

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Tehachapi Unified School District



Volume 4, Issue 10

February 2023



TUSD Students: Engaging, Exploring, Connecting, and Achieving!





Caroline Robison Optometry

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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



562/493-3193
kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com

This is our 4th year publishing the TUSD *School News*. As we begin this new year, the challenges seem to be less for all of us as we go about our "normal" routines. I do wonder if our "normal" has changed a bit. If we don't feel well, we question if it is a cold or something worse. Perhaps that is a good thing to be cautious and pay attention to symptoms. At least we know we aren't alone. Everyone experienced the pandemic and can relate and kindness may be one result. As Superintendent Larson-Everson wrote in her message on the following page, "giving and receiving acts of kindness help students develop into well-rounded individuals." If someone seems a bit down, a simple act of kindness makes a big different. We don't hear much about the Golden Rule anymore, but back in my day...way back... we learned to treat others as we wanted to be treated.

This issue has a wealth of information so plan to settle into a comfy chair and read for awhile. And don't forget to enter our word search contests on page 12.

Our next issue is April 12.



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- INDUSTRY CERTIFIED -



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School News

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24 YEARS

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Thank You

As we settle into the second half of the school year and begin preparing for upcoming spring activities and festivities, it's hard to believe that we are already through half of the 2022-2023 school year. Thank you to everyone who is a part of our Tehachapi Unified School District community and who made the first half of the school year a success. TUSD teachers, administrators, and staff worked hard to welcome students back to campus in August

and hit the ground running with the implementation of Capturing Kids Hearts as well as many other programs and strategies aimed at student progress and success. We were very excited to host Back to School nights at each school. It was wonderful to have families back on school campuses and visiting their children's classrooms. During the last week of October, TUSD schools participated in fun activities as they celebrated both Red Ribbon Week and Halloween. In November and December, students provided musical and drama performances as well as achieved great accomplishments on the athletic field. In January 2023 we will once again be encouraging all students and staff to participate in the Great Kindness Challenge. Numerous studies show that both giving and receiving acts of kindness help students develop into well-rounded individuals. Even small gestures such as saying, "Good morning," or smiling at someone are thoughtful gestures that encourage a sense of welcome and belonging.

I want to sincerely thank you for your continued support and engagement in your student's education. We recognize the many challenges that have emerged post-pandemic and we are dedicated to the continued implementation of strategies designed to help all students feel welcome, safe, supported, and successful in school. If you have any questions or concerns throughout this school year, please do not hesitate to call the District Office at (661)822-2100.

Hello and Happy New Year!

By Paul Kaminski, President Board of Education

It is my pleasure to not only be a TUSD Governing Board Member but also as its president. I look forward to working with not only the other six trustees but also with Superintendent Larson-Everson. Tehachapi Unified has challenges it faces but also has dedicated administrators, teachers, and support staff to take those challenges on. What challenges you may ask? As we enter the second half of the school year:

First, we will continue to prioritize student safety. Students have the right to attend school without fear of harm, whether that be of physical or verbal means. Having an agreement just approved in December with the Sandy Hook Project is an additional tool to help THS and JMS.

Next, with the release of the California Dashboard recently, student achievement has shown to be a definite challenge. There are many factors, one being the challenge of the teacher shortage. Our Instructional Services department also has the challenge of providing teachers with staff development in facets of instructional strategies, classroom management, and most importantly, social emotional strategies. I see this year's implementation of Capturing Kids Hearts as a great way to help our students have better self-worth and the grit necessary to face their personal challenges. My confidence is high that the TUSD Personnel and Instructional Services departments will each meet their challenges.

Finally, as Board President, I will strive for the Board to be transparent in its public dealings and in communications with all staff. Our challenges can only be met with honest discussion, no matter how difficult those discussions may be. If you feel the need, I invite you to reach out to the Board, we are here to serve you! You will find our email addresses on the TUSD website, tehachapiusd.com, under 'District Information,' then 'School Board,' then 'Meet the Members.'

I can assure you the Board and staff will continue to work hard for our District to meet its mission, '...to provide all students instruction and guidance to develop the knowledge, skills and character to be successful, contributing and positive citizens.'

Business Services

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



Hojat Entezari
Chief Administrator

New Team Members

The Business Services Department is excited to introduce you to some of our newest team members! The Department has had three staff members move on to pursue other opportunities in the last few months and we are very happy for them.

Our newest accounting clerk, Mrs. Amanda Walker, is taking over the District's Accounts Payable and purchasing functions and will

assist school sites with making sure they have the supplies and services they need to serve students. She moved from Yucapia to Tehachapi in December of 2019 with her husband, two kids, and two dogs and decided to pursue a career in accounting after being at home raising their kids for ten years. Her hobbies include jujitsu with her family and crocheting.

We are also excited to introduce you to our newest Fiscal Coordinator, Bianca Bequer! She is new to

Tehachapi, but says she enjoys the scenic drive from Palmdale where she grew up and is close to her family and friends. Bianca will be taking over the District's primary accounting functions including accounts payable, purchasing, and payroll. Bianca gained her experience in school business working for the Lancaster School District where she served as a program specialist at Piute Middle School and was promoted to the Payroll Clerk IV position before joining Tehachapi. Bianca recently completed her Master's Program in Business Administration. In her spare time, she enjoys participating in delicious hobbies which include cooking. Her signature plates include sushi and charcuterie boards. She is also a huge fan of soccer and has played for over ten years, refereed for about four years, and coached one season. She loves to watch movies at home and at the theater.

Both Bianca and Amanda have already become integral parts of the Business Services Department and we are happy to have them as part of our team!

Food Services

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



Hortencia Tapia
Supervisor

Yearly Food Show

The Pinco Food Show was back this school year and THS students were able to participate and attend the food show once again. TUSD Food Service Department is part of the PINCO co-op and one of the many perks of this co-op is being able to attend the yearly food show with our Tehachapi High School students. Sadly, due to Covid this wasn't possible the last few years but this year we had over 30 students attend

the show, held at the Bakersfield Marriot. This was made possible thanks to Mrs. Heaslet for organizing the field trip and Mr. & Mrs. Carr for chaperoning. THS students were able to taste test a lot of new foods from different vendors and take home lots of goodie. Students that attended the food show filled out food rating forms and voted on the foods they liked best and the foods they didn't like. Vendors will be awarded contracts for the following school year based on our student's ratings as well as the food service staff that attended the show. Students will be able to have these items on our menus for next school year.



District Nurse

300 South Robinson St., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/979-6596



**Jenna Burgess,
RN BSN**
*Credentialed
School Nurse*

Preschool Vision and Hearing Screenings

Tehachapi Unified School District Nurses screen Special Education students' vision and hearing before their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings and as needed throughout the school year with teacher and staff referrals. Our district has two classes of Special Education preschool students, the classes have 3 and 4 year olds in

attendance. The District Nurses get to work with these young students and their parents to make sure they don't have any unmet vision or hearing needs.

On October 21, 2022 with the help of their teacher, Ms. Vidal, April Drury, RN and I were able to screen all of the Golden Hills' preschool class. We used LEA symbols, which are shapes that are easily identifiable for children ages 3-5 years old, and the corresponding matching materials, along with our audiometer. What a joy it was to work with these young students and have them participate in our screenings!



Abigail Leyva and April Drury

Instructional Services

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



Andrea Paxton
Chief Administrator

Local Control Accountability Plan

Beginning in January 2023 and continuing through the remainder of the 2022-2023 school year, Tehachapi Unified School District will begin working on the revision of the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) for the 2023-2024 school year. As part of the annual revision process, TUSD will be meeting with staff, students, and parents to gather input that will be used to inform decisions on how best to support students.

In addition to in person meetings with educational partners, digital surveys will be sent out through ParentSquare to invite input from parents and to give opportunities for parents to express opinions on current programs. Please be on the lookout for these surveys and consider participating.

The current LCAP document can be located on the homepage of the TUSD website at tehachapiusd.com. Within the current LCAP document there are three goals:

1. Tehachapi Unified School District will provide students with safe facilities, learning resources, and high-quality instruction that is research-based, standards-driven, culturally responsive, and inclusive, which ensures all learners have access to and can participate in meaningful and challenging learning opportunities.
2. Tehachapi Unified School District will provide students with a rigorous and interactive instructional program that reduces the educational disparity in academic outcomes for state-identified student groups and provides all students access to support systems as well as opportunities for problem-solving, collaboration, and innovation as measured by participation in professional learning opportunities and technology integration.
3. Tehachapi Unified School District will engage students, their families, and the community by providing an equitable, inclusive, and responsive school environment to support both personal and academic growth for all students.

TUSD looks forward to continuing our partnership with our community to develop a comprehensive plan that supports the needs of all students.

Personnel Services

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



Dr. Roxane Romero
Chief Administrator

Welcome Mrs. Kuthie

Starting 2023 with a big and motivated heart to find the best staff!

We are so excited about this new year. We look forward to 2023 and are eager to start staffing for the upcoming school year. Our first in-person recruitment fair will occur on February 5, 2023, through Kern County Superintendent of Schools. It's not too late to join our team for this school year. The Personnel Department has ongoing hiring

needs for talented and student-centered people to join our TUSD team. Please feel free to contact us for further information at 661-822-2100.

We would like to introduce you to one of our new teachers, Katherine Kuithe, at Tehachapi High School. Mrs. Kuthie has many years of working with special

education students and we are excited to have her on board to serve our students while sharing her knowledge. We have also hired a new Student Success Counselor, Marisol Luna, who will be serving students at Monroe and Tehachapi High School. Her experience and resources to help students will be an asset to our learning community. All our new employees have shown a heart of service and will be amazing advocates for our students, staff, and community. We welcome all our new 2022 hires and wish them the best of luck with the current school year.

Also, thank you to our parent volunteers for working in classrooms, chaperoning field trips, or coaching our student-athletes. Your support has been invaluable in helping us with a successful first semester. If you are a parent who would like to volunteer, please check in with your student's school site for volunteer opportunities and clearance.

Professional Development

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



Jennifer Butler
Coordinator of Instructional Support and Improvement

Preschool/ Transitional Kindergarten Professional Development

Tehachapi Unified School District is excited to offer professional development for the educators of our youngest students. Our first session took place in December where the team collaborated using the preschool framework to determine student developmental levels. The team developed lessons to support students' varying social-emotional needs specific to their

developmental levels. Research shows that children with strong social-emotional skills are better able to cope with everyday challenges and benefit academically, professionally, and socially.

A few things that you can do at home to support your child are to play games together, talk about feelings and what they mean, talk about how to calm down when you are angry like taking slow breaths in and out, and read stories together that show how characters feel in different situations.

This spring we will be delving into algebra function and math reasoning for students aged 4-5 years old.



Special Education Services

126 South Snyder, Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2100



Dr. Solomon DeFrancis
Director SPED

Preschool

The Tehachapi Unified School District's Special Education Department is pleased to share one of several enhancements to our Special Education Program.

We established a new special education preschool model. The new model comprises two special education preschool classes. The original Tompkins Elementary classroom and an additional Golden Hills early morning session class allow for better continuity of student services. This model provides for increased educational learning time for students, as well



as expanding program hours and days, to 4 hours a day, 5 days a week. It is our goal to prepare children to be successful! Our preschool programs follow the California Preschool Learning Foundations to guide our curriculum and instruction. This is just one of many improvements in the Special Education Department and our

dedication to improving student outcomes. Thank you for choosing Tehachapi Unified School District for your child's preschool experience! We will do our best to meet your expectations.

Student Services

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



Dr. Bonny Porter
Director
Student Services

TUSD Before and After School Care

TUSD's Extended Care is a before and after program designed to provide high quality supervision for working families with elementary age children in the Tehachapi community.

Extended Care services are available at elementary schools for

TK through fifth grade students. Care is available from 6:00 AM until school begins and after school until 6:00 PM.

Staff plans activities such as art, crafts, games, story time, sports, as well as homework assistance, to support students' academic and social emotion development. Activities are based on a theme for the month. Daycare Managers from each site meet once a week with the Daycare Coordinator to plan lessons for the upcoming week.

Our Extended Daycare is a safe and healthy environment for students. Tuition assistance is available for families who qualify for free or reduced cost daycare. If you have any questions, please call Robyn Hall, Daycare Coordinator at (661) 221-1935.



Extended Care students on a fieldtrip to downtown Tehachapi.

Technology

400 South Snyder, Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2100



Ryan McKay
Director

New VoIP

The past two months have been spent getting the new location set up and fine tuning the new VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) phone system for the District. The VoIP phone system is a much needed upgrade from using traditional phone lines. Phone calls are clearer and the system allows for a lot of customization for each school's individual needs. We've taken the time since the install to customize

some of the call menus and make sure calls are routing in the way each school intends. There are a surprising amount of differences in the ways that each school likes to use their phone system. My team has also been working hard to learn the backend of the phone system and how to provide support to the sites as needed. We've been working with the phone system vendor to ensure we are utilizing best practices.

Our new office location has gotten a lot of work lately, adding shelves, workspaces, desks, conference tables and more, to give the Technology Department a location to both work and meet as a team. Having a single location with all the employees in the same location, with the exception of the site techs, who are housed at their designated schools, has been wonderful for improving communication and collaboration. We've been meeting parents as the new department building is the chromebook pickup/dropoff location.

We've added a new administrative clerk, Jackie Fox, to the Department team. She's been helping keep the entire department organized. We're very grateful she's been able to join the Technology Department and I, for one, am very excited for the Department's future plans. We're starting to plan out what is going to be happening through the rest of the school year and into the summer.

Transportation

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



Denise Berry
Supervisor

Drive with Caution around School Buses

Every year transportation receives calls and questions regarding the use of the "Red Lights" and whether vehicles can pass at school bus stops. California has laws in place to protect school children. Vehicle code 22112 (A) explains language regarding the use of the eight-light warning system on all school buses for the use of loading and unloading students. Vehicle Code 22454 (a)

explains meeting and passing of school buses while the eight-light warning system lights are activated.

Remember yellow, amber flashing lights is a warning, the bus is approaching a school bus stop. Once this bus comes to a full stop, the red lights shall be activated for the traveling public to stop. Motorists should drive with caution not only around school bus stops but also in residential areas. Children are impulsive, they may see a friend across the street and run, without thinking, or retrieve a ball. Please help us protect our children.



Cummings Valley *Elementary*

24220 Bear Valley Rd., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2190 • cvs.tehachapiusd.com



Taylor Marquesen
Principal

Community Projects

Students at Cummings Valley School are learning how rewarding it is to think of others and help out those less fortunate than themselves, as we have had two very successful community projects recently.

In November, CVS families generously donated nearly 1,500 pairs of new and used shoes to an international organization that distributes them to underdeveloped nations. This was our first shoe drive ever, and we were so excited by its success!

We also had our annual community food drive, made even more exciting by a competition between all three TUSD elementary schools, in which the school that collects the most grocery items gets to “slime” their principal! CVS families once again came through, donating more than 2,100 items to a local food bank. CV Principal Mrs. Marquesen was a good sport as 5 gallons of green slime poured down her head and back and 600 students cheered her along!



CVS Principal Taylor Marquesen got slimed in front of an excited crowd, as a school prize for collecting the most grocery items in a recent charity food drive.

Golden Hills *Elementary*

20215 Park Rd., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2180 • ghe.tehachapiusd.com



Kendra Bailey
Principal

Science Matters at Golden Hills!

On November 30th Golden Hills Elementary held its first Science Fair since the pandemic began. It was a huge success! As Science Fair Coordinators, Rebecca Stephens, 4th grade teacher, and Madeline Cortez, 1st grade teacher,

helped participating students with their projects during their lunch breaks. Our goal was to ensure that every student wanting to participate received sufficient support and guidance to complete a Science Fair experiment. Nine students received gold, silver and bronze awards. Congratulations to Kieran Bailey, Jamie Smith, and Braylie Chun whose top projects qualified them to represent our school at the Kern County Science Fair on March 14, 2023. Kieran tested rock salts to

melt ice; Jamie explored aircraft aerodynamics; and Braylie investigated types of gases to propel a balloon car. We are excited to be growing future scientists here at Golden Hills Elementary School because science matters!



Jacobsen *Middle School*

711 Anita Dr., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2150 • jms.tehachapiusd.com



Eric Loe
Principal

Attendance Matters!

Regular attendance is one of the leading indicators of success. That is true at school, as well as in other aspects of our lives. As people say, “Showing up is half the battle!” At Jacobsen Middle School, just as at schools across the nation, we are working on improving student attendance. Nationwide, student attendance has not rebounded to pre-COVID averages. Chronic absenteeism has increased in the last few years, and has damaging effects on student achievement while in school, as well as afterwards, when they enter the workplace.

Chronic absenteeism is considered to be absent 10%, or more, of a school year. That averages out to approximately 2 absences per month. Missing 10% of

instruction in classes leads to discontinuity for a student and a lack of in depth understanding of the material being studied. The lack of in depth understanding often leads to an amplification effect in which the student does not have a solid foundation of understanding to build on and falls further and further behind.

Good attendance has many benefits! Students with regular attendance have higher reading comprehension than those who are chronically absent. They also achieve at higher levels in academic endeavors, are less likely to drop out of high school, more likely to go to college, and make more money when they enter the workforce than their average, chronically absent peers.

Regular school attendance is a group effort. School staff, families, and students all need to be active, dedicated partners working toward the goal. The benefits are worthwhile, and lifelong.

Tehachapi *Independent Learning Academy*

400 S. Snyder Ave., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2266 • tila.tehachapiusd.com



Dr. Bonny Porter
*Director
Student Services*

TILA Teachers Integrate Technology into Instruction

Technology is a powerful learning tool that provides students with ways to learn, communicate, and work collaboratively. Additionally, technology has increased learning materials that are at students’ fingertips. As more technology is easily accessible for students, the way we educate students is shifting. Teachers are using short video clips, interactive learning modules, and digital platforms to increase student engagement.

Our TILA teachers have embraced the integration of technology into their classrooms. Both our Blended and Classic TILA Teachers use technology to improve the learner-centeredness of their lessons. Through digital platforms, students can progress at their own pace and learn new material through captivating digital lessons. TILA students have the ability to Zoom as well as engage in face-to-face communication with their teachers and classmates. If you have any question please email Dr. Bonny Porter at bporter@tehachapiusd.com or call the TILA office at (661) 822-2266.



TILA middle school students using technology in their classroom.

Tehachapi High School

801 S. Dennison Rd, Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2130 • ths.tehachapiusd.com



Cristina Libatique
Principal

Dual Enrollment Courses

Career Technical Education (CTE) is thriving at THS, we offer six Industry Sectors, seven Pathways within those Industry Sectors, and 21 CTE courses (16 A-G approved) including four Dual Enrollment courses with Cerro Coso Community College where students can earn college credits - 12 units in Graphic Design or six units in Criminal Justice. Currently, we have seven fully credentialed

CTE Teachers and 960 students enrolled in our CTE courses. Students have the opportunity to explore Graphic Design, Photography, Drama, Woodworking, Engineering Technology & Design, Game Design, Business, and Criminal Justice. CTE Students are enjoying the return of field trips and events such as Manufacturing Day at Bakersfield College, AVAS STEM EXPO, visiting the Broad Museum, Drama's Fall Play, Women in Trades, Pinco Food Show, tour of the Hyundai/KIA Proving Grounds, and the Templeton Theatre Celebration. THS CTE is working hard to prepare our students for their future and employment.

Tompkins Elementary

1120 S. Curry St., Tehachapi, CA 93561 • 661/822-2170 • tpk.tehachapiusd.com



Clair Rhea
Principal

Snug Hugs

As part of Capturing Kids Hearts, at Tompkins we recognize that students cannot learn if their basic needs are not met. Therefore, we have a new program called Snug Hugs, a coat lending program. Parents were asked to donate coats that their child

had outgrown. These coats were laundered and hung up in the lounge so all staff members can assist students who need to borrow a coat for the day. The office sees numerous students daily asking to borrow a coat. We are happy to help our students stay warm during the cold wintery months. Thank you to Nicole Bessard and Jenna Casas for collaborating on this project.



We Love Our Dogs Word Search Contest

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

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

Entries must be received March 15, 2023

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

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| Akita | Pinscher |
| Basenji | Poodle |
| Beagle | Pug |
| Bloodhound | Puli |
| Boxer | Retriever |
| Bulldog | Rottweiler |
| Chihuahua | Saint Bernard |
| Chow Chow | Samoyed |
| Collie | Shiba Inu |
| Dalmatian | Shih Tzu |
| Doberman | Siberian Husky |
| Great Dane | Weimaraner |
| Malamute | Xoloitzcuintli |
| Mastiff | |



Musical String Instruments Word Search Contest

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

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

Entries must be received by March 15, 2023

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

- | | |
|------------|----------|
| BALALAIKA | LUTE |
| BANJO | LYRE |
| BASS VIOL | MANDOLIN |
| CELLO | ORGAN |
| CLAVICHORD | PIANO |
| CONTRABASS | SITAR |
| DULCIMER | UKULELE |
| GUITAR | VIOLA |
| HARP | VIOLIN |
| CHORD | ZITHER |

