

School News

Education + Communication = A Better Nation

Covering the Tehachapi Unified School District



Volume 4, Issue 12

October 2023



Engage! Empower! Excel!



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School News

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Covering the

TEHACHAPI UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Welcome to a new school year! This is always an exciting time for students to reconnect with old friends, meet new friends, meet their teachers, and settle into a routine. By now students are focused on their goals and we are

excited to bring you the news. Thank you for continuing to include *School News* among your reading choices.

Our next issue is January 31, 2024
Until then Happy Holidays!!



Happy Halloween!



Caroline Robison Optometry

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Superintendent



**Stacey
Larson-Everson**

The 2023-2024 school year is well underway! As a team, TUSD is focused on building strong connections with students as well as positive academic outcomes. Our theme for this year is “It’s



Today.” Our “It’s Today” message is meant to convey our district-wide energy and laser-focus on meeting students’ current educational needs each and every day. We want to make every moment in school count!

Many strategies and educational tools are being implemented in TUSD schools to support students in their academic achievement. Significant resources and layers are also in place to increase social and emotional support for students. These strategies include a School Social Worker, Psychologist, and Intervention Specialist at each traditional school campus.

On the academic front, we are very proud of our students’ collective achievement. The graduating class of 2023 from Tehachapi High School, recognized five co-valedictorians and celebrated the graduation of 245 students! This school year, we have expanded academic support at both the elementary and secondary levels. At each elementary campus, struggling early readers are now working daily with Burst Tutors to help them develop fluency with basic phonics skills. At both Jacobsen Middle School and Tehachapi High School, we have added Language Arts and Mathematics part-time intervention teachers. Both of these schools are also offering after-school tutoring sessions in both English and Math. Finally, with the start of the school year, students in grades K-12 took diagnostic assessments in English and Math, using the iReady platform. These results have been shared with parents and guardians. Please review the results of your student’s assessments and reach out to your child’s school with any questions you may have.

Finally, a primary link to student success in school is social-emotional well-being and connectedness to school. This year, TUSD is continuing the implementation of Capturing Kids’ Hearts (CKH). CKH is recognized nationwide as an outstanding set of practices designed to promote:

- Student social-emotional well-being
- A positive, relationship-driven campus culture at all schools
- Student connectedness to school

Capturing Kids’ Hearts promotes relevance, rigor, and relationships. Respect and responsibility are key characteristics in the CKH model. The entire process teaches strong interpersonal skills and promotes academic and lifelong success. Teachers use the EXCEL model (described below) to communicate with students. Students work collaboratively to create classroom rules that detail how everyone agrees to treat each other and how they want to be treated.

The EXCEL Model

Engage: Students are greeted at the door with a handshake, hug, or high-five with eye contact and a sincere welcome.

X-plore: Teachers listen and attend to the personal, emotional and academic needs of students.

Communicate: Teachers communicate care as well as academic content.

Empower: Teachers empower students to gain the ability to “use and do” the things they have been taught.

Launch: How we “end and send” our students into the world at the end of class. The purpose is to start our students on a course of action by ending our classes on a powerful, positive note.

Students Describe School Behaviors

The “Social Contract” is an agreement that is created by the students, assisted by the teacher, in an effort to answer four questions regarding the classroom and school environment. The four questions include:

- How do you want to be treated by the teacher?
- How do you want to be treated by each other?
- How do you think the teacher wants to be treated by you?
- How do we want to treat each other when there is conflict?

The resulting answers make up a list of adjectives that serve as the basis for student expectations of behavior in the classroom. The “Social Contract” is signed by all classroom members including the teacher and is referred to on a regular basis during class.

Good Things/Hoorays

At the beginning of classes teachers will start with “good things,” which means that students share something good that is going on with them. This creates an environment of positivity and helps build relationships.

We are very dedicated to the continued district-wide implementation of CKHs and hope that students benefit from these strategies. If you have questions or would like more information about CKH, please contact your child’s school administrative team.

Have a great school year.

Business Services

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



Hojat Entezari
Chief Administrator

Summer School Projects

Summer may bring a recess for students, but for the TUSD Maintenance and Operations (M&O) team, it's a season of diligent work and innovation. This past summer witnessed a multitude of projects aimed at improving our school facilities and ensuring a school and learning environment for students to thrive.

A significant highlight of the summer was extensive refurbishments to Tehachapi High School's Coy Burnett Stadium. From seating repairs on both the north and south ends of the home side to a fresh coat of Warrior Green on the press box, restrooms, snack bar, bleachers, and handrails – the stadium was truly revitalized. The tennis courts at Tehachapi High School also received significant restoration.

The dedication of our M&O staff was further evident when they successfully completed two roofing projects in-house: the Jacobsen Middle School band room and the south side wing of Tompkins Elementary. At TUSD Central

Kitchen, the hub that serves all students throughout the District, a pressing concern was addressed by installing a new monolithic anti-skid floor appropriate for a proper commercial kitchen.

Golden Hills Elementary and Tompkins Elementary received a fresh look, with repainting efforts rejuvenating the campuses. Tompkins Elementary also benefitted from the extension of the kindergarten playground. The Tehachapi Independent Learning Academy is looking forward to welcoming children with a brand-new playground structure and new gymnasium floor later this year.

These summer projects are a testament to TUSD's commitment to uncompromising excellence. It's worth noting that our decisions are not made in isolation. Through the Facilities Advisory Committee, we've received invaluable insights not only from our staff but from you, our community. We encourage everyone to continue to be a voice in shaping our schools' future. Please visit the TUSD website to discover how your feedback can make a lasting impact. Your vision can become our next project!

District Nurse

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

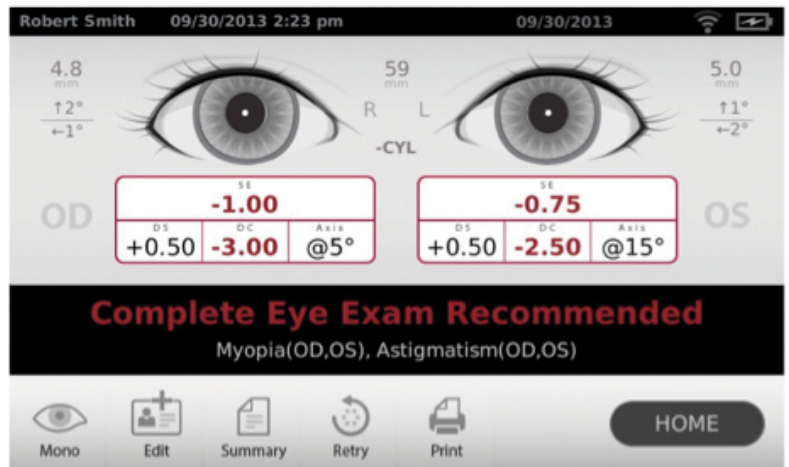


Jenna Burgess,
RN BSN
Credentialed
School Nurse

Vision Screenings

TUSD's vision screenings completed by the district nurses for students in TK, Kindergarten, 1st grade (boys), 2nd grade, 5th grade, and 8th grade have gotten a lot more interesting this year thanks to the district's decision to begin using the Spot Vision Screener by Baxter. The Spot Vision Screener, backed by peer-reviewed clinical evidence, is designed to safeguard

children's vision. It is a handheld camera, operated by the district nurse for vision screenings. The device automatically captures children's eyes from a noninvasive 3-foot distance using the fixation target to keep the child's focus. A screening of both eyes is completed in seconds, revealing the fast and objective detection of common vision problems in children as young as six months old. The device's touchscreen displays instant results indicating whether a complete eye exam is recommended or if all measurements are in range. The screening's results are downloaded and mailed to parents with the vision referral.



What common vision problems can it accurately detect for further evaluation with an optometrist or ophthalmologist? It can identify myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness), astigmatism (blurred vision), anisometropia (unequal refractive power), strabismus (eye misalignment), and anisocoria (unequal pupil size). If you receive a referral in the mail you can call one of the district nurses with any questions you may have about this new vision screening process.

Food Services

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



Hortencia Tapia
Supervisor

Universal Meal Program

California is continuing the Universal Meal Program. With this program, every student attending in person can receive a free breakfast and a free lunch. As we start the school year,

the food service department is very busy processing meal applications but we would love to receive more. It is very important to complete a meal application, even if your child brings a lunch from home. We encourage every household to submit an application by going to PayPams.com. If you qualify, your child might be eligible to receive the pandemic EBT card offered over the summer and Universities of California application fee waivers as well as SAT fee waivers. The chart below shows the income guidelines to qualify.

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$ 26,973	\$ 2,248	\$ 1,124	\$ 1,038	\$ 519
2	\$ 36,482	\$ 3,041	\$ 1,521	\$ 1,404	\$ 702
3	\$ 45,991	\$ 3,883	\$ 1,917	\$ 1,769	\$ 885
4	\$ 55,500	\$ 4,625	\$ 2,313	\$ 2,135	\$ 1,068
5	\$ 65,009	\$ 5,418	\$ 2,709	\$ 2,501	\$ 1,251
6	\$ 74,518	\$ 6,210	\$ 3,105	\$ 2,867	\$ 1,434
7	\$ 84,027	\$ 7,003	\$ 3,502	\$ 3,232	\$ 1,618
8	\$ 93,536	\$ 7,795	\$ 3,898	\$ 3,598	\$ 1,799
For each additional member, add:	\$ 9,509	\$ 793	\$ 397	\$ 366	\$ 183

Instructional Services

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



Andrea Paxton
Chief Administrator

TUSD Staff Prepares for the Beginning of the School Year

Prior to the return of students to school campuses for the 2023/2024 school year, TUSD faculty engaged in professional learning to hone their skills before working with students. New

and existing teachers had the opportunity to participate in a two-day training that provided

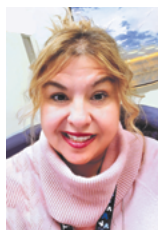
workshops on differentiation, effective lesson design, strategies to incorporate science in other academic disciplines, using data to support student learning, and how to effectively teach writing. In addition to the two-day teacher training, substitute teachers and classified staff members participated in a one-day training on district programs and resources. Topics of the classified staff and substitute teacher training included: Capturing Kids Hearts, using technology in the classroom, student confidentiality, district and site

safety procedures, and classroom management strategies. As students returned to school campuses on August 9th, TUSD staff members were ready to put their newly acquired skills into practice to best support their students to have positive academic and social emotional growth throughout the 2023/2024 school year.



Personnel Services

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



Dr. Roxane Romero
Chief Administrator

Here's to 2023-2024!

We would like to take the time to introduce new leadership team members to our learning community. Mr. Tae Mauk is our new Director of Special Education, Mrs. Kimberly Lewis is our new Vice Principal at Tehachapi High School, Mrs. Christina Andrade is the new Vice Principal at Tompkins Elementary

and Mrs. Kim Goldstein has accepted the position of Learning Director at Jacobsen Middle School. They are all excited and ready to make positive impacts within our school district. Each leader brings valuable experience and a desire to support students, staff, and the community. We have also hired many teachers across our school sites along with exceptional support staff. We welcome all our new hires and wish them the best of luck in the current school year. It's not too late to join our team. 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.



Also, school sites have begun recruiting parent volunteers for the 2023-2024 school year. Volunteering is a great way to get involved and support your local schools. Parent volunteers can choose between working in the classroom, chaperoning field trips, or coaching our students. For more information, 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

Universal Screener

In Tehachapi Unified School District we administer a Universal Screener assessment in English Language Arts and Mathematics three times a year. Students in first grade through twelfth grade currently take the Universal Screener in the fall, winter, and spring. Kindergarten students only take these diagnostic tests two times a year in winter and spring.

In order to engage students in preparation for the upcoming diagnostic test, Snargg and Plory, characters that appear in reading and math lessons and assessments, were able to visit elementary students. They plan on returning to participate in additional school visits to celebrate student growth after the second diagnostic this year. Students may demonstrate typical growth, this is the average annual growth that a student should typically make in one school year. They may also attain "stretch growth". This is an ambitious but attainable

level of growth that places students on a path to achieve or maintain advanced proficiency levels.

Universal screeners provide information to our district on overall student strengths and areas for growth. Data collected provides school's with specific information about overall site and grade level needs. Additionally, for teachers, the universal screeners provide a view of overall class needs to guide classroom core instruction. It also provides data about individual student strengths and areas for growth.

TUSD families will receive student specific reports in both Math and Reading. These reports let you know where your child is performing overall in each domain. Suggestions for discussions with your child are provided below their overall percentile and can be used when conferencing with your child's teacher. On the back of the report you will see skill progress broken down by domain, where your child currently is performing, and information about specific areas your child may need additional academic support.

Special Education Services

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



Tae Mauk
Director

Welcome Mr. Miguel Alegre-Ramirez!

The Special Education Department has gone through change over the summer. We have implemented ongoing adjustments to ensure all students attending Tehachapi Unified School District receive the best possible educational services in the most appropriate settings. We have asked our community partners for feedback and welcome the collaborative stance the

parents have taken. The Special Education Department has many new staff members this year including a new Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), Mr. Miguel Alegre-Ramirez. Mr. Alegre-Ramirez comes to us with a decade of experience servicing students with disabilities and his passion grew as he worked toward his Master of Education degree from Arizona State University. Among many duties as a BCBA, Mr. Alegre-Ramirez develops strategies and goals to help students better communicate their needs and increase positive behaviors. Watching students develop social, emotional, and daily living skills brings great joy to Mr. Alegre-Ramirez and validates the work he does.



Student Services

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



Dr. Bonny Porter
*Director
Student Services*

Independent Study Contracts

TUSD offers families Short-Term and Long-Term Independent Study Contracts. There are frequently questions about what an Independent Study contract is and who qualifies as a Short-Term Contract. A Short-Term Independent Study Contract is an optional educational alternative to classroom instruction when a student misses from three to fourteen days of school. A student cannot access a Short-

term Contract for more than fourteen days in one school year. If a student has been gone longer than fourteen cumulative school days, they can enroll in a Tehachapi Independent Learning Academy (TILA) for a Long-Term Independent Study Program. For example, if a student is planning to be absent for a vacation or family event, a Short-Term Independent Study Contract may be a good way to keep up on work they are missing at school. Families looking to be more involved in their child's

education, or who have a child with a medical condition may want to consider a Long-Term Independent Study Contract through TILA.

Families can request a Short-Term Independent Study Contract through their school office. Please make a request at least three days prior to a student missing school. Once a contract is requested, teachers can prepare assignments for the student prior to them leaving. Advance notice of a student entering a Short-Term Independent Study Contract will help teachers gather assignments for the student. Provided materials will align to the California State Content Standards. Upon returning to school, the work is graded. Fully completed work will count for student attendance. Days that the student is absent from school can be changed from an unexcused absence to a cleared absence. Families who have a student with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) will need to schedule an IEP to determine if the student has the appropriate access to instructional materials provided through Independent Study.

Technology

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



Ryan McKay
Director

Important Upgrades

We're excited to share some important enhancements we've been making to Jacobsen Middle School's digital infrastructure.

With an increasing reliance on digital resources in today's educational landscape, our previous network cabling began to limit our capabilities. We noticed slower internet speeds and connectivity issues which, on occasion, impacted classroom efficiency. To address this, a decision was made to upgrade our network cabling.

The new cabling system will dramatically improve our connection speeds—up to 100 times faster than before. This means quicker access to online resources, smoother streaming of educational content, and an overall enhanced digital experience for both our students and staff.

A significant portion of the upgrade was completed over the summer break. However, to ensure that daytime school operations remain unaffected, some additional work is being conducted during nighttime hours. This minimizes

disruption and ensures that our students can continue their studies without any hindrance.

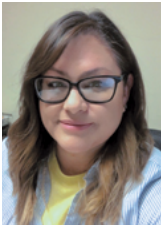
Once fully implemented, classrooms will experience fewer technical interruptions, making online learning tools and resources more accessible and reliable. Our teachers can confidently integrate digital tools into their lessons, knowing the network will support them. And our students will have an improved, seamless online experience, essential for modern education.

Beyond the upgrades at Jacobsen Middle School, we're also taking steps to enhance our entire district's connectivity. With chromebooks in every classroom, wireless devices play a pivotal role in education. Therefore, we're upgrading the cabling connected to wireless access points at all of our schools. This will provide extra bandwidth and support for wireless devices districtwide, ensuring a consistent and robust connection for everyone.

We're confident that these upgrades will significantly enhance our school's learning environment. With faster and more reliable connectivity, our students and staff can make the most of the digital resources available to them.

Transportation

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



Denise Berry
Supervisor

New Faces

The start of the school year is an eagerly anticipated time for School Bus Drivers. Drivers play a crucial role in ensuring a safe and smooth transition for students. This school year, adding new drivers and extra routes aims to alleviate the ridership load and ensure a smoother commute for students.

As eager learners step onto the yellow school buses, they'll be greeted by new friendly faces behind the wheel. These dedicated drivers have undergone extensive training to ensure the safety of their passengers, these drivers are also embarking on a journey filled with excitement and challenges.

In response to the growing demand and increased ridership, the decision to add two additional bus routes is a strategic and necessary move for our school transportation system. This expansion reflects our dedication to ensuring the convenience, safety, and efficiency of student transportation.



Victor Bozano, Kevin Webber, Wayne Cribb, Julie Trapp.

Cummings Valley *Elementary*

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



Taylor Marquesen
Principal

Out of This World!

Cummings Valley School students and staff are “blasting off” the new school year with a theme of “CVS is Out of This World”! Think rocket ships, astronauts, stars and planets, and even aliens...all over the school campus.

Each year, Cummings Valley adopts a new school-wide theme in an effort to make school a more exciting and fun place to be! “We find that students really engage and enjoy it when they can see a common theme throughout campus,” said Principal Taylor Marquesen. “We carry the theme throughout our classrooms, library, cafeteria, office -- wherever we can – to make it very visible to everyone. Our hope is that this can really help foster an interest in the sciences for our students, and show them that literally, the sky is the limit!”



**Secretary Pam Johnson, Courage the Cougar,
Principal Taylor Marquesen, Clerk Jen Frender.**

Golden Hills *Elementary*

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



Kendra Bailey
Principal

i-Ready, Set, Soar

The Golden Hills Eagles are back to school and ready to soar to new heights! These first weeks of school have been filled with excitement, enthusiasm, and

countless happy faces. Our teachers and staff continue to focus on building strong and supportive relationship with students and families in effort to maximize student outcomes. We are hard at work to ensure every student makes strong academic progress this year. Finally, we are continuing the long-standing tradition of Friday Flag, in which our entire school community meets together to say the Pledge of Allegiance, appreciate positive behavior, and recognize various student accomplishments. To motivate students for i-Ready



assessments and practice, Goldie, Snargg and Plory visited our first Friday Flag. Our students enjoyed their song and dance! We look forward to seeing our students thrive and succeed this school year! For our Eagles, the sky is the limit!

Jacobsen *Middle School*

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



Eric Loe
Principal

Volunteerism

Recently the Tehachapi Unified School District funded a wonderful trip for the 85 Jacobsen Middle School 8th grade students to attend Camp KEEP (Kern Environmental Education Program) in San Luis Obispo. The students had a great time and learned a lot, and TUSD, as well as Kern County Superintendent of Schools employees worked hard to make the experience possible

Today however, I want to focus on the volunteers. The trip to camp would not have been possible without

volunteers freely giving their time and effort. Chaperones were needed for each group of seven campers. The volunteer chaperones rode the bus to the coast and back, were with the students 23 hours per day, and participated in all activities with the students.

They worked tirelessly to make the experience joyful and memorable for the students of Jacobsen Middle School.

The quality education we strive to provide for the young people of Tehachapi is often based on peoples' willingness to go above and beyond the norm by giving their time, attention, and effort. Thank you to all the volunteers in our communities' schools! Better schools make better communities!



Tehachapi *High School*

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



Cristina Libatique
Principal

Promoting Student Social Emotional Wellness

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is an essential part of all students' education across all grade levels. What does that look like at different developmental stages, and how can SEL best support high school students' learning and development? SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. SEL can support many existing high school priorities, such as promoting mental health, civic learning, and workforce readiness. A strong Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) empowers our counseling staff to use evidence-based practices to meet the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of all students. Tehachapi High School (THS) Counseling Department focuses on three evidence-based, engaging, developmentally appropriate MTSS interventions for high school students across:

Attendance and School Climate, Behavior, and Social-Emotional Learning.

THS counseling department is fortunate to have three student counselors, a school social worker, a school psychologist, and an intervention specialist to work collaboratively with students' educational team and parents to develop and implement intervention strategies (positive behavior supports) within the school environment. The mission of the THS Counseling Department is to empower all students to reach their fullest potential by providing a comprehensive school counseling program to facilitate their academic, career, social, and emotional development. This is achieved by offering one-on-one academic and social-emotional support to all students each and every day. THS also offers peer support groups as an additional way to provide a safe environment to increase emotions regulation, communication skills, learn skills for supportive peer relationships, and experience a sense of belonging and connection. Ultimately, the goal of the counseling staff is to support students in making positive choices to successfully meet positive behavioral and academic outcomes guided through specific interventions and supports which make achieving this goal possible.

Tompkins *Elementary*

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



Clair Rhea
Principal

Tiger TV

Tompkins Elementary has launched Tiger TV, a new platform for delivering daily messages to students. ASB officers film a daily newscast with announcements and reminders

that is sent to each classroom to be watched at a convenient time, such as snack time. Mrs. Roediger and Mrs. DeJulio, the ASB Activities Coordinators, along with Kyle Winchell, the site tech, set up a news studio for the daily broadcast. Mrs. Andrade, the Vice Principal, created a Canva link for the newscasts. Mrs. Hagerty, our School Social Worker, assists in

posting the newscasts to the link. Students are enjoying watching Tiger TV. The link is shared on Parentsquare so families can view it as well.



Tehachapi *Independent Learning Academy*

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



Dr. Bonny Porter
*Director
Student Services*

TILA Offers an Alternative Learning Experience

Tehachapi Independent Learning Academy (TILA) offers an educational option that focuses on a partnership between the teacher and families to provide a hybrid learning experience for students. TILA has two programs available for TK-8th graders. Students attending the blended model participate in a traditional classroom experience

twice a week with an optional Friday enrichment opportunity. Families work with the students to complete their school work on the days that they are not in class.

Students who are enrolled in the classic model are provided with a curriculum to complete at home as well as meet with their teacher for virtual lessons via Zoom. High school students can also enroll in TILA through the classic model. High school and middle school students are assigned to web-based Edmentum courses. The classes are aligned to the California academic standards that prepare students to enter college.



Students Jack Pappin, Myles Bega, and James Crum.



Tehachapi Valley
Recreation & Park District

YOUTH BASKETBALL LEAGUE

K-2nd grade Co-Ed and 3rd-12TH Grade Boys & Girls

REGISTRATION:

Open through November 9th

COST:

Kinderball:

\$87 OR \$65.25 with in-District Discount

1st-12th Division:

\$135 OR \$101.25 with in-District Discount

INCLUDES:

Jersey

****Pictures NOT included in registration****

Head-Coach Discount:

\$30(1st -12th) \$10(Kinderball)

Sibling Discount: \$10

SEASON:

January 6th - March 9th

Championship games to follow

MANDATORY SKILL EVALUATIONS:

NO skill evaluations for this K-2nd Division

Girls 3rd-12th Grade: November 14th

Boys 3rd-6th Grade: November 15th

Boys 7th-8th Grade: November 16th

Boys 9th-12th Grade: November 17th

PRACTICES AND GAMES:

Practices will begin the week of November 27th

(No practices December 24th-31st)

Kinderball will NOT have practices during the week.

Kinderball practices will take place right before the game, it will be worked into the schedule.

Games every Saturday

No games on February 17th

***SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE
FOR QUALIFYING YOUTH!***

VOLUNTEER COACHES NEEDED

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