

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Fountain Valley School District



Volume 19, Issue 113

September 2023



SUPERINTENDENT

We are So Excited to have Started the 2023-2024 School Year!



Dr. Katherine Stopp
Superintendent

Since school let out in June, our FVSD team has been busy preparing for the return of staff and students. We spruced up campuses and classrooms and added an additional layer of safety to three of our ten schools whose perimeter fencing projects are almost complete. Concurrently, entry systems, bells, and intercom systems are being updated. We will watch the continued progress across the District through the course of this school year. We hired many new employees this summer, and all our new and veteran staff engaged in professional learning opportunities, expanding and honing their knowledge and skills.

The Fountain Valley School District Board of Trustees identified Guiding Principles to introduce to our entire school community in preparation for the 2023-2024 school year. These foundational principles serve to remind us of the ideas, beliefs, and basic values that will help our students in school and in life. As we focus on positive school climate and culture, these FVSD principles will anchor our discussions and interactions.

We are off to a great start, and we look forward to a safe and spectacular school year for all our educational partners in Fountain Valley School District.



FOUNTAIN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

LOVE

LOVE - Showing care, generosity, gratitude, kindness, compassion, patience, empathy, and forgiveness inspires others to be better people. Everyone and everything benefits from love.

RESPECT

RESPECT - Treating others respectfully, and having self-respect, builds healthy relationships. Respecting different perspectives, and guidelines created to maintain peace, foster feelings of trust and wellbeing.

INTEGRITY

INTEGRITY - Doing the right thing when no one is watching is integrity. People with integrity are dependable, accountable for their actions, humble, and honest, which build self-confidence.

TEAMWORK

TEAMWORK - Working with a team promotes communication skills, enhances feelings of connectedness and community, boosts productivity, motivates, and inspires.

LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP - Setting and achieving goals, being a good example to others, seeking solutions, and creating positive change within our families, schools, community and the world is leadership.

CITIZENSHIP

CITIZENSHIP - Being a good citizen involves understanding our country's founding principles, acting responsibly, and engaging with others through positive participation and selfless service for society.

PERSEVERANCE

PERSEVERANCE - Facing challenges and overcoming them is having perseverance. Working hard and focusing on passions and goals, even in the face of failure, is showing perseverance and grit.

Fountain Valley School District's Guiding Principles

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Member

By Jeanne Galindo, Board President

"I believe that the first day of school is better than the last," said a current student eager to start the new school year.

Firsts are best because they are new beginnings. Young minds begin to take on new skills and new challenges. Young minds are capable of taking on BIG ideas.

As we start the 2023-24 school year, we continue building on the power within these young minds.

And so, on the first day of school, students march in the door with new backpacks, shoes, and hopes for a loving teacher.



Teachers have prepared for weeks and maybe months to create an environment that meets the needs of every student. Their careful planning guides students toward better reading and math skills. The students gain reasoning skills. They learn to write using facts taken from resources to support their positions.

As a school board member, I invite parents, teachers, and staff to remember the power of a well-delivered and well-received education. This environment enables students to grow in all their skills.

Fountain Valley School District's newly articulated Guiding Principles - love, respect, integrity, teamwork, citizenship, and perseverance will ensure that our students begin to receive the best possible education.



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Kay Coop
Founder/Publisher



562/493-3193

kay@schoolnewsrollcall.com



Netragrednik

Welcome back to another new school year. This is always an exciting time for students as they reconnect with old friends, make new friends, meet their teachers and settle into a routine.

Superintendent Dr. Stopp begins

this issue on page 2 with her message introducing the Fountain Valley School District Guiding Principles.

Thank you for continuing to include *School News* among your reading choices. Our next issue is November 1.

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www.schoolnewsrollcall.com

Covering the
FOUNTAIN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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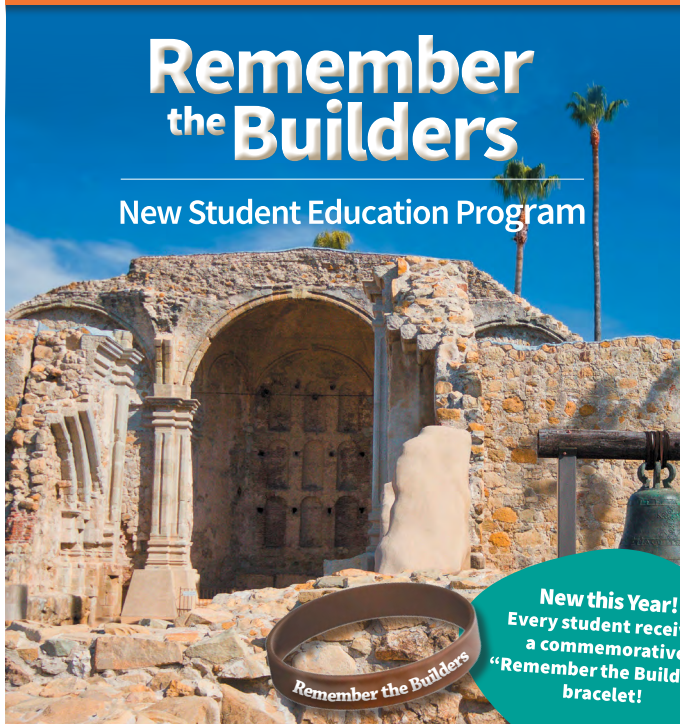


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September is Library Sign-Up Month!

Kimberly Tran-Hoang, Children & Teen Librarian

A library card is elemental, get yours today at the Fountain Valley Library, a branch of the OC Public Libraries system. All you need is a valid photo ID.

Check out the variety of programs offered in the library throughout the month. Find out the details at <https://www.ocpl.org/libraries/fountain-valley>.

Below are some highlights of upcoming programs:

Children & Families

Spanish Bilingual Storytime: Last Tuesdays at 4pm

Vietnamese Bilingual Storytime: September 16 & October 28 at 11am

Acrylic Painting Workshop: Last Wednesdays at 4pm. For ages 10 & up, registration required.

Franklin Haynes Marionettes: October 28 at 2pm

We also have weekly Toddler and Preschool Storytimes, monthly Family Craft Nights, movie screenings for families, gardening programs, and more! Check out our Program Calendar.



Teens

Volunteer Orientation: First Wednesdays at 5pm – Volunteer application required for teens ages 14-18.

Teen Advisory Board: Meets First Thursdays at 5pm – Volunteer application required for teens ages 13-18.

Animescapes (Anime Film Screenings for Teens & Adults) – September 16 & October 21 at 2pm.

Acrylic Painting Workshop: October 12 at 4pm. For ages 13-18 only, registration required.

Spicy Chicken Wing Contest: October 14 at 2pm

Adults

Crafts for Adults w/Developmental Disabilities: Mondays at 10am.

ESL/ELL Crafts & Conversation: Third Wednesdays at 5pm. Improve your English and make new friends!

Paint N Sip Workshop: Second Wednesdays starting October 11 at 4pm. Registration required.

Ecos de Espana, Classical Spanish & Flamenco Music: September 23 at 2pm

Polymer Clay Workshop: October 16 at 4pm. Registration required.

We also have monthly book groups, yarncraft group, classic movie screenings for adults, Tech Help Hour, etc. Check out our Program Calendar for more!

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Roch Courreges *Elementary (K-5)*

18313 Santa Carlotta, Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4280 • www.courreges.fvsd.us



Lisa Tanita
Principal

Welcome to the 2023-2024 School Year Courreges Cougars!

I am honored and thankful each day to work alongside the amazing Courreges staff and community, where each child is embraced and supported to thrive through creativity, innovation, and differentiation! Our teachers have been busy preparing for a fantastic school year in growing readers, writers, mathematicians, and critical thinkers. We

know this begins with strong connections and a culture of care, so we kicked off the year with a Welcome Back event to start building relationships even before school started. We want Cougars to know YOU matter.

We have a great year planned for all of our students and look forward to a productive partnership with our parent community to inspire each student to learn and grow in a safe, engaging, and inspiring environment. It's going to be a fantastic year!



James H. Cox *Elementary (K-5)*

17615 Los Jardines E., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4240 • www.cox.fvsd.us



Dr. Jen Ollila
Principal

Cox Welcomes New Principal!

Cox Elementary School celebrated its first day of school on Wednesday, September 6, 2023, with a renewed excitement for learning and a new principal! The Cox Elementary Eagles are delighted to welcome Jen Ollila, Ed.D., to the Eagles nest. Dr. Ollila is a long-time Orange County resident with deep roots in the area and a strong passion for the community. She comes to

Cox and the Fountain Valley School District with 15 years of educational leadership experience. Her leadership journey helped her to develop strong skills in working collaboratively, creating positive relationships, and fostering a strong school culture and climate. “I am so excited to join the Cox and FVSD communities,” shared Dr. Ollila, “I look forward to listening and learning from the Cox families, staff, and students about what makes Cox such a great school and how I can support continued growth and success for all students.”



Be kind. Be Aware. Crosswalk Initiative.



School Counselor Bailey Adling, Teacher Carrie Desormiers, Principal Jen Ollila, and Site Lead Nikki Buck are keeping students safe at pickup and drop off.

Harry C. Fulton *Middle School (6–8)*

8778 El Lago St., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/375-2816 • www.fulton.fvgsd.us



Jenny Salberg
Principal



Molly Kuykendall
Assistant Principal

We are Introducing a Brand-New Wheel Elective!

This year, we are pleased to start a new elective that will make it easy for students to get their foot in the door for a music elective. This class is called Beginning Instruments and is part of Wheel A for 6th and 7th graders.

In this class, students will be given a “sample platter” of instruments and two weeks to try out each instrument, learning the basics of music and performance. These students are given the opportunity to play Clarinet, Trumpet, Guitar, Violin, and Percussion (drums). By the end of the trimester, the students will have had the chance to try each of these instruments and will also be picking which one to play in a performance!

We are excited about this class since it allows students to expand their skills and have a good time without necessarily needing to commit to a yearlong elective (not that Mr. L. isn’t a fun teacher to have for the year!)

As part of that class, the students will be learning the academic side of music, which Mr. L. calls “Theory Thursday.” On Thursdays, because it’s a shorter day, rather than taking the time to set up and get out the instruments, which cuts into rehearsal time, all music students instead obtain the “head knowledge” that is necessary for being an excellent music student, and in many cases, learning things that apply to other parts of their life and classes. Have you ever wondered what happened right after Rome fell? Or wondered about what the term “Classical” means? Or how 4 minutes of silence could be considered music? If so, these questions are answered in Mr. L.’s music classes. What do the little squiggles and lines on a piece of music

page mean? What fingers do I use? How long do I play that note? Theory Thursday is for this, and it’s a lot of fun.

So if you are currently on Wheel A, or are thinking about it for next year, this is what you have to look forward to! Some fun times with cool instruments making weird noises in the music room.

Hope to see you there!



Robert Gisler Elementary (K-5)

18720 Las Flores, Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4211 • www.gisler.fvgsd.us



Katherine Pavidis
Principal

The Power of Our Village

The new school year is here, and at Gisler Elementary, we're celebrating the power of our village—our dedicated staff, enthusiastic students, and supportive community. Together, we create an environment where learning thrives, and we're excited to kick off another educational adventure.

Our staff, including teachers, administrators, and support teams, have worked tirelessly to prepare our classrooms and curriculum. Their unwavering commitment to fostering a love for learning is truly inspiring.

To our students, you are the heart of our school. Your curiosity and passion infuse energy and vitality into our halls. We're here to support you every step of the way.



Welcome Back- 1st Day Photo

Our community, from parents to local partners, plays a vital role in shaping our school's character. Your involvement strengthens the bonds that connect us.

As we begin this new school year, let's celebrate our village spirit. Challenges will come, but together, we'll overcome them. We'll inspire, learn, and grow, leaving an indelible mark on our students' lives.

Welcome back to Gisler. Let's make this year exceptional!



Mascot Meet & Greet



Friends



1st Day



Staff Photo



PTO Board

Kazuo Masuda Middle School(6–8)

17415 Las Jardines W., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4250 • www.masuda.fvsd.us



Cara Robinson
Principal



Jessica O'Malley
Assistant Principal

New Beginnings

As the new administrative team at Masuda Middle School, Principal Cara Robinson, and Assistant Principal, Jessica O'Malley are already settling into their new roles. Assistant principal, Jessica O'Malley, has served as an elementary

teacher leader at our neighborhood feeder elementary, Cox, for over twenty years. She joins the Masuda team,

bringing with her strong ties to our community and her excellent reputation as an educator. Jessica notes, "I could not imagine a better way to make a difference in this world than to spend time bolstering and protecting students as they navigate the dynamic years between elementary and high school." Principal, Cara Robinson, also no stranger to the community, joins the team from Cox Elementary, where she served as principal. Cara shares, "I am thrilled to rejoin the Masuda team after having started my teaching career in Fountain Valley at Masuda years ago. I love this community and look forward to watching these students grow up and transition into high school."



William T. Newland *Elementary (K-5)*

8787 Dolphin St., Huntington Beach, CA 92646 • 714/378-4200 • www.newland.fvsd.us



Matt Ploski
Principal

New Faces at Newland

Newland Elementary is off to a great start to the new school year with the addition of some new faces. We are thrilled to welcome new Kindergarten teacher Alysia Erskine, and two new Special Education teachers Erin Gordon and Alison Kinney.

Alysia Erskine is a passionate and dedicated educator with a deep love for nurturing young minds. With over 10 years of experience in the field, she is excited to continue her journey where she grew up, in FVSD. Alysia graduated with a Masters Degree in Education from USC and loves to go back to her alma-mater for the occasional football game, Go Trojans! Outside of the classroom, Alysia loves spending time baking, camping, snowboarding, hiking and going to Disneyland with her family!



Alysia Erskine

Alison Kinney was born and raised in Houston, TX. After high school, she moved to sunny Southern California. She attended CS Fullerton and earned her degree in Child and Adolescent Studies and then her Special Education credential. She has spent the last 7 years teaching in a Special Education classroom for grades TK - 2nd in Santa Ana. In her downtime, Alison loves to exercise, go boating with her family, watch football, and travel. She is also devoted to her two dogs, Tiggy and Harper.



Alison Kinney

Erin Gordon is a Southern California native, who recently moved back to Orange County after living in Westlake Village for the last decade. Ms. Gordon graduated summa cum laude after earning a dual Bachelor's degree in Elementary and Special Education, and she is currently working toward her Master's degree to further expand her knowledge in education at Pepperdine University. Ms. Gordon is passionate about special education, and she has over 10 years of experience in the field. Her greatest joys in life are going to the beach, working out, doing anything with her family, and working with individuals with special needs.



Erin Gordon

Isojiro Oka *Elementary (K-5)*

9800 Yorktown Ave., Huntington Beach, CA 92646 • 714/378-4260 • www.oka.fvdsd.us



Julie Ballesteros
Principal

Welcome to the Wolfpack

The Wolfpack is pleased to introduce three new members to our Oka Staff. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to learn and grow with these great educators.

My name is Alaa Shehadeh, and I am so excited to work at Oka as a 4th grade teacher! I actually attended Oka growing up from preschool to 5th grade. It's a dream to be back here as a teacher! This will be my second year teaching and my first year teaching 4th grade! I can't wait to dive into the 4th-grade curriculum!



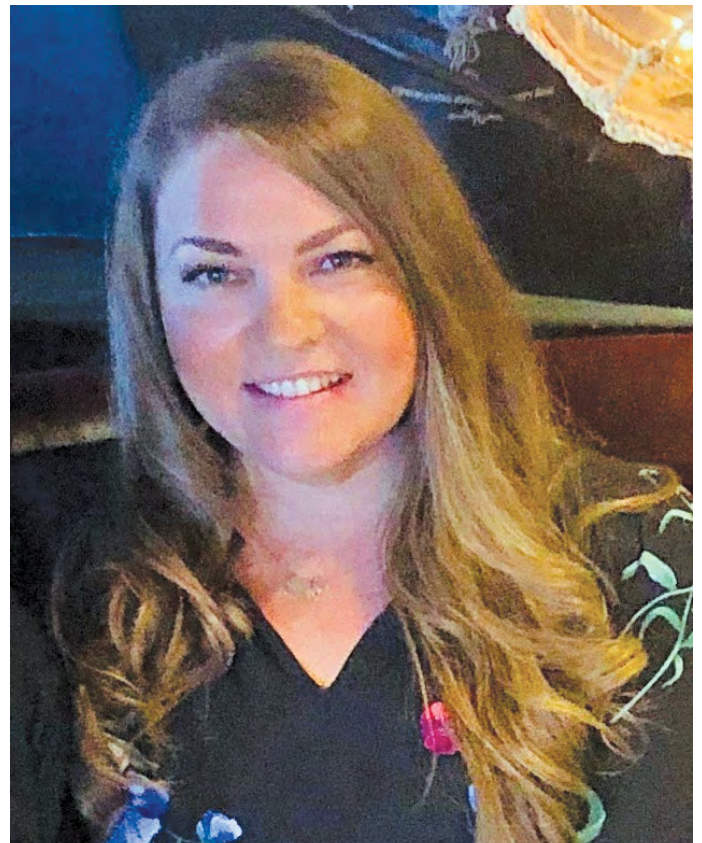
Alaa Shehadeh

My name is Heather Cottle, and I am excited to join the Oka team as the SDC preschool teacher. I have taught in an SDC preschool classroom, an inclusion preschool program, and an SDC TK/K classroom. I grew up in Fountain Valley and attended FVSD for elementary and middle school. I am so happy to be back in FVSD now as a teacher! Outside of school

My name is Jennifer Bernhardt, and I am thrilled to begin as Oka's Reading intervention teacher. I have served as a support teacher (RTI), a reading intervention and support teacher, and a 5th-grade ELD teacher. I am a long-time resident of Huntington Beach, and I am a mother of two elementary school-age daughters at Oka. I have loved my experience working with the staff, students, and administrators within the Fountain Valley School District as a parent, and I am so excited to be joining the FVSD family at Oka.



Heather Cottle



Jennifer Bernhardt

Urbain H. Plavan *Elementary (K-5)*

9675 Warner Ave., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/378-4230 • www.plavan.fvsd.us



Dr. Patrick Ham
Principal

Welcome

Plavan welcomed Carly Schulenburg (TK) and Kennedy Neubauer (4th) to our team to start the 2023-2024 school year.

Carly Schulenburg grew up attending the Fountain Valley School District and now has two children who attend Oka Elementary. Mrs. Schulenburg has experience teaching preschool and has a deep passion for guiding children to achieve their best while making

it fun and engaging. Outside the classroom, Carly enjoys spending time outdoors with her family and going to Disneyland!

Kennedy Neubauer was born and raised in Mission Viejo, but spent the last decade living and teaching on the island of Oahu. This year is her sixth year teaching in the upper grades. She enjoys spending free time with her family, friends, and her dog, Tiger. Ms. Neubauer has a deep love for teaching and a special ability to connect with all students. We are so proud and grateful to have Carly Schulenburg and Kennedy Neubauer join our amazing community!



Kennedy Neubauer



Carly Schulenburg with her family.

Samuel E. Talbert *Middle School (6-8)*

9101 Brabham Dr., Huntington Beach, CA 92646 • 714/378-4220 • www.talbert.fvdsd.us



Jay Adams
Principal



Brandon LoMonaco
Assistant Principal

Team Talbert!

The 2023-24 school year is off and running with our T-Bird Team of staff here at Talbert! With just a few “rookies...” Daycia Aaron, Counselor; Sage Moore, History; and Renee Hancharick, School Psychologist...the home team is looking strong for the

upcoming season. GM's Jay Adams and Brandon LoMonaco are raving about this team's potential for greatness!

We'll be watching stats throughout the year. Students' RBI's--Responsibility & Being Independent. Staff ERA's--Excellent Rapport Averages. Teachers' Percentage of Game Saves. We're looking for NO student strike outs! No team errors! And HOME RUNS off the charts, people!!

With the necessary commitment, drive, and dedicated heart, Team Talbert is the group to watch as we hurtle toward success and an ultimate WINNING YEAR!



Hisamatsu Tamura Elementary (K-5)

17340 Santa Suzanne St., Fountain Valley, CA 92708 • 714/375-6226 • www.tamura.fvsd.us



Chris Mullin
Principal

Old and New Faces Join the Tamura Tigers First Day

Tamura recently opened its doors to the 2023 – 2024 school year. In addition to welcoming students back to the campus, Tamura also welcomed two new teachers. Mrs. Martone joins Tamura as a 1st Grade teacher from Cox Elementary. Also adding to the staff is Mr. Grant, joining us from Newland and teaching SDC in grades 3rd – 5th. Finally, Mr. Christopher Mullin is

thrilled to be back for his second year as principal at Tamura Elementary.

Mr. Mullin has lived in and around Fountain Valley for over 50 years. He attended Moiola Elementary and graduated from FVHS. After high school, Mr. Mullin decided to take the road less traveled and worked as a forest firefighter with CalFire and with US Forestry as a backcountry ranger. Mr. Mullin graduated from Montana State University and began teaching fifth-grade at a K-12 school in the small rural town of Three Forks, MT., working there for three years. Eventually he made his way back to the Fountain Valley School District teaching 8th grade science and PE. For the past 18 years, Mr. Mullin has worked as an administrator at Fulton and Masuda Middle Schools, Newland Elementary, and most recently Tamura Elementary. When not at school, Mr. Mullin can be found enjoying time with his wife and children. Free time is often spent fishing, going to Angels games, or cooking for family and friends.



This year we are elated to welcome back students and parents to an exciting new year at Tamura Elementary. This has always been a school with a solid record of high academic achievement and one that promotes a learning community characterized by child-centered differentiated instruction. As we open our door once again, our dedicated staff are eager to embark on this journey for the 23-24 school year. This academic year promises endless



opportunities for growth, learning, and discovery. Together we look to create a nurturing environment where every child can thrive. Mr. Mullin, along with the entire staff, are excited to begin what will be an excellent year and embrace the challenges and triumphs that await us.



Orange County Department of Education

200 Kalmus Drive, Costa Mesa CA 92628 • 714/966-4000 • www.ocde.us



Dr. Al Mijares
Superintendent



Dr. Ramon Miramontes
Deputy Superintendent of Instructional Programs

In the Star Wars universe, whenever a spacecraft makes the jump to light speed, the stars outside the cockpit stretch out into luminous streaks. It's a mesmerizing visual of acceleration that brings to mind the dizzying advancement of

technology here on planet Earth — and the urgent need for educational systems to keep pace.

With artificial intelligence poised to reshape workplaces and society at large, the Orange County Department of Education is moving ahead with an ambitious initiative that will evaluate and determine the best approaches for integrating AI into teaching and learning. This could include more personalized learning, real-time feedback for students and teachers, or the automation of routine tasks, allowing educators to focus more on matters that demand human insight, judgment and creative thinking.

While the outcomes have yet to be determined, we do know this won't be a solitary endeavor. Led by our Educational Services division, OCDE is taking the first steps of a collaborative journey that will involve school district leaders, industry partners, educators, parents and students. And we envision it taking place in three distinct phases.

The first phase will seek to elevate AI literacy and leadership, establishing a common understanding and terminology in Orange County. The second phase will develop strategies and an implementation plan in collaboration with leaders of the county's 28 independent school districts. Finally, a third phase will evaluate our efforts, gather data and plan for the future. OCDE's commitment to continuous improvement and

community engagement ensures that the feedback loop will remain open, fostering a culture of learning and adaptability.

OCDE has long sought to stay ahead of the curve when it comes to emerging technologies, but AI represents something we haven't quite seen before. These newer tools simulate human intelligence, enabling computers to perform tasks that typically require human cognitive abilities. As such, they have the potential to impact just about every aspect of our work and lives, from teaching and learning to health care, transportation, media, energy, finance and customer service.

While ChatGPT and other publicly available services aren't perfect, remember that they are programmed to learn from us, which means they can and will evolve exponentially. In other words, the examples we see today are the worst versions we're going to encounter moving forward.

Preparing students for an AI-driven future isn't just about passing along technical skills. It's about teaching adaptability, critical thinking and ethical decision-making. By integrating AI literacy across educational settings, OCDE and our partners will be able to equip students with the capacity to navigate an increasingly complex world without losing those traits that make us uniquely human, like kindness, character and artistic expression. And through community engagement, we can pursue a shared vision for AI that aligns with our local values and needs.

The need for education to remain in stride with technology is undeniable, and the Orange County Department of Education has long been a leader in this arena. But collaboration is the key to what lies ahead. That's how we'll ensure that the next generation isn't just ready to embrace the challenges of an AI-driven world, but that they're poised to drive innovation, forge new paths and contribute meaningfully to a future that's constantly in motion.