds and lots of exploration. Our Pandas are making meaningful discoveries about how STEM is relevant in our everyday lives. Acacia is proud to launch all our Pandas into the world of coding, engineering, and design. Students

use coding apps and robots, such as Ozobots, Dash, and Cue, to learn how coding and technology amplifies our world. A team of sixth graders placed 1st place in the FSD App Design and Challenge!

Our younger Pandas also use Scratch Jr., Ozobots, and Dash as an introduction to coding. They customize their characters and elaborate in their storytelling techniques and even create mini games! Our second and third graders are currently working on circuits using Little Bits to enhance their inventions. With these curious, innovative minds, we know that they'll create the next best thing that our world needs.



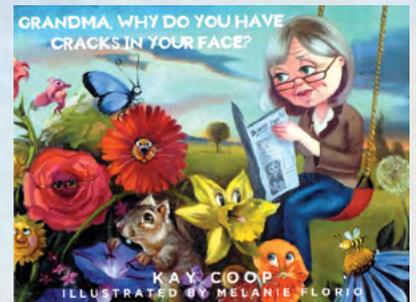
Students code Dash robots

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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.

By Kay Coop | Illustrated by Melanie Florio

Beechwood School

780 Beechwood Ave., Fullerton, CA 92835 • 714/447-2850 • beechwood.fullertonsd.org



Hannah Lim
Principal

California Distinguished School

We are excited to announce that we are one of six schools in the Fullerton School District who have the honor to be recognized as a 2023 California Distinguished School.



This distinction is awarded to schools for closing the achievement gap and achieving exceptional student performance. This is a direct reflection of the amazing hard work and partnership of our staff, students, parents, and community. Thank you all for the continued support.

As an International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme school, we encourage our students to pursue learning beyond the walls of a classroom and to pursue their passions, make their dreams a reality, and make an impact in their community. Our students are tasked to identify their dreams and transform them into tangible actions. Currently, our eighth-grade students are in the process of investigating, developing, planning, executing, and evaluating year-long service projects. Students create

these projects while keeping global contexts in mind, which allow them to apply knowledge to real world problems.

The IB program helps our students become more aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, undertake challenges that develop new skills, persevere in action, work collaboratively with others, and develop international-mindedness. In this spirit, we strive to recognize our Bobcats that embody the IB learner profile. We do these through programs like Dream Catcher, Every Student Succeeds, and monthly Character awards. We also provide opportunities for our Bobcats to experience and explore their interests through field trips to global corporations such as Google and our upcoming Career Day on February 24th. We give our Bobcats voice and choice by giving them the opportunity to choose which three presenters speak to their interest. Some past presenting participants have been a Disney executive, entrepreneurs, doctors, immigration lawyers, and so much more. We look forward to another successful Career Day.

We are eager to see what our students will accomplish this year and are so proud of developing lifelong learners who are well-rounded citizens.

Commonwealth Elementary School

2200 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, CA 92831 • 714/447-7705 • commonwealth.fullertonsd.org



Jean Summy
Principal

Commonwealth STAGE Program

“A whole new world...a new fantastic point of view!” That is exactly what our Commonwealth STAGE program brought to the Tiger community on December 8, 2022 with a wonderful presentation of Aladdin! Students from Third through the Sixth Grade rehearsed for 10 weeks under the supervision of All the Arts

STAGE directors Shannon Sharpe and Erin Miller, and with Mrs. Arshiya Khan, our Commonwealth teacher sponsor. The Aladdin company performed the play twice for all students and held an evening performance for parents and family. We are so proud of their hard work and commitment to making sure “The Show Goes ON!” despite many obstacles. It was a beautifully presented gift of theater for the entire Commonwealth Elementary family!



Fern Drive *Elementary School*

1400 W. Fern Dr., Fullerton, CA 92833 • 714/447-7710 • fern.fullertonsd.org



Julie Lucas
Principal

Our Holiday Performance Brings Joy!

Our Fern Drive Holiday Performance was back this year and it was a dazzler! On Saturday, December 17th, all our TK-6th grade classes dropped in to perform for parents and guests bringing joy to all who attended. This tradition has been taking place for many years at Fern Drive and this year we were excited to be able to bring the production back after the pandemic. Our fabulous Fern Drive Foundation, led by our President Mrs. Jody Lebs, planned and hosted our Whoville-themed

performance. Students dressed in holiday outfits and absolutely shined as they sang for families and guests. Each performance was packed and our students shined with pride and joy! After the performance, students and families were able to enjoy pancakes and hot chocolate and have their picture taken with Santa! Watching our students shine on stage and having time together with our families only strengthens our school community, making Fern Drive a special place for our kids to learn and grow. These are the traditions that create life-long memories and our Falcons won't forget this special tradition!



Robert C. Fisler School

1350 Starbuck St., Fullerton, CA 92833 • 714/447-2890 • fisler.fullertonsd.org



Robert C. Fisler & Team Kids for Community Partnership

Team Kids is an amazing nonprofit organization that Fisler has partnered with for years, and their mission is to empower kids to change the world and be powerful, capable, and compassionate community partners. Our first school-wide challenge was collecting socks for our community's homeless shelters. Our second challenge was writing letters to patients at St. Jude Hospital. All throughout the week, we had countless donations of warm socks and heartfelt letters to children who are facing the hardest of hardships. With the support of our Fisler families and students, we were able to collect 100 socks and over 300 letters to send to community members in need. At the end of our Team Kids challenge, our students host a carnival that is 100% student run and all proceeds go to a charity chosen by Team Kids leaders. We were able to raise over \$180 for OC Animal Care!

Dr. Kimberly Benaraw
Principal

our community's homeless shelters. Our second challenge was writing letters to patients at St. Jude Hospital. All throughout the week, we had countless donations of warm socks and heartfelt letters to children who are facing the hardest of hardships. With the support of our Fisler families and students, we were able to collect 100 socks and over 300 letters to send to community members in need. At the end of our Team Kids challenge, our students host a carnival that is 100% student run and all proceeds go to a charity chosen by Team Kids leaders. We were able to raise over \$180 for OC Animal Care!



Golden Hill School for Creative & Performing Arts

732 Barris Dr., Fullerton, CA 92832 • 714/447-7715 • golden.fullertonsd.org



Main Stage Productions

The past few months have been a busy time at Golden Hill. From ensuring students are receiving a quality education in all subject areas, to also ensuring that we are integrating the arts into their everyday experiences, staff and students have been working overtime! In November we kicked off our main stage productions. We began with our third grade team, who presented

a wonderful performance of Fullerton Is Our Town. That was followed up by our fourth grade team and their production of Tall Tales, Fables, and Fairy Tales. Our first graders presented Stone Soup and soon, our 5th and 6th grade students will present a full musical, when in February, we present The Addams Family. We will close the year with our second grade team!! It is no secret that the arts are important to the growth and development of every child and at Golden Hill, those dreams become reality!



Hermosa Drive *Elementary School*

400 E. Hermosa Dr., Fullerton, CA 92835 • 714/447-7720 • hermosa.fullertonsd.org



Dr. Caroline Llewellyn
Principal

Broadcasting Club

Hermosa Drive students love participating in our Broadcasting Club. During their weekly club meetings students develop their passions technology, speaking, and writing skills.

Recently, our Hermosa Hawk students partnered up with The

Troy High School students to create a collaborative broadcast. With their big buddies, our Hermosa Hawks created and wrote a script. Next, they divided up into multiple teams: sound, graphics, production, producing, cameras, and broadcasters. Our students worked collaboratively with their high school buddies and produced an entire show.



At Hermosa Drive we value experiences and enrichment opportunities that empower our students to impact their community. We are so proud of our students using their skills to bring stories to life during their broadcasting club. I am so impressed with our Hermosa Hawks!

Ladera Vista *Junior High School of the Arts*

1700 E. Wilshire Ave., Fullerton, CA 92831 • 714/447-7765 • ladera.fullertonsd.org



Bill Lynch
Principal

"Spamalot the Musical"

Ladera Vista Junior High School for the Arts will be presenting the Broadway musical, *Spamalot* with two evening performances on March 2nd and 3rd. Our staff, parents and Fullerton community will be treated to singing, dancing and laughs in this entertaining musical comedy. Our all-student

backstage crew keep the production running in addition to our dedicated and involved group of parent volunteers that help support the production in all phases, including costume and set design.

The student cast and crew comes exclusively from Ladera Vista Productions (LVP), our musical theater production class. LVP also includes our "Triple Threat" students, which includes students who take a dance, a choir, and a theater class in their student schedule. Students interested in joining the LVP program or other advanced performing arts electives can find information about auditions on our school website.



Laguna Road *Elementary School*

300 Laguna Rd., Fullerton, CA 92835 • 714/447-7725 • laguna.fullertonsd.org



Stephanie Guppy
Principal

Friday Night Live at Laguna Road

Laguna Road School values student leadership and service-learning opportunities that give all students voice and choice. Friday Night Live is one of our leadership groups that makes an impact by implementing student-led ideas. Just before winter break, this group of 4th-6th grade students ran a campaign called, “Change the way you look at change.” The purpose of the campaign was to highlight the importance

of caring for others, and that together, a small action can turn into something big. The entire school collected change during the month of December, and we were able to give a generous gift to a family. Each small act of generosity turned into a larger gift from the students at Laguna Road. A few more examples of how this group of students leads at school is by supporting younger students during recess, helping monitor hallways during lunch transitions, and planning lessons and activities during Red Ribbon Week. We are lucky to have such creative, hardworking students at Laguna Road!



Maple *Elementary School*

244 E. Valencia Dr., Fullerton, CA 92832 • 714/447-7590 • maple.fullertonsd.org



Anthony Abney
Principal

New Focus, New Vision

Maple Elementary is proud to announce a new vision for its education program for 2023-24, with a focus on providing a curiosity-driven, impactful education to its students. To achieve this, Maple students will be learning through project-based learning (PBL), environmental science, advocacy, and immersive, once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

Students will learn environmental science through PBL, which will encourage students to delve deep into real-world problems and give them opportunities to create and problem solve in practical and meaningful ways. It will also give students a deeper understanding of the natural world and our role in preserving it. Advocacy will also be a key aspect of the new vision, with students being encouraged to speak up and take action on issues they are passionate about.

Maple’s new vision is not only about educating students, but also about empowering them to make a positive impact on their communities and the world. This new approach will help students to develop the critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills they need to succeed in the 21st century.



Nicolas Junior High School

1100 W. Olive Ave., Fullerton, CA 92833 • 714/447-7775 • nicolas.fullertonsd.org



Jose Varela
Principal

Nicolas' Own DreamCatcher

Nicolas Junior High School would like to congratulate Daniel J. Fischman for his selection as one of Fullerton's School District's DreamCatcher. Daniel has mastered the skills required in woodshop. His teachers

states that Daniel is a model student that knows the importance of safety and thoroughness. His favorite wood projects are the Mallot and the Spinning Top. Currently he is working on his next project, a Bird House. Daniel is also a member of the Nicolas Jr High School Ambassador's Program. He wishes to continue helping the Nicolas and Fullerton Communities as well as improving his wood working skills.

Congratulations Daniel. Nicolas Jr High School is proud of you.



Pacific Drive Elementary School

1501 W. Valencia Dr., Fullerton, CA 92833 • 714/447-7735 • pacific.fullertonsd.org



Dr. Kelly Castillo
Principal

Pacific Drive Celebrates the Congressional App Challenge

This December, Pacific Drive sixth graders celebrated the Congressional App Challenge. As the capstone project to our school wide computer science pathway, sixth graders designed apps that can be used to

better their community.

One of our groups who placed in the challenge designed and created an app called "Water Control". The team invested this app as a way to help people reduce drought conditions by monitoring and limiting water use. In addition to the team recognized here, many other students developed apps to combat climate change including beach clean up, tree planting, and reduction

of greenhouse gas emissions. Sixth graders are looking forward to expanding their computer science experience as they continue to work through our Python curriculum this year. Our students and their families were honored to be recognized at Fullerton College. We are very grateful for our teachers Ms. Herdina and Ms. Juarez for making this project possible for all of our students.



Pacific Drive 6th Graders

Sebastian Rangel, Jonathan Magdaleno, Yescemity Durazo and Maximilliano Pérez

Orangethorpe *Elementary School*

1400 S. Brookhurst Rd., Fullerton, CA 92833 • 714/447-7730 • fullertonsd.org/orangethorpe



Deborah Bennett
Principal

A Lasting Partnership

Every student begins their educational journey in an elementary school which accounts for a significant part of their schooling. In the blink of an eye, the elementary years come to an end and students move onward and upward following their passions and dreams. Some students return to say hi to their previous teachers but many lose ties with their elementary school. Until now! Students from the

theater program at Fullerton Union High School (FUHS) and Orangethorpe's Multiage program have formed a partnership called Stories from Orangethorpe.

Specifically, Orangethorpe's Multiage students write narrative stories as part of their Writer's Workshop curriculum and the stories are shared with the students at FUHS. The theater students select ten stories, create scripts and then perform the stories for Orangethorpe students and families during the day and two shows at FUHS in the evening. A wonderful experience for all involved.



The theater program at FUHS and Orangethorpe Multiage students create lasting memories.

Parks Junior High School

1710 Rosecrans Ave., Fullerton, CA 92833 • 714/447-7785 • parks.fullertonsd.org



Laura Makely
Principal

Community Service Projects

Happy New Year from Parks Junior High School. First semester concluded just before the winter break and brought a number of opportunities for students to participate in community service projects. Once again,

our PTSA sponsored a toy drive for Pathways of Hope. Parks families donated generously and we were happy to help children in our own community enjoy some new toys at the holidays. Parks' student group, the Ambassadors, partnered with OC United and the Gilbert Community Center to provide groceries to support local families. Students organized the donated food

and packaged bags for each family. The Ambassadors look forward to planning additional events to support families in need and to demonstrating the positive impact that teens can have on their community.



Raymond Elementary School

517 N. Raymond Ave., Fullerton, CA 92831 • 714/447-7740 • raymond.fullertonsd.org



Cristina Centeno
Principal

Raymond Elementary's Updated Library

Raymond Elementary is excited to announce that we have recently updated our library thanks to the Phelps grant money awarded in May, 2022. Through this grant, Raymond has furnished the library with state-of-the-art furniture that provides a flexible learning space. We now have a stage for student use to promote

collaboration and creativity through STEM-related activities, Readers' Theater, and much more! In addition, we have updated our library book collection to offer recent titles and more diverse selections, including bilingual options and Spanish-translated texts. Our updated library will provide our students with the tools and stage to use their voices and guide them in understanding this voice's power. Undoubtedly, learning and creativity will occur due to the secure and comfortable environment and the literature available to students. Raymond School would like to thank the Phelps foundation for helping make this all possible!



Richman *Elementary School*

700 S. Richman Ave., Fullerton, CA 92832 • 714/447-7745 • richman.fullertonsd.org



Kristen Holm
Principal

Educating the Whole Child

Richman Elementary believes in educating the Whole Child and helping every child to find his or her own greatness. The arts have the power to inspire and change people, or their outlook on the world. Most importantly, the arts can help children find what they are truly passionate about. Thanks to All the Arts for Kids we are fortunate to

host the afterschool STAGE program for a second year! S.T.A.G.E. (Shared Theater Arts Grand Experience) is an opportunity for students in grades 3rd-6th to perform in a musical production. This year we have 70 students participating in the Lion King STAGE Production. Students put in 4 hours a week, learning songs, lines, and choreography.

The impact this program has on students is obvious when you ask them how they feel about being involved:

6th grader (third year STAGE student) Laura says, "It's an amazing experience after all the hard work, you learn patience, connect with people you wouldn't hang out with, it builds confidence, friendships and after it's all done...we are a family".

4th grader (second year STAGE student) Sofia says "I look forward every year to STAGE. It increases your creativity. It is a fun experience. I love it!"

3rd grader Anderson said, "I have always dreamed becoming a part of STAGE. It has changed my life. Really, it has! I feel that I am prepared and I am ready to do my best. I'm so excited!"

On March 15th and 16th at 6:00 p.m. we will have evening performances for parents and families. Hope you can make it!



Richman's 2023 Lion King

Rolling Hills *Elementary School*

1460 E. Rolling Hills Dr., Fullerton, CA 92835 • 714/447-7795 • rolling.fullertonsd.org



Lindy McNutt
Principal

Step In Time with Mary Poppins!

In December, the MP3 Multi-age program, led by Mrs. Hohn-Mack and Ms. Johnson, put together 6 amazing performances of Mary Poppins! With a musical screenplay adapted and directed by Amy Goo, everyone in the K-3 class

was able to participate in this exciting production! From chimney sweeps to Mary, Bert, Jane and Michael, students were able to learn about cooperation, teamwork, and problem-solving through rehearsing and performing this musical! The students were so fortunate to have multiple parent volunteers help with staging, sets, and costumes to bring this play to life. We even had former MP3 fourth and fifth grade students

come back as part of the stage crew! In addition to on-stage time, students were able to participate in a variety of thematic STEAM activities, including the chimney sweep challenge, math lessons with money and many reading and writing lessons in class. We are so proud of our students!



MP3 Chimney Sweeps step in time to the fun-loving musical of Mary Poppins!

Valencia Park *Elementary School*

3441 W. Valencia Dr., Fullerton, CA 92833 • 714/447-7755 • valencia.fullertonsd.org



Dr. Guillermo Muñoz
Principal

Arts Family Night

Valencia Park School and All the Arts Foundation (our favorite providers of Art and Family experiences) got together this fall for an All the Arts Family Night filled with great art and fun. We danced, learned about Media Arts, did visual

arts, and engaged with music. We had a great turnout and great feedback from the families. We look forward to repeated events like this. They were so good and talented. <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cl-dVxbjPAv/> One thing we know for sure, WE LOVE All The Arts. We are fortunate to host the Clay lab here at Valencia Park as well as have roving artists visit us and share their talents with our students. We believe the Arts are an integral part of a high-quality education and couldn't be happier.



Sunset Lane *Elementary School*

2030 Sunset Ln., Fullerton, CA 92833 • 714/447-7750 • sunset.fullertonsd.org



Dr. Tracy Gyurina
Principal

The Jungle Book Kids Comes to Life at Sunset Lane

On Wednesday, December 14th, some of Sunset Lane's talented third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders performed in *The Jungle Book Kids*, directed by Larry Watts, and produced by Erin Miller and our STAGE team. Our fabulous first grade teachers, Ms. Nakamura and Ms. Andi supported our students with each rehearsal. It was the first time a musical has come to life in

the Sunset Lane Multipurpose Room since before the pandemic. The outstanding performers put on three entertaining shows for both students and parents. Our amazing board members Hilda Sugarman and Ruthi Hanchett were also in attendance. From Bageera, to Baloo, to Kaa, to King Louie, Shanti, Shere Khan, Mowgli, and a whole jungle full of animals, audience members were delighted by song, dance, and a lot of laughs. We are so grateful for this opportunity and to be able to watch our students grow in confidence and stage presence!



The Jungle Book Kids cast and crew gather together for a celebratory picture after a rocking performance!

Woodcrest *Elementary School*

455 W. Baker Ave., Fullerton, CA 92832 • 714/447-7760 • woodcrest.fullertonisd.org



Chris Wilkins
Principal

Woodcrest Telling their Story!

Woodcrest Elementary is excited to promote our largest Speech and Debate team in school history. The club is an exciting opportunity for our students to learn a wider vocabulary and oral communication skills in addition to dramatic reading and interpretation techniques. The team consists of returning members Sara

Serban, Natalia Alvarez, Jenyffer Montiel, and Angeline Mendoza. There are also many standout newcomers who are gearing up for upcoming Mardi Gras tournaments in January. Our talented coach Erin Townsell and her assistant coach Chris Berglund have brought the program to new heights and excitement! Woodcrest had their first Speech and Debate Champion this year in Sara Serban for JV Storytelling. The success of the team is bringing excitement to the Speech and Debate community and school district! We look forward to continued success that these trailblazers have started for Woodcrest!



MyConnect Academy

1460 E. Rolling Hills, Fullerton, CA 92835 • 714/447-2862 • fullertonisd.org/Academies



Robin Mundschau
Principal

Connecting on Zoom

MyConnect Academy Distance Learning students were excited to have Dr. Pletka, superintendent of Fullerton School

District come visit on Zoom. Dr. Pletka was able to hear about students business plans in Ms. Clemente's class, see a Jeopardy review game in Ms. Kim's class, talk to

students in Ms. Lee's class about what they were learning, and even took 3rd place in an American Revolution Blooket in Ms. Bustos class. Distance Learning students are working hard and learning lots of amazing things.

MyConnect Academy Homeschool students enjoyed participating in a field trip to the Planetarium. Students and parents got to connect to their Bunch Box learning of making constellations, learning about astronomy and more. Students then got to take a live look at stars/constellations and

experience space. Students and families were then able to enjoy time together eating and hanging out over lunch. Homeschool field trips and in-person experiences are so much fun for learning and personal connection.



Orange County Department of Education



Dr. Al Mijares
Superintendent

On a crisp December morning, the City of Westminster and the Orange County Department of Education celebrated the opening of a new park honoring the historic case of Mendez v. Westminster, which put an end to forced segregation in California's public schools while laying the foundation for the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board* decision.

City officials, local dignitaries, students and community members turned out in force for Mendez Tribute Monument Park's dedication ceremony, marking the completion of a five-year collaborative effort. But a few days before its official opening, I had an opportunity to preview the park with Sylvia Mendez, a civil rights icon whose story is central to the case.

Nearly 80 years earlier, in 1943, Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez sought to enroll Sylvia and her two brothers, Geronimo and Gonzalo, Jr., at 17th Street School, known then as "the white school." Despite being American citizens who spoke English — the family lived and worked on a Westminster farm — they were turned away and directed instead to Hoover Elementary, a campus designated for Mexican American children.

Sylvia Mendez was just 8 years old at the time. She would later describe Hoover as "a terrible little shack" with dirt for a playground.

The Mendez family ultimately hired an attorney and teamed up with four other Orange County families who had similarly been denied access to their neighborhood schools. Their case, *Mendez, et al v. Westminster et al*, argued that 5,000 children throughout the county were unjustly harmed by unconstitutional segregation policies.

In 1946, U.S. District Court Judge Paul J. McCormick ruled in favor of the five families, and his decision was later upheld by the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The case ended on April 14, 1947 — one day before Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color barrier with the Brooklyn Dodgers. Seven years later, the Supreme Court declared segregated schools unconstitutional in its sweeping *Brown v. Board* decision.

Gonzalo Mendez died in 1964 at age 51, and his wife Felicitas passed in 1998 — but not before urging her daughter to share the family's story far and wide.

On Monday, Nov. 28, bronze statues of Gonzalo and Felicitas were unveiled for the first time in the new quarter-acre park, which also features a large textbook monument and statues of two students, symbolizing the children impacted by the court's decision. Surrounding these displays are drought-resistant plants, a dry creek bed and interactive stations with content from OCDE's staff of professional educators, who also developed lesson plans and activities for teachers.

As the towering likenesses of her parents were revealed, Sylvia Mendez and her siblings stood front and center. Other invited guests took photos and applauded.

"I'm just so happy," Sylvia said. "I know my mother and family are looking at us from heaven, and they are so happy. Thank you for honoring them."

In this season of gratitude, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Mendezes, along with the Estrada, Guzman, Palomino and Ramirez families, all of whom fought for access and equality on behalf of generations of students they would never meet. As Felicitas Mendez said, they were taking action not just for their own children, but *para todos los niños* — for all children.

The Mendez case is worth celebrating because it broke new ground not just for Orange County but for our entire nation, broadening and strengthening the principles on which this country was founded.

Now and forever, Mendez Tribute Monument Park will serve as a space to gather behind shared values, to reflect on those principles, to revisit a watershed moment in our history and to learn more about the everyday Americans who made it possible.

For more information on Mendez Tribute Monument Park, along with lesson plans and activities, visit www.mendezpark.org.

Kailani's Review



Kailani T.

Hard work and Dedication

"I've Got This!" is book 1 of 8 in the *Perfect Balance Gymnastics Series* by Melissa Torres. The story is about Trista Thompson, a young tumbler who has just moved to Utah and wants to join a competitive



gymnastics team. Since she is great at tumbling, she believes she can quickly and easily learn all gymnastics skills. Can she learn gymnastics skills quickly? What does it take for Trista to be part of the team? Will she be good enough to join the team?

I like all of the books in the *Perfect Balance Gymnastics Series*, especially this one. As a competitive gymnast, reading this book at the start of my new gymnastics season encourages me to try new skills and work harder to improve my existing skills. I give this book 5 out of 5 stars and would highly recommend it to anyone who loves gymnastics or wants to explore the world of gymnasts.

Kailani is a 5th grader who loves to read. When not reading, Kailani likes to play with her brother, jump on the trampoline, listen to music, and ride horses.

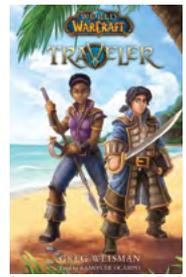
Sourish's Review



Sourish M.

The Hidden Leader Within

Have you met someone you haven't seen in a while, especially one close to you? Well this book, *The Traveler*, talks about the main character Aramar Thorne who is shocked by the sudden



emergence of his father Captain Greydon Thorne. Greydon takes Aramar on a journey with him but after several months, the ship is attacked by the raiders known as the Hidden. It left Aramar and Second Mate Makasa Flitwill all alone to lead themselves back home. The many questions that Aramar had was about the special compass that his father had given to him right before the shipwreck. Little did he know that the compass was the key to something greater than him. *The Traveler* offers a magnificent roller coaster ride in emotions and is overall a really great book. It displays the message of using leadership skills and knowledge when the time comes. You have to Endure...

Sourish M. is a seventh grader who is enthusiastic to learn more and experience new things. He likes Science and Reading, plays soccer, basketball, guitar, and has fun with friends and family. Sourish loves to spend long hours coding and expanding his experiences by traveling with his family.

Fun Things and Places—Word Search Contest

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

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

Entries must be received by March 30, 2023

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

CARNIVAL	CAMP
HOME	SEASHORE
SCHOOL	FARM
PARK	ZOO
SLIDES	HIKE
SWINGS	BIKE RIDE
ROAD TRIP	REUNION
PARTY	CRUISE
MOVIE	SKATING
POOL	VIDEOS
FOREST	



Congratulations to Benjamin Ayala
Winner of our October Word Search Contest!